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## **AITCHISON, Craigie Mason (Lord Aitchison) (1882–1941)**

LABOUR AND NATIONAL LABOUR MP, LORD ADVOCATE, LORD JUSTICE-CLERK

Craigie Mason Aitchison was born at the Erskine Manse, Falkirk on 26 January 1882. His father was the Reverend James Aitchison, a minister of the United Presbyterian Church; his mother was Elizabeth Mason Craigie. Aitchison was educated at Falkirk High School and won a scholarship to the University of Edinburgh. Graduating with an MA in 1903, he was a Vans Dunlop scholar in logic and metaphysics and Muirhead prizeman in civil law. He qualified as an LLB with distinction in 1906; he was called to the Scottish bar in 1907 and took silk in 1923. His speciality was criminal work; his advocacy combined forensic skills with sympathetic eloquence.

During the 1914–18 war Aitchison served with the Royal Artillery. After the war he resumed his legal career and became politically active. His family background was strongly Liberal, and in 1920 he was selected as the Liberal candidate for Clackmannan and East Stirlingshire. The area had been strongly Liberal before 1914; in the ‘coupon’ election of December 1918 the seat had been won by a Coalition Conservative Ralph Glyn, with a Co-operator second and a Liberal third. The unusual circumstances of the election could give some hope of a Liberal revival in more normal circumstances, but the Co-operative vote suggested that in a seat with a significant number of miners the Labour presence would be a permanent factor.

The collapse of the Coalition Government produced a confused election in November 1922. Glyn had voted with the minority at the Conservative MPs’ meeting in the Carlton Club, in favour of the Coalition’s continuation. The Labour candidate was Lachlan MacNeil Weir, formerly a schoolteacher and now a polemical journalist for the weekly newspaper *Forward*. Aitchison’s Liberalism was traditional. He stood with those who had opposed involvement in the Coalition, commended the rigours of liberal political economy and indicted the Coalition for financial extravagance: ‘Mr Gladstone, the greatest master of finance, ever Britain had, said it should be left to the people to spend the money. Private enterprise was his policy’ [*Alloa Circular*, 1 November 1922]. He attacked Labour Party policies on nationalisation and the capital levy. However in a three-way contest the Labour support amongst the miners and the unemployed was perhaps decisive.

Clackmannan and Eastern Stirlingshire 1922: electorate 31 563, turnout 77.9 per cent

L. M. Weir (Labour)	10 312 (42.0 per cent)
C. M. Aitchison (Liberal)	7 379 (30.0 per cent)
R. G. C. Glyn (Conservative)	6 888 (28.0 per cent)
Majority	2 933 (12.0 per cent)

In a subsequent speech to his supporters Aitchison perhaps flew a kite: ‘Give me a straight fight and I will take on the winner tomorrow ... if extreme Socialism was to be fought and defeated in this constituency, then it was Liberalism that was going to do it’ [*Alloa Circular*, 22 November 1922].

The circumstances of the December 1923 election were in sharp contrast to the earlier contest. Glyn had secured the Conservative candidacy at Abingdon and the Clackmannan and East Stirlingshire Unionists did not find a replacement. Instead they decided to support Aitchison. The result was that one of the central issues of the election, free trade or protection, was not relevant to this contest. In fact Aitchison proved to be the only campaigning candidate; MacNeil Weir was ill and took no part. Aitchison portrayed the issue as socialism or liberalism, and was uninhibited in his attacks. ‘This was not the time to undermine the State by preaching sedition, disaffection and irreligion, because, after all, that was the substance of a great deal of the Socialists’ propaganda’ [*Alloa Advertiser*, 17 November 1923]. He presented Glasgow as exemplifying the challenge.

You have at every street corner, mob orators preaching what they term Socialism, but preaching in reality class hatred, class bitterness, contempt of the law and treason to the State ... the

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Socialist party is honeycombed by men who are openly and avowedly out for revolution, and who if they had their way would wreck the democratic institutions of this country [*Alloa Advertiser*, 24 November 1923].

The influx of Labour into the Commons following the 1922 election had produced ‘Communitic rowdyism’ [*Alloa Advertiser*, 1 December 1923].

This was the dominant element in Aitchison’s campaign, complemented with praise for traditional Liberal virtues and an insistence that Liberals had a constructive programme. Yet his fidelity to Liberalism became a campaign issue. As recently as October he had declined to come forward as a Liberal candidate. This was at a time when no election was thought to be imminent [*Alloa Advertiser*, 13 October 1923]. Once an election was declared he changed his mind. His explanation to the Liberal Association was that he had been concerned about continuing Liberal divisions but reunion around defence of free trade had removed his doubts [*Alloa Advertiser*, 17 November 1923]. However the allegation that he had been exploring the possibility of joining the Labour Party rapidly became public. There was even a rumour of a Labour candidacy. Aitchison acknowledged that he had met Patrick Hastings, a prominent lawyer and Labour MP for Wallsend, in a Glasgow hotel, following an appearance by Aitchison in the High Court. The meeting was observed by another Labour MP who announced the same evening at a public meeting that Aitchison would soon be a party member. A letter allegedly written by the Glasgow Labour leader, Patrick Dollan, claimed that Aitchison had applied for Labour Party membership on more than one occasion. Aitchison’s response was measured: ‘I never joined the Labour Party, and what is more, I have never made overtures, direct or indirect for membership of the Labour Party’ [*Alloa Advertiser*, 24 November 1923]. He insisted that he had never been approached ‘officially’. This disclaimer did not exclude informal contacts by party figures. Given his subsequent actions, Aitchison’s response to any such overture was unlikely to have been dismissive; thus his own antisocialist rhetoric might well have been something of a court room performance concerned to win a verdict. It failed narrowly. The reduction in turnout probably indicated Conservative abstentions, but also winter weather.

Clackmannan and Eastern Stirlingshire, 1923: electorate 31 976, turnout 64.2 per cent

L. M. Weir (Labour)	10 492 (51.1 per cent)
C. M. Aitchison (Liberal)	10 043 (48.9 per cent)
Majority	449 (2.2 per cent)

MacNeil Weir, a sycophantic supporter of MacDonald, became the party leader’s parliamentary private secretary, and then, from 1931, one of his most virulent critics; Aitchison rapidly provided credibility for the campaign allegations about his political allegiance. In 1924 he joined the Labour Party in Edinburgh. This could well have reflected his judgement that a Liberal government was no longer likely and that the best hope of a significant advance in his career was through the Labour Party. For Aitchison this choice was no doubt facilitated by the style of MacDonald’s leadership. In the snap election of October 1924 Aitchison was adopted, after the campaign had begun, as the Labour candidate for The Hartlepoons. This constituency had not joined the postwar shift to Labour by the adjacent Durham coalfield; employment in the constituency was dominated by docks and steelworks. The prewar pattern of close Liberal–Conservative contests had continued into the 1920s. In 1922 another lawyer, William Jowitt, had won the seat for the Liberals by 567 votes in a straight fight; in December 1923, his margin had fallen to 145, with a Labour candidate taking 2755. Jowitt’s credibility as a left-inclined Liberal was strengthened in October 1924 when he was one of a small number of Liberal MPs who had backed the Labour government in the vote over the Campbell case.

Aitchison's strategy was to deny the relevance of the Liberal Party.

I am an old Liberal myself ... and I don't seek to deprecate the services the Liberal Party has rendered in the past, and the great work it did for political democracy. But the great problem of today ... is of industrial democracy. Labour is bringing a new conception of social obligation and service as its contribution to the common stock [*Northern Daily Mail*, 21 October 1924].

Aitchison's view of public ownership in Labour Party terms was heterodox: 'I don't commit myself necessarily to nationalisation, which as I understand it would mean the centralisation of power under the bureaucracy ... he favoured some kind of democratic control of local industry' [ibid.]

Jowitt raised the issue of Aitchison's earlier Liberal condemnations of the Labour Party. The latter's reply was very much that of a lawyer who had taken a new brief: 'Mr Jowitt has made a great discovery. ... He finds that when I was a Liberal I was saying and doing Liberal things' [*Northern Daily Mail*, 23 October 1924]. But now 'the Liberal Party had ... tethered themselves hand and foot to Toryism' [ibid]. Aitchison cited the extent of local Conservative–Liberal pacts, but in The Hartlepoons the old political allegiances remained robust.

The Hartlepoons, 1924: electorate 42 676, turnout 90.3 per cent

Sir W. H. Sugden (Conservative)	19 077 (49.5 per cent)
W. A. Jowitt (Liberal)	15 724 (40.8 per cent)
C. M. Aitchison (Labour)	3 717 (9.7 per cent)
Majority	3 353 (8.7 per cent)

Aitchison's lost deposit indicated how in a few industrial seats the Labour Party remained peripheral. Yet the national weakness of the Liberal Party would help to bring both Aitchison and Jowitt into the 1929 Labour government.

The relationship between MacDonald and Aitchison was no doubt strengthened by their involvement in the Oscar Slater case in 1927–28. At a trial in May 1909 Slater had been found guilty of murdering an elderly woman in Glasgow. The verdict had been by a majority of nine to six; his death sentence had subsequently been commuted to life imprisonment. Arthur Conan Doyle had always been convinced of Slater's innocence. An inquiry into the verdict in 1914 had upheld the original decision, but in 1927 Conan Doyle sent to MacDonald a copy of a newly published book by William Park, *The Truth About Oscar Slater*. This suggested both the weakness of the prosecution's case and that the police had suppressed inconvenient evidence. Discussions between MacDonald and the secretary of state for Scotland, Sir John Gilmour, preceded Slater's release on 15 November 1927. The Court of Criminal Appeal for Scotland had only been inaugurated the preceding year and had no power to deal with cases that predated its foundation. However a single-clause bill was passed that permitted Slater to appeal. Aitchison appeared for Slater before the High Court of Justiciary in July 1928. He spoke for 13 hours, claiming that 'the Crown's conduct of the case was calculated to prevent and did prevent a fair trial' [*The Times*, 10 July 1928]. The verdict was given on 20 July. The court ruled against the defence claim that on the basis of the evidence offered at the original trial the jury had acted unreasonably. Similarly new evidence did not justify the overturning of the original verdict. However the appeal was allowed on the ground that the judge in 1909, Lord Guthrie, had misdirected the jury; he had underlined the prosecution's emphasis on Slater's unattractive character. The defendant had allegedly lived off prostitution. This was held to have weakened the presumption of innocence [*The Times*, 10–13, 21 July 1928; Marquand (1977) 412–13; for a location of the trial in the context of anti-Jewish prejudice see Barber (2003)].

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Aitchison's legal reputation was strengthened not just by the Slater appeal, but also by the Merrett case, the previous year (1927), in which he had successfully defended John Merrett against a charge of matricide by securing a non-proven verdict. In the wake of these successes he contested Glasgow Central for Labour in the 1929 election. This seat had never been won by the party, although the margin had been narrow in 1923. The business vote remained significant, although the women's vote had increased markedly as a result of the 1928 enfranchisement. The terms of the previous female enfranchisement suggested that many of the new women voters would be working class. However many women out-voters could claim a business vote on the ground of their husband's qualification. In such a constituency Aitchison was arguably a particularly strong Labour candidate [for the complexities of the electorate see *Glasgow Herald*, 7, 20 May 1929]. However the extent of the business vote proved decisive.

Glasgow Central, 1929: electorate 49 983, turnout 72.0 per cent

Sir W. Alexander (Conservative)	18 336 (50.0 per cent)
C. M. Aitchison (Labour)	17 663 (49.1 per cent)
Majority	673 (1.8 per cent)

During the 1924 Labour government the post of Lord Advocate for Scotland had been occupied by a non-partisan figure, W. P. Macmillan. In June 1929 MacDonald selected Aitchison, who became the first Labour Party member to hold the post. His lack of a Commons seat meant that his legal expertise could not be applied directly in debates. When the MP for Kilmarnock, Robert Climie, died on 3 October 1929 the vacant seat seemed to offer an opportunity for Aitchison. The Labour Party National Executive Committee considered a report on the pending by-election on 23 October. The subsequent decision suggested a strong preference and hinted at a problem:

RESOLVED (a) That the Executive Committee press for the inclusion of the name of Mr Craigie Aitchison, The Lord Advocate, in the list of candidates, and (b) That Messrs Henderson and Shepherd proceed to Kilmarnock to interview the Divisional Labour Party respecting the wishes of the Committee [National Executive Committee Minutes 23 October 1929].

Henderson, the Foreign Secretary, travelled north in his role as party secretary; Shepherd was present as the newly appointed national agent. The meeting was long and sometimes acrimonious. Several delegates to the Kilmarnock Trades and Labour Council favoured a candidate similar to Climie. He had lived locally and was a trade union organiser. The local Independent Labour Party supported John Pollock, a former Communist who was endorsing the ILP's shift to the left. These feelings were evident in the lack of respect towards the Foreign Secretary.

At intervals the atmosphere of the conference became very heated, and occasionally delegates were reminded that it was against the rules and out of order to speak while Mr Henderson was on his feet ... As one ... caustically queried 'Why shall the Foreign Secretary come here to interfere in 'home' affairs – you would think we were a lot of aliens' [*Kilmarnock Herald*, 31 October 1929].

Some delegates resurrected Aitchison's anti-Labour statements from his Liberal campaigns; others in response emphasised Pollock's Communist antecedents. Eventually it was decided by a narrow margin to allow Aitchison's name to go forward to a selection conference. When this was held on 9 November, Aitchison was selected by 50 votes against Pollock's 33 [*Kilmarnock Herald*, 14 November 1929].

The choice produced a hostile reaction from some Scottish ILP members. David Kirkwood insisted that he and some other Clydesiders would not speak for Aitchison [*The Times*, 19 November 1929]. The extent to which this was a response to the rejection of Pollock or an expression of deepening discontent with the Labour government is unclear. In October 1931, in a very different political context, Maxton retrospectively emphasised Aitchison's political limitations as a Labour candidate.

He had no confidence in the candidate that Labour had chosen as having any sound understanding of Labour and Socialist principles. While he knew that the candidate had rendered distinguished service to the criminal classes of Scotland, he was not aware of any particular service he had rendered to the Working-Class [*Kilmarnock Standard*, 17 October 1931].

The criticism was one small episode in the deterioration of relations between the Labour Party and the ILP that by 1932 would produce the latter's disaffiliation. Such ILP criticism allowed Aitchison to distance himself from the Labour left – 'he had the support of the best Labour Members of Parliament in Scotland' [*Kilmarnock Herald*, 21 November 1929]. The nomination of a Communist Party candidate, Isobel Brown, at the zenith of the Communists' 'class against class' strategy encouraged Aitchison to emphasise his respectability: 'Communism was a doctrine of blood and violence. It was financed in this country by foreign revolutionaries and in his judgement, it was a form of mental derangement and should be treated as such' [ibid.]

In the 1929 general election a Liberal candidate had secured 7700 votes. The 1929 Liberal candidate, J. R. Rutherford had refused to stand, insisting that 'the policy pursued by the present Government is almost wholly Liberal in origin and character' [*Kilmarnock Standard*, 2 November 1929]. In the absence of a Liberal, Aitchison could hope that his politics could secure Liberal backing. Aitchison probably gained a sizeable minority of ex-Liberals. Above all the Labour government remained electorally popular. The pessimism produced by rising unemployment lay in the future. Compared with Climie's vote in May 1929, his vote rose by 1097 (up 7.4 per cent on a lower poll).

Kilmarnock by-election, 27 November 1929: electorate 46 310, turnout 71.7 per cent

Rt Hon. C. M. Aitchison (Labour)	18 465 (55.6 per cent)
C. G. MacAndrew (Conservative)	13 270 (40.0 per cent)
I. Brown (Communist)	1 448 (4.4 per cent)
Majority	5 195 (16.6 per cent)

In the Commons Aitchison acted essentially as the senior Scottish legal officer. His interventions in debates were largely on technical matters. One reference in Hugh Dalton's diaries hints, with what accuracy is unclear, at another aspect. In March 1930 the Labour government lost a division on the Coal Bill by eight votes. Three unpaired ministers were absent. One was 'Craigie Aitchison, who it is said, was lying drunk at his hotel, not an uncommon condition' [Dalton's diary, 11 March 1930, quoted in Pimlott (1986) 97].

The August 1931 crisis posed no dilemma for Aitchison. Personal ties, political judgement and perhaps career pointed in the same direction – the National government.

Apart from considerations of personal loyalty to you, which I could not lightly disregard, I am very clear in my own mind that at the present time the new Government ought to be supported. The situation is so altogether exceptional, and a financial crash would have results of so calamitous a kind for the whole people [Aitchison to MacDonald, 29 August 1931, MacDonald Papers, PRO, 30/69, 1314].

Aitchison's support of the National government became public on 1 September [Bassett (1958) 204]. Two days later he met the executive of the Kilmarnock Trades and Labour Council. He

did so not as a backbencher who was supportive of MacDonald's actions, but as an office holder in the new administration. Aitchison had written optimistically to MacDonald about Scottish Labour opinion: 'I have found a very considerable body of Labour opinion which is not in sympathy with the official Labour view at this moment' [Aitchison to MacDonald, 29 August 1931]. But the Kilmarnock activists, like their counterparts elsewhere, rejected any supporter of the National government. In this case there was also the background of Aitchison's controversial selection as candidate less than two years before. The Trades and Labour Council Executive recommended to the full Trades Council that a new candidate be chosen [*Kilmarnock Herald*, 10 September 1931]. The position was subsequently confirmed by the full council [*Kilmarnock Standard*, 26 September 1931].

When Aitchison fought the October 1931 election as National Labour candidate he did so with the support of local Conservatives and Liberals. The Conservative candidate, A. N. Forman, withdrew in his favour on 10 October [*Kilmarnock Standard*, 17 October 1931]. His only opponent was John Pollock: in October 1931 ILP-sponsored candidates refused to sign an undertaking to accept the Standing Orders of the Parliamentary Labour Party. Pollock therefore lacked Labour Party endorsement, an absence which in the circumstances of October 1931 probably did not affect his vote. Aitchison praised the Labour leaders who had joined the National Government; J. H. Thomas was 'the best trade union leader that Labour has ever produced'. He drew a historical comparison: 'During the war, when Mr Henderson was a member of the War Cabinet, Mr MacDonald stood out like a great block of granite, and nothing could harm him because he believed it was right ... That is what he has done now' [*Kilmarnock Standard*, 17 October 1931].

Aitchison's victory was decisive but not overwhelming.

Kilmarnock, 1931: electorate 46 006, turnout 79.5 per cent

Rt Hon. C. M. Aitchison (National Labour)	21 803 (59.6 per cent)
J. Pollock (Independent Labour Party)	14 767 (40.4 per cent)
Majority	7 036 (19.2 per cent)

Aitchison continued as Lord Advocate until the autumn of 1933, when he resigned to become Lord Justice Clerk of Scotland with the title Lord Aitchison. In the subsequent by-election Kilmarnock was held for National Labour by Kenneth Lindsay, who retained the seat until 1945. He defeated candidates from the Labour Party, the now disaffiliated ILP (Pollock) and the Nationalists. All polled credibly, thereby letting in Lindsay with 34.8 per cent of the vote. In some Scottish constituencies the Labour traumas of 1931 had a long-term and negative impact. Aitchison's brief period as a Labour MP should be placed in that context.

He continued as Lord Justice-Clerk until his sudden death in Edinburgh on 2 May 1941. In 1919 he had married Charlotte Forbes, daughter of James Jones JP of Torwood Hall, Larbert, Stirlingshire. They had two sons.

Politically, Aitchison typified the lawyers recruited to the Labour Party in the 1920s. The party's governmental ambitions necessitated legal expertise; in return eminent lawyers, faced with the decline of the Liberal Party, saw Labour as a means to realise their own ambitions. Inevitably, several such recruits had limited acquaintance with the culture of the labour movement; the responses of Aitchison and others, including his one-time opponent, Jowitt, in August 1931 were hardly surprising.

**Writings:** *Law and Liberty. Lecture Delivered to the University of Glasgow Law Society* (reprinted from the *Scottish Law Review* and Sheriff Court reports) (1937).

**Sources:** (1) **MSS:** Ramsay MacDonald Papers, PRO 30/69, 1314; Labour Party National Executive Committee minutes, October 1929, National Museum of Labour History, Manchester. (2) **Newspapers:** *Alloa Advertiser*; *Alloa Circular* for November 1922 and

December 1923 elections; *Northern Daily Mail* for October 1924 election; *The Times*, July 1928 for Oscar Slater appeal; *Kilmarnock Advertiser*, *Kilmarnock Standard* for November 1929 by-election and October 1931. (3) **Books and articles:** R. Bassett, 1931. *Political Crisis* (1958); David Marquand, *Ramsay MacDonald* (1977); Ben Pimlott (ed.), *The Political Diaries of Hugh Dalton 1918–40. 1945–61* (1986); Entry in *Dictionary of National Biography Supplement 1941–50* by Lord Alness; Ben Barber, 'The Trial of Oscar Slater (1909) and Anti-Jewish Prejudices in Edwardian Glasgow', *History* (2003) 262–79. (4) **Obituaries:** *Scotsman*, 3 May 1941; *The Times*, 3 May 1941.

DAVID HOWELL

*See also:* †Archibald George CHURCH; †Richard Douglas DENMAN; Derwent HALL CAINE; †William JOWITT; †George Wilfred Holford KNIGHT; James Alexander LOVAT FRASER; Sydney Frank MARKHAM; Thomas ROSBOTHAM.

**BALDWIN, Oliver Ridsdale (Viscount Coverdale, Second Earl Baldwin of Bewdley)**  
(1899–1958)

LABOUR MP

Oliver Ridsdale Baldwin, the elder son of the Conservative and Unionist leader, Stanley Baldwin, and Lucy née Ridsdale, became a committed Labour supporter and MP. He was born in London on 1 March 1899. The family was comfortably wealthy; at the time Alfred Baldwin (Oliver's grandfather) was chairman of the Great Western Railway. His father, who was a significant industrialist, entered the House of Commons in 1908, and Oliver, the elder son, entered St Aubyn's preparatory school the following year. The family of Oliver's mother, the Ridsdales, prided themselves on their liberal views and their tendency for fierce, often radical, outspokenness. One of his classmates at St Aubyn's was his second cousin John Kipling, son of Rudyard, a year older than himself. His experience at Eton (1911–15) was very negative, and he came to loathe the public school system. He saw no value in the arcane, mystique-filled rituals of upper-class society. Only with reluctance would he return to visit. He left early, driven by the outbreak of the 1914–18 war and a sense of martial duty, which was given focus when he heard of the death of John Kipling at Loos on 27 September 1915. He also felt he had the capacity to be a soldier, which proved true. Rudyard Kipling was helpful and tactful in calming him down when, aged 16, he experienced a surge of adolescent anger at being too young to enlist. He persisted, receiving his commission in 1917, and set off for France in May 1918 with the Irish Guards, initially with the Reserve Battalion and later serving in the First Battalion.

He was soon at the front line in France and participated in the decisive push against the Hindenburg Line in summer 1918, serving with some distinction at the battle of the Canal du Nord (27 September). After a brief leave in England at the time of the armistice, he returned with the regiment to France and Germany in 1919 to deal with postwar matters such as prisoners of war. The war had given him a sense of radicalism; he felt that the generals had had an easy life at the expense of their men. He experienced a feeling of disillusion on seeing that the conflict had changed nothing in society in terms of greater fairness or justice. His interest in socialism grew, partly because his family was an old Liberal one (which had seen only two generations of Tories), and partly because J. W. Mackail, the biographer of William Morris, was a cousin by marriage. He also read radical writings. He felt that the inequities in society were intolerable, and his material comfort did not blind him to this fact. His radicalism grew from wanting to see a better society, and was not driven by the self-reflexive notion of 'middle-class guilt'.

The end of the war left him with a hankering for more action. A visit to the head of the Secret Service, Mansfield Cumming, landed him with a job that had as its cover the task of issuing



visas at Boulogne. He managed to irritate those around him by acting with undiplomatic arrogance, and was rapidly relieved of the post. After a few months' agreeable drifting on holiday in Algeria he made for Alexandria, where he encountered a former prime minister of independent Armenia, Alexander Khatisian, who persuaded him to travel to his country to help train the Armenian army – at the time Armenia was being seriously threatened by both Bolshevik Russia and Nationalist Turkey. (Whether this meeting was engineered by military intelligence or was a chance encounter is still open to question.) Travelling by ship via Constantinople and Batum he arrived in Yerevan, the Armenian capital, in late September 1920. The brief training he was able to give bore fruit in the maintenance of fighting spirit in his sector in the ensuing conflict.

Kars, Armenia's second city, fell to the Turkish nationalists on 30 October 1920, and on 17 November Armenia was compelled to sign the humiliating Treaty of Alexandropol. It was not ratified. Within two weeks the Armenian government had resigned and a coalition of Bolsheviks and left-Dashnaks (Armenian nationalists of a social-democratic hue) had taken over. Baldwin stayed on in Armenia, despite being urged to flee to Georgia. He was imprisoned by the incoming Bolsheviks, who cast aside their Dashnak colleagues and brought not peace and bread but red terror. In early 1921 his imprisonment was changed to house arrest.

A very significant moment of political inspiration occurred for him when he witnessed the counterrevolution of 18 February 1921. Communism crumbled in Armenia owing in part to its own excesses, and the Dashnak party regained power. He was particularly inspired by the fact that the Dashnak directorate did not order the revolt against communism to stop despite the Communists' butchery of the imprisoned Armenian intelligentsia. He felt that this refusal to compromise on freedom showed great political strength. But it was only a matter of time before the Communists would reassert their control, and he had to escape. Unwisely he chose to get out via Turkey, then under the control of the nationalists, and he was imprisoned first in Kars and then in Erzerum, in shocking conditions of deprivation and near starvation that were minutely recorded in his memoir of the period. On one occasion (May 1921) he was convinced he was going to be taken into the yard and shot; but he was in fact released, and he found his way via Trebizond to Constantinople which at the time was in the hands of the Allies.

Back in England he took some time to recover, fleeing from family claustrophobia to the Kiplings in Sussex, but finding their care equally confining. He was briefly engaged to Dorothea Arbuthnot, thinking that this might enable him to escape family tensions. A short assignment for the *Morning Post* in East Africa, to write on the Indian problem brought a temporary solution. In late 1922 a further delay in making a decision was made possible by an invitation to accompany the Armenian delegation to the Lausanne Conference. Baldwin's presence there was warmly recalled by Alexander Khatisian in his memoirs [French translation (1989)]. For the Englishman it was a bad moment psychologically. As a result of his experiences, especially of the counterrevolution, he felt a commitment to Armenia. But the delegation was given no official status and the country was diplomatically annihilated at the conference, being unmentioned in the subsequent Lausanne Treaty (1923).

On his return a year later he made two major decisions. First, any talk of engagement was a fraud; he was homosexual and needed to live the rest of his life with a male partner, whom he found in the person of John Parke Boyle (1893–1969), the son of an army officer, descended from the earls of Cork. Together they set up home in Oxfordshire, first at Shirburn and then at North Stoke, keeping geese and hens and taking in lodgers, with Oliver trying to make money by writing. (He refused to accept money from his father, except for small cheques at Christmas or for his birthday.) Second, Oliver decided his politics lay decisively on the left. The substance of an interview he gave to the *Westminster Gazette* was taken up by Fred Gorle of the Social Democratic Federation. Baldwin was invited to become a member, which he immediately did. H. M. Hyndman, the guiding spirit of the SDF, remained his political inspiration for the rest of his life.

Some members of his family thought that the adoption of socialism was deeply treacherous, but Stanley Baldwin was always warm, generous and understanding of the idealism of his elder son. His mother, coming from a background where the questioning of received ideas was not

just possible but expected, was also supportive, and on a personal level too – she wrote to John Boyle to say, ‘Thank you for loving my Oliver’.

Seeking to become a Labour MP, Oliver was offered the seat at Dudley, which he lost by a narrow margin in 1924.

Dudley, 1924: electorate 26 826, turnout 80.2 per cent

C. E. Lloyd (Conservative)	11 199 (52.1 per cent)
O. R. Baldwin (Labour)	10 314 (47.9 per cent)
Majority	885 (4.2 per cent)

His political work thereafter consisted in visiting deprived industrial areas of the country and giving heartening socialist speeches; Burnley, Clitheroe, Oldham, Grimsby and South Wales are mentioned. He also wrote some articles for the *Sunday Chronicle*. In 1923 he had published (under the pseudonym Martin Hussingtree) a novel, *Konyetz* (Russian for the End), which is a cataclysmic and paranoid view of the approaching end of the world, almost unreadable today but highly praised at the time by Robert Byron. This was followed in 1925 by a memoir of his time in the east, *Six Prisons and Two Revolutions*, a successful and clear account of his searing experiences. Almost certainly the writing of it constituted a form of therapy that enabled him to come to terms with that traumatic time. The book is also useful as a primary source for the period. In it Baldwin foresaw the possibility of the end of communism in the region, something that occurred 66 years later. He did not consider the system to be immovable; after all he had seen it crumble. In 1928 both father and son were present at the opening of Dudley’s new town hall, an event that highlighted the warm personal feelings that existed between the two. The *Dudley Chronicle* noted that the prime minister ‘met his son Mr Oliver Baldwin, who is prospective Labour candidate for Dudley, and whom he clasped heartily by the hand’, an example of the lifelong father–son friendship [*Dudley Chronicle*, 20 October 1928]. Critics (such as Martin Green in *Children of the Sun*) who believe that the relationship between the two was negative are wrong; the son, committed to Labour, never swerved from his friendship with his father, an affection that was always returned.

Oliver Baldwin won Dudley for Labour in 1929.

Dudley, 1929: electorate 34 883, turnout 81.6 per cent

O. R. Baldwin (Labour, Independent/Labour)	13 551 (47.6 per cent)
C. E. Lloyd (Conservative)	10 508 (36.9 per cent)
T. I. Clough (Liberal)	4 399 (15.5 per cent)
Majority	3 043 (10.7 per cent)

In the Commons he played a fairly low-key role. He was more active in the informal business of the House, and in looking after constituency matters. There was no ‘big speech’. He sought a clean-up of the industrial landscape of his constituency; a relaxation of film censorship so that *Battleship Potemkin* and other similar films could be shown; free postage in the House of Commons for MPs; and a tribunal ‘to defend people from alleged injustices against government departments’ [*Hansard*, 5 November 1929, col. 879], that is, an ombudsman, an idea that was emphatically rejected by Philip Snowden. He also looked forward to a relaxation of the blasphemy laws, and sought to limit police powers after the embarrassing seizure of D. H. Lawrence’s paintings for alleged obscenity – an operation in which apparently paintings by William Blake were also said to have been carried off by officers. He also enquired about the possibility of broadening and modernising the intake of candidates for the diplomatic service, which were seen by him as necessary measures in view of the increasingly democratic nature of foreign governments.

In the Commons Oliver sat opposite his father. This created no difficulty for either of them since they both saw their differences as principled. But for Oliver’s mother, who had become

accustomed to frequent visits to the public gallery to hear her husband speak, the situation became confusing and intolerable, and she gave up visiting the House.

Baldwin was as troubled as any on the left by the crisis of 1930–31. He was one of the 16 Labour MPs who (along with the miners' leader A. J. Cook) signed the Mosley Manifesto in December 1930. He resigned from the Labour Party in February 1931, cutting all connections with his Dudley constituency party. However he never joined the New Party; indeed when (as he saw it) the progressive forces split in a by-election in April 1931 at Ashton-under-Lyne – which let a Tory in – he knew it was time to quit the Mosley movement. By September he was back in the Labour Party, and for the election in the following month he was selected to contest Rochester Chatham, where he came second to the Conservative candidate.

Rochester, Chatham 1931: electorate 42 356, turnout 75.5 per cent

Sir P. Goff (Conservative)	19 991 (62.5 per cent)
O. R. Baldwin (Labour)	10 837 (33.9 per cent)
M. F. Woodroffe (New Party)	1 135 (3.6 per cent)
Majority	9 154 (28.6 per cent)

His autobiography, *The Questing Beast*, was published in 1931. It contains passages on what he saw as the futile waste of time taken up by procedure in the House of Commons. The preceding autumn a play of his had been put on at the Embassy Theatre in Swiss Cottage, performed on successive Sunday nights in October. In the play, *From the Four Winds*, a cross-section of English society met for dinner and underwent a transformation into Christ's twelve apostles at the Last Supper. Baldwin, whose beliefs were deist/unitarian combined with a touch of spiritualism, was always interested in what would happen to society if the gospels were taken literally and released from their institutionalisation as the province and the protectorate of the church and the establishment. In 1936 he wrote a life of Christ, giving the story the aspect and hue of life in Algeria, a country he had come to know when spending time at his uncle's villa just outside Algiers. He called the book *The Coming of Aissa* (Aissa = Isa = Jesus).

His articles on fascism in 1933–4, written for the *Daily Herald* and C. B. Purdom's *New Britain*, were punchy and to the point. For the *Herald*, his 'NO FASCISM for British Youth', printed on 17 January 1934, just two days after the *Daily Mail*'s 'Hurrah for the Blackshirts!', tore into all Rothemere's arguments, focusing on policy towards Jews, trades unions and the unemployed. For him the moment had come to decide; between 'national and individual profit-making, persecution of minorities and selfishness', and 'those who imagine our little world can be best be run on tolerance, with the fruits of the world for all, and not merely for the few'. His 'Open Letter to British Fascists' was witty and subtle. Fascism was redundant and unnecessary, he declared, since any policy or viewpoint could find a place in one of the three established political parties. 'If an individual still felt he or she had a need for discipline, marching and shouting', then 'join the Territorials, the Hikers or the Church Choir' [*New Britain*, 26 July 1933].

His constituency for the 1935 election was Paisley, and he lost it to the Liberal by the slimmest of margins. His friendship with Clement Attlee, now leader of the party, dates from that time.

Paisley 1935: electorate 55 473, turnout 80.3 per cent

Hon. J. P. Maclay (Liberal)	22 466 (50.4 per cent)
O. R. Baldwin (Labour)	22 077 (49.6 per cent)
Majority	389 (0.8 per cent)

In 1936 Kipling died, and some fair but less than reverent comments about him by Baldwin caused a minor storm in the press. Baldwin focused on Kipling's expressions of force and hatred in 1910–14, especially as regards Ulster and his embittered later years. He called Kipling's *Mary*

*Postgate* (1915) 'the wickedest story in the world'. (The story concerns the death of a young German airman, whose moments of dying agony are used for a fantasy of sexual gratification by a puritanical, sadistic, middle-aged spinster.) The letters columns of the right-wing press surrounded with condemnations of his views [*Daily Telegraph*, 29 July, 5, 7 August 1936].

Baldwin shared his father's distrust of Edward VIII, less because of his marital arrangements than on account of the very right-wing political grounding that he had been given by the palace. He considered the 1937 coronation of George VI the high point of his father's career. In December 1938 he and Johnnie Boyle gave a lavish family party, with singers and Black Country raconteurs, for Baldwin senior (now the First Earl Baldwin) at the two men's house in Chester Square in celebration of his time in politics. The former Prime Minister was delighted. The event is not mentioned in the biographies of him and of Lord and Lady Davidson, his close political allies, who were also present.

Oliver Baldwin (now Viscount Corvedale) was underemployed for most of the 1939–45 war, despite his proven military capacity and the natural context he found in army circles. In 1941 he served under George Steer in Eritrea and fought in the liberation of Asmara. He coordinated an effective system designed to win over defectors, which had a good rate of success. In Asmara he changed the huge fascist placards of 'Duce' to 'Pace' (from 'leader' to 'peace'). He found a surprising degree of obstructive, unofficial, profascist sentiment among the British officer class. The Eritrean experience marked the end of any significant action for him; despite going to Algeria, where he had access to his uncle's villa and spoke the local language, he was not allowed to perform any significant military tasks. Towards the end of the war he was posted back to England, where he had a more successful time instructing and examining for the War Officers' Selection Board.

After the war he stood again for Paisley, and was successful in the Labour landslide.

Paisley 1945: electorate 61 286, turnout 73.9 per cent

Viscount Corvedale (Labour)	25 156 (55.6 per cent)
T. G. D. Galbraith (Conservative)	14 826 (32.7 per cent)
Lady Glen-Coats (Liberal)	4 532 (10.0 per cent)
A. F. Eagles (Independent)	765 (1.7 per cent)
Majority	10 330 (22.9 per cent)

He was briefly parliamentary private secretary to Fred Bellenger, the Minister of War, but on his father's death in 1947 he was compelled to enter the Lords as the second Earl Baldwin. He was now without a job. After discreet enquiries he received a note from Arthur Creech Jones, the Colonial Secretary, suggesting that they discuss the possibility of his becoming Governor-General of the Leeward Islands (Antigua, Barbuda, Montserrat and St Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla). He was appointed in early 1948, and left for his post almost at once.

On arrival the main issues he was confronted with were the frequent strikes in the sugar industry, the rigorous apartheid practised by the white settlers towards the black majority, and the shortage of water in the islands. Within days he was negotiating successfully between owners and strikers. At a dance given in aid of a hospital charity a month or so after his arrival both he and his private secretary, Ross Hutchinson (a liberal Tory who was to stand for his party at Lewisham in 1951), took to the dance floor with black women, to the shock of the planters. 'Neither of us danced with any of the whites', said Hutchinson [Hutchinson to Boyle, 30 May 1948]. To find water, Baldwin hired a water diviner, and within three months water was flowing from five wells. A school sports day found Baldwin and Hutchinson again making the black population the centre of their attention. As a night-time relaxation the governor and his party would select a deserted beach and swim in the nude. They searched for treasure on an uninhabited island called Dead Man's Chest, but found none. In September 1948 Johnnie Boyle went to visit, together with the secretary who worked at the Oxfordshire house, Dickie Payne, and a woman friend of Johnnie's, Miss Bold [R. Hutchinson, 'Leeward Letters', c.1951, unpublished, p. 112].

In December 1948 Baldwin gave a pep talk to the island's Legislative Council. After speaking of the new legislation he proposed, he reviewed his own time in office. He declared that the 'government', with its limited funds, could not do everything. He proposed to abolish the chaining of prisoners, and planned new local industries. He warned of 'Leewarditis', defined as 'a disease that makes people most enthusiastic about ideas and far from enthusiastic about carrying them out'. After declaring that the heart of the people was sound, he expressed a hope for unity irrespective of class and colour. He ended with a quotation from the Mahabharata: 'Greatness is to take the simple things of life and walk truly among them; and holiness is a great love, much serving' [Governor's speech, ORB Papers].

In the meantime moves were being made against Baldwin. In early December a note reached the Colonial Office from Sir Alan Burns, an old Caribbean hand who was almost certainly the MI6 representative in the area. He was currently representing Britain on the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations. He declared that in the islands there was 'no government worthy of the name ... the situation is completely out of control ... mob law prevails' [PRO, CO 537/3788]. On 10 January 1949 the Colonial Secretary in London cabled Baldwin that it 'might be necessary to come to London'. The message was repeated more urgently. The press sensed that something was up. Headlines goading the British government into a statement appeared in early February, and on the 9th there was a major row in the Commons: was Lord Baldwin being recalled in order to be sacked at the behest of the sugar barons? [*Hansard*, 9 February 1949, cols 362-66].

The answer was probably no, but various elements had led to Lord Baldwin's recall. The whites were feeling deep unease, and made their opinions known. To an old-fashioned right-winger such as Sir Alan Burns (author of *In Defence of the Colonies*, whose opinions counted, judged by the seriousness with his words were taken, even if his intelligence could not be proven), it must have seemed like the end of the British Empire. Baldwin's speech to the Legislative Council was akin to the preaching of revolution. Word spread about the nude bathing, and there were allegations about Baldwin's reception of the Home Fleet, especially HMS *Duke of York*, commanded by Admiral McGrigor. The governor and his private secretary were alleged to have virtually ignored the officers, and thereby broken with protocol.

When Baldwin returned to Britain on 12 February he was met by a reporter from the *Sunday Dispatch*, to whom he gave a dramatic and arguably unwise interview, declaring that he was 'on the mat' and that there would be chaos in Antigua unless he returned. Leftist journalists were unostentatiously supportive. Hannen Swaffer put forward a cogent case for Baldwin in his column in *The People*. William Connor, 'Cassandra' of the *Daily Mirror*, wrote hilariously about Baldwin's predicament, and expressed the natural sympathy it evoked. James Cameron put some blithe and brilliant paragraphs on his behalf in the *Daily Express*. On 17 February a two-man delegation from the Antigua Labour and Trades Union Council, Vere C. Bird and Robert Bradshaw, arrived in London to add their support to Baldwin.

Two meetings at the Colonial Office convinced Baldwin that the government had more facts (or allegations) than he had bargained for, and that the issue went deeper than the objections of the planters. He managed to strike a deal with the government: that he would be permitted to return to the islands, but only for a limited time. Creech Jones, the colonial secretary, concluded that Baldwin should 'maintain the dignity and authority of his office in both his official and his private life ... He should be encouraged to maintain a less unusual household and to lead a more normal way of life' [Attlee Papers, Bodleian Library, dep. 79 pp. 76-9]. On 9 March Creech Jones announced to the Commons that Baldwin was returning to the islands. Two days later he caught a French banana boat to the Caribbean. 'What a way to run an Empire!' lamented the *Daily Mail*, proclaiming that the whole affair was 'enough to make a cat laugh - or make it sick'. James Cameron was on the quayside for the *Express* when Baldwin arrived at Antigua, and filed a report of great wit and verve: like most ordinary Britons, Cameron saw Baldwin as a man who had taken on the establishment and won.

With hindsight one can see the absurdity of a Labour government trying to keep an empire going with the pompous racism and harsh unmodified capitalism that was inherent in the

imperial structure. Baldwin was no longer a political firebrand; his earlier radicalism had melted. But he still distrusted bossy capitalists, and hated distinctions based on race. Since these are arguably the essence of empire, in trying to limit them he was seen as striking at the heart of the empire.

For over a year after his return Baldwin followed his old routine, but in May 1950 he announced his resignation and his plan to leave later that month. Ill health and exhaustion were given as the reasons for his decision. A serious dock strike threatened to delay his departure, but he mediated a solution just in time. His successor was Kenneth Blackburne, described by an acquaintance as ‘very pontifical and a die-hard Tory’ [ORB to JPB, 14 May 1950]. Writing six years later, Charlesworth Ross, the former (local) colonial secretary of the Leewards Islands and retired career civil servant, said, ‘many people in M’rat and A’gua I have heard saying: ‘I wish to goodness we had Lord Baldwin back’ [C. Ross to ORB, 10 April 1956].

The homecoming found him disillusioned, and he sat silently on the benches of the House of Lords. Conviviality continued in Oxfordshire, but drink was consumed in excessive quantities. When he spoke in the 1951 election campaign in support of the Labour candidature of Roy Jenkins, he fell over on the platform and had to be helped back to verticality. His friendship with Attlee continued, and he introduced the former prime minister to the Lords in January 1956.

Oliver Baldwin died of a chronic gastric ulcer on 10 August 1958 at the Mile End Hospital in Stepney. He left £40 668 9s. 6d. None of the obituaries spoke openly about his homosexuality or his lifetime partnership with Johnnie Boyle, nor did they more than hint at the reasons for the issues that had cut short his Leeward governorship. The Armenian episodes of his youth were largely ignored, and no reference was made to his antifascist journalism. The image hardened of him as a class and family traitor, and it has taken a new look at his life to create a more balanced picture of one who, by challenging most received ideas, lived the life of a socialist original.

**Writings:** *Konyetz* (published under the pseudonym Martin Hussingtree, 1924); *Six Prisons and Two Revolutions* (1925); *Socialism and the Bible* (with Jean Ouvret, 1928); *Conservatism and Wealth* (with Roger Chance, 1929); *The Questing Beast* (1932); *Unborn Son* (1933); *The Coming of Aissa* (1935); *Oasis* (1936).

**Sources:** (1) **MSS:** Stanley Baldwin Papers, University Library, Cambridge; Attlee Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford; Oliver Baldwin Papers, private collection, London. (2) **Newspapers:** *The Social Democrat*, 1925–28; *Westminster Gazette*, 1923; *Evening Standard*, 1923; *Dudley Chronicle*, 1924, 1929; *Sunday Chronicle*, 1926–27; *Daily Express*, 1926; *Daily Mail*, 1935–37; *Daily Herald*, 1937–39; *New Britain*, 1933. (3) **Books:** *Who Was Who* (1960); Martin Green, *Children of the Sun: Decadence in England after 1918* (1978); Michael Redgrave, *In My Mind’s Eye* (1983); Alexandre Khatissian, *Eclosion et développement de la république arménienne* (Athens, 1989); Christopher J. Walker, *Oliver Baldwin: A Life of Dissent* (2003).

CHRISTOPHER J. WALKER

## **BAMFORD, Samuel** (1788–1872)

RADICAL AND WRITER

Samuel Bamford is best known for his role at ‘Peterloo’ in 1819 and for his political autobiography, *Passages in the Life of a Radical*, regarded by E. P. Thompson as essential reading for any Englishman. He was also a journalist, poet and diarist of distinction, and one of the longest-lived and best-documented working men of his age.

Bamford was born in 1788 in the Lancashire weaving village of Middleton, six miles north of Manchester. His father was an artisan weaver and a Methodist, and sometime governor of the

poorhouse in Salford, where half the family, including Samuel's mother, died of fever; young Samuel himself nearly followed them. He received an intermittent formal education, including spells at grammar schools in Middleton and Manchester, and then held a succession of jobs, ranging from east coast sailor to Manchester warehouseman. He also enlisted for a time in the local volunteer force. In 1810 he married his childhood sweetheart, Jemima (Mima), soon after the birth of their only child, Ann. He was in Manchester at the time of the Luddite disturbances in Middleton in April 1812, and was back weaving in Middleton as the postwar movement for a radical reform of parliament took off.

Bamford became secretary of the Middleton Hampden Club, founded in 1816, just at the time when Lancashire was taking the radical initiative from London, as it would in the Chartist period a generation later. In the desperate winter of 1816–17 Middleton and Bamford himself were briefly at the centre of national developments. When the London Hampden Club proposed a national petitioning campaign for parliamentary reform lasting many months, Middleton led the demand for more urgent action, 'as it is impossible for the People of this part of the Country, to SUBSIST on their present means, even with the support of the SOUP KETTLE, till the Date fixed by the London Hampden Club (2 March 1817)' [PRO HO42/157, fol. 182]. A delegate meeting for the Manchester area, held in Middleton in December, resolved to send out missionaries to rouse other manufacturing districts, and another in January chose delegates, including Bamford himself, to the national Hampden Club meeting in London on 22 January 1817. There Bamford met his heroes, Cobbett, Cartwright and Hunt, and made a crucial intervention in favour of manhood rather than taxpayer suffrage, pointing out that the militia lists provided a practical basis for an electoral register. 'This was enough for me. The thing had never struck me before', wrote Cobbett; Hunt's radical line was adopted [*Cobbett's Weekly Political*, 22 February 1817].

The response of the Manchester reformers to the expected rejection of the bill by parliament was to organise a march on London to petition the Prince Regent: the 'march of the blanketeers' on 10 February. *Habeas corpus* was suspended in anticipation. Bamford opposed the expedition on practical grounds, accurately predicting its successful interception by the military. With equal shrewdness in order to secure a base for a second march on London, he exposed and denounced a clandestine attempt to enlist him in a scheme to 'make a Moscow of Manchester'. The planned rising went ahead, involving some of his associates, but it was penetrated (and perhaps instigated) by spies and the conspirators were arrested at the end of March. Bamford was among those rounded up afterwards in chains and taken to London for interrogation by Lord Sidmouth and the Privy Council. He took care to drill his comrades in a common defence; not a single one of them went to trial, and Bamford was released ahead of the others in May 1817. His early return raised suspicion that he had turned informer, a suspicion that was never entirely to leave him but which is refuted in Home Office records; others wavered, but not Bamford. He also rejected an approach from the instigators of the abortive Pentridge rising; his close associate Joseph Mitchell, who was bolder but less shrewd, was ruined by his role as the unwitting colleague of Oliver the spy.

Now a figure of some authority, Bamford was prominent in the series of local reform meetings that accompanied the spinners' and weavers' strikes of 1818. He continued to advocate petitioning, a discredited tactic that placed him visibly at odds on the platform with his more bombastic comrades. For Bamford, petitioning went with a more open, community-based style of campaigning and a preference for homely, common sense political metaphors. He was an early advocate of women voting at meetings. He was a natural local leader of the revived mass platform strategy in the spring of 1819. No pacifist, he helped to form the guard for Hunt on his visit to Manchester in January 1819. He was the chief local organiser of the Rochdale and Middleton component of the march to Manchester for the great reform meeting of 16 August 1819, notable for its military-style discipline, its festive array and its inclusion of women and families. He distributed laurels to the section leaders as the march moved off and urged peace and good order upon the marchers. Troops broke up the meeting, and in the 'Peterloo massacre' that followed eleven were killed and over 500 more sabred and trampled, among them many women and children. Afterwards, reunited with his wife, whom he had feared dead, he led

a thousand of his comrades on a defiant and disciplined march back to Middleton beneath the only banner to survive the carnage. It was his finest hour. A few days later he was arrested, imprisoned briefly in Lancaster castle and charged, along with Henry Hunt and others, with seditious conspiracy.

Bamford reacted fiercely to Peterloo, and in the autumn of 1819 appeared in spies' reports as consorting with plotters and pike grinders in Manchester and toasting damnation to 'the bloody butchers of Manchester' – an episode that was overlooked in his autobiography in favour of the meticulous legal preparations for his trial in York in April 1820 [PRO HO42/198, fols 142–3]. Bamford conducted his own defence, and while Hunt took the attacking role Bamford's carefully marshalled witnesses' portrayal of the peaceful and festive nature of the procession made such an impact on both judge and jury that the prosecution despaired of success. He was not alone in being shocked by the verdict of guilty, and his outburst at the subsequent sentencing hearing at the King's Bench in London probably exacerbated the penalty: one year in Lincoln gaol.

Bamford now began working to establish himself as a writer. For several years he had been producing poetry, and the radical *Manchester Observer* had printed his songs and verses, which extolled Hunt, Cobbett, Brandreth and liberty and denounced corrupt lawyers and parsons. A slim volume, *The Weaver Boy*, had been published in early 1819. From Lincoln he added many more, including two popular broadsides: a tribute to Queen Caroline and 'The Song of the Slaughter' about Peterloo, the latter sung to imposing effect at the solemn anniversary gatherings in 1820 and 1821. A larger volume of *Miscellaneous Poetry* was published by Thomas Dolby of London in 1821. The radical moment, however, had passed, and the isolation and resentment of the political prisoner seem to have affected him badly, as expressed in his poem 'Homely Rhymes on Bad Times'. He had also fallen out with Henry Hunt over Hunt's shameless self-promotion, and again aroused the suspicion of some of his fellow villagers. He returned to weaving, at which he was highly skilled, and the next year moved a little way out of Middleton to Stakehill to work his loom and tend his family in peace.

Little is known of Bamford's life over the next 18 years or so. He was among the local radicals who made some common cause on reform issues with the liberal Lord Suffield, lord of the manor of Middleton. In 1825 they accepted Suffield's patronage in establishing a Mechanics' Institute for Middleton, an episode that ended in acrimony as (in Bamford's account) Suffield tried to censor the publications in the reading room. In 1826 he went on a long journey on foot to persuade neighbouring calico weavers not to take part in machine breaking in Middleton, a successful mission that earned him death threats but which may have kept the weavers out of a trap laid by the authorities. By Bamford's own account he stopped weaving in 1826, although he was reported in 1840 to be weaving silk. He tried various other occupations, including beer seller, newsagent, auctioneer and post officer. In 1826 he became a regular correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian* and a London morning paper. He had earlier written for the *Morning Herald* after his skill as a reporter had been recognised at the contentious inquest into the death of a Peterloo victim, John Lees. In 1832 he was forced to serve as parish constable in Middleton, during which time he was involved in an undignified series of disputes with other reformers and townspeople and appealed to the magistrates for support; Bamford himself always claimed the issues were personal. He continued to write poetry and published *Hours in the Bowers* (1834), a largely new collection of more lyrical material with the most radical verses of his youth excluded. The following year brought the greatest blow of his life when his daughter Ann died at the age of 25, apparently of consumption, which in his darker moments he attributed to his family's privations during his imprisonment in Lincoln.

Bamford was a critic of the Chartists from the outset, even though he maintained the justice of their wider cause. As he later said of himself, 'whilst he repelled every attempt by individuals to coerce him, or arbitrarily to influence him, his greatest contempt and repugnance was reserved for mob law and mob violence' [Bamford (1848) introduction]. He publicly clashed with the factory campaigner Richard Oastler at a Chartist meeting in Middleton, while the Chartists' opportunist opposition to the anti-Corn Law movement aroused the fury of an old



radical blooded in opposition to the bread tax. In the spring of 1839 he published an explicit warning to the Chartist in the form of a version of *La Lyonnaise* by Berenger, author of the *Marseillaise*, a poem that detailed the awful consequences of the Lyon silk weavers' uprising of 1834. Later that year he began work on the first volume of his autobiography, *Passages in the Life of a Radical*, at the same time moving to Blackley and gaining a local post office licence. *Passages* gained him national recognition, particularly in the anti-Corn Law movement (which he never formally joined). He was read approvingly by Gladstone, written admiring letters by Thomas Carlyle and visited by Jane Welsh Carlyle. He struck up a number of literary friendships. He supplemented his income from writing by occasional appearances as a lecturer, and became a frequent speaker at meetings designed to promote self-education and mutual improvement among the working classes [*Manchester Courier*, 6 May 1848; *Manchester Guardian*, 24 May 1848, 18 January 1851]. In 1841–42 he wrote for the press a series of *Walks Among the Workers* of the cotton districts, subsequently published in his 1844 collection of journalistic articles, *Walks in South Lancashire*. Thomas Percy painted his portrait for the Manchester Reform Club.

Bamford was uncomfortable with the sometimes disingenuous and hollow praise heaped by the middle classes on the head of a model moderate working man. Increasingly he turned to literature, particularly dialect literature, and the fellowship that went with it as a solvent of class alienation – an alienation that he himself felt in both directions. In 1838–42 he occasionally attended meetings of the Sun Inn circle of Lancashire poets and authors in Manchester, where he was something of an elder statesman in a circle of rising dialect writers and fireside poets. He also became friends with the Sheffield 'Corn Law rhymers' Ebenezer Elliott. In 1843 there appeared another expanded edition of his *Poems*, and *Walks in South Lancashire* contained literary sketches and even the start of a novel. His poem 'God Help the Poor' featured in Elizabeth Gaskell's Manchester novel *Mary Barton*, its author characterised as a 'fine-spirited' son of toil [Gaskell (1848) ch. 9]. He developed an interest in the history of his native Lancashire, particularly its old halls and its dialect, developing a somewhat idealised view of the virtues of the old paternal gentry. He became friendly with the antiquarian and folklorist John Harland of the *Manchester Guardian*. In association with William Gaskell and the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society he worked on a glossary of Lancashire dialect, believing he could detect in the linguistic boundaries of the Pennines the borders of England's Saxon and Celtic kingdoms. Bamford's glossary, which he first published himself in 1850, became the principal basis for future Lancashire dialect dictionaries [Nodal (1873); Lockhart (1866) 132–44].

In the afterglow of the Corn Law repeal, Bamford again found himself struggling to make a living. A testimonial fund was set up for him, but his undefeasible insistence on taking the proceeds as a lump sum rather than an annuity provoked acrimony and distrust amongst his supporters. Preferring independence to charity, in 1848–49 he invested the money in publishing a second volume of autobiography, *Early Days*. This was followed in 1850 by an edition of the founding text of Lancashire dialect writing, Tim Bobbin's *Tummus and Mary* (1746), as *Dialect of South Lancashire* in 1850. In it he used his own experience to 'correct' Tim Bobbin's original for the Rochdale district in which it was set. This provoked a fellow Lancashire author, George Richardson, to publish an illustrated satirical poem entitled 'Tim Bobbin's Ghost' (1850), which homed in mercilessly on Bamford's weaknesses and sensitivities. Bamford was deeply wounded. He began a continuation of *Walks in South Lancashire*, but then accepted the offer of a post in the Inland Revenue by the Liberal Sir John Wood, and in 1851 left his native Lancashire to work as a clerk in the once-hated tax-gathering machine.

The move to London was not a success. Bamford was shifted from office to office as the Inland Revenue reorganised itself, finishing up at Somerset House cataloguing 'a huge mass of old foisty, rotting, stinking books and papers' [*Bamford Diary*, 11 March 1858]. The hours of work and his advancing age left him no time to visit the British Museum reading room to write his further history and memoir of Lancashire. However he did manage to extend his autobiography into the 1820s, with a hostile polemical memoir of his fellow-reformer Amos

Ogden (1853). He also contributed three fictional sketches of the 1853–54 Preston cotton lockout to *Cassell's Illustrated Family Paper*, a moralising fictional intervention that preceded those of Dickens and Gaskell [*Cassell's Illustrated Family Paper*, 28 January, 11 February, 25 March 1854]. He was an occasional guest of Thomas Carlyle at his home in Chelsea, and the drinking companion of the Northumberland poet Robert Story, a fellow clerk at Somerset House, but he never felt at home in London. He kept up a correspondence with old acquaintances and the local press, and revisited Lancashire from time to time. After seven years he resigned his post and in May 1858 returned to live in Moston, near his native Middleton, narrowly surviving a serious train crash on the way.

Now aged 70, Bamford sought once more to make a living as a writer and lecturer. In this he was assisted by the revival of the liberal reform movement in 1859–61, which saw him as something of a respectable working-class figurehead. Dinners were held in his honour and he was befriended by Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth, providing reminiscences and gathering historical material about the 1826 power-loom riots for Kay-Shuttleworth's novel *Scarsdale* (1862). His public appearances, however, brought mixed results and his efforts shifted to obtaining a government pension for himself in compensation for the imprisonment he had suffered for the cause of reform in his youth. He was bitter at his failure to obtain more than a £50 one-off grant, and his prickliness again alienated potential patrons, but the death of his wife Mima in 1862 prompted a final testimonial, which this time was used to provide him with a pension. During 1858–62 he kept a diary, filled with letters and cuttings. He abandoned his plan to write further histories and memoirs, burning 'old and useless letters and papers', although the final edition of his poetry, *Homely Rhymes* (1864), included some further reminiscence [*Bamford Diary*, 18 April 1861]. He lived on peacefully, visited by friends, admirers and local children, until his death on 13 April 1872.

It would be easy to see Bamford's political life in terms of a simple decline from radicalism to reaction and finally irrelevance. After his release from gaol in 1821 his social resentments were increasingly expressed in disputes that were personal rather than political, and directed as often against his fellow reformers as against their enemies, a tendency that reached its nadir in his constableness in 1832–33. As he lost faith in the immediate fitness of his class for the franchise, his belief in manhood suffrage became more of a declaration of faith in educational progress than an immediate political demand: 'the people themselves wanted reforming' he later declared [*Bamford* (1839–42) ch. 25]. In his autobiography he suppressed mention of some of his insurrectionary associations and activities, and bid instead for middle-class recognition of his status as a pioneering working-class moderate and anti-Corn Law campaigner. If towards the end of his life his iconic status as an honest, stalwart radical was largely unchallenged, it was partly because he had outlived and outwritten most of his critics. There will always be evidence for those who see him as a renegade. Seen in a wider context, however, Bamford's consistency of principle is more apparent and his stature rises.

From the time of his imprisonment, if not before, Bamford placed family and social values over short-term political targets; Victorian values came out to meet him, rather than *vice versa*. He understood from bitter experience the vulnerability of the radical movement to espionage and the disastrous human consequences of demagoguery, betrayal, imprisonment and isolation. Peterloo shook him to the core, for the most peaceful of mass protests had been met with the most savage response, but by the same token he was able to recognise liberalisation when he saw it. The tendency of modern scholars has been to downplay the significance of Chartism and class rhetoric as litmus tests of radicalism, to emphasise the limitations of formal, male-dominated political organisations, and to recognise the importance of community, gender and culture; on all these counts, Bamford's stock rises. While experience brought him to reject annual parliaments and payment for MPs, he never deviated from the long-term goal of universal manhood suffrage. His supposed apostasy can more appropriately be read as a combination of willingness to learn from experience with consistency of principle in a political landscape that had changed almost completely over his long lifetime. He stood by the old radical demands of cheap government and bread tax, and was genuinely outraged at the Chartists' tactical

opposition to the anti-corn law movement. The Bamford who in later life insisted on toasting the whole royal family and not just the monarch was the same Bamford who had proclaimed the rights of the King's abandoned wife 40 years before. He rejected class division in all its manifestations because he remained an old-style radical patriot.

Bamford's well-known autobiography remains one of the founding documents of English radical history, and indeed of nineteenth-century social history generally. It has appeared to some commentators as disingenuous, but (despite strategic omissions) time and again the sources bear out his account. Written during and against the Chartist age, it can be read both as a rebuke to class conflict and as a celebration of the radicalism of his own generation. While other nineteenth-century working-class autobiographers such as William Lovett typically describe the alienation of the self-educated working man from the unreformed society of his youth, Bamford celebrated his, confessing to a dissolute youth and offering in *Early Days* a rich insider's account of the customs and culture of the weaving districts in the early industrial revolution. Whilst the more overtly political *Passages in the Life of a Radical* includes in its later stages a mass of self-justifying newspaper cuttings, Bamford (like the young Dickens) regularly paused to relate anecdotes and ghost stories. Much of his other prose writing was didactic and moralising, although he could at times write with powerful eloquence (as in the introduction to *Dialect of South Lancashire*). His poetry has been less highly regarded, partly because its context has been lost: much of it was written to be sung rather than read, or had a topical political purpose, depended on local familiarity or used dialect. Bamford's 'Ode to a plotting parson' curses Hay, the Peterloo magistrate, with tremendous effect:

And here, like a good loyal priest shalt thou reign,  
The cause of thy patrons with zeal to maintain;  
And the poor, and the hungry, shall faint at thy word,  
As thou doomst them to hell in the name of the Lord  
[*Manchester Observer*, 26 February 1820].

'The Bard's Reformation' dwells lovingly on the pleasures behind the alehouse door as it closes for the last time, while Bamford's verses in ironic celebration of his quack doctor friend Healey have a robust vulgarity that is worthy of Tim Bobbin himself. Above all, his rough dialect elegy on 'Tim Bobbin's grave' powerfully unites the spirits of two poets from a common soil in a timeless communion of brown ale.

As a working man seeking to make a living as a writer, Bamford encountered suspicion from his peers and a mixture of prejudice and condescension from his social superiors. Feted in the 1840s, he almost appeared to make it as a professional, but his later diaries make clear the sharpness of the struggle between acting the part of the respectful and exceptional working man to win middle-class patronage and recognition on the one hand, and maintaining the integrity and identity that gave his work meaning and value on the other. The steady working-class radical of socially cohesive views, professional attainments and independent means was a creature as yet unrecognised by any stratum of society. Many of the contradictions and awkward failures of expression in his journalism in particular can be attributed to his attempt to speak simultaneously to both working-class and middle-class audiences, and to transmit the better values of each to the other, a near-impossible task for which he believed himself well-fitted. 'God has ... led me to dwell amongst this people, one of them, and still apart' he wrote in the preface to *Walks in South Lancashire*. While contemporary working-class writers either embraced respectability, such as William Lovett and Thomas Cooper, or descended into alcoholism, destitution and mental turmoil, like the poets John Bolton Rogerson, Robert Story and John Critchley Prince (not to mention O'Connor), Bamford's rugged survival was exceptional. In his seventies he remained strong, clear-eyed, upright and direct. With age, he ripened rather than mellowed. He died one of the most celebrated of all English radicals. Thousands attended his funeral. The cortege, five-abreast, sombrely re-enacted in reverse the march to Manchester

that he had led over half a century before. There could have been no finer tribute to the hero of Peterloo.

**Writings:** (1) **Autobiography:** *An Account of the Arrest of Samuel Bamford* (1817); *Passages in the Life of a Radical* (1839–42); *Early Days (1848–49)*, collected in W.H. Chaloner (ed.) *The Autobiography of Samuel Bamford* 2 Volumes (1967). (2) **Poetry:** *The Weaver Boy* (1819); *Miscellaneous Poetry* (1821); *Hours in the Bowers* (1834); *Poems* (1843); *Homely Rhymes* (1864, collecting most of the above); verses published in the *Manchester Observer*, 1818–21. (3) **Other:** *Walks in South Lancashire* (1844, reprinted 1974, ed. J. D. Marshall); *Dialect of South Lancashire* (1850); *Some Account of the Late Amos Ogden of Middleton* (1853); *The Diaries of Samuel Bamford* (2000 ed. M. Hewitt and R. Poole).

**Sources:** (1) **MSS:** Local Studies, Manchester Central Library; John Rylands Library, Manchester; Middleton Public Library; Harbord Papers, Norfolk County Record Office, Norwich; Home Office disturbance papers, HO40 and HO42, 1816–21, Public Record Office, London. (2) **Newspapers and periodicals:** *Cobbett's Weekly Political Pamphlet*, 1817; *Manchester Observer*, 1818–21; *Cassell's Illustrated Family Paper*, 1854. (3) **Books and articles:** J. C. Lockhart, 'Sam Bamford', in *Odds and Ends XII* (Manchester, 1866); James Dronsfield, *Incidents and Anecdotes of the Late Samuel Bamford* (1872); J. H. Nodal, *The Dialect and Archaisms of Lancashire* (Manchester, 1873); Catherine Hall, 'The Tale of Samuel and Jemima: Gender and Working-class Culture in Nineteenth Century England', in H. J. Kaye and K. McClelland (eds), *E.P. Thompson: Critical Perspectives* (1990); Martin Hewitt, 'Radicalism and the Victorian Working Class: the case of Samuel Bamford', *Historical Journal*, 3, 4 (1991) 873–92; Morris Garratt, *Samuel Bamford: Portrait of a Radical* (1992); Brian Maidment, *The Poorhouse Fugitives* (1992); Robert Poole, 'Samuel Bamford and Middleton Rushbearing', *Manchester Region History Review*, 8 (1994); Martin Hewitt and Robert Poole, 'Samuel Bamford and Northern Identity', in Neville Kirk (ed.), *Northern Identities* (Aldershot, 2000). The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Martin Hewitt.

ROBERT POOLE

## **BILLINGTON-GRIEG, Teresa (1877–1964)**

SUFFRAGE CAMPAIGNER

Teresa Billington was born in Preston on 15 October 1876, the second daughter of Ellen Wilson and her husband William Billington, an engineer. Her paternal grandfather owned a department store, and Teresa was born above her parents' own shop, but William was a poor businessman and was forced to move his family to Blackburn, where he worked as a clerk for a firm of boiler makers. Teresa's childhood was not particularly happy. Her mother, a devout Roman Catholic, had made a poor marriage. William's input to what began as his wife's business lost her both money and independence, and eventually Ellen withdrew from the marital bed, inspiring her daughters to declare that they would never marry.

The family's financial circumstances forced them to rely on relatives to help fund their children's schooling. Teresa had some education at a convent school but had to leave at an early age. Her father thought mill work would be suitable, but Ellen was determined to find a better position for her daughter and apprenticed her to a milliner. Teresa continued to try to educate herself, reading widely and writing with some success, selling some early stories to a Catholic magazine. Dissatisfied with her work and at increasing odds with her religious mother, Teresa ran away from home at the age of 17. Her attempts to persuade her grandfather to employ her in

his store failed, but he did arrange for other relations in Manchester to give her a home. In Manchester, with strong determination, she managed to persuade the Roman Catholic bishop to give her work as an assistant teacher. This enabled her to finance her further education, and, still working by day, she achieved her teaching certificate at night school. She then began an extension course at the University of London, eventually achieving a BSc degree. She also became involved in the Ancoats University Settlement in Manchester, which introduced her to many progressive social ideas and honed her organisational skills in the role of honorary secretary of the Associates.

As soon as she was earning enough money Teresa left her Catholic relations and lived independently. She also declared herself an agnostic, and moved from a Catholic to a municipal school. Having taken this step, she was irritated to find that the curriculum still forced her to teach a prescribed programme of religious instruction, and took this up with the director of education in 1903. He sent her to meet a member of the Manchester School Board, Emmeline Pankhurst, to talk about the problem. Pankhurst found Billington a position in a Jewish school as a compromise. The two women became friends, and Pankhurst introduced Billington to the new organisation, the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), which she had recently founded.

Billington became one of the key figures in the early WSPU, speaking at many of its first meetings in and around Manchester. These were generally held under the auspices of the broader socialist movement, ILP branches, Labour churches and socialist Sunday schools. Billington was an able and popular speaker, and in the spring of 1905 she was offered a position as paid organiser for the ILP (which she had joined in 1903), the first woman to be appointed to such a post. In an article written in 1957 she claimed that this had been arranged by Mrs Pankhurst to 'forward the women's cause through the ILP', but that it had also closed off Billington's academic ambitions [TBG Papers]. It also took her away from Manchester for six months, during which time Annie Kenney, whom Billington and Christabel Pankhurst had recruited to the WSPU, emerged as one of its leaders. An untitled fragment of Billington's manuscript memoirs suggests that she felt somewhat displaced by Kenney, whom she found to be 'the practical politician in Christabel's pattern' when she returned to Manchester in October 1905. It was Kenney rather than Billington who accompanied Christabel to the Free Trade Hall that month for the WSPU's first public act of militancy. Billington was charged with arranging the publicity on the week's imprisonment they both received for this.

During Easter 1906 Billington left her ILP post and joined Kenney in London at Sylvia Pankhurst's lodgings. Now officially working for the WSPU, her task was to develop a London headquarters. She also helped to organise innumerable events. The best-known of these was a demonstration, co-led by Kenney, of about 30 women outside Asquith's house in Cavendish Square, where they succeeded in ringing the doorbell. Billington was arrested for assaulting a police officer and sentenced to two months in Holloway after a trial in which she refused to recognise the masculine court [PRO MEPOL 2/1016] On this occasion Billington was quickly released when the *Daily Mirror* arranged payment of her fine. The WSPU was rapidly expanding at that time, and the London work was significantly rearranged by Emmeline Pethick Lawrence. Billington was dispatched to Scotland to build up the WSPU there.

Little detail is known of Billington's work over the next 18 months, although the period encompasses several milestones in her life. She appears to have been a successful Scottish organiser, helping to recruit new organisers such as Annot Robinson and Helen Fraser. Such reinforcements were invaluable as Billington was also in demand as a national speaker for the WSPU. Her presence was required at many by-elections, including the famous Cockermouth campaign in August 1906, at which Christabel Pankhurst unveiled her new policy simply of opposition to government candidates, thus alienating many in the ILP who had expected the WSPU contingent to be working on behalf of their candidate, Robert Smillie. Both women were summoned to give an account of their actions to their ILP branches in Manchester, but managed to avoid expulsion. Despite her increasingly busy political life, Billington found time to

marry a Scotsman, Frederick Louis Grieg, in February 1907. Both partners altered their surnames in a decision intended to convey the degree of equality they invested in each other.

Although she retained a high profile in the WSPU, Billington-Grieg becoming increasingly distant from the Pankhursts. The reasons for this are difficult to decipher. She claimed that it was the lack of democracy in the WSPU, which prompted her into the open rebellion that culminated in the formation of the Women's Freedom League in October 1907. Brian Harrison, who interviewed Billington-Grieg's niece and daughter in the 1970s, interestingly suggests that the more single-minded Pankhurst women were irritated by Billington-Grieg's romances, and her marriage [Harrison (1987) 43]. Certainly, Mary Gawthorpe, another WSPU organiser, eventually gave up her engagement under pressure of WSPU work, and the number of married women who managed to combine family life with that of a full-time suffrage worker was small.

However Billington-Grieg's personality was probably equally important. She found it impossible to compromise and difficult to work for an organisation, preferring to lead in her own way. Her suggestion for a quasi-autonomous Scottish WSPU federation, presumably with herself as leader, disquieted Emmeline Pankhurst. The day that Billington-Grieg suggested the federation in *Women's Franchise*, Pankhurst wrote a cryptic letter to Annot Robinson's husband requesting 'that letter you showed me ... to use discretely. I can't tell you all the details but the same disloyalty that preoccupied the letter is at work in other directions ... I don't mind open opposition of a fair and straightforward kind but these whisperings and suggestions are not fair fighting' [Emmeline Pankhurst to Sam Robinson, 22 June 1907, Robinson Papers, Manchester Central Library]. Sam Robinson was a stalwart of the Manchester ILP, whilst his wife was still connected with the Dundee WSPU and would have known Billington-Grieg well. A further suggestion that the letter to which Pankhurst referred concerned Billington-Grieg comes from another letter she wrote on the same day to her daughter, Sylvia: 'As for the TBG affair we just have to face her and put her in her place. She has gone too far this time' [Emmeline Pankhurst to Sylvia, 22 June 1907, Sylvia Pankhurst Papers, IISH, Amsterdam]. Concurring, Christabel Pankhurst told Sylvia that Billington-Grieg was simply a 'wrecker' [Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement* (1921) p. 263]. Billington-Grieg resigned from her paid position at that time, although she left no record of the reasons for her decision. She continued to work for the WSPU until the October conference, when she finally left it in a storm of publicity, along with Mrs Despard, Edith How-Martyn and others, and set up her new organisation.

Billington-Grieg now put all her energy into the Women's Freedom League (WFL) and became its honorary organising secretary. She hoped that the WFL would pioneer a less flamboyant, more reasoned militancy, relying on persuasion, non-cooperation and education rather than the tactics of irritation that she felt precipitated a 'martyr spirit.' However an operation in the summer of 1909 and a back injury sustained in a train accident in 1910 removed her from much active campaigning and limited the amount of influence she was able to have in the WFL. In December 1910, the WFL combined with the WSPU to break the truce that had suspended militant action in order to allow the Conciliation Bill time in parliament, at which point Billington-Grieg resigned, furious that the new body appeared to be placidly following the WSPU. She made her views explicit in *The Militant Suffrage Movement: Emancipation in a Hurry* (1911).

For the next four years Billington-Grieg worked as a freelance speaker and writer, working from the family bungalow in Glasgow, which she had designed. Her publications reveal a broadening of interests into areas such as the white slave trade (over which she felt that the WSPU was whipping up unnecessary panic) and the need for a mobilisation of consumer power amongst women. This she explored in a short book, *The Consumer in Revolt* (1912), which suggests that her disillusionment with suffrage organisations had spread to the labour movement, which she also felt to be too sectional. Her proposals remained in advance of those of many in the feminist movement, including her advocacy of birth control. However this radicalism did not necessarily extend to her private life, as her niece recalled that she found it almost impossible to talk to her daughter or her nieces about sexual matters.

Billington-Grieg opposed the outbreak of war in 1914 but did not follow other feminists into the pacifist movement. Rather she shared the trajectory of many pre-war feminist activists in working neither for nor against the war but to alleviate its worst effects, particularly in the case of Belgian refugees. She was precluded from undertaking more active work by the birth of her only child, Fiona, in 1915, and by her decision at about the same time to take in two of her teenage nieces – daughters of her sister Beatrice – to help with their education in much the same way as her Manchester relations had aided her. She also took over much of her husband's work for the billiard table manufacturers Burroughs and Watts, thus freeing Fred for war work in Glasgow.

After the war her husband was promoted and the family moved to London, ultimately settling in Wimbledon. Billington-Grieg became active in the Sports Fellowship, which aimed to interest young people in sport, serving as its secretary from 1927 to 1930. Predictably her main interest was encouraging girls to become involved in sport, and she also established the Women's Billiards Association. Outside sports-related activities, however, collaborating with an organisation appears to have remained almost impossible for her. She began to attend WFL reunions in the 1920s, and after the 1928 Full Enfranchisement Act she appeared at a special conference at which she urged the WFL to campaign for an increased number of women candidates. Her motion was rejected, and she withdrew from the WFL until 1937. In the meantime her husband had lost his job, and after a less than successful attempt to start a business he was made secretary of the London Rotary Club. Teresa, now in her late fifties, took on a series of jobs, including a short return to school teaching. It was possibly the dispiriting search for work as an older woman that pushed her back into feminist activity in 1937. Her aim now was to ensure that the vote delivered the equality that had been planned. She left the WFL executive in 1938 due to poor health, but continued to work for Women for Westminster, a body devoted to increasing the number of women in parliament.

After the war Billington-Grieg became increasingly concerned about the need for an accurate history of the suffrage movement. She began to collect material for a biography of Charlotte Despard, and approached Christabel and Sylvia Pankhurst for details of their own lives as part of a lecture project she was planning on the Pankhursts. Both sisters were quite dismissive of her, although Sylvia granted her an interview, a move she later regretted when it transpired that Billington-Grieg had also helped Roger Fulford with his 1957 book *Votes for Women*, an account of the suffrage campaign that was less than favourable to the WSPU. The Despard project was abandoned in 1961 when Billington-Grieg was widowed. The death of her husband, with whom she appears to have enjoyed an extremely happy marriage, hit her particularly hard, and she undertook little further public work. She did agree to address a conference of the Six Point Group, but was prevented from doing so by illness. She was diagnosed with cancer shortly after that, and died in the London Hospital for Women on 21 October 1964, leaving £5147.

**Writing:** T. Billington-Grieg, *The Consumer in Revolt* (1912).

**Sources :** (1) **MSS:** Billington-Grieg Papers, Women's Library, London; Annot Robinson Papers, Manchester Central Library; Sylvia Pankhurst Papers, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam; Pethick Lawrence Papers, Trinity College Library, Cambridge; Metropolitan Police Papers, Public Record Office. (2) **Books:** E. S. Pankhurst, *The Suffragette* (1911); T. Billington-Grieg, *The Militant Suffrage Movement: Emancipation in a Hurry* (1911); E. S. Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement: An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideals* (1931); R. Fulford, *Votes for Women* (1957); C. McPhee and A. Fitzgerald (eds), *The Non-Violent Militant: Selected Writings of Teresa Billington-Grieg* (1987); B. Harrison, *Prudent Revolutionaries: Portraits of British Feminists Between the Wars* (Oxford 1987). (3) **Interviews:** B. Harrison, taped interviews with Fiona Billington-Grieg (daughter, 24 August, 19 September 1974), and Mrs Blackman (niece, 19 September 1974) Women's Library, London.

KRISTA COWMAN

See also: †Ada Nield CHEW; †Alice Schofield COATES; †Annot Erskine ROBINSON.

**BRADDOCK, Thomas (Tom) (1887–1976)**

LABOUR MP

Tom Braddock was born on 31 August 1886, the son of Henry William Braddock and his wife Selina (née Booth) in a small cottage in Kennington, south London, facing the Oval cricket ground. Henry Braddock was originally from Bolton, Lancashire, and Selina from Stockport. Henry, the son of a stone carver, was a successful draughtsman of some talent and a keen asparagus grower. Soon after the birth of Tom, the family moved back to the north of England, where Henry was employed on the Mersey railway tunnel as an engineer. During this period the family lived in Southport, but on completion of the project, when Tom was aged nine, they returned to London. Henry was involved in a number of projects in the capital, including the design of Marylebone Station, opened in 1899, and the underground railway lines. The family resided first in Haydons Road and later in Dorset Road, Merton Park, Wimbledon.

Tom Braddock received his early education at the Wimbledon Collegiate School under the tuition of H. F. Redman, and later attended the Rutlish School. His thoughts were firmly set on following his father into an architectural career. Throughout his school years he developed skills in sketching and drawing, leading to his training as an architect. His first post was with Douglas Fox and Partners, a local firm of engineers. Francis Fox, a senior partner of the firm, took a shine to Braddock and encouraged him to study hard. Under Fox's guidance he enrolled for a number of evening classes at the London Architectural Association and the London County Council School of Building. A keen student, he was the recipient of many prizes and awards, including a Grissell Gold medal from the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), Architectural Silver and Bronze medals, and National Bronze medals for architectural design. Fox also encouraged Braddock to join the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and to take an interest in the politics of local government, as he himself was a JP and well-known civic figure. However Braddock was diverted by the arguments of the small number of socialists he encountered at street meetings and on Wimbledon Common, where he would often take walks.

Braddock's political awareness was shaped by his interest in literature. On leaving school he read widely, but was especially drawn to the work of Charles Kingsley, John Ruskin, and Robert Blatchford. The street socialists of Wimbledon articulated the ideas expressed in this genre of literature. He joined the Wimbledon Socialist Society in 1907, which at that time consisted of about 20 older members. It had been established some years earlier by a group of Marxists, some of whom had known William Morris and had worked for him at Merton Abbey. Braddock made an early impression on his fellow society members and he was sent as a delegate to the Trades and Labour Council, eventually becoming secretary. He was an energetic speaker and seemed to enjoy the cut and thrust of debate and the regular demonstrations on Wimbledon Broadway. His spare time was dominated by work for the society and he assisted in a number of strikes in the locality, which introduced him to socialists from the trade union movement. He attended meetings throughout the week and became a regular speaker at local labour movement events. The biggest gathering was usually the Sunday afternoon meeting on Wimbledon Common. Speakers were drawn from all over London and a clarion van would regularly make an appearance. Braddock was particularly impressed by individuals on the left of the movement, including Victor Grayson, who had triumphed as an independent socialist candidate for Colne Valley in July 1907.

In 1910 Braddock married Betty Dolleri Houghton, also a committed socialist, and sought a better paid job. He took the position of chief designer at George Jackson and Sons, the biggest interior decorating firm in the country. Discovering that members of the sales division could earn more than designers, he promptly transferred. He was promoted to sales manager and then general manager, but was uncomfortable about leaving his trade for mere financial gain. He returned to architecture through a partnership with Andrew Mather, subsequently winning competitions to design war memorials in Dundee and Dorking, and going on to design buildings for the Odeon cinema chain in London (including that in Leicester Square), Guilford, Brighton



and Reigate. He also designed the vicarages of St. Luke's and St Andrew's in Wimbledon. After a successful period with Mather he left to set up his own private practice. However his main concern was politics and he invested the bulk of his spare time in proselytising for socialism.

By the outbreak of the 1914–18 war, membership of the Wimbledon Socialist Society had risen to around 130. However the war restricted the work and popularity of the organisation. Some of the younger members joined the forces, some were conscripted and others were imprisoned as conscientious objectors. Braddock avoided service as he failed the medical examination and was registered unfit for active service at Kingston Barracks. As he was engaged in work of national importance his military exemption was unopposed by a subsequent tribunal. With the reorganisation of the Labour Party in 1918, Braddock and others from the Wimbledon Socialist Society became individual members, attracted by the formal commitment to socialism in the constitution. A divisional party was formed, with Braddock playing a leading part in recruitment and organisation. The membership quickly rose to over 200 and premises were secured to establish a permanent presence in Wimbledon's political landscape. Braddock held all the major party positions and worked tirelessly in a predominantly Conservative constituency. Mark Starr, a former member of the Communist Party and organiser for the National Council of Labour Colleges was defeated heavily in Wimbledon at the general elections of 1923 and 1924. Like Braddock, Starr was on the left of the party and no doubt had an influence on the local organisation. When Starr made it clear that he was more interested in working-class education than a career in Westminster, Braddock became his most likely replacement.

Braddock's hard work for the party during the 1920s paid off and he was selected as prospective Labour parliamentary candidate for Wimbledon for the 1929 general election. He was nominated by a number of groups, including the women's section. Margaret Bondfield visited the constituency on his behalf. He was well known in the district and his residence at 18 Homefield Road became an unofficial meeting place for socialists who were keen to discuss the issues of the day. Broad party support for his candidature was ensured by his position on the Wimbledon Trades and Labour Council. He was also a founder member of the Association of Building Technicians. Although never a member of the Communist Party, he remained close to individual members and was a consistent advocate of the party's affiliation to the Labour Party. This was perhaps conditioned by the fact that he was a socialist first and a party man second. He felt that the only reason the Labour government had been driven out of office in 1924 was its willingness to trade with the Soviet Union [*Wimbledon Borough News*, 17 May 1929]. He fought an effective campaign in 1929, beating the Liberal candidates into second place.

Wimbledon 1929: electorate 59 654, turnout 68.8 per cent

Sir J. C. Power (Conservative)	21 902 (53.4 per cent)
T. Braddock (Labour)	9 924 (24.2 per cent)
A. Peters (Liberal)	9 202 (22.4 per cent)
Majority	11 978 (29.2 per cent)

Braddock was encouraged by Labour's success in the election and continued to agitate for the socialist cause in Wimbledon. He was again selected as the future parliamentary candidate, but was shocked by the defection of MacDonald and the formation of the National Government in August 1931. From the outset of the financial crisis he had opposed any measure that would lead to a lowering of income for working people. He used the local press to attack those who had broken with Labour, calling immediately for disciplinary measures to be taken against the dissidents.

Individual members of the party, be they ex-Cabinet Ministers or rank and file workers, represent no one but themselves in joining or combining with other parties or individuals to further any policy except that of the Labour Party. Repudiation and expulsion will follow

such action ... There is no justice nor common sense in reducing unemployment insurance, wages or social services ... The 3 or 4 who have joined the opposition must go their way, they were strong because and only because they had the support and backing of working men and women ... The damage they have done is great, they will have shattered the faith of many [*Wimbledon Borough News*, 28 August 1931].

In subsequent weeks, Braddock traded insults with Liberals and Conservatives in the local press. He questioned the severity of the economic crisis and argued that there was only one way out of fiscal instability and that was to nationalise the banks, industries and land. His uncompromising position on the left of the party forced him to defend his stand during the political meetings that preceded the general election. At one gathering a heckler shouted 'you are in less agreement with your party than I am, and I am not a member of it' [*Wimbledon Borough News*, 16 October 1931]. This was a position that Braddock was to occupy for the rest of his life – a left-wing socialist impatient with the moderation of Labour gradualism. He increasingly utilised apocalyptic language, stressing that the capitalist system was bound to collapse and that perhaps the Soviet Union provided the only solution.

Wherever you look in the world you will find that modern methods are breaking down. There is one exception, and that is Russia, where capitalism is dormant. I am not suggesting that we should follow the methods of that country, I hope we shall not need to, but that is one country where unemployment, as it exists elsewhere is unknown [*Wimbledon Borough News*, 23 October 1931].

Braddock was heavily defeated in the 1931 election.

Wimbledon, 1931: electorate 69 506, turnout 71.0 per cent

Sir J. C. Power (Conservative)	39 643 (80.4 per cent)
T. Braddock (Labour)	9 674 (19.6 per cent)
Majority	29 969 (60.8 per cent)

However he was successful in local government elections. In 1934 he was elected to Surrey County Council, where he remained for nine years. In 1936 he also became a member of Wimbledon Borough Council. He played a full role in local government, and became a governor of the Rutlish School and the Raynes Park Secondary School. This signalled a life-long commitment to education and he consistently campaigned for the abolition of public schools, and later of grammar schools.

Braddock was defeated at the 1935 general election in another straight fight, once again with the Conservative, Sir John Power. The Conservatives had used the local press to allege that there was an alliance between Labour and the Communist Party. Braddock stated that he was doubtful whether a Communist Party branch existed in Wimbledon, but even if there were Communists in the constituency, he had absolutely no communication with them. A subsequent leaflet produced by the local Labour Party stressed that 'it may be said emphatically that ... Tom Braddock and the party to which he belongs have repeatedly declared their opposition to the methods and propaganda of the Communists'. During the campaign, Braddock had to argue his position in some heated meetings attended by Communists, fascists and advocates of social credit. In his post-election statement he stated

that if only an election result was at stake, Labour in Wimbledon would be well satisfied. A great advance has been made in the number of Labour supporters in a district almost untouched by the worst effects of unemployment ... Labour will carry on as always with its propaganda for justice and sanity, and 1935 shows that its appeal is not falling on deaf ears.

Education and organisation must still be our watchwords [*Wimbledon Borough News*, 22 November 1935].

Wimbledon, 1935: electorate 80 283, turnout 67.6 per cent

Sir J.C. Power (Conservative)	36 816 (67.8 per cent)
T. Braddock (Labour)	17 452 (32.2 per cent)
Majority	19 364 (35.6 per cent)

By the outbreak of the 1939–45 war, Braddock had established himself as a mature political campaigner with an acute sense of the importance of a regular canvass. He spoke at many meetings around the country and was invited by local parties in the north of England and the Midlands to become their prospective parliamentary candidate. He refused, on the basis that he had done too much work in Wimbledon and was unwilling to leave the constituency. During the war he was employed as a civil servant, oversaw the construction of an ordnance factory in Berkshire and was one of the 12 inspectors appointed to ensure that living conditions on large building sites were satisfactory. Later he became an assessor for the War Damage Commission. These experiences strengthened his view that the civil service was primarily a conservative institution, being suspicious of change and generally unsympathetic to socialist planning. After the war he returned to architecture and opened a private practice with his son Peter. Together they designed a number of office blocks in London, the Wulfrun shopping centre in Wolverhampton and the William Morris Hall in Wimbledon. He was a familiar personality in Wimbledon and the surrounding areas, a tall man, sporting a hat, pronounced chin and goatee beard, and cutting a striking figure on and off the platform.

The 1945 general election was preceded by the creation of a number of new and revised constituencies to reflect the growth of suburbia since the major redistribution of constituencies in 1918. When the election was announced, Braddock was selected for the neighbouring constituency of Mitcham and Wallington, formerly Mitcham and Carshalton. Local Labour activists initially felt that the redistribution would ensure that the seat remained Conservative. Braddock took advantage of his position as an established Labour figure across London and gained a favourable response on the doorstep. His work in education was recognised across the party divide and he had recently been elected vice-chairman of the Divisional Education Executive. He was also an acknowledged expert in the field of housing, being one of the authors of the County of Surrey Plan (drawn up by the Surrey Federation of Labour Parties), in which Mitcham was selected to show how a town could be replanned in the postwar period. The plan also proposed a scheme to reduce the housing shortage by turning large houses in London and beyond into small flats.

Braddock threw himself into the election and was supported by Harold Laski at a number of meetings. He promoted the programme of the Labour Party and called for a greater understanding of communism in Russia. At a post-election meeting in the constituency he was asked whether he was in favour of a one-party system. He replied that ‘the Socialist Party in England did not favour a one-party Government’. However, ‘Although Russia had only one party, political discussion there was more active and informed than here’ [*Mitcham News and Mercury*, 5 October 1945]. Braddock took the seat in a straight fight with the Conservative candidate.

Mitcham, 1945: electorate 63 545, turnout 73.4 per cent

T. Braddock (Labour)	26 910 (57.7 per cent)
Rt Hon. Sir M. A. Robertson (Conservative)	19 742 (42.3 per cent)
Majority	7 168 (15.4 per cent)

When the victory of Attlee’s Labour Party was announced, Braddock genuinely felt that the ‘socialist revolution had arrived in Britain’ [Letter from Tom Braddock to John Saville, 2/12/72,

DLB file, University of York]. As a constituency MP he was a success, holding regular meetings and addressing the concerns of the local population. In November 1945 he created a stir when police reinforcements had to be called in to deal with the many visitors he had invited to the Commons. He had organised a trip from his constituency through the Mitcham Civic Society and expected about 40 people to arrive to hear his maiden speech. However more than 200 came and Braddock, undeterred, led them into the House. His maiden speech went smoothly and he suggested that the government should adopt his idea of a new Commons using his design. He also called for the development of the committee system so that every member could be fully employed [*Hansard*, 5 November 1945, cols 2375–78].

In the House of Commons, Braddock concentrated on pressing his views on housing and, more controversially, foreign policy, although he was an infrequent speaker. In the debate on the American loan in December 1945, he voted against the government as he felt its terms would be unfair to Britain. The loan also excluded cooperation with the Soviet Union and therefore would go against one of the central tenets of the election manifesto. In 1946 he supported attacks on the government's foreign policy at the Labour conference. He felt that the government was aligning itself too closely with the United States at the expense of any relationship with the Soviet Union. In December 1947 he signed a telegram to Germany welcoming socialist/communist fusion moves in the Soviet sector of Berlin, an action that divided left-wing MPs.

Braddock was the driving force in the anti-Bevin group, which included Konni Zilliacus, Tom Driberg and others, who met regularly in Braddock's Wimbledon flat. They drafted a letter demanding the withdrawal of troops from Greece [Schneer (1988) 108]. His views on communism were causing concern for members of his local party and were brought to the attention of the government. A number of letters in the Labour Party archive reveal that some members were monitoring his speeches and sending extracts of them to Transport House [Morgan Phillips Papers, 'Lost Sheep' File, NMLH Manchester]. He also voted against the government on the continuation of conscription in spring 1947 and the establishment of the Ministry of Defence in December the same year. Braddock became secretary and chairman of the group who sent the Nenni telegram (see Special Note) to the majority Italian Socialist Party during the Italian election of April 1948 [Letter to Saville, DLB files]. The Nenni socialists were allied with the Italian Communist Party; the official line of the British Labour Party was to support the much smaller and anticommunist Saragat socialists. He organised their line of defence, sending out instructions on how the rebels should answer the charges levelled at them by the National Executive Committee (NEC). The NEC focused on John Platts-Mills as the instigator and he was duly expelled [Jackson (1968) 68–9]. Braddock's anti-American perspective was further exhibited on 12 May 1949, when along with Ronald Chamberlain, Emrys Hughes and expelled members, he opposed the government on the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Braddock was rapidly becoming a figure associated with the far left in the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP), with many seeing him, along with Zilliacus, Solley and Lester Hutchinson as a communist fellow traveller. He regularly attended meetings of the PLP and spoke more than anyone else. He saw the business of the PLP as more important than discussions in the Commons. His distance from the leadership was further emphasised when he was the only Labour MP not to support the confidence vote after the devaluation of the pound in September 1949. Nevertheless, as a matter of principle he would never vote with the Conservative opposition.

In 1948 Braddock became one of the leading figures behind *Socialist Outlook*, a move that raised further suspicion about his loyalty to the party. This publication, which was an outlet for socialist criticism of the Labour Party, was edited by John Lawrence, arguably the most important Trotskyist in Britain in that period. Another early Trotskyist member was Gerry Healy, who became largely responsible for the paper's demise. Under the guise of 'The Club', several Trotskyists had entered the Labour Party in 1947 and worked with others on the left to launch the monthly publication. The supportive MPs, party members and trade unionists were unaware

of Trotskyist involvement in the paper; instead they regarded it as articulating broad left-wing criticisms of government timidity [Ratner (1994) 131]. *Socialist Outlook* was produced in Braddock's constituency and he became a member of the editorial board. The newspaper led to the establishment of the Socialist Fellowship a year later, organised by Braddock, who became vice-president, and another MP, Ellis Smith, during the Labour Party conference in 1949. The group consisted of Labour members who pledged themselves to early attainment of a socialist society. However, like the newspaper, the Socialist Fellowship was infiltrated by Trotskyists, who ensured that factionalism would stifle its development. In the first edition of *Socialist Outlook*, Braddock argued for a more socialist domestic and foreign policy.

It is now certain that the British Labour Party's great attempt to achieve Socialism in this country by compromise and gradual methods is going to fail. This is not the fault of British Socialism or of the Labour Party itself. The attempt had to be made, our people being what they are and having the Fabian Society talking to them for so many years. No party could have gained power in 1945 on any other terms. Other methods will now have to be adopted ... we can hang on to the tail of the USA for a bit, but it will in the end get us nowhere ... I am afraid both the Government and the Party have become statesmen, they have joined the ruling classes [*Socialist Outlook*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1948].

In a regular column titled 'Speaking My Mind', Braddock used *Socialist Outlook* to promote his socialist views but he generally avoided involvement in the factional disputes that were beginning to sour relations over editorial policy. The Trotskyists felt that he was too close to the Communist Party, a charge that he consistently denied. He felt that there was a democratic socialist alternative that was being stifled by moderates in the PLP. In characteristic style he stressed that 'we Labour Party socialists as distinct from the Labour Party Conservatives, intended to carry through our revolution by the middle way, planned and peaceful' [*Socialist Outlook*, vol. 1, no. 6, 1949]. In November 1950, Braddock became president of the Socialist Fellowship, but by this time it was more firmly in the grip of the Trotskyists. There had been a division over the Korean War, when *Socialist Outlook* condemned the role of the United Nations, leading to many Labour members distancing themselves from the organisation, including Ellis Smith, Bessie Braddock and Fenner Brockway. A number of Trotskyists left, including Tony Cliff. Braddock felt that the war represented a policy of imperialist aggression by the United States against the Soviet Union, and that this should be condemned. Along with Lawrence, he supported a united front with the Communist Party.

The Trotskyists now viewed Braddock as a firm Stalinist, a sentiment no doubt reinforced by his platform speeches for the British-Soviet Friendship Society. However he remained a critic of Communist Party policy. In 1951 he was invited by Palme Dutt to write a piece for *Labour Monthly* on the Communist Party's policy document, *The British Road to Socialism*. He submitted his article, but it was not published because it was seen as an attack on some aspects of the programme. Braddock argued that 'in this pamphlet the CP shows itself to be in such a muddled state of mind, so tolerant of existing ideas and institutions as to render it quite useless as a guide to revolutionary action' [*Socialist Outlook*, vol. 3, no. 7, 1951]. In 1950 Braddock produced a pamphlet for the Socialist Fellowship titled *From Labour to Socialism*, in which he presented the case against parliamentary socialism, but he denied that it was an extremist document [Jenkins (1979) 100].

Braddock fought the 1950 election for Mitcham, after another redrawing of constituency boundaries. In his election literature he reminded his constituents that 'in public matters I have not been afraid to make and stand by difficult decisions, I have been nobody's "yes man". I am willing to carry on' [Braddock, election leaflet, 1950, DLB file, University of York]. The *Mitcham News and Mercury* predicted a difficult fight for Braddock as he had followed a political trajectory 'that had taken him into the wilderness'. Nonetheless the paper went on to praise him as 'essentially likeable'. He has the common touch. He has not become a party cipher ... His

record as one who has cast many votes against his party is a yardstick of his sincerity' [*Mitcham News and Mercury*, 3 February 1950]. Braddock campaigned well, but was beaten by Robert Carr, an ambitious Conservative who took advantage of the strong swing against Labour in suburban London.

Mitcham 1950: electorate 73 160, turnout 85.8 per cent

R. Carr (Conservative)	31 881 (50.7 per cent)
T. Braddock (Labour)	27 055 ( 43.1 per cent)
Mrs. D. L. Page (Liberal)	3 864 (6.2 per cent)
Majority	4 826 (7.6 per cent)

After Labour's narrow victory in the 1950 election, Braddock used his column in *Socialist Outlook* to argue that if the party was to recover there had to be a change of leadership in parliament and the TUC. In characteristic style, he said that 'there can be no recovery until we are prepared to take all power from capitalism at home and cut-off all dependence on capitalism abroad' [*Socialist Outlook*, vol. 2, no. 4, 1950]. He remained involved with *Socialist Outlook* until his resignation from the editorial board in 1954. He clashed with Gerry Healy over German rearmament, a policy that the latter supported. In a written statement he clearly showed his feeling that factionalism was seriously hindering the success of the organisation.

What has arisen is not a mere difference over procedure – it is difference concerning the whole future of *Socialist Outlook*. This is the question: Shall the paper continue with its present clear – yet non sectarian – appeal to the Labour movement, or shall it degenerate into an organ for the airing of doctrinal disputes which would divide the movement at a time when it should be united? ... This sectarian twaddle which is creeping into the columns of the paper is, unfortunately, backed by at least one member of the Editorial Board [this was Gerry Healy] ... valuable space has been devoted to these meaningless, doctrinaire sermons, and thus the Outlook has already been partially diverted from giving full attention to the real tasks which confront the labour movement [Ratner (1994) 197].

The Labour Party proscribed the Socialist Fellowship in 1951 and *Socialist Outlook* in 1954. After the 1950 election Braddock was adopted as the parliamentary candidate for Wimbledon. This marked the beginning of his long battle with the National Executive Committee (NEC), which for the next seven years consistently refused to endorse his nomination. The NEC ordered the local party to have another selection conference; Braddock was again selected but refused endorsement. In October 1950 he was summoned to a meeting with the party's general secretary, Morgan Phillips and the national agent. Phillips gave reasons why Braddock had not been endorsed by the NEC, the primary one being that he had consistently claimed he would vote against the party if returned to parliament. At a subsequent meeting Braddock gave his assurance that he would not vote against the government if it were in danger of defeat. Phillips noted his assurance, but endorsement was still refused. In 1954 Braddock was again selected by the Wimbledon CLP. He and the chairman of the Wimbledon CLP attended a meeting organised by the NEC Election Sub-Committee, but was yet again refused endorsement. The secretary of the Surrey Federation of Labour Parties contested the decision on the ground that no reasons had been given for refusal. The Wimbledon General Management Committee voted in favour of Braddock's candidature. Braddock was called to a meeting of the Organisation Sub-Committee, composed of Attlee, Gaitskell, Edith Summerskill, and the chief whip. He was questioned about his voting behaviour in the 1945–50 parliament. Endorsement was not only withheld again, but also the committee threatened the Wimbledon CLP with expulsion if it did not select another candidate. In 1957 he was again selected, and this time refused endorsement on the ground of age [Jackson (1968) 256–60].

A year later Braddock was selected to fight the safe Conservative seat of Kingston-on-Thames. He was called to the Organisation Sub-Committee and asked if he supported the party manifesto. He answered in the affirmative and this time was allowed to stand. Nonetheless, in his election literature he was keen to stress the fact that he was not really a party man. In his address to electors he claimed that 'I do not live by politics: I earn my living now, as always, by working. I do not take orders from Leaders, I stand to represent all types of workers' [Braddock election leaflet, 1959, DLB file, University of York]. He was subsequently defeated, but fought the same seat again in 1964.

Kingston Upon Thames, 1959: 60 403, turnout 77.9 per cent

Rt Hon. J. A. Boyd Carpenter (Conservative)	31 649 (67.3 per cent)
T. Braddock (Labour)	15 408 (32.7 per cent)

Majority	16 241 (34.6 per cent)
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Kingston Upon Thames, 1964: electorate 58 884, turnout 77.1 per cent

Rt Hon. J. A. Boyd Carpenter (Conservative)	23 973 (52.8 per cent)
T. Braddock (Labour)	13 611 (30.0 per cent)
Dr S. Randle (Liberal)	7 827 (17.2 per cent)

Majority	10 362 (22.8 per cent)
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Braddock was much more enthusiastic about Labour's prospects under the leadership of Harold Wilson and felt that the country would finally benefit from an attack on vested interests that were stifling progress. His eighth and last parliamentary campaign came in 1966, when he stood for Wimbledon, now approaching the age of 80. The Conservative Cyril Black defeated him. His battle with Black was long-standing and at times personal. In 1943 Braddock had had to be forcibly removed from the Wimbledon Council chamber for suggesting that Black was not fit to represent local residents.

Wimbledon, 1966: electorate 40 248, turnout 75.0 per cent

Sir C. W. Black (Conservative)	15 191 (50.4 per cent)
T. Braddock (Labour)	9 517 (31.5 per cent)
J. R. Macdonald (Liberal)	5 475 (18.1 per cent)

Majority	5 674 (18.9 per cent)
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Braddock never retired from politics, and throughout the 1960s busied himself in the affairs of the labour movement. At the 1966 Labour Party conference he gave a well-received, humorous speech on making birth control advice available free on the National Health Service.

If contraceptive knowledge had been known about and used fifty or sixty years ago, most of the occupants of the platform would not be with us today ... Some of you may think that this is the best argument I could put forward ... I don't know about that. After all, George Brown must have been a very pretty baby [*Daily Mirror*, 5 October 1966].

Braddock was also a campaigner against slum housing and continued to debate socialist strategy with the non-Labour left. In 1969 he spoke at a constituency meeting with local Communists, arguing that they should join the Labour Party: 'the party of the mass working movement by tradition and action ... the Communist Party ... are full of contradictions and seem to offer very little to the cause of socialism' [*Wimbledon News*, 14 February 1969]. He retired from his architectural work in 1970, leaving the firm in the hands of his son Peter.

Braddock was labelled a Communist by moderates in the Labour Party, a Stalinist by members of the various Trotskyist sects and a Trotskyist by sections of the Communist Party. He was none of these things and was very much the product of his early exposure to the politics of the left in the Wimbledon Socialist Society. Always averse to party discipline, his primary loyalty was to the working class and the cause of socialism. He was a committed left winger who could not be easily characterised by organisational labels. In his final years he remained firmly on the left of the party and was a supporter of rising trade union militancy in the early 1970s. He left Wimbledon with his wife, who was increasingly unwell, to live on the south coast. He continued to work for his local party as an education officer. He died on 8 December 1976 in his home at East Preston, Sussex, leaving an estate valued at £24 289.

**Writings:** Braddock wrote a number of pamphlets and short pieces for newspapers and journals. His regular column for *Socialist Outlook* provides a broad sketch of his political views. A complete set is deposited in the National Museum of Labour History, Manchester.

**Sources:** (1) **MSS:** Braddock file containing correspondence, election leaflets, and biographical sketch, Dictionary of Labour Biography files, Department of Politics, University of York; Labour Party NEC Minutes, Tom Braddock Press Cuttings File, General Secretary's Papers, 'Lost Sheep' File, Labour Party Conference Reports, National Museum of Labour History, Manchester. (2) **Newspapers:** *Surrey Times*, 6 October 1928; *Wimbledon Borough News*, 1929–35; *Mitcham News and Mercury*, 1945–50; *Coulsdon and Purley Times*, 31 October 1947; *Bournemouth Echo*, 8 March 1948; *Socialist Outlook*, 1948–54; *Daily Telegraph*, 1 August 1949; *Malden Borough News*, 1950–64; *Surrey Comet*, 25 September 1964; *The Times*, 4 October 1966; *Wimbledon News*, 5 October 1966; *Daily Mirror*, 5 October 1966; *South Wales Argus*, 12 May 1967; *Kingston and Morning Star*, 12 May 1969; *Chichester Observer*, 12 November 1971; *Tribune*, 4 August 1972. (3) **Books:** Austin Ranney, *Pathways to Parliament: Candidate Selection in Britain* (Madison, 1965); Robert J. Jackson, *Rebels and Whips: An Analysis of Dissension, Discipline and Cohesion in British Political Parties* (1968); Mark Jenkins, *Bevanism: Labour's High Tide, The Cold War and the Democratic Mass Movement* (Nottingham, 1979); Michael Stanton and Stephen Lees, *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament, Vol. 4, 1945–1979* (1981); Sam Bornstein and Al Richardson, *War and the International: A history of the Trotskyist Movement in Britain 1937–1949* (1986); John Callaghan, *The Far Left in British Politics* (1987); Jonathan Schneer, *Labour's Conscience: The Labour Left 1945–51* (1988); Eric Shaw, *Discipline and Discard in the Labour Party* (Manchester, 1988); Harry Ratner, *Reluctant Revolutionary: Memoirs of a Trotskyist 1936–1960* (1994). (4) **Other:** *Hansard*, 1945–50. (5) **Obituaries:** *Wimbledon News*, 31 December 1976; *The Times*, 11 January 1977; *Fabian News*, 2 March 1977; *WWW*, 1971–80.

KEITH GILDART

See also: †Stephen SWINGLER; Lyall WILKES; †Konni ZILLIACUS.

### Special Note: The Nenni Telegram

On Saturday 17 April 1948 the *Daily Herald* headlined a telegram sent by some Labour MPs to the Italian Socialist Party (PSI), led by Pietro Nenni. The telegram conveyed best wishes to the party for the general election, to be held on Sunday 18 April. Superficially the telegram simply conveyed greetings to a fraternal party, but the PSI had an electoral agreement with the Italian Communist Party (PCI). The headline suggested an imminent controversy.

37 Labour MPs in Italian Election Surprise  
 PLATTS-MILLS SENDS A TELEGRAM  
 Backs Ally of Communism [*Daily Herald*, 17 April 1948].



John Platts-Mills was the Labour MP for Finsbury and a prominent critic of the Labour government's foreign policy. A few weeks earlier the Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia intensified the hardening of Cold War alignments. Platts-Mills had commended the takeover, an increasingly isolated position within the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP). It was becoming very difficult for Labour politicians to be seen giving support to what could be characterised as pro-Communist causes. The Italian election campaign marked another step in Cold War polarisation. The *Daily Herald's* expectation would be realised: 'Their action, entirely unrepresentative of the Labour Movement, is certain to produce strong repercussions' [ibid.] The subsequent complex exchanges were a milestone in the shifting political culture of the post-1945 PLP. There are two necessary starting points for an analysis – the situation within the PLP and Italy's post-liberation politics.

Backbench concern about the Labour government's foreign policy was considerable until the end of 1946. Much of the unease – and on the part of some individuals, strong criticism – stemmed from a belief that government policy in this area was marked by strong elements of continuity with that of earlier administrations, and that such continuity entailed rejection of any conception of a socialist foreign policy. Many critics advocated a socialist third way between Soviet Communism and a largely unregulated capitalism – a position elaborated in the *Keep Left* pamphlet published in May 1947. However to varying degrees others showed more sympathy for Soviet policy, the consolidation of Communist control in Eastern Europe and alliances between Socialists and Communists. Such sentiments were evident in some critics' assessments of the government's policy on Greece. They were also expressed in two telegrams sent by a few Labour MPs to the German left-wing expressing the desirability of German left unity. The first sent on 20 March 1946, wished the German Social Democratic Party 'success in bringing about the political unity of the German workers on terms fair and just to both Social Democrats and Communists'. This precipitated criticism within the PLP, as did the second telegram, sent in December 1947. The occasion was the convening in the Soviet sector of Berlin by the German Socialist Unity Party of a 'Unity People's Congress'. The telegram proclaimed: 'It is essential for establishing a lasting peace with Germany that the views of genuine German democrats be heard by the Allied Governments. Therefore we welcome all efforts made in Germany to organise a united representation of all democratic forces.' The official response within the PLP was to argue that the German Socialist Unity Party was a Communist body; while the *Daily Herald* condemned the 13 signatories as Communist dupes [for the two telegrams and reactions see Schneer (1988) 104–10].

Six Labour MPs signed both telegrams, and later defended their support for the Nenni telegram. However one other signatory of the German telegrams subsequently claimed that his supposed support for the Nenni telegram was unauthorised. This nucleus demonstrated support for Popular Front initiatives that produced a significant degree of sympathy within the PLP, or at least in the immediate postwar years. Memories of the struggle against fascism were strong, not least because the disasters of 1922 in Italy and 1933 in Germany owed something to divisions on the left. But by early 1948 such views were increasingly marginal within the PLP. Most of the former critics of government foreign policy accepted, albeit often reluctantly, that some kind of alliance with the United States was inevitable. The Czech crisis intensified this sense of inevitability. Within the Labour Party the leadership considered action against two prominent critics: Platts-Mills and Konni Zilliacus. The initial move had been made by the Liaison Committee of the PLP, whose concerns had been made known to the National Executive Committee [Labour Party National Executive Committee Minutes, 23 March 1948]. Many on the Labour left firmly distinguished themselves from those whom they regarded as pro-Soviet. As early as 3 January 1947 *Tribune* had disparaged 'pro-Communists who gate-crashed into the Labour rebels' ranks'.

Platts-Mills had established himself as one of the most outspoken critics. He was a Balliol-educated New Zealand Rhodes Scholar and a successful and ostentatious lawyer. He evinced enthusiasm for the Soviet Union and the pro-Soviet developments in Eastern Europe, and

seemed impervious to changing sentiments within the party. Will Griffiths, a left-wing backbencher, characterised him as 'a nice chap, but naïve'. He recalled listening to him in a debate. Initially Griffiths had been broadly sympathetic, but 'when I heard him, I was aghast' [Will Griffiths, interview]. Other verdicts were more damning and more influential. Platts-Mills spoke on Rumania in a debate on 23 October 1946. Attlee's response was characteristically succinct. Platts-Mills's contribution was 'entirely out of tune with the principles of democratic thought to which the Labour Party is attached. It was in fact not much more than a reproduction of the ordinary propaganda stuff of the Communist Party' [*Hansard*, 23 October 1946, col. 1675]. On 13 April 1948 a special NEC subcommittee decided to interview Platts-Mills about his political activities. This predated the sending of the Nenni telegram by three days.

This chronicle of increasing political isolation must be complemented with an analysis of the Italian political situation. When the PCI leader, Palmiro Togliatti, returned from exile in Moscow to Italy in March 1944 he argued for the broadest possible front of antifascist forces. This alliance would embrace not just the socialists, but also the Christian Democrats. The policy could be characterised as an Italian application of the Popular Front strategy adopted at the seventh Comintern congress in 1935, and given added urgency with the entry of the Soviet Union into the war in June 1941. In Togliatti's view the circumstances of the fascist regime's collapse, with allied forces present in large numbers and advancing northwards, ruled out any prospect of socialist insurrection. Moreover the PCI's assessment of what was feasible was influenced by the Italian left's catastrophic interwar record. The concentration on the need for national unity to liberate the whole of Italy meant the postponement of any move towards political and social reforms. Radical pressures from below – be it from the resistance movement or from peasants' 'and workers' organisations – were stymied. Communists entered the Badoglio government in April 1944. Their prominence on the Italian left was a consequence of both their resistance to fascism and the wartime appeal of the Soviet Union. Such credibility facilitated the party's project of putting down strong bases in sections of Italian society. Such pragmatism was accompanied by thorough support for the Soviet Union and Stalin, and by effective democratic centralism. In contrast Nenni's socialists were divided and poorly organised, although they too were committed to the unity of the left – as with the PCI, this was a consequence of the traumas of 1921–22.

The feasibility of a radical alternative in postliberation Italy remains a matter for debate. The April 1945 insurrection against the Germans in northern cities was the resistance's heroic moment and arguably hinted at the potential for radical change. The PCI, however, stuck firmly to its strategy, and the antifascist parties continued to cooperate. Gradually the key elements on the centre right regained their confidence; the left's optimism about a progressive future became less credible. Beyond the facade of co-operation, Italian politics was polarising into two blocs. Their characteristics revealed much about the conflicts within Italian society over economic and social reform and the role of the Catholic Church, but they were also expressive of the polarities of the emerging Cold War. On the one side stood Christian Democracy, backed by the Church, employers and landowners, but with a genuinely popular base and a minority reforming wing. On the other stood the organised labour movement, the PCI and the PSI. Increasingly these polar blocs were identified with the prime powers in the Cold War: the United States and the Soviet Union.

When the Italian people voted on 2 June 1946 the cooperative ethos still had some credibility both in Italy and internationally, but there was declining hope that the wartime allies might succeed in establishing an agreed postwar European order. The poll had two elements. The electorate decided by referendum to terminate the monarchy and to establish a republic; they also elected a Constituent Assembly to produce a new constitution. The Christian Democrats emerged as the largest party, but the two parties of the left together had a stronger presence. Much to the PCI's surprise it fared marginally less well than the PSI.

The Christian Democrat prime minister, Alcide De Gasperi, used his electoral success to weaken the left's representation in the government. Their exclusion, however, was a riskier

**Principal parties, Constituent Assembly election, 2 June 1946**

	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Seats</i>
Christian Democracy	35.2	207
PSI	20.7	115
PCI	19.0	104

*Source:* Ginsborg [1990] p. 99.

enterprise. De Gasperi was very aware that the left had restrained radical initiatives since liberation, and that exclusion could mean the removal of such restraint. Moreover in late 1946 high inflation threatened the popularity of the Christian Democrats and heightened fear of social conflict. In January 1947 De Gasperi visited Washington and returned with a \$100 million loan. Doubtless discussions had included the need to marginalise the Italian left. Developments elsewhere suggested that the moment for exclusion was imminent. The sharpening of US foreign policy, as articulated in the Truman Doctrine, brought an explicitly anticommunist content into American statements about Italy. In May 1947 the French Communists were excluded from government for the first time since liberation; at the end of that month De Gasperi formed a government without the parties of the left.

The deteriorating international situation rapidly affected the strategy of the Italian left. The PCI's leaders attended the first meeting of the Cominform in Poland in September 1947. Stalin used the occasion to impose on communist parties a new and intransigent opposition to US foreign policy. One strand in the Soviet case was severe criticism of the PCI and its French counterpart for excessively conciliatory behaviour towards antiworking-class parties. Instead PCI strategy should reflect the division of the world into two blocs. Togliatti's characteristic response was to combine adherence to the Cominform line with the preservation of as much of the previous strategy as possible. Despite the PCI's involvement in the social protests of late 1947, it remained committed to the politics of the ballot box, not of the street. This meant planning for the election timetabled for April 1948, an agenda underpinned by impressive evidence of increasing party membership. In December 1947 the PCI and PSI agreed that they would fight the election on a united platform – a Democratic Popular Front.

The PSI was a battered ally. Giuseppe Saragat and the group, *Critica Sociale* had emerged as a significant opposition faction by the spring of 1946. Saragat spoke the language of social democracy, reform and anti-Stalinism; by November 1946 he was attacking the Nenni leadership's 'smoke screen of maximalism and fusionism' [Ginsborg (1990) 104]. Both Togliatti and De Gasperi hoped to benefit from secession from the PSI. The former would have a more amenable socialist ally; the latter could anticipate the sympathy of a new party towards any exercise in coalition construction. The split came in January 1947. Saragat and his supporters formed the Italian Social Democratic Party (PSDI) with the support of 52 of the 115 socialists elected to the Constituent Assembly in mid 1946.

The 1948 election was notable for extensive US interference in Italian affairs. Between January and March 1948 the Truman administration provided Italy with \$176 million of interim aid. Arrivals of American goods were given celebrity treatment. The Italian-American community bombarded Italians with anticommunist rhetoric. The exercise was given added impact by the events in Czechoslovakia, which were presented as an example of the Italy that would result from a left-wing victory. The resources of Catholicism – both material and spiritual – were mobilised. The American Catholic hierarchy gave its benediction to Washington's foreign policy. In Italy the Church effectively became part of the Christian Democrat campaign. Abstention or a vote for the left would be a mortal sin. Standing against sermons that urged

voters to protect God, the Church and the family, the left remained imprisoned in the optimism of its committed supporters. The new Czech regime was defended. The Popular Front's alternative economic programme was unclear, an indication of the diminishing choices available to the West European left.

If all else failed the United States was prepared to defend virtue by encouraging subversion of the electoral process. At the very least, further socialist divisions might undermine a left-wing majority; more ambitiously, military and financial encouragement might be given to an anticomunist insurrection. The election campaign saw US warships anchored in Italian ports [see Ginsborg (1990) 116]. Such preparations proved unnecessary as the left's defeat was decisive.

The Christian Democrats gained an overall majority of 305 seats of the 574 in the Chamber of Deputies. They took 48.5 per cent of the vote, 13.3 per cent more than in June 1946. Some of their advance was at the expense of smaller right-wing parties; in the north they also gained a significant number of urban working-class votes. The Saragat Social Democrats also demonstrated strength in the north, winning 33 seats. The decline in support for the left was a consequence of both the socialist split and the Christian Democrats' strength. Whereas in 1946 the PCI and the PSI had won 39.7 per cent of the vote, in April 1948 the Democratic Popular Front took only 31 per cent. Advances in the south were more than balanced by heavy losses further north. Moreover the Communists had secured hegemony on the left. The PCI's seats increased from 106 in 1946 to 140; the PSI's holdings declined from 115 (63 after the split) to 41. This was the complex politics in which the Nenni telegram was an intervention, a pattern of political alignments, influenced by the Cold War, but whose roots went back to prefascist Italy, and in some respects, to the Risorgimento. It is doubtful whether all the supporters of the Nenni telegram fully grasped the peculiarities of Italian politics. In order to understand the significance of the telegram within the Labour Party it is necessary to analyse its origins.

These appear to have been in mid March. Platts-Mills and the Labour Independent MP, D. N. Pritt, wrote to Konni Zilliacus claiming that the suggestion had come from a correspondent. In Pritt's case this was 'a Mr L. J. Carruthers ... a somewhat illegible and impassioned letter' [Pritt to Zilliacus, 18 March 1948, Zilliacus Papers]. Platts-Mills referred to 'one of my garrulous and tireless correspondents' [Platts-Mills to Zilliacus, 19 March 1948, loc. cit.] In each case the suggestion was understood to be one of support for the left as a whole: 'the Italian parties of the left' (Pritt), Nenni and 'the left bloc' (Platts-Mills). A different version was presented much later by Platts-Mills in his autobiography. He noted the contribution of the Willesden East MP, Maurice Orbach: 'He was a chess addict and in the chess room at parliament he introduced me to three young Italian journalists representing their Social Democratic Press. I think they may have started the idea among MPs' [Platts-Mills (2002) 275]. By 'Social Democratic' Platts-Mills meant the PSI and not the Saragat party, but already, as the possibility of a telegram was being mooted, the Labour Party's position on the two Italian parties was shifting.

Morgan Phillips (Labour Party general secretary) and Dennis Healey (secretary of the party's International Department) had visited Rome from 11–15 March. They had returned with a proposal that the International Sub-Committee of the NEC approved on 16 March. The Labour Party should try to shift international socialist backing from the PSI to the Saragat party, referred to in the resolution as 'Socialist Unity'. Should the attempt fail, the Labour Party should shift unilaterally. When the full NEC approved the proposal on 23 March, in effect it became party policy, but whether this was known by all those who subsequently supported the telegram is unclear. In the subsequent arguments, one prudential defence was to claim ignorance of the decision. After all the PSI had been the fraternal equivalent of the Labour Party since its return to legality in 1944.

However at least some of the signatories knew of the exit of two PSI delegates from the international socialist meeting in London on 19 and 20 March. Moreover the PSI was not represented at the socialist meeting held to discuss the Marshall Plan on 22 and 23 March.

One supporter of the telegram emphasised the hostility towards the PSI in his explanation of his decision.

Shortly before the Easter recess I discussed with a few other members, the possibility of sending a telegram of good wishes to the majority Italian Socialist Party led by Nenni.

My view at the time, was and still is, that the Nenni Party had been shabbily treated at the International Socialist Conference at Selsdon Park, and that they were the object of an unscrupulous political campaign directed by the Vatican and the American State Department.

I thought it right to let them know that they still had some friends in the British Labour Movement who realised that they offered to the Italian workers the only acceptable alternative to the ramshackle capitalism of the De Gasperi Government and to the neo-Fascism of the extreme Right Groups.

The fact that they had entered into an electoral agreement with the Communists was, in my view, a matter of internal political tactics with which no outside body had any right to interfere [William Warbey, *Daily Herald*, 22 April 1948].

Warbey noted that by 24 March he had agreed to support a message. His rationale was probably typical of the better informed supporters of the telegram: a critical view of the United States and by implication of the British government, support for socialist unity as a tactic, and a belief that the Cold War had not yet closed down progressive alternatives. Schneer named Warbey as one of the people who had canvassed for broader support, along with Platts-Mills, Orbach, Zilliacus, Tom Braddock and Herschel Austin [Schneer (1988) 111]. Also involved was S. O. Davies [see Platts-Mills (2002) 278 and material in the Platts-Mills Papers].

Some sense of the style of signature-gathering is evident in an unsigned hand-written note to Tom Braddock [Platts-Mills Papers]. The undated note is in Platts-Mills' handwriting and suggests a last minute attempt to widen the telegram's basis of support, especially amongst trade union members. In a few instances Platts-Mills presented arguments that Braddock might use. Three potentially sympathetic trade union members were highlighted because of their participation in an East European trip identified as 'Zilli's Tour'. A South Wales Miners' MP, David Grenfell, should be shown 'the miners' names'. In fact there was only one to show – the atypical S. O. Davies. Platts-Mills felt that the left-wing Manchester MP, Will Griffiths would be 'a certainty if asked'. He might well have been right. More than 20 years later Griffiths claimed that he would have signed, and had admitted as much to his whip, but he had been away from the Commons on the final Friday [Will Griffiths, interview]. In addition, Platts-Mills sketched the vacillations of Ernest Fernyhough the MP for Jarrow.

He signed, but then asked to withdraw on the ground that it would harm him in the union USDAW (Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers). Show him all the recent TU boys who are on it, and explain that it will strengthen him' [this and earlier quotations from a draft letter headed 'Dear Tom' in the Platts-Mills Papers].

Several MPs were approached but declined to sign; others were considered as possible supporters but were not contacted (see the lists in the appendix to this note). Some of those who refused had earlier records of dissent over foreign policy, including Seymour Cocks, George Thomas, Leah Manning, Ben Levy and Ronald Chamberlain. One who did not sign was Tom Driberg. In his case the refusal was prudential: he was taking legal action against a local newspaper in his Maldon constituency that had suggested he was close to being a fellow traveller. Support for the telegram might weaken his case, a judgement that in itself demonstrated the diminishing space for dissent over foreign policy [Driberg, interview]. The extent to which those who gave their consent anticipated the subsequent controversy is unclear. Harold Davies, for one, claimed in retrospect that he had had no illusions [Harold Davies, interview].

Certainly, by Friday 16 April the scope for any illusion was minimal. Knowledge of the initiative was widespread amongst Labour MPs. A fervently anticommunist Labour backbencher, Raymond Blackburn, raised the issue in the Commons. Having attacked one left-winger, John Mack, for his views on Bulgaria, he turned to the Italian question.

I understand that some 20 or more Members of the Labour Party today sent out a message on the subject of the Italian elections. Some of those hon. Members were Members who made speeches on the subject of Greece. I will only say that in sending a message to Italy inviting Italy to join the Communist conspiracy against freedom, they have shown themselves to be traitors to the cause of the Labour Party and to the cause of freedom and democracy [*Hansard*, 16 April 1948, cols 1404–5].

Blackburn could perhaps be dismissed as a maverick, but the Foreign Office minister, Hector McNeil, could not; he responded by noting that the Labour Party had declared for the Saragat party [*ibid.*, col. 1406]. Blackburn was mistaken; the telegram had not yet been sent. According to Platts-Mills' own account, he was subsequently attempting to dictate its contents over the telephone when another signatory, Geoffrey Bing, arrived to say that the whips were threatening supporters of the telegram with expulsion [Platts-Mills (2002) 277]. Platts-Mills thought about deferring the transmission until discussions could be held, but it was Friday evening and the signatories would be travelling to their constituencies, so wider consultations would be difficult. Instead he acted on his own initiative. At about 9.00 p.m. he drove in his new Daimler to an all-night post office in the City of London, where he sent the telegram. The message was simple and made no reference to a popular front: 'Greetings to our Italian Socialist comrades and warm hopes for your triumph in the election'. Attached were the names of 37 Labour MPs plus D. N. Pritt. The inclusion of the Labour Independent was enough to give the enterprise a fellow-travelling character in the eyes of some. Platts-Mills then contacted the news agencies and several newspapers.

News of the telegram's transmission was followed rapidly by the denial by some that they had ever given their support to the initiative. On Monday 19 April the *Daily Herald* quoted four MPs, all of whom had some record as foreign policy critics. John Baird denied all knowledge of the telegram; Stan Tiffany insisted that he had refused to sign; Fred Longden admitted knowledge of the telegram but no more; Lyall Wilkes simply issued a disclaimer. Two of the quartet later elaborated on the issue in the Commons. The issue had been raised there by Blackburn on 19 April, had been taken up by the Conservative opposition, and had culminated in a debate on 27 May. Wilkes suggested that the inclusion of his name had simply been a misunderstanding

#### Nenni telegram supporters, as transmitted on 16 April 1948

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W. T. Adams*	S. O. Davies	N. H. Lever	Julius Silverman
Herschel Austin	Will Dobbie	Fred Longden*	Sydney Silverman
John Baird*	Norman Dodds*	J. D. Mack	L. J. Solley
A. Balfour*	J. Evans*	W. McAdam*	Stephen Swinger
Percy Barstow	W. J. Farthing*	Walter Monslow*	Stanley Tiffany*
Geoffrey Bing	G. House*	Maurice Orbach	Wilfred Vernon
Tom Braddock	Emrys Hughes	Ben Parkin*	William Warbey
W. G. Cove	H. Lester Hutchinson	John Platts-Mills	Ellen Wills*
Harold Davies	A. J. Irvine*	Charles Royle	Lyall Wilkes*
			Konni Zilliacus

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\*Subsequently withdrew support or claimed never to have given it in the first place.

[*Hansard*, 27 May 1948, cols 469–72]. Baird's recollection in late May was not that of someone who had been completely unaware of the initiative. He acknowledged that he had had a discussion with Platts-Mills:

So far as I recalled the suggestion was made that some gesture should be made to the Nenni Socialists. I showed certain sympathy with that point of view. I will be honest about it ... in certain aspects of foreign policy I agree with the hon Member for Finsbury. However I categorically state ... that I on no occasion gave the hon Member for Finsbury my authority to use my name [*ibid.*, col. 472].

The gathering of supporters had been somewhat disorganised [see Platts-Mills, *ibid.*, col. 445]. A note in the Platts-Mills Papers suggests that amongst those who withdrew or denied their support, two had been recruited by Braddock (Irvine and House), two by S. O. Davies (Farthing and Wills) and four, including three of the controversial ones, by Platts-Mills (Baird, Wilkes, Monslow and Longden). Understandings between canvassers and putative signatories might well have been ambiguous. Platts-Mills was ready to acknowledge this:

Looking back ... it seems to me quite possible that the somewhat ill-organised and haphazard way of collecting adherents to the message might very well have left some of them with the idea that they would be consulted again when the agreed number had been collected. Such a reference back was never asked for, nor agreed upon, but I would be the last to rule out the possibility of a misunderstanding [Platts-Mills to Morgan Phillips, 24 April 1948, Platts-Mills Papers].

Such uncertainties perhaps allowed an escape clause when the signatories became aware of the threat of discipline. For Baird, such awareness came in the shape of Herbert Morrison, who spoke in his Wolverhampton constituency on 17 April – the day that the telegram and its signatories were headlined in the *Daily Herald* [Schnee (1988) 112]. Baird's thorough and rapid recantation and his later more measured response might not have been the whole story. One piece of evidence suggests that Baird's involvement with the telegram might have been more substantial. A member of the Socialist Medical Association, Charles Robertson, wrote to Platts-Mills on 19 April about an encounter with Baird six days earlier in the Commons: 'he jubilantly informed us he had just been speaking to you, and that he was collecting signatures for the Nenni telegram' [copy, Charles Robertson to Platts-Mills, 19 April 1948, Platts-Mills Papers; see also letter of 22 April and reply on 26 April].

As well as the four who had denied signing, three others who withdrew their support had records of left-wing criticism: Norman Dodds, Ben Parkin and, to a lesser extent, Walter Monslow. Several others might well have given their support without much awareness of the substantive issues or the leadership's probable reaction. They therefore readily withdrew their support. In two cases explanations were offered that were unflattering in personal terms. Ellen Wills and W. J. Farthing claimed that they had given their backing to the telegram in the belief that it would be sent to the Saragat party. In both cases the canvasser had been S. O. Davies. The arguments he had used are not known, although a patronising description of the securing of Wills' signature is included in Platts-Mills' autobiography (2002, p. 278).

The 22 who were prepared to maintain their backing for the telegram in the face of disciplinary pressure became known as the 'Nenni Goats'. They included one anomaly. The Salford West MP Charles Royle, had written to Platts-Mills to ask that his name not be attached to the telegram. His message had arrived too late [*ibid.*, pp. 278–6], but in the face of disciplinary threats he stood firm. The 'Nenni Goats' included only three members of the Keep Left group. Two of them, Geoffrey Bing and Stephen Swingler, had been involved in Popular Front politics; both were Oxford educated, the only ones amongst the 22. The third, Harold Davies, was a close friend of Stephen Swingler. Most of the remainder had come from white-collar occupations: the law, education, journalism and in one case, Braddock, architecture. Three had significant trade union experience. Percy Barstow had cleaned locomotives, then become a clerk and eventually

an office manager at the headquarters of the National Union of Railwaymen. S. O. Davies had been an agent in the South Wales Miners' Federation and, in the 1920s, a prominent member of the Miners' Minority Movement. The most eminent trade unionist, Will Dobbie, had been employed in the York carriage works of the North Eastern Railway and had served two terms as president (a lay office) of the NUR. He had been the first Labour lord mayor of York; his tenure had coincided with the unexpected election of the first Labour government, and his second mayoral term coincided with his support for the Nenni telegram.

The Nenni Goats had a much broader age profile than Keep Left. At least 10 had been born before 1900, the oldest, Dobbie, in 1878. Formative political experiences therefore included debates on the Edwardian left, the pre-1914 industrial militancy, the 1914–18 war and the Bolshevik Revolution. Barstow had joined the Social Democratic Federation in 1906 and became an active propagandist. Dobbie had been a city councillor in York from 1911. S. O. Davies had been party to the radicalisation of sections of the South Wales coalfield between 1910 and 1926. Emrys Hughes, son-in-law of Keir Hardie, had been deeply involved in the controversies of the Independent Labour Party. Zilliacus had been a member of the Allied Military Mission to Siberia and subsequently worked in the League of Nations secretariat. Five had been returned to the Commons prior to 1945: Cove (1923), Dobbie (1933), S. O. Davies (1934), Sydney Silverman (1935) and Barstow (1941). Later crises and campaigns had also been influential, not least the Popular Front mobilisation of the 1930s.

Such diverse experiences suggest that the Nenni Goats were unlikely to be politically uniform. In some sense it would be reasonable to assert that all had accepted the ideal of a socialist unity that included Communists and to some degree rejected the alignments of the Cold War. The most obvious examples were those who were subsequently expelled from the party as alleged fellow travellers. Yet even for this group, three observations can be made. First, their expulsion, with the exception of that of Platts-Mills, occurred when the Cold War had been intensified by the Berlin crisis and the negotiations that preceded the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. To see these outcomes as immanent in the events of April 1948 may be a simplification. Second, the expelled MPs might have been distinguishable more on account of their naïveté and inflexibility than their views. As another Nenni Goat, Geoffrey Bing, admitted in mid 1949 when opposing the expulsion of Solley and Zilliacus, 'If I am not at this time in the same position as that in which they are, that is because I have been, somehow or other, more adroit than they have been in not being put in a position where I had to declare myself' [*Labour Party Conference Report* (1949) 120–1]. Third, even this small section was not monolithic, as Zilliacus's support for Tito in his quarrel with Stalin would demonstrate.

In 1949 the NEC seriously considered the political record of one Nenni Goat, Herschel Austin, prior to his endorsement as a candidate for the forthcoming election. Austin's political profile had some features in common with those who were expelled. He had supported both German unity telegrams, and had backed Communist Party affiliation to the Labour Party in 1946. But he had clearly separated his position from that of the Communists, whilst suggesting as late as the autumn of 1948 a consideration that perhaps lay behind his support for the Nenni telegram: 'Let us not confuse prejudice against the Communists with the legitimate interests and rights of the working-classes in Europe' [*Hansard*, 27 October 1948, col. 194]. Austin survived the interview but was defeated at the 1950 election. Emrys Hughes' record was also scrutinised, but less thoroughly. He was a longstanding critic of the internal policies of the Soviet Union, and not least of the show trials of the 1930s. Certainly Sydney Silverman, and arguably Braddock, Vernon and Warbey, belonged to a broad left socialist tradition that could not be characterised as procommunist. Sometimes such sentiments could fuel positive appraisals of developments in Eastern Europe. John Mack was a colourful orator whose enthusiasms led him to be known as 'the King of Bulgaria' [Bealey *et al.* (1965) 96].

Beyond the question of ideological identity stood that of fixity – or perhaps rigidity – of purpose. In his 1945 election campaign Barstow had stressed the need for socialist unity: 'Our destiny as a nation does not lie with being linked up with the financiers of Wall Street, but with



the Socialist States of Europe' [*Pontefract Express*, 29 June 1945]. Such sentiments had not been unusual in the summer of 1945, but three years later many of Barstow's colleagues had doubts about their feasibility. Fixity of purpose could be resourced by a bloody mindedness that refused to buckle under political pressure. Royle's decision to stand with the other signatories was one example; so too was S. O. Davies's political style over several decades. Davies was firmly on the left; Dobbie was less clearly so, but his politics evinced a similar stylistic quality. Cove was arguably a disappointed man whose long parliamentary career had been spent wholly on the back benches. Orbach and Julius Silverman were chess players who aligned themselves unostentatiously with the left. The youngest signatory, Harold Lever, was a sporadic presence in the postwar parliament. He had been involved with some left-wing campaigns in the late 1930s [Will Griffiths, interview], but was perhaps the most improbable 'Nenni Goat'.

The vigour of the leadership's response rapidly became apparent in a letter sent by the party's general secretary, Morgan Phillips, to all alleged signatories on Monday 19 April. The letter asked whether such support had been given, and whether the signatories had any other observations to make. The previous day Platts-Mills, Austin, Braddock and Zilliacus had met and sent all the signatories a letter inviting them to a meeting on Tuesday 20 April. Nine of the signatories – Platts-Mills, Julius Silverman, Lever, Bing, Swingler, Harold Davies, Mack, Hughes and Orbach – subsequently sent a joint reply to Phillips. This attempted to narrow the issue. The merits of a Popular Front were not raised; rather the nine emphasised that they had supported a party that had been recognised by the Labour Party since 1944 – 'not the Saragat breakaway, but the official Socialist Party'. They supplemented this argument with a reference to the freedom of individual MPs [Copy in Zilliacus Papers]. In contrast to this measured response, S. O. Davies wrote his own letter attacking Phillips' request as 'most offensive and utterly unworthy of our great Movement' [Schneer (1988) 113–14].

Yet the pressures were intensifying. On 21 April, Platts-Mills met the special NEC sub-committee. Its members included Attlee, Morrison, Dalton and the Durham Miners' leader, Sam Watson, senior figures who could be trusted to be firm in the pursuit of fellow travellers. Platts-Mills was presented with a four-page statement of his alleged misdemeanours over the previous two years, including articles, speeches and statements. Invited to reply, Platts-Mills did so on 24 April in the letter to Morgan Phillips cited earlier. Four days later a full meeting of the NEC expelled him. Although the topic of Nenni telegram had been raised during the interview with Platts-Mills on 21 April, the ground for expulsion was 'his general political conduct' [NEC Minutes, 28 April 1948]. The essential charge was captured in a question allegedly put to Platts-Mills by Herbert Morrison: 'Were there any issues on which he disagreed with the Communist Party?' [Jackson (1968) 204].

Stylistically and politically Platts-Mills might have been an easily detachable critic. Yet inevitably his rapid expulsion intensified the pressure on the remaining 21 'Nenni Goats'. At the NEC sub-committee meeting on 21 April, once Platts-Mills' interview had ended, attention had shifted to the party's response to those who would not withdraw their support for the telegram. A second letter from Phillips was sent the following day. This claimed that the telegram was 'an open defiance of Labour Party principles and policy', and the signatories must withdraw their support for the telegram and promise not to commit similar breaches in future. The 21 were becoming increasingly isolated. Both the *New Statesman* and *Tribune* criticised their behaviour. One possible consequence of this pressure was that they would fragment, leaving an exposed few to share the fate of Platts-Mills.

The unrepentant signatories met on 26 April and responded collectively to Phillips' second letter.

When our telegram was sent we were not aware that the NEC had formally withdrawn recognition from the Italian Socialist Party which it had recognised since 1944, nor do we see how we could have known, since we can find no report of this decision in this press, nor was it communicated to the Parliamentary Labour Party [copy in Zilliacus Papers].

The signatories emphasised their lengthy membership of the party and insisted there was no question of any breach of its constitution. Their reply met with a predictably bleak response from the NEC; having expelled Platts-Mills, the NEC authorised Phillips to issue an ultimatum to the 21 who were standing firm.

The Executive has noted that a number of Members of Parliament persist in acting as a group in organised opposition to Party policy. In these circumstances I have been directed to write to each of the Members alleged to have signed the message of good wishes to the Nenni Communist combination ... and who have neither repudiated their alleged adherence to the message nor withdrawn such adherence, and to inform them that unless they individually undertake by first post Thursday 6 May 1948 to desist in future from such conduct, they are excluded from membership of the Labour Party [Labour Party Conference Report (1948) 17].

Three points can be made about this demand. First, it was inaccurate to suggest that these 21 signatories were an organised group. This was the only occasion on which they acted together. Their political backgrounds and priorities were diverse. Second, the telegram had not been sent to 'the Nenni Communist combination', as several of the signatories subsequently pointed out. Finally, the ultimatum incorporated a modification of the original position, as decided by the NEC subcommittee a week earlier. The full NEC modified that proposal by removing the requirement that the signatories 'withdraw their adherence to the message' [for the modification see NEC Minutes, 28 April 1948]. The rationale behind this change is not included in the minutes; it clearly lessened the risk of a potentially disastrous split amongst the Nenni Goats.

Nevertheless some of the 21 were acutely aware that the modified ultimatum required a judicious response. A note in the Zilliacus Papers indicates how the political heterogeneity of the signatories limited the strategic options.

If the 21 signatories of the telegram to Nenni had stood together to defy the Executive, it is highly probable that the NEC would not have dared to expel them all. But the Right Wing in the NEC had no intention of treating the signatories as a group; to begin with some of them had previously signed a message to the Germany Unity Socialists, whereas the majority had not. This offered one possible line of cleavage. Others had long records of opposing the Government foreign policy and could be singled out for this reason. In any case it became clear from the outset that there was no chance whatever of mobilising and holding together the signatories in a united policy of defiance. The accident that had brought them together could not dispose of the fact that their political backgrounds, outlook and record were very different, and that most of them had no idea of risking expulsion on an issue that was doubly compromised, first by the withdrawal or contesting of the genuineness of 15 out of the 37 signatures. Second, because of the issue of defying Party discipline [Note on the Nenni Telegram Controversy, Zilliacus Papers].

The signatories' response was to send individual replies that made collectively agreed points. Twelve of them – Austin, Barstow, Bing, Braddock, Cove, Harold Davies, S. O. Davies, Dobbie, Lever, Sydney Silverman, Warbey and Zilliacus – worked on a draft reply [see Zilliacus Papers]. The wider group met on 4 May to discuss the result. The proposed common elements covered an assurance of no support for any party that was in conflict with the British Labour Party, insistence that the telegram had been sent to the PSI and not to 'the Nenni-Communist combination', and a commitment that any future disagreement with the NEC would be limited to that permitted by the constitution [note from Braddock, 30 April 1948, Vernon Papers]. Yet these concessions barely masked continuing differences over the wisdom of defiance. The specific elements of some individual responses – for example those by Vernon, Solley, Sydney Silverman

and S. O. Davies – suggested that acquiescence was merely tactical. Vernon gave the required assurances, but his reply was hardly conciliatory: ‘I bitterly resent your letter of April 28 which by having been given to the press, entirely misrepresents me to my constituents. It contains implications of motive and charges of conduct which are entirely untrue’ [copy, Vernon to Morgan Phillips, 5 May 1948, Vernon Papers]. Whatever the style of the responses, for the NEC this was the end of the affair. The outcome appears anticlimactic: written assurances about the future and, apart from Platts-Mills, no punishment for past actions. Yet during the controversy no ‘Nenni Goat’ defended cooperation with Communists. At least for Labour parliamentarians, such public support was no longer acceptable.

The brute facts of the Cold War cohabited with much residual feeling within the Labour Party that the government had failed to pursue a socialist foreign policy. Such sentiments endured despite the diminishing options, and did not indicate, in most cases, pro-Communist or pro-Soviet sympathies. This arguably limited the freedom of party disciplinarians, as underlined by the few problems encountered by the 21 in their constituency parties. Swingler received firm support from the Stafford party and Bing had unanimous backing from the Hornchurch party executive. In the general management committee his position was endorsed by a vote of 92 to four. Even in the loyalist Yorkshire coalfield, Barstow had few problems and he attended a meeting of the Pontefract party in late May. His defence emphasised not left-wing priorities but his ignorance of the changed relationship between the PSI and the Labour Party. An earlier call for his resignation had been made by the Goole local party, but at the full constituency meeting the proposal failed to find a second. Barstow’s explanation was accepted unanimously [*Daily Herald*, 22 April 1948 (Swingler); Schneer (1988) 165–74; (Bing) *Pontefract Express*, 4 June 1948 (Barstow)].

The mood within the PLP seems to have been temperate. There was general concern that the matter should be settled internally and that a Conservative demand for a parliamentary inquiry into the legitimacy of some signatures should be resisted. Several Labour MPs had a strong sense that divisive steps should be avoided; the NEC’s ultimatum and the consequential responses from the 21 could be seen as steps to restore harmony. The matter was discussed at a PLP meeting on 5 May just before the deadline set by the NEC. Two sources refer to this episode. A brief reference in Hugh Gaitskell’s diary indicates that Emmanuel Shinwell, that year’s party chairman and a minister, thought that expulsions were undesirable. The specific reference is to Shinwell’s ‘shocking speech about the Nenni business, trying to give the impression that very obviously he had not really agreed with the Executive’s decision’ [Williams (1983) 65]. In fact Gaitskell had not been present at the meeting; the Shinwell characterisation had been given to him by a colleague, Kenneth Younger. No doubt it confirmed Gaitskell’s strong distrust of Shinwell. However the reference also indicates a durable distinction in the postwar PLP between disciplinarians and reconcilers.

The second, much more extensive reference, to the PLP meeting is in the Vernon Papers. Wilfrid Vernon seems to have been one of the more contumacious ‘Nenni Goats’ and his account should be assessed accordingly. He too noted Shinwell’s view that expulsions were undesirable and emphasised what he saw as effective contributions from three signatories (Braddock, Bing and Warbey), a Keep Left supporter, Ernest Millington, and the – in this controversy – prudent Driberg. He characterised the party leaders – Attlee and Morrison – as making the best of a difficult case. His verdict that ‘the extreme Right Wing in the NEC and the Government had suffered a severe setback’ was mistaken. There was no purge, but limits were laid down in respect of acceptable behaviour.

In mid May the Labour Party conference was held in Scarborough. A delegate from the Haldane Society moved the suspension of standing orders in order to permit Platts-Mills to address the conference on his expulsion. The attempt failed, although it secured 1 403 000 votes. Clearly some left-inclined trade unions were prepared to oppose the leadership on the issue. However the overall mood was not divisive. One signatory acknowledged the end of the controversy: ‘Nobody in the Conference wished to raise the issue of the Nenni telegram or to gratify the Tory press anxiety that there would be washing of dirty linen on this question’ [Emrys Hughes, *Forward*, 22 May 1948].

Thereafter the 'Nenni Goats' went their diverse ways. Solley, Hutchinson and Zilliacus were expelled from the Labour Party in 1949. Together with Platts-Mills, they stood unsuccessfully in the 1950 election. Apart from Hutchinson, who opposed Attlee in West Walthamstow, their votes were credible. Zilliacus was readmitted to the Labour Party in 1952 and was re-elected to the Commons at the 1955 general election. Solley was readmitted in 1958 and Platts-Mills in 1969. Will Dobbie died in January 1950; at the following month's election Austin, Braddock, Swingler and Warbey were all defeated. Barstow retired, and according to some accounts subsequently joined the Communist Party. Mack retired at the 1951 election, accompanied by rumours of dubious financial practices [Ranney (1965) 187–8]. Vernon was defeated in 1951, as was Bing at the 1955 election. The latter became Kwame Nkrumah's attorney general. Swingler took Mack's place in Newcastle under Lyme in the 1951 election. Until 1964 his reputation remained that of a firm left-winger, an active Bevanite and a member of Victory for Socialism. From 1964 he served as a minister in the Wilson government, earning praise from across the political spectrum for his work at the Ministry of Transport. In contrast Warbey returned to the Commons in 1953 and became a more thorough critic of the party leadership. His opposition to the Wilson government's Vietnam policy arguably led to his early retirement in 1966. Braddock's repeated attempts to return to the Commons were unsuccessful. NEC refusals to endorse him as a candidate were followed by contests in hopeless constituencies.

Cove, Orbach, Royle and Julius Silverman had uneventful careers on the back benches. In contrast Emrys Hughes was a prominent back-bench critic, his opposition to the Korean War and the cost of the royal family was in the style of the ILP or an older nineteenth-century radicalism. From the back benches Sydney Silverman played a leading role in the abolition of capital punishment. S. O. Davies remained an individualistic critic; his electoral appeal in Merthyr was evident at the 1970 election when, discarded by his local party on the ground of age, he comfortably retained the seat. Harold Davies stood firmly and prominently on the left throughout the years in opposition. He was appointed to a number of junior ministerial posts by Wilson, and his mission to North Vietnam on behalf of the government secured much publicity – this was essentially a ploy to deflect criticism within the party. The least likely Nenni Goat, Harold Lever, seemed for many years to be a thoroughgoing backbencher, but he became a senior cabinet figure in the Labour governments of the 1970s.

The 'Nenni Goats' were not an ideologically coherent group, let alone a pro-Communist faction. Rather they were a small collection of Labour MPs from diverse backgrounds who gave their support to a telegram. Some saw the issue as controversial, others simply as expressing support for a fraternal party. One characteristic they did share was that when faced with disciplinary pressure they did not recant. Their motives ranged from commitment and – in a few cases – a taste for martyrdom, to straightforward obstinacy. The Nenni telegram acquired symbolic status in the development of Cold War alignments. This assessment is important, but the political complexities that underpinned the controversy are of equal significance as they offer insights into the culture of the post-1945 Labour Party, and especially of its MPs.

## Appendix

The Platts-Mills Papers contains material on Labour MPs who declined to support the Nenni telegram when approached. A typed list consists of the following names.

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Seymour Cocks	Fred Lee	Hayden [sic] Guest	PPSs, various
John Lewis	Ashley Bramall	Ellis Smith	O. G. Willey
George Thomas	John Haire	R. Sorensen	H. B. Morgan
Leah Manning	Woodrow Wyatt	B. Stross	Ben Levy
Barbara Ayrton Gould	George Chetwynd	T. Horabin	Ronald Chamberlain

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Added in ink were S. Jeger, G (Jeger), Skinnard and Shackleton. A second list contains signatures in different handwritings – mostly that of Platts-Mills with additions in another ink. No comment is attached to these. They may be refusals or suggested signatories who were not approached. Some of these, indicated by an asterisk, also appeared in the ‘Dear Tom’ note discussed in the main text:

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G. Jeger	Scollan	Rhys Davies*
Ellis Smith	Som Hastings	Skeff Lodge?*
A. Allen*	Tom Horabin	D. Grenfell
C. White?*	A. J. Irvine	B. Stross*
Joe Champion*	Woodrow Wyatt	

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Additional names suggested in the ‘Dear Tom’ note were		
D. J. Williams,	Mellersh (possibly Mellish)	Ernie Fernyhough,
D. E. Thomas,	Peter Freeman	
G. Deer,	Will Griffiths (apparently Griffiths would have signed if he had been asked)	

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It is highly improbable that some of these would have lent their support. If ‘Mellersh’ was Bob Mellish, this Catholic, TGWU-sponsored backbencher was unlikely to support the PSI, with its alliance with the Communists. George Deer might have been a founding member of the Communist Party of Great Britain, but by 1948 he was a thoroughly loyal backbencher. He too was sponsored by the TGWU. There was at least one confusion of identity. ‘C. White?’ – expanded to ‘Charlie White’ in the ‘Dear Tom’ letter – referred to the Labour MP for West Derbyshire, a former Liberal who had resigned the Labour candidacy and won the seat sensationally as an independent at a 1944 by-election. He is noted by Platts-Mills as having gone on ‘Zilli’s Tour’ to Eastern Europe in October 1947. Charles White had not been present, although Henry White, the MP for North East Derbyshire and an NUM loyalist, had participated. In fact all in ‘Zilli’s’ group were targeted for support, that is, alongside Zilliacus himself, and Bing, Ben Parkin, George Thomas, Fred Lee, Henry White, A. J. Champion and A. C. Allen [see Potts (2002) 90 for photograph].

Although there were obvious misunderstandings and naïveté on the part of the telegram’s instigators, several of those who were unsuccessfully approached did have some record of dissent on foreign policy. However by the spring of 1948 they had accommodated themselves to the rigours of the Cold War or had some awareness that in disciplinary terms association with the telegram could be perilous. Many thought that some Labour MPs were unreasonably pro-Soviet and that association with initiatives by such people – Platts-Mills and Zilliacus being prime examples – was best avoided.

**Sources:** (1) MSS: Platts-Mills Papers, Brynmor Jones Library, University of Hull; Vernon Papers, British Library of Political and Economic Science, London; S. O. Davies Papers, University of Wales Swansea; Zilliacus Papers, Labour Party ‘Lost Sheep File’, Labour Party National Executive Committee Minutes, National Museum of Labour History, Manchester. (2) **The Nenni Telegram in Hansard:** vol. 449, cols 1404–6, (16 April 1948), cols 1447–50 (19 April 1948), cols 1628–30 (20 April 1948), cols 2011–17 (22 April 1948); vol. 450, cols. 612–14, 29 April 1948, cols. 1967–8, (11 May 1948); vol. 451, cols 435–87 (27 May 1948). (3) **Books:** Leon Epstein, *Britain – Uneasy Ally* (Chicago, 1954); Raymond Blackburn, *I Am An*

*Alcoholic* (1959); Eugene Meehan, *The British Left Wing and Foreign Policy* (New Brunswick, NJ., 1960); D. N. Pritt, *The Labour Government 1945–51* (1963); F. Bealey, J. Blondel and W. P. McCann, *Constituency Politics. A Study of Newcastle Under Lyme* (1965); Austen Ranney, *Pathways to Parliament* (1965); Robert Jackson, *Rebels and Whips. An Analysis of Dissension, Discipline and Cohesion in British Political Parties* (1968); M. R. Gordon, *Conflict and Consensus in Labour's Foreign Policy 1914–65* (Stanford, 1969); Emrys Hughes, *Sydney Silverman. Rebel in Parliament* (1969); Philip Williams (ed.), *The Diary of Hugh Gaitskell 1945–1956* (1983); Kenneth O. Morgan, *Labour in Power 1945–51* (Oxford, 1984); Jonathan Schneer, *Labour's Conscience. The Labour Left 1945–51* (1988); Peter Weiler, *British Labour and the Cold War* (Stanford, 1988); Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy 1943–88* (1990); John Saville, *The Politics of Continuity: British Foreign Policy and the Labour Government 1945–6* (1993); John Platts-Mills QC, *Muck, Silk and Socialism. Recollections of a Left-wing Queen's Counsel* (Wedmore, Somerset 2002); Archie Potts, *Zilliacus. A Life for Peace and Socialism* (2002). (4) **Interviews conducted by David Howell in 1969:** Harold Davies, Tom Driberg, Will Griffiths.

DAVID HOWELL

*See also:* S. O. DAVIES; †Konni ZILLIACUS; Tom BRADDOCK; Lyall WILKES; †Stephen SWINGLER.

**BROWN, George Alfred (Lord George-Brown) (1914–1985)**

DEPUTY LEADER OF THE LABOUR PARTY, LABOUR MP, TRADE UNION OFFICIAL

George Brown was born in Lambeth, London on 2 September 1914, the eldest of four children. His father, also called George Brown, was a chauffeur to officers in the Army Service Corps and later a van driver; his mother was Rosina Harriet Brown (née Mason). His commitment to Labour politics was initially shaped by the poverty of his working-class background. Soon after his birth the family moved to Southwark, where they occupied two rooms in a barrack-like series of ugly flats, sharing washing facilities with other residents on a communal landing. When his father was sacked by his employers for bringing fellow van workers out during the 1926 general strike, George was required to go to the local workhouse to collect the family ration of food, consisting of bread and treacle.

Brown was educated at Gray Street Elementary School and passed an entrance exam to attend West Square Central School in Southwark. Central schools offered a broader course of study than the elementary schools that most children from poor backgrounds attended between the wars. However Brown left before taking formal exams in order to help contribute to the family income; the strain on this income had increased with the arrival of two sisters and a younger brother, Ronald, who also became a Labour MP. As a teenager Brown developed an interest in politics, campaigning for George Isaacs, the Labour candidate in Southwark North in the 1929 general election. He was much influenced by a local Anglican vicar, the Reverend John Sankey, who combined High Church religious practice with a deep commitment to social justice. Brown also became active in the Labour Party League of Youth, which introduced him to the world of factional divisions among rank-and-file activists.

For several years Brown's growing interest in politics was subordinated to the needs of earning a living. This he did initially as a clerk with a firm of merchants in the City of London and then by working in the fur department of John Lewis's Oxford Street store, where he was responsible for beating fur skins with a cane as a moth preventative. When he was 17 he was promoted to junior salesman, and for the next few years he made a good living from commission, having more money, 'relatively speaking', than he was to earn until he became a Cabinet minister [Brown (1972) 28].

In April 1937, at the age of 22, Brown married Sophie Levine, the second of three daughters of Solomon and Kate Levine, a Jewish couple living in the East End who had been prime movers in the founding of the Mile End Labour Party. Her father was a bookbinder, a trade she also followed on leaving school. Brown and his wife moved to a semidetached house in Barnet, North London, but he found his employment at John Lewis difficult to reconcile with his increasing trade union and political activities. He spent two years as a union ledger clerk at the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) office in Finsbury Park, attempting to support his family, which grew with the arrival of two daughters; he was eventually appointed as a full-time official of the TGWU in the post of Watford district organiser. At that time the union was firmly under the control of Ernest Bevin; Brown, like his leader, became concerned with political as well as industrial issues.

Before long Brown had become secretary of the St Albans Labour Party and tried without success to get elected to his local council. His chance of a career in politics was much improved after he came to prominence at Labour's 1939 annual conference, held in Southport. With great nerve and skill, Brown made a considerable impression during a debate on the expulsion of Sir Stafford Cripps, Aneurin Bevan and George Strauss. The basic issue was their support for a popular front that would unite all progressive forces, including Communists, against fascism. He was called to speak by the conference chairman, George Dallas, another influential figure with a TGWU background. Brown won loud applause when he expressed his annoyance at spending 'nine blasted months' discussing the fate of Cripps [*Labour Party Conference Report*, pp. 235–6]. The speech was effective, not decisive; the votes of the main unions were already decided. Brown had made a name for himself, although one consequence was that Cripps refused to speak to him thereafter, even when both men later served in the same government. However he secured the patronage of Hugh Dalton:

His speech was a real knockout ... I told him afterwards that, when he became a prospective Parliamentary candidate, I would come and speak for him. I did, at Belper some years later, and some years later still, when I was Chancellor of the Exchequer, he was my Parliamentary Private Secretary [Dalton (1957) 219].

Two further factors worked to Brown's personal advantage in the war years. One was that as a union official he was exempted from military service. Unlike many young hopefuls who were serving in the armed forces abroad when the time came to seek parliamentary seats, Brown remained on the home front dealing with production hold-ups and disputes in the aircraft and armaments factories of north London. This experience also confirmed his politically moderate views as he fought against what he saw as the obstructionism of Communists in the workplace. The second factor in Brown's favour was his friendship with George Dallas, who for many years had been the Labour candidate for the parliamentary constituency of Belper in Derbyshire. Dallas decided that he would be too old to stand in a postwar election, so instead he threw his weight behind Brown's bid for the nomination. Belper was one of the many seats that Labour captured in its 1945 landslide victory, enabling Brown to become an MP at the age of 30. He was the only trade unionist amongst 13 newly elected MPs invited to dinner by Hugh Dalton on 30 July 1945. The others included Hugh Gaitskell, Harold Wilson, Dick Crossman, Evan Durbin, Woodrow Wyatt, John Freeman, Kenneth Younger and Christopher Mayhew [Williams (1983) 11–16].

Derbyshire, Belper, 1945: electorate 57 405, turnout 80.0 per cent

G. A. Brown (Labour)	24 319 (52.9 per cent)
G. Hampson (Conservative)	15 438 (33.5 per cent)
R. A. Burrows (Liberal)	6 276 (13.6 per cent)
Majority	8 881 (19.4 per cent)

After only three days at Westminster the young MP was asked to become parliamentary private secretary (PPS) to the Minister of Labour, George Isaacs, for whom Brown had campaigned many years earlier in Southwark. He was given responsibility for helping displaced persons in Britain after the war, and in the spring of 1947 he was invited to become PPS to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Hugh Dalton, who told him the move would strengthen his prospect of promotion to ministerial rank whenever a government reshuffle took place. While working at the Treasury, Brown became embroiled in the August 1947 plot to remove Attlee as Prime Minister; the intention was that Attlee would be replaced by Ernest Bevin, the Foreign Secretary. As soon as Bevin got wind of events he summoned Brown, accusing him of acting as ‘office boy for that bastard Dalton’ [Brown (1972) 45]. The young MP was also brought before Attlee, who instead of giving him the sack – as Brown expected – offered him the post of parliamentary secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture under Tom Williams. The Prime Minister no doubt calculated that this excitable newcomer would be better off fully occupied and out of Dalton’s orbit. Attlee’s instincts proved correct as Brown knuckled down to the demands of ministerial life, playing his part in steering through new legislation on agriculture.

In April 1951 Brown took up the position of Minister of Works in the reshuffle that followed the resignation of Aneurin Bevan over health service charges. This was another considerable step forward: he had achieved full ministerial rank (although still outside the cabinet) at the age of only 37. But for the Labour administration in general the outlook was bleak. Attlee’s majority had been greatly reduced in the 1950 general election and with little prospect of major new policy initiatives, Brown decided to concentrate his energy on a personal crusade to secure the opening of the Tower of London on Sundays. This he achieved by displaying attributes that were to become characteristic of his later career, such as his refusal to bow to opposition from vested interests. Running a department proved to be a challenging but short-lived experience. In October 1951 Labour was defeated at the polls. However Brown easily retained his seat in the 1950 and 1951 elections.

Derbyshire, Belper, 1950: electorate 65 480, turnout 88.8 per cent

G. A. Brown (Labour)	30 904 (53.2 per cent)
M. V. Argyle (Conservative)	21 581 (37.1 per cent)
Dr J. P. Lawrie (Liberal)	5650 (9.7 per cent)

Majority	9 323 (16.1 per cent)
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Derbyshire, Belper, 1951: electorate 66 325, turnout 86.8 per cent

Rt Hon. G. A. Brown (Labour)	32 875 (57.1 per cent)
S. F. Middup (Conservative)	24 678 (42.9 per cent)

Majority	8 197 (14.2 per cent)
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In opposition, Brown steadily advanced to become a senior figure in the Labour hierarchy. In the factional in-fighting of the early 1950s he was a firm supporter of his fellow London moderate Herbert Morrison. He was an outspoken critic of the Bevanite group, blaming them for Labour’s loss of office and calling them a ‘little band of splenetic furies’. By taking on his opponents at PLP meetings he earned venomous and lasting hatred among the Bevanites, one of whom dubbed him a ‘pimp’. Bevan himself called Brown ‘Arthur Deakin’s lackey’ [Brown (1972) 54] (Deakin was Bevin’s successor as TGWU General Secretary). This last reference underlined Brown’s trade union credentials, particularly his membership of the Transport and General Workers’ Union, and his profile as an emerging spokesman for the Labour right. In 1953 he accepted a financial retainer from Cecil King of the *Mirror* newspaper group; in return he was used to advise on anti-Bevanite stories that were followed up in the *Daily Mirror*. In 1955 he was elected to the shadow cabinet and took the portfolio of shadow minister of supply. He was among the few who remained loyal to Morrison in the



leadership contest that followed Attlee's retirement in 1955, but he was nevertheless able to flourish under the new leader, Hugh Gaitskell. Gaitskell had already assessed Brown as someone who could play a significant part in a future Labour government. He was attracted both by his intellectual qualities and by his robust attitude towards the left.

Another person who will count a lot in the future is George Brown, now Chairman of the TU group in the House. He carries rather too much of a chip on his shoulder about the middle classes, though I often think he puts it on in order to score some point. But his record in speech and writing is excellent. He has unlimited courage and plenty of sense [Williams (1983) 334, general entry 1952–54].

But Gaitskell also noted one significant limitation: 'it is a pity that George by his aggressive manner makes too many enemies in the party' [*ibid.*, p. 394, for 25 March 1955].

In 1954 and 1955 Gaitskell's successful candidacies for the treasurership against Aneurin Bevan had demonstrated the strength of the right wing within the trade unions. When the party treasurership became vacant after Gaitskell's election as leader, Brown secured support from his own union and from the National Union of General and Municipal Workers. However, and not for the last time, Brown proved unable to succeed Gaitskell. The right wing was split between three candidates: Brown, Charles Pannell of the Amalgamated Engineering Union and David Rhydderch of the Clerical Workers. Bevan not only had the backing of several left-inclined trade unions and the bulk of the constituency party delegates, but also of his own union, the Mineworkers, who had previously supported Gaitskell. The outcome was victory for Bevan, and defeat not just for Brown but also, significantly, for the two general unions [Harrison (1960) 316–17; Minkin (1978) 258; for material on trade union leaders see Williams (1983) 424–477, entry for 5 April 1956].

Labour Party treasurership 1956

A. Bevan	3 029 000
G. Brown	2 755 000
C. Pannell	644 000
D. Rhydderch	44 000

Yet it would be misleading to view this episode as the harbinger of a shift to the left. Rather it was much more a testimony to the view that reconciliation between Gaitskell and Bevan was desirable.

After observing his diligent work on the problems of the aircraft industry, in 1957 Gaitskell promoted Brown to the post of shadow defence spokesman, where he had responsibility for developing Labour's policy on the controversial question of nuclear weapons. Although the Belper constituency moved away from Labour in the 1955 and 1959 elections, his seat seemed secure.

Derbyshire, Belper, 1955: electorate 66 585, turnout 81.6 per cent

Rt Hon. G. A. Brown (Labour)	30 214 (55.6 per cent)
J. Twells (Conservative)	24 115 (44.4 per cent)
Majority	6099 (11.2 per cent)

Derbyshire, Belper, 1959: electorate 69 336, turnout 84.2 per cent

Rt Hon. G. A. Brown (Labour)	31 344 (53.7 per cent)
Mrs J. Ratcliffe (Conservative)	27 007 (46.3 per cent)
Majority	4 337 (7.4 per cent)

By that time Brown's prominence as a public figure, if not necessarily his reputation, had been further enhanced following a famous dinner given by Labour's National Executive Committee (NEC) to the Soviet leaders Nikita Khrushchev and Marshal Bulganin on 23 April 1956. Labour encouragement prompted an unscripted and lengthy intervention from Khrushchev, who attacked Britain's role in the war. This caused Brown to interject that it was the Russians 'who signed the treaty with Ribbentrop'. Pandemonium ensued and the meeting ended in chaos, with accusations flying in both directions. Accounts of the episode in the subsequent days gave the Tory government great pleasure, especially Khrushchev's accusation that Labour was 'anti-Soviet'. Brown was heavily criticised by those in the Labour ranks who felt that the Soviet system could no longer be condemned as 'pure totalitarianism'; at the NEC several speakers described his behaviour as 'intolerable' [Janet Morgan (1981) 487–91]. But at the same time the incident appeared to increase his popularity in the country, with sections of the press hailing him as a breath of fresh air and a forthright character.

Compared with many Labour politicians of his generation, not least Gaitskell, Brown was sympathetic to Arab sentiments. When in July 1958 a revolution in Iraq led to the murder of King Feisal and the pro-British Prime Minister, the PLP initially rejected Aneurin Bevan's argument that British policy should not include sympathy for the old regime. This decision was in the context of US marines arriving in the Lebanon. However when the Macmillan government rapidly decided to send British troops to Jordan, the PLP determined to censure the government. Brown, the advocate of loyalty to party decisions, refused to participate in the Commons vote. Thus a member of the shadow cabinet stood in breach of collective responsibility. His offer to resign was not accepted, but in the elections to the shadow cabinet in autumn 1958, his vote fell from 119 to 90 and he finished third amongst the runners-up. However he returned to the shadow cabinet a year later.

Brown's rise through the party ranks was also helped by a reasonable working relationship with Gaitskell, although they differed over some areas of policy and Gaitskell was never entirely exempt from Brown's distrust of his 'intellectual' social superiors. This was evident in Brown's antagonism towards some of Gaitskell's closest colleagues – the so-called Hampstead set. In contrast there was deep and mutual dislike between Brown and his main rival for the mantle of 'coming man' in the Labour Party, Harold Wilson. Brown was jealous of Wilson's superior academic pedigree and more rapid rise to cabinet rank in the 1945 government, but after 1955 Brown had the advantage that Gaitskell's distrust of Wilson matched his own.

Gaitskell's attempt to revise clause four of the party constitution after the 1959 election defeat was viewed by Brown as an unnecessary distraction. The concern about Gaitskell's leadership style soon focused on another issue. In the months preceding the 1960 Labour Party conference, there was widespread expectation of a defeat for Gaitskell and the majority of the PLP on the issue of unilateral disarmament because significant trade unions were endorsing the unilateralist position, not least Brown's own union, the Transport and General Workers. The impending conflict tended to be personalised as a clash between Gaitskell and the TGWU general secretary, Frank Cousins. Brown was both a TGWU-sponsored MP and the PLP spokesperson on defence. Through the spring and summer of 1960 he attempted to produce a compromise, acting initially in collusion with Richard Crossman. The success of their venture would depend on the cultivation of ambiguity and calculated omissions. However they failed to produce a compromise policy in May. Patrick Gordon Walker noted that Brown's primary concern was to maintain as much party unity as possible in support of what he regarded as a credible defence policy. 'His view is that the crisis in the party is largely one of confidence. We must all talk together instead of remaining in factions. We will find a lot of agreement. The aim must be to isolate the pacifists' [Pearce (1991) 263, Gordan Walker diary entry for 26 May 1960].

Brown tried again in September on the eve of the party conference, when he argued that official party policy and the position of the TGWU could be reconciled. On this occasion, too, he was unsuccessful. He then published an article in the *New Statesman* (1 October 1960) opposing both explicit unilateralism and withdrawal from NATO but insisting that a

compromise had been feasible [Williams (1979), ch. 22 esp. pp. 583–607]. Nevertheless, once the unilateralists had won the votes at the party conference Brown stood firmly with Gaitskell in his commitment to reversing the decisions.

When Wilson challenged Gaitskell for the party leadership in the autumn of 1960, Brown secured the deputy leadership, which had been made vacant by the death of Aneurin Bevan. In the first ballot, he led Jim Callaghan and Wilson's running mate, Fred Lee, by 118 votes to 55 and 73 votes respectively. In the run-off Brown decisively defeated Lee by 146 to 83. In November 1962 Wilson challenged Brown for the deputy leadership. Brown's anxiety about the outcome was exacerbated by his differences with Gaitskell over the latter's opposition to the British attempt to join the Common Market, but in the event he won by the comfortable margin of 133 to 103. Unfortunately for Brown he was not able to repeat this victory when another, more important contest was held a couple of months later, following the sudden death of Gaitskell in January 1963.

This was of a different order from the earlier contests. Labour MPs were now being asked to judge the best party leader and potential prime minister. Brown relied on an assorted bunch of backbenchers led by Desmond Donnelly, with trade unionists such as Charles Pannell, Roy Mason and Frank Tomney urging colleagues to vote to 'keep the spirit of Gaitskell alive'. Brown's own trade union was not enthusiastic. He ranked low in the TGWU hierarchy and there were obvious divergences between his and the union's recent political positions. Brown knew that Wilson would attract voters on the left of the PLP. These were a minority of Labour MPs, but Brown's chance of success was more seriously impaired when Jim Callaghan decided to stand. This split the anti-Wilson vote as numerous Gaitskellites decided that Callaghan was preferable to Brown, including Douglas Jay, Michael Stewart, Jack Diamond, George Thomson and Christopher Mayhew [Morgan (1997) 181–2]. Some, such as Tony Crosland, bravely told Brown to his face that his problem was volatility, coupled with heavy drinking. Thus the conflict between the Brown and Callaghan camps became acrimonious.

On 7 February, for Brown the result of the first ballot came as a severe blow: Wilson 115 votes, Brown 88 and Callaghan 41. This put Wilson in pole position. Callaghan was eliminated and only a few of his supporters needed to back Wilson to confirm the latter's victory. This they did in a second ballot (won by 144 votes to 103), which Brown insisted upon in spite of pressure to concede defeat in the interests of party unity. One supporter, Patrick Gordon Walker, summarised what he saw as the limits and strengths of Brown's appeal: 'The decisive thing was that GB was too unpredictable: that he drank too much and that we could not afford such a head man. He had personally affronted many people. He had a bunch of very loyal supporters' [Pearce (1991) 277 Gordon Walker diary entry for 20 February 1963].

Angry, bitter and believing he had been let down by his friends, Brown flew to Scotland and went to ground for a few days. Press commentators made much of this disappearing act, implying there were serious doubts about his political future. He eventually returned to continue as deputy leader, but as Wilson rapidly made his mark on the party and the country, Brown was finding it difficult to recover from the blow of being passed over for the leadership. His heavy drinking came to the attention of the nation's television viewers when he was invited to comment on the death of the American President, J. F. Kennedy, in November 1963. Brown gave a performance that was described by one writer as 'deeply, excruciatingly, embarrassing, a compound of maudlin sentimentality, name-dropping and aggression' [Paterson (1993) 150]. His references to 'Jack' as a great friend were accompanied by a tell-tale slurring of his words and windmill movements of his arms. There was a rumpus in the PLP, a flood of letters of complaint and much comment in the newspapers about how the incident confirmed Brown's unsuitability for national leadership.

With Labour looking set to return to power, however, Brown could look forward to playing a key role in an incoming Wilson administration. As chairman of the Home Policy Committee of the NEC, he was in a pivotal position to influence discussions with civil servants and leading economists on the need for structural change in government to facilitate higher growth. Britain

was increasingly struggling to keep pace with international competitors, and it was felt that the creation of a new ministry – the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) – would galvanise industry and generate long-term initiatives to end Britain's economic underachievement. 'Modernisation' was in vogue, and Labour was considerably impressed by the success of the French model of economic planning.

In the wake of Labour's narrow victory at the general election in October 1964, Brown was appointed as secretary of state for economic affairs, as well as first secretary (in effect deputy prime minister). This was a position that could potentially bring him into friction with the chancellor, Callaghan.

Derbyshire, Belper, 1964: electorate 74 891, turnout 86.1 per cent

Rt Hon. G. A. Brown (Labour)	30 481 (47.3 per cent)
J. L. Lowther (Conservative)	24 169 (37.5 per cent)
N. Heathcote (Liberal)	9 807 (15.2 per cent)
Majority	6 312 (9.8 per cent)

Brown's early weeks in office were spent establishing a new ministry in Whitehall. After the disappointments of recent years, these were heady days. It was Brown who energised the new DEA by 'shouting, cajoling, arguing, driving, sulking, cheering, scolding, drinking, and hardly ever sleeping' [Paterson (1993) 165]. Yet one crucial decision had already been taken. On 17 October 1964, two days after the election, Wilson, Callaghan and Brown had met. Faced with pressure on the pound, the government's three senior figures decided to defend the existing parity.

The main aim of the DEA was to produce a national plan to encourage expansion, with a particular concentration on supply-side measures. One key plank involved the development of a voluntary agreement on prices and incomes. Negotiations were never easy. In spite of his background, Brown found it difficult to deal with trade union leaders who were prepared to defend free collective bargaining even under a newly elected Labour government. But after months of hard talks with representatives of both sides of industry, he was in a position to unveil the centrepiece of his strategy in September 1965. The national plan projected an annual growth rate of 4 per cent and was hailed as a significant breakthrough – a bold measure that gave substance to Labour's modernising rhetoric. In March 1966 Wilson seized an opportunity to increase Labour's majority to over 100. It was the last moment of optimism. In Belper, Brown's majority fell against the national trend, an early indication of the demographic changes that were beginning to transform the constituency's politics.

Derbyshire, Belper, 1966: electorate 76 914, turnout 84.1 per cent

Rt Hon. G. A. Brown (Labour)	34 495 (53.3 per cent)
J. . Lowther (Conservative)	30 221 (46.7 per cent)
Majority	4 274 (6.6 per cent)

Within months the national plan was dead in the water. In the 'July crisis' of 1966 the cabinet backed the chancellor's view that a massive deflationary package was essential to stabilise sterling, which was under attack on the currency markets. Like some other ministers, Brown had become convinced that ambitious targets for growth could not be achieved without devaluation. He was supported by Crossman, Castle, Wedgwood Benn, Crosland and Jenkins on the issue, but Wilson and Callaghan persuaded the majority of the cabinet that this was a dangerous leap in the dark and threatened to undermine US support for the pound. In his frustration Brown threatened to resign – a threat that was followed by a highly embarrassing climb-down. Rumours of his departure reached the nation's television screens. One hundred Labour MPs hastily collected a petition urging him to stay, and he eventually made a midnight appearance

before TV cameras in Downing Street to say that the resignation was off. The extent of his humiliation was difficult to disguise. Thereafter he had to accept collective responsibility for spending cuts that made a mockery of the DEA's plan for sustained growth.

In his memoirs Brown looked back on the experiment of the DEA as a revolution that failed. He believed that the department had had qualified successes, such as the machinery it established for the development of regional policy. But its central failure he attributed to a betrayal by some of those who had pledged to see it through. This was a coded attack on the prime minister for failing to resolve differences between the DEA and the Treasury, which had fought hard to maintain its overriding responsibility for economic policy. The Treasury had resented the emergence of a rival department and with its greater resources had eventually won the day in its insistence on traditional cost-cutting measures in times of crisis. In this light, Brown believed that the DEA had been doomed from the start; its precise role had never been outlined with sufficient clarity and its powers remained opaque [Brown (1972) 87–8, 108–10; Clifford (1997) 94].

Brown realised there was little point in staying after July 1966. He remained long enough to pilot through new prices and incomes legislation, but willingly accepted an offer to move when Wilson decided in August that a reshuffle was required to give an appearance of a fresh start after the traumas of the summer. Brown's pleasure was enhanced by an offer to take up one of the most senior positions in the government, that of foreign secretary. For the Prime Minister this appointment had several advantages: it assuaged Brown's backbench supporters who had petitioned on his behalf; it confined his two warring colleagues – Brown and Callaghan – to separate spheres of influence; and it checked the ambitions of Callaghan, who had annoyed Wilson by telling journalists of his own wish to leave the Treasury for the Foreign Office.

Brown proved a forceful Foreign Secretary, although in his 19 months in the post he was unable to emulate the achievements of his trade union hero Ernest Bevin, who had served with distinction in the 1945 government. Relations between Brown and his officials were never easy, in part because – unlike Bevin – he never came to terms with the social gulf that separated him from his overwhelmingly public school, Oxbridge educated civil servants. Tensions were made worse by Brown's unorthodox behaviour: his defiance of tradition by interfering in the appointment of diplomats; his willingness to criticise British ambassadors in front of public audiences; and his tendency to shout down senior officials with whom he disagreed in the presence of their juniors. Nevertheless the departmental arguments were more about style than the substance of policy. Although constrained by initiatives taken before he arrived, for example in the case of Rhodesia, Brown pursued what his officials regarded as sensible and consistent policies. Perhaps his most important and lasting contribution was made during the 1967 Arab–Israeli conflict, when he was credited with formulating 'Resolution 242', a United Nations Security Council initiative that sought to find a peaceful way forward that would be acceptable to both Arabs and Jews.

Yet in three important areas of policy Brown's tenure at the Foreign Office was marked by frustration. First, as a keen advocate of closer ties with Europe, he strenuously pushed forward the case for Britain joining the Common Market. He undertook a lengthy tour of European capitals in early 1967 and had some success in winning over sceptics in his own party, including the prime minister. But his efforts were to no avail. In November 1967 General de Gaulle issued his second veto on British membership of the European Community, leaving Brown to insist – more in hope than anticipation – that the British bid remained on the table. The second area of great difficulty was the Vietnam War, which attracted widespread public opposition in Britain. Brown was an ardent pro-American and the issue was a source of further disagreement with Wilson. The same was true of the third area of policy – a proposal to end the embargo on arms sales to South Africa. Late in 1967, in the aftermath of devaluation, Wilson suspected that the foreign secretary and others were using this issue in an attempt to oust him from the leadership. The bitterness of the exchanges that ensued persuaded Brown that his working relationship with the prime minister had broken down irrevocably. This provided the backcloth for his resignation from the government and his rapid decline as a senior figure in Labour politics.

Brown's volatile temperament was such that he frequently spoke of resignation; according to one estimate he threatened to go 17 times before finally quitting, although many of those threats were never put into writing. Matters finally came to a head in March 1968 when, with a fresh economic crisis brewing, the government received a request from the US President temporarily to close the London gold market – an action that required a meeting of the Queen's Privy Council. The Prime Minister hastily complied by calling together the required number of ministers for a late evening meeting on 14 March, stating later that all efforts to contact Brown had proved unsuccessful. When the Foreign Secretary learnt that others had been summoned he flew into a rage, inviting over half the members of the cabinet to join him in the House of Commons, where there were many complaints about the Prime Minister's lack of consultation. Angry telephone exchanges followed. Brown told Wilson his behaviour was intolerable; Wilson in turn accused Brown of being drunk and of having no right to convene a 'cabal'. When the leading protagonists gathered at Downing Street in the early hours of the morning the argument continued over what efforts had been made to contact the Foreign Secretary. After much shouting Brown left, slamming the door and returning to the Commons, where he was reported as saying that he had 'had enough – I've resigned'. He spent all of the next day at his London flat reflecting on events and wondering if, as in the past, Wilson might ask him to reconsider. But there was no message from Downing Street, and on the evening of 15 March the resignation became official. There was no going back.

The reaction of the press was mostly unsympathetic. Some commentators, with the help of the Prime Minister's 'spin doctors', claimed that Brown had made a fool of himself, resigning out of pique or because of a 'gratuitous personal crisis'. In his resignation letter Brown said he had gone because of 'the way in which this Government is run and the manner in which we reach our decisions'. Wilson brushed this aside, thanked Brown for his contribution as a minister, and rested content that he had got rid of a troublesome colleague without raising any major issues in the process. Some cabinet colleagues agreed however, or at least in private, that important principles were at stake. Richard Crossman wrote in his diary that the episode was being portrayed as one of petty opposition, yet 'there's a great deal in it'. If he himself were to resign, he continued, it would be precisely over the question of Wilson's presidential style: his failure to build up an inner group to devise government strategy, working on the basis of cronyism and clique rather than through genuine collective means [*Crossman Diary*, 17 March 1968, 714]. This grave charge was not taken up in Brown's resignation speech in the Commons on 18 March, which proved to be an anticlimax. In careful language Brown pledged loyalty to the government – thus removing any threat that he might lead dissident opinion among Labour MPs – and failed to voice his concern about Wilson's leadership style [*Hansard*, 18 March 1968, cols 55–7]. He later maintained that the tone of his resignation speech was designed not to spare the prime minister's feelings but to minimise the effects of his departure on the party's electoral fortunes [Brown (1972) 175–6].

After his resignation Brown continued to serve as deputy leader of the party and as chairman of the Home Policy Committee of the NEC. In the latter capacity he helped to secure the appointment of Harry Nicholas of the TGWU as the party's new general secretary instead of Wilson's preferred choice, Anthony Greenwood. This ensured that his relationship with the Prime Minister remained one of mutual suspicion; it 'never rose much beyond what might be called a civilised level' [*ibid.*, 190]. Although there was much press speculation, no firm offer to rejoin the government was made. Brown instead spent his time writing for newspapers, preparing his memoirs and engaging in his business interests, which included his taking on the role of part-time industrial relations adviser at Courtauld's.

After the disappointments of office, Brown fought to energise the party during the 1970 election campaign, addressing meetings on a nationwide tour and winning plaudits for his skilful handling of hecklers. But he knew that the writing was on the wall in his Belper constituency, where there had been an influx of new voters to private housing estates. His majority was easily overturned as the Tories under Edward Heath swept back to power, leaving Brown out of parliament and underlining

the speed with which his career at the top level in politics had come to an end. In fact the swing against Labour in Belper was about average for the Derbyshire county seats; the deviant result that presaged 1970 had occurred four years earlier [Butler and King (1966) 318, 325; Butler and Pinto-Duschinsky (1971) 368–9].

Derbyshire, Belper, 1970: electorate 86 608, turnout 80.1 per cent	
D. G. Stewart-Smith (Conservative)	35 757 (51.5 per cent)
Rt Hon. G. A. Brown (Labour)	33 633 (48.5 per cent)
Majority	2 124 (3.0 per cent)

In his later years Brown kept in touch with political developments as a member of the House of Lords. He changed his name by deed poll to Lord George-Brown of Jevington (Sussex), and his disenchantment with Labour ‘extremism’ became increasingly obvious in the articles he wrote for papers such as the *News of the World*. In March 1976, only weeks before the final departure from Downing Street of his long-time adversary, Harold Wilson, Brown resigned from the party, ostensibly over the alleged erosion of press freedom as a consequence of the Labour government’s Trade Union and Labour Relations (Amendment) Bill. He suggested that the issue went much wider and that he shared the then fashionable views of Alexander Solzheynitsin about the erosion of freedom in Western societies. Such sentiments fitted in with the growing anti-Labour Party agenda of some sections of the press. *The Times* commented on the resignation in a portentous leader that pronounced ‘Lord George-Brown drunk is a better man than the Prime Minister sober’ [*The Times*, 4 March 1976]. Yet the contrast implied that Brown was no longer an effective crusader for any political cause. Within the Labour Party he had ceased to count.

Returning to the House of Lords after his televised announcement, and under the influence of drink, he stumbled and fell outside the parliament building. The following day he was pictured being helped to his feet by reporters. The *Daily Mail* spoke of his ‘tragic exit from the party he had delighted, horrified and mesmerised for nearly half a century’ [*Daily Mail*, 3 March 1976]. Senior Labour figures were scathing in their reaction, saying they thought he was no longer a member of the party anyway, given his attitudes and voting record in the Lords. From then onwards Brown largely disappeared from public view. The only other time he made the headlines was when he announced his affiliation in 1983 to the Social Democratic Party, though as president of a forerunner organisation, the Social Democratic Alliance (and as a cross-bencher in the Lords), it was already widely assumed that his sympathies had moved in that direction.

Brown died from cirrhosis of the liver at the Duchy Hospital in Truro, Cornwall, on 2 June 1985. An Anglican for most of his life, he had converted to Roman Catholicism shortly before his death. A memorial service was held a few weeks later at St Margaret’s, Westminster, where tribute was paid to his rumbustious personality and to the mark he had left on the public imagination, in spite of being a senior minister for less than four years. Brown would be remembered, it was suggested, for his consistent espousal of the pro-European cause, which he had successfully combined with a deep and lasting admiration of the United States and a commitment to the maintenance of the ‘special relationship’. He also deserved credit as the architect of the national plan, and although the plan had never been carried through it represented a serious attempt – or at least in the eyes of his supporters – to forward a vision that combined economic efficiency with social justice. He had been, as his colleague Richard Crossman noted in his diary, ‘tough and crude and yet brilliant and imaginative’, in many ways the most gifted member of the cabinet in the 1960s [*Crossman Diary*, 17 March 1968, 715].

Overall characterisation of Brown is difficult. At one extreme he could be regarded as a product of the TGWU at its most authoritarian and unimaginative; at the other, colleagues saw him as demonstrating intellectual qualities that were untrammelled by the limits of extensive formal education. Stylistically he had something in common with another trade unionist turned

politician – Jimmy Thomas – but the latter’s trade union activities were much more substantial. Yet at their peak both men arguably had a capacity to appeal beyond Labour’s committed constituency to sections of the electorate who were attracted by their earthiness. One journalist recalled him speaking outside a South London pub on a Saturday afternoon during the 1966 general election campaign:

He’d arrived late and had all but lost his voice, and as soon as he relaxed you could see how tired he was, and how unwell. But out on the hustings he was magical; exhorting, denouncing, wheedling, cajoling, and yet finally managing to convey above all a sense of total commitment to the raising of the fallen and the righting of the wrongs [David Mckie, *Guardian*, 3 March 1976].

Much of the newspaper interest in the memorial service centred less on Brown’s achievements and legacy than on the presence not only of his wife, Lady George-Brown, but also his former secretary, Maggie Haimes, with whom the 70-year-old peer had been living at the time of his death. Brown’s marriage had become increasingly unhappy over the years, particularly after his resignation from the government, and after 40 years together he had walked out on his wife during Christmas 1982 and gone to live with his secretary, first in Sussex and then in Cornwall. This relationship had also been strained, but it had been Haimes who bore the brunt of looking after Brown as his health deteriorated. Despite this he had never divorced his wife and she was the sole recipient of his legacy of £81 436 (£65 678 net). Nothing had been left to Haimes, who later accepted an out-of-court settlement from the family’s lawyers. Lady George-Brown died in 1990.

**Writings:** Lord George-Brown’s autobiography, *In My Way*, was published by Gollancz in 1971. References in the above text are taken from the paperback edition, published by Penguin in 1972.

**Sources:** The only biography at present is by Peter Paterson, *Tired and Emotional. The Life of Lord George Brown* (1993). There are brief overviews in Brown’s obituary in *The Times*, 4 June 1985, and in *The Dictionary of National Biography 1981–85* (the latter entry written by his colleague, also a Labour foreign secretary, Michael Stewart). For Brown’s rise to influence in the period after 1951, an important source is Janet Morgan (ed.), *The Backbench Diaries of Richard Crossman* (1981). There is much information on Brown in the diaries written by cabinet colleagues in the 1960s, notably Hugh Dalton, *The Fateful Years* (1957); Richard Crossman, *The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister*, Volume 1, *Minister of Housing 1964–66* (1975) and Volume 2, *Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons 1966–68* (1976); Philip Williams (ed.) *The Political Diary of Hugh Gaitskell* (1983); Tony Benn, *Out of the Wilderness. Diaries 1963–67* (1987); Barbara Castle, *The Castle Diaries 1964–76* (1990 edn); Robert Pearce (ed.), *Patrick Gordon Walker. Political Diaries 1932–1971* (1991); see also Philip Williams, *Hugh Gaitskell* (1979). On the DEA, see Christopher Clifford, ‘The Rise and Fall of the Department of Economic Affairs 1964–69: British Government and Indicative Planning’, *Contemporary British History*, 11, 2 (1997) 94–116. This article is followed in the same journal (pp. 117–42) by an edited transcript of a witness seminar on the DEA in London in 1996, which was attended by politicians and officials who played a key part in the history of the department. Brown’s career in the 1960s can also be traced in more general terms by works that shed light on the Wilson administrations of 1964–70; including Lewis Minkin, *The Labour Party Conference: A Study in the Politics of Intra-Party Democracy* (1978). There are several recent overviews of Labour Party history, for example Kevin Jefferys, *The Labour Party since 1945* (1993); Eric Shaw, *The Labour Party since 1945. Old Labour: New Labour* (Oxford, 1996); Andrew Thorpe, *A History of the British Labour Party* (1997). For more detailed assessments of the Wilson years see Clive Ponting, *Breach of Promise: Labour in Power 1964–70* (1989); Richard Coopey, Steve Fielding and Nick Tiratsoo (eds), *The*



*Wilson Governments 1964–1970* (1993). Memoirs that reflect on George Brown as a colleague include those by James Callaghan, *Time and Chance* (1987); Denis Healey, *The Time of My Life* (1989); Roy Jenkins, *A Life at the Centre* (1991). Finally, some of the most revealing insights on Brown can be found in major biographical studies, most notably Ben Pimlott, *Harold Wilson* (1992); Kenneth O. Morgan, *Callaghan: A Life* (Oxford, 1997). See *The Times*, *Daily Mail* and *Guardian* March 1976 for material on resignation from the Labour Party. For elections see D. E. Butler and Anthony King, *The British General Election of 1966* (1966); David Butler and Michael Pinto-Duschinsky, *The British General Election of 1970* (1971).

KEVIN JEFFERYS

See also: †George DALLAS; Fred LEE.

### **CRONIN, John Desmond (1916–86)**

LABOUR MP

John Desmond Cronin was born on 1 March 1916 in Highgate, London. His parents were John Patrick and Beatrice Cronin (née Brooks). His father was a businessman who later became a director of Lever Brothers and for some years was in charge of Lever Brothers' business in India. John Cronin spent his first three years (1916–19) in India. The family then returned to Highgate and lived there until 1929, when they moved to Woodside Park in Croydon. Cronin later recalled that there were still fields there then, with cattle grazing. From 1930–33 he was educated by Jesuits at Stoneyhurst College in Lancashire. He commented many years later that, 'My father was not a practising Catholic – but he thought if I did, it would make up for him' [interview with the author (1982)].

After Cronin finished school his father asked him what he wanted to do. He replied, 'Join the army'. His father just snorted. The latter was keen for him to follow a medical career and arranged for him to study at St Bartholomew's Medical School, which was part of London University. He became a member of the Royal College of Surgeons and a licentiate of the Royal College in 1939, and gained a bachelor of medicine and a bachelor of surgery in 1940 under Sir Girling Ball (who was immortalised by James Robertson Justice as the fierce consultant in the films of Richard Condon's books). However, during the war Ball was occupied with administrative work so most of Cronin's experience was gained with others. With the wartime shortage of skilled staff he successfully applied for the post of resident surgeon at the Grimsby and District Hospital, and was in charge of emergency surgery in north Lincolnshire in 1940–41. He then moved on to a more prestigious post, that of a surgical registrar and surgeon in the Emergency Medical Service at the Royal Free Hospital.

In 1942 Cronin joined the army, serving as a lieutenant in the Royal Medical Corps. After he had served for a few months as a general duty officer the army learned that he had surgical qualifications and he was made a graded surgeon. He took part in the Normandy landings in 1944, arriving in a landing craft and commanding 50 pioneers. He worked as a surgeon just outside Caen during the battle there. At the end of 1944 he was posted to India, where in 1945 he was promoted to major and then acting lieutenant colonel. He was involved in action in Burma, working with the forward troops. He returned from Burma in 1946 and lived near Regents Park in London. He successfully passed the examinations to become a fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1947. Later that year he was appointed as assistant orthopaedic surgeon at the Prince of Wales Hospital, a post he held until 1951. He was also appointed as orthopaedic surgeon at the French Hospital, where he worked until retirement age. He had his own consultancy in Wimpole Street from 1948 and became an expert in industrial injuries. From the 1950s he was regularly employed by the legal profession as an expert witness in personal injury cases, most of which had been taken up by trade unions.

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