

# **The Conservative Party and the Extreme Right, 1945-1975**

**Mark Joseph Pitchford**  
**PhD, Cardiff University**



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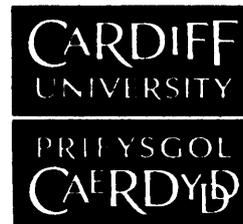
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**Summary of Thesis:**

My thesis examines the Conservative Party's relationship with the extreme right in the period 1945-75 by investigating its actions towards various groups and individuals. It reveals how the Conservative Party adopted some of the extreme-right's themes, whilst at the same time sticking to its long constitutional practice. It also investigates the role of the Conservative Party's bureaucracy and wider Conservatism.

I begin by outlining the Conservative Party's connections with the extreme right before the Second World War. I then show that after 1945, the extreme-right re-emerged as difficult issues arose, such as decolonisation, immigration, industrial unrest and Europe. The Conservative Party shunned any groups or individuals that espoused or even exhibited any form of fascism. The Party was also wary of non-fascist groups that occupied political space to the right of the party. I explain why and how the Conservative Party approved or disapproved of these particular groups and individuals, and how it consistently posed dilemmas for them, whether they were inside or outside the party.

The thesis concludes that the Conservative Party did indeed help to thwart the extreme right. However, it also argues that this is as much a consequence of the Conservative Party's practical measures against such groups as its attraction of its supporters. Thus, whilst the Conservative Party's critics might be correct in identifying the role the party played in ensuring the extreme-right's failure, the reasons why, and methods by which this occurred, does not confirm their perception of the Conservative Party as 'semi-fascist itself'.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface i  
Abbreviations iii

## **Introduction iv**

### **Chapter 1: The Shock of Opposition, 1945-1951...1**

A Right Response to Defeat...1  
Conservative Reaction to Attlee's First Government and Re-emerging Fascism...4  
Central Office's Emerging Role...12  
After the 1950 General Election...33

### **Chapter 2: Consensus Conservatism and Extreme-Right Revival, 1951-57...46**

Existing Concerns...53  
New Concerns...68

### **Chapter 3: Macmillan and Home: 'Pink Socialism' and 'True-Blue' Conservatism...94**

The Conservative Party's Left-Wing Leader...96  
Outside Right...107  
Moving Right?...126  
The Right to Work...138  
Inside Right...160  
Right turn Homewards?...168

### **Chapter 4: Edward Heath: a rightwards turn and the coalescence of the extreme right, 1964-70...183**

Right, Left, Right...194  
The Internal Extreme Right...219  
Always Right: The Impact of Enoch Powell...248  
Electively Right...265

**Chapter 5: 'Heathco' meets the extreme-challenge...270**

Extreme-Right Reaction...281

Inside the Inside Right...288

Was Guinness good for them?...295

**Conclusion: Keeping it Right...328**

Bibliography...340

## **PREFACE**

My purpose in this research was to discover what role the Conservative Party played in the extreme-right's failure after the Second World War. Readers will make moral judgements about individuals and groups mentioned, but I do not. This is partly because views that society now rejects were once commonplace and accepted. Moreover, individuals who once held these views may now repudiate them, and I see no point in criticising them now. The historian's task is to explain. Judgement is a matter for society.

Many institutions have helped me to conduct this research. Cardiff University was very accommodating in allowing me to study for a PhD, particularly so long after graduating. I found a very warm welcome at Cardiff University and am saddened that my active association with it seems to be ending. The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) provided a full doctoral award. This was a life-changing event. Without it, I doubt that I would have completed my research. The AHRC also granted a scholarship for a substantial period of study at the John W. Kluge Centre in the Library of Congress, Washington DC. I am grateful to the financial and cultural opportunities afforded by the AHRC's generosity. Other institutions also contributed financially. The Institute of Historical Research granted an award that allowed me more time to rummage through archives in London. The Royal Historical Society and Cardiff University provided funds so that I could attend overseas conferences.

I am indebted to many individuals, and apologise if I have inadvertently omitted someone from my thanks. The archival staff at the universities of Hull, Sheffield, Birmingham, and at the LSE were very helpful. So, too, were the employees of the British Library in London, and the staff at the Working Class Movement Library in Salford. The people at the Colindale newspaper library were remarkable in meeting my requests. I am especially grateful to Colin Harris, Jeremy McIlwhaine and their colleagues at the Bodleian Library. They provided an exemplary service and a warm welcome. I also want to thank Mary Lou Reiker at the Kluge Center for her kindness, and staff at the Library of Congress for their help and perseverance. Former members

of the Monday Club were also generous in giving their time and thoughts, and in allowing me to include their comments in the thesis and any subsequent publications.

I am grateful for the care of the medical profession over more than two decades, particularly Dr. J. S. Broxton, Mr. Geoffrey Ingram, Professor Sir Miles Irving and Mr. Iain Anderson. My friends Peter Hully and John Kerr have helped keep me sane over many years, including the course of the research, not least by being as rubbish on the golf course as I am. Peter also frequently offered financial assistance, which I will never forget. Dr. Garthine Walker was incredibly tolerant in accommodating me when necessary, which I appreciate very much. All research students are indebted to their supervisors. This is particularly so in my case. Dr. Keir Waddington acted as my second supervisor and provided cogent comments that assisted in focusing my efforts. My connection with Dr. Kevin Passmore goes back to the early 1990s when I was one of his undergraduates. He was exemplary then, and as a PhD supervisor, and I consider him a friend. His only flaw is a deluded belief that someday Cardiff Blues will win the Heineken Cup.

I wish to end with comments about my family. During the course of this research, my brother, Michael Pitchford, confirmed what I have long thought about him. On a number of occasions, he made substantial journeys to bring me home when I was having problems. He is the best of brothers. As for our parents, Neville and Mary Pitchford, I will never be able to repay their love and kindness. Without their practical assistance and moral support, I would not have completed this research. They are excellent role models, both as parents and grandparents. As in so much of my life, however, four people have made what I do worthwhile, my wife Joanne, and our children Christopher, Edward and Amy. They have lived with the consequences of my medical condition with love and without complaint. It is to them that I dedicate this work.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>ACG</b>	<b>Anti-Communist Guardian</b>
<b>AIMS</b>	<b>Aims of Industry</b>
<b>BCAEC</b>	<b>British Council against European Commitments</b>
<b>BDL</b>	<b>British Defence League</b>
<b>BHL</b>	<b>British Housewives League</b>
<b>BNP</b>	<b>British National Party</b>
<b>BPP</b>	<b>British Peoples Party</b>
<b>BUF</b>	<b>British Union of Fascists</b>
<b>FFF</b>	<b>Fighting Fund for Freedom</b>
<b>CCO</b>	<b>Conservative Central Office</b>
<b>CPA</b>	<b>Conservative Party Archive</b>
<b>CPC</b>	<b>Conservative Political Centre</b>
<b>CRD</b>	<b>Conservative Research Department</b>
<b>FCS</b>	<b>Federation of Conservative Students</b>
<b>HINC</b>	<b>Halt Immigration Now Campaign</b>
<b>LEL</b>	<b>League of Empire Loyalists</b>
<b>MCA</b>	<b>Middle Class Alliance</b>
<b>MCU</b>	<b>Middle Class Union</b>
<b>NAFF</b>	<b>National Association for Freedom</b>
<b>NDP</b>	<b>National Democratic Party</b>
<b>NF</b>	<b>National Front</b>
<b>NFU</b>	<b>National Farmers Union</b>
<b>NFWI</b>	<b>National Federation of Women's Institutes</b>
<b>NRP</b>	<b>New Reform Party</b>
<b>NUA</b>	<b>National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations</b>
<b>NUEC</b>	<b>National Union Executive Committee</b>
<b>NUM</b>	<b>National Union of Mineworkers</b>
<b>ONG</b>	<b>One Nation Group</b>
<b>PEST</b>	<b>Pressure for Economic and Social Toryism</b>
<b>PLDF</b>	<b>Peoples League for the Defence of Freedom</b>
<b>PUB</b>	<b>Publications</b>
<b>RPS</b>	<b>Racial Preservation Society</b>
<b>SIF</b>	<b>Society for Individual Freedom</b>
<b>TGGN</b>	<b>The Guild of Good Neighbours</b>
<b>TGWU</b>	<b>Transport and General Workers Union</b>
<b>TNC</b>	<b>The New Crusade</b>
<b>TNF</b>	<b>The National Fellowship</b>
<b>TRG</b>	<b>Tory Reform Group</b>
<b>UDI</b>	<b>Unilateral Declaration of Independence</b>
<b>UIA</b>	<b>United Industrialists Association</b>
<b>WF</b>	<b>Workers Forum</b>

## Introduction

The Conservative Party is a political phenomenon. A 'Tory' party has existed for over three hundred years. It survived changes resulting from industrialisation, adapted to the Great Reform Act of 1832 and even introduced its own progressive electoral reforms under Disraeli. A party of landowners, property and privilege, the Conservative Party not only weathered the century when full democracy emerged but dominated it. It won nineteen of the twenty-six general elections between 1900 and 1997, eleven of them outright. Even in those lost it gained over 40% of the vote. Perhaps most startling is the Conservative Party's domination of politics in the 'hungry thirties', albeit within a National Government, when other western democracies were threatened by, and some succumbed to, authoritarian and extremist government. Until 1997, only one Conservative Party leader in the twentieth century failed to become Prime Minister: Austen Chamberlain. It was a period of consistent success largely explained by the Conservative Party's ability to adapt to new circumstances such as an increased franchise, imperialism and nationalism, as Pugh demonstrated.<sup>1</sup> Fierce opposition to change frequently became muted acceptance and party policy. Wheatcroft stated that the Conservative Party co-opted, and then absorbed, Peelites, Liberal Unionists, Coalition Liberals and National Liberals.<sup>2</sup> The result is a broad-based electoral monolith. Therefore, it is easy to attribute the extreme right's conspicuous and longstanding electoral failure to the Conservative Party's ability to attract many voters.<sup>3</sup>

Yet the extreme right was a persistent feature of twentieth century Britain. Prior to the Great War, the Tariff Reform League propounded mass populism, autarky and Anglo-Saxon alliance. The National Maritime League, The Navy League and The National Service League emphasised defence in reaction to a perception that a liberal

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<sup>1</sup> M. Pugh, 'Popular Conservatism in Britain: Continuity and Change 1880-1987', *The Journal of British Studies*, 27, 3 (Jul., 1988), 254-282.

<sup>2</sup> G. Wheatcroft, *The Strange Death of Tory England*, Penguin, London (2005), 21.

<sup>3</sup> For this, and other factors, See R. Griffin, 'British Fascism: The Ugly Duckling', in M. Cronin (ed), *The Failure of British Fascism*, Macmillan, London (1996), 141-165, and R. Eatwell, *Fascism: A History*, Pimlico, London (2003), 327-335.

consensus that was antithetical to the demands of empire dominated British politics. Xenophobia and anti-Semitism existed in the British Brother's League, National League for Clean Government, Parliamentary Alien Immigration Committee, the London League and the Immigration Reform Association. Victory in 1918 arguably deprived the extreme right of fertile soil, but fear of Communism and Socialism provided an impetus for the National Party to win two seats in the 1918 General Election. Fear of the Left, Jews and aliens resulted in the formation of interwar movements such as the British Empire Union, National Citizens Union and Middle Class Union. After Mussolini formed the first fascist government in Italy in 1922, a welter of mimetic indigenous movements appeared in Britain. Nazi groups emerged after Hitler came to power in 1933. The Second World War associated the extreme right in the public mind with racism, authoritarianism and extermination. However, it did not eradicate it. In the period 1945-87, over two hundred embryonic extreme-right movements materialised.<sup>4</sup>

Prior to 1939, the Conservative Party did not deny this connexion. Some Conservatives openly flaunted it. Future Conservative MP Patrick Hannon sat on the British Fascisti's Grand Council.<sup>5</sup> Pugh described Conservative membership of the British Fascisti as a calculated attempt to alter the party's 'limp-wristed attitude towards the left'.<sup>6</sup> Its relations with the Conservative Party were deliberate and open. The Fascisti acted as stewards at Conservative meetings and Conservative local associations rented rooms to the Fascisti.<sup>7</sup> Conservative MPs made no secret of their sympathies for extreme-right governments, whilst others betrayed their views when they supported restrictive measures on 'aliens' who sought sanctuary from such regimes.<sup>8</sup> Support for extreme-right views appeared in Conservative publications such as the *English Review*, *Saturday Review*, the *National Review* and *Truth*. The Conservative Party was especially associated with *Truth* via its connection with

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<sup>4</sup> C. O Maolain, *The Radical Right: A World Directory*, Longman, Essex (1987), 293-335.

<sup>5</sup> T. Linehan, *British Fascism 1919-39: Parties, Ideology and Culture*, MUP, Manchester (2000), 43.

<sup>6</sup> M. Pugh, 'Hurrah for the Blackshirts!' *Fascists and Fascism in Britain Between the Wars*, Pimlico, London (2006), 61.

<sup>7</sup> Pugh, *Hurrah*, 61-62

<sup>8</sup> For example, Lt. Com. Peter Agnew, MP for Camborne from 1931 and a PPS 1935-39, and Col. Harold P. Mitchell, MP for Brentwood and Chiswick from 1931. See *The Daily Telegraph*, 29 August 1980, obituary, and R. Griffiths, *Patriotism Perverted: Captain Ramsay, The Right Club and British Anti-Semitism*, Constable, London (1998), 154-158.

Neville Chamberlain, but so were Oswald Mosley, and former BUF member and subsequent founder of the National Front, A. K. Chesterton, whom it employed.<sup>9</sup> The *English Review* attempted to influence Conservative Party policy in a campaign orchestrated by its editor, the BUF sympathiser Douglas Jerrold, and Lord Lloyd, a Conservative MP until 1925.<sup>10</sup> The proprietor of *Saturday Review* sided with Mosley against the Conservative Party that it supposedly supported.<sup>11</sup> Many Conservatives were also members of the January Club, which was a British Union of Fascists front organisation.<sup>12</sup> The mainstream Conservative newspaper, the *Daily Mail*, supported Mosley.<sup>13</sup> One Conservative MP stated that there were ‘no fundamental differences of outlook between Blackshirts and their parents, the Conservatives’.<sup>14</sup> Individual Conservatives funded Mosley.<sup>15</sup> Some, such as the Duke of Northumberland, financed extreme-right publications that attracted contributions from Conservative MPs and fascists.<sup>16</sup> Others formed their own extremist movements. For example, Edward Doran, Conservative MP for Tottenham North, announced in 1933 that he had formed The Liberators, a private Nazi army.<sup>17</sup> Lord Lymington, Conservative MP for Basingstoke (1929-34), founded English Array, a group that harked back to England’s rural golden age, and consorted with known fascists who attempted to form the extreme right into a viable movement.<sup>18</sup> R. Dorman-Smith, Unionist MP for Petersfield (1935-41), Minister of Agriculture (1939-40) and Governor of Burma (1941-46), joined Lymington’s English Array.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> F. Beckett, *John Beckett: The Rebel Who Lost His Cause*, London House, London (1999), 161. Griffiths, *Patriotism*, 31-32. R. B. Cockett, ‘Ball, Chamberlain and Truth’, *The Historical Journal*, 33, 1 (March, 1990), 131-142.

<sup>10</sup> S. Dorril, *Blackshirt: Sir Oswald Mosley and British Fascism*, Penguin/Viking, London (2006), 237-258.

<sup>11</sup> M. Pugh, *Hurrah*, 140-151

<sup>12</sup> R. Griffiths, *Patriotism*, 133-139 and passim. See also Lionel S. Rose, *British Fascism: Factual Survey No. 1 and British Fascism: Factual Survey No. 2*, London (1948).

<sup>13</sup> ‘Hurrah for the Blackshirts!’ *Daily Mail*, 15 January 1934.

<sup>14</sup> Sir Thomas Moore, MP for Ayr Burghs; quoted in D. Renton, *Fascism, Anti-Fascism and Britain in the 1940s*, Macmillan, Basingstoke (2000), 56.

<sup>15</sup> Significant sums came from the future Conservative peer and minister Wyndham Portal, Henry Drummond Wolff MP and W. E. Allen MP. Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 278.

<sup>16</sup> Griffiths, *Patriotism*, 50 & 134-5.

<sup>17</sup> O Maolain, *Radical Right*, 325.

<sup>18</sup> D. Stone, ‘The Far Right Movement and the Back-to-the land Movement’, in J. V. Gottlieb and T. P. Linehan, *The Culture of Fascism: Visions of the Far Right in Britain*, Tauris, London (2004), 182-198. G. Wallop, Earl of Portsmouth, *A Knot of Roots: An Autobiography by the Earl of Portsmouth*, Geoffrey Bles, London (1965), 126ff.

<sup>19</sup> A. Sykes, *The Radical Right in Britain: Social Imperialism to the BNP*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke (2005), 188ff. Griffiths, *Patriotism*, 52-3.

Conservatives and extreme-right figures were members of the same organisations. Dorril described the National Citizens Union as ‘dominated by Conservative diehards and aristocratic closet Fascists’.<sup>20</sup> More noteworthy, given the possibility of conflict, was the proliferation in the 1930s of pro-Nazi, pro-peace groups. The Anglo-German Fellowship contained peers, Conservative MPs, ministers of the Crown, and extreme-right individuals like the subsequently interned Barry Domvile.<sup>21</sup> The Link was a populist pro-Nazi organisation that sought to attract all classes. It included, amongst others, Conservative MP Sir Lambert Ward, described as an ‘inveterate supporter’ of Nazi Germany,<sup>22</sup> and the Duke of Westminster.<sup>23</sup> Westminster joined The Link on the advice of Henry Newnham, editor of *Truth*.<sup>24</sup> During the war, Westminster headed moves to secure peace with Nazi Germany.<sup>25</sup> At a meeting at his own home, Westminster presented a paper written by Henry Drummond Wolff, the Conservative MP who was secretly funding Mosley’s BUF.<sup>26</sup> MI5 monitored Westminster’s meetings and Conservative Cabinet members were aware of them.<sup>27</sup> Most intriguing was the secretive Right Club. It was a combination of extremists and Conservatives, and it provided the only interned Conservative MP, Captain Archibald Maule Ramsay.

During the Second World War, Conservative MPs spoke up for extreme-right individuals whom the government had detained as potential traitors,<sup>28</sup> whilst Fascist sympathisers sought respectability within the Conservative Party. Sir Charles Petrie, the Literary Editor of the *New English Review*, was a fellow traveller who argued subsequently that if Mosley had identified the BUF more closely with the Conservative Party he would not have attracted as much opprobrium.<sup>29</sup> These examples supported Stanley Baldwin’s earlier comment that fascism was

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<sup>20</sup> S. Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 424. Dorril also identified Conservative friends of Mosley as well as a host of others connected via the January Club.

<sup>21</sup> Griffiths, *Patriotism*, 35ff.

<sup>22</sup> Griffiths, *Patriotism*, 40.

<sup>23</sup> Griffiths, *Patriotism*, passim. See also Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 424.

<sup>24</sup> Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 465.

<sup>25</sup> Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 470.

<sup>26</sup> Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 470.

<sup>27</sup> Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 470.

<sup>28</sup> *The Times*, 4 November 1941, in Oswald Mosley Deposit, University of Birmingham, GB 150 OMNB/3/3.

<sup>29</sup> Sir Charles Petrie, *Chapters of Life*, Eyre and Spottiswoode, London (1950).

‘ultramontane Conservatism’.<sup>30</sup> One fascist put it more prosaically when he described the whole of the extreme right as simply, ‘Conservatism with knobs on’.<sup>31</sup> However, the Second World War was the extreme-right’s watershed. It brought images of genocide that were indelibly associated with right-wing extremism, especially Nazism. Henceforth, no British extreme-right movement used the epithet ‘fascist’, and it was not until 1962 that an extreme-right party called itself ‘National Socialist’.

The Conservative Party’s main objective after the Second World War was the same as it was before it: to achieve and maintain power. Labour’s victory at the 1945 General Election presented the Conservative Party with the new paradigm of a Labour government able to implement its radical socialist programme. This meant increased state interventionism, governmental planning and controls, a corporate response to industrial relations, the construction of the Welfare State and nationalisation. Conservatives had opposed a greater role for the state, and the philosophy that shaped it. However, the size of Labour’s majority meant that there was little the Conservative Party could do to stop the government. It also showed that the electorate wanted Labour’s policies, especially as they had emphatically ditched Britain’s war-leader. Therefore, the Conservative Party adapted, just as it had in the nineteenth century. It accepted much of Labour’s programme when in opposition and in government. Hoffman described how the Conservative Opposition of 1945-51 formulated a position that was similar to that of the Labour Government.<sup>32</sup> Robert Blake implicitly accepted Hoffman’s interpretation when he portrayed the post-1945 Conservative Party as one that adapted to changed circumstances.<sup>33</sup> Peter Clarke was more explicit when he described the Conservative Opposition as ‘content to acquiesce’ in its opponents’ political agenda.<sup>34</sup> Samuel Beer, a contemporary political scientist, thought that by the time that the Conservative Party regained office in 1951, its membership had accepted the substance of Labour’s social revolution.<sup>35</sup> Another,

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<sup>30</sup> *The Sunday Times*, 17 June 1934. See also R. Benewick, *The Fascist Movement in Britain*, Allen Lane, London (1972), 174.

<sup>31</sup> Respectively, *The Sunday Times*, 17 June 1934, and A. Leese, leader of the Imperial Fascist League, quoted in Eatwell, *Fascism*, 225.

<sup>32</sup> J. D. Hoffman, *The Conservative Party in Opposition, 1945-51*, MacGibbon & Kee Ltd., London (1964).

<sup>33</sup> R. Blake, *The Conservative Party: from Peel to Major*, Heinemann, London (1997).

<sup>34</sup> P. Clarke, *Hope and Glory: Britain 1900-2000*, Penguin, London (2004), 255.

<sup>35</sup> S. Beer, ‘The Conservative Party of Great Britain’, *The Journal of Politics*, 14, 1 (Feb., 1952), 41-71, esp. 58.

Leon Epstein, showed how Churchill's governments put this into practice.<sup>36</sup> Historians subsequently described how, in the period from 1945-75, the Conservative Party maintained this consensual approach. Charmley described this period as one in which the Conservative Party accepted the essential framework of this consensus.<sup>37</sup> Alan Clark portrayed it as one on which the Conservative leadership consistently pursued policies that were more than just a simple nod in the direction of socialism.<sup>38</sup> Morgan evinced a picture of a cautious Conservative leadership that accepted the collectivist consensus.<sup>39</sup> Historians have even described the period between 1967-72, when the Conservative Party under Heath appeared to turn rightwards and formulate a more right-wing programme, as little more than a cosmetic reaction whose orientation is often misunderstood.<sup>40</sup>

This is not to say that historians have accepted this generalisation without question. Gilmour and Garnett thought that Conservative policy documents re-stated earlier Conservative beliefs.<sup>41</sup> Kynaston argued that these documents consistently championed private enterprise and individualism over collectivism.<sup>42</sup> Ramsden also identified similarities between pre and post-1945 Conservative policies, and pointed to differences between the Conservative and Labour Party over issues such as the nationalisation of certain industries that suggested that the notion of consensus was overstated.<sup>43</sup> Some historians have analysed how far consensus existed in narrow areas. Rollings argued that historians have exaggerated the notion that a consensus between the parties existed in economic policy.<sup>44</sup> Phillips investigated unrest in the Docks to argue that clear differences between the parties existed in industrial policy.<sup>45</sup> Others have tried to place the notion of consensus within a wider purview. Marquand,

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<sup>36</sup> Leon D. Epstein, 'Politics of British Conservatism', *The American Political Science Review*, 48, 1 (Mar., 1954), 27-48, esp. 32-40.

<sup>37</sup> J. Charmley, *A History of Conservative Politics*, Macmillan, London (1996).

<sup>38</sup> A. Clark, *The Tories: Conservatives and the Nation State 1922-1997*, Phoenix, London (1999), 319-467.

<sup>39</sup> K. O. Morgan, *Britain Since 1945: The People's Peace*, OUP, Oxford (2001).

<sup>40</sup> J. Ramsden, *The Winds of Change: Macmillan to Heath, 1957-1975*, Longman, London (1996), 243ff. I. Gilmour and Mark Garnett, *Whatever Happened to the Tories: The Conservatives Since 1945*, Fourth Estate, London (1997), 228-244.

<sup>41</sup> Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever*, 35.

<sup>42</sup> D. Kynaston, *Austerity Britain 1945-51*, Bloomsbury, London (2007), 239.

<sup>43</sup> J. Ramsden, *The Age of Churchill and Eden, 1940-1957*, Longman, London (1995).

<sup>44</sup> N. Rollings, 'Poor Mr Butskell: A Short Life, Wrecked by Schizophrenia?' *Twentieth Century British History*, 5, 2 (1994), 183-205.

<sup>45</sup> J. Phillips, 'The Postwar Political Consensus and Industrial Unrest in the Docks, 1944-55', *Twentieth Century British History*, 6, 3 (1995), 302-319.

for example, identified the Conservative Party's actions as an adaptation to the dynamics of democracy as it unfolded in Britain after 1918.<sup>46</sup> Yet, none denied that areas of agreement existed, whilst many agreed that a broad framework of consensus existed.<sup>47</sup> Nor have any historians challenged the view that the Conservative Party reacted to Britain's new paradigm after 1945.

These investigations identified similarities and differences between the two main political parties. In doing so, they helped this research to highlight differences between the Conservative Party and those groups and individuals that operated at its extreme-right edge. However, no matter what these investigations concluded, the real issue at stake was not whether a consensus existed, but what the extreme right perceived the situation to be. This was unambiguous. After 1945, the extreme right thought that the Conservative Party aped the Labour Party both in opposition and in government, and consistently criticised it for failing to implement 'true Conservative' policies. The right attacked the Conservative Opposition of 1945-51 for appeasing the Labour Government and meekly accepting its policies. It persistently assailed Conservative governments from 1951. When the Conservative Party returned to opposition in 1964, it faced an increased internal extreme-right challenge from the Monday Club, and an external extreme-right threat that soon coalesced to form the National Front in 1967. Unexpected victory in the 1970 General Election did not remove this threat. The extreme right viewed the policy U-turns by the Conservative Government of 1970-74 as surrender to the left's militant forces. This provided impetus to the extreme right. The Monday Club appeared capable of dominating the Conservative Party, or forming its own party. By the mid-1970s, the National Front was Britain's fourth political party, and hoped to overtake the Liberals. Connections between the National Front and Monday Club magnified the extreme-right's threat. Yet, the threat from the Monday Club and National Front was over by the mid-Seventies. The Party bureaucracy forced the Monday Club to purge its extremists. Margaret Thatcher, Conservative leader from 1975, made an obvious appeal to potential National Front's voters that contributed to its vote crumbling in the 1979

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<sup>46</sup> D. Marquand, *Britain Since 1918: The Strange Career of British Democracy*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London (2008).

<sup>47</sup> See, D. Kavanagh and P. Morris, *Consensus Politics from Attlee to Major*, Blackwell, Oxford (1994).

General Election. Thereafter, the extreme right fragmented. The Conservative Party, on the other hand, governed for the next eighteen years.

These extreme right organisations were but a few that the Conservative Party faced in the post-war period. Conservative Central Office kept a careful watch on many external and internal extremists. The Conservative Party's success in gaining power, and the extreme-right's failure to attain it, was the most obvious manifestation of its role as a barrier to the extreme right in Britain. Yet this apparent relationship remains unexplored. In contrast, there exists extensive work on many aspects of the Conservative Party and the extreme right individually. These are usually parallel lines of study that either fail to investigate this relationship or do so inadequately. Blake, for example, provided an excellent narrative, but mentioned the party's extreme right only tangentially and external movements hardly at all.<sup>48</sup> John Ramsden mentioned internal and external extreme-right groups, but did not elaborate on the Conservative Party's role in their fortunes.<sup>49</sup> Davies mentioned extreme-right dissidents within the Conservative Party and investigated the party's links with other organisations and the intelligence services, but does not go beyond drawing attention to connections.<sup>50</sup> Charmley explained criticism of the party from the right, but remained firmly within the bounds of the Conservative Party.<sup>51</sup> Writing also from a right-wing perspective, Clark omitted virtually all reference to external extreme-right groups, save for the odd, tantalising approbation.<sup>52</sup> From the left of the Conservative Party, Gilmour countered right-wing arguments, but also remained within party confines.<sup>53</sup> Biographies rarely, of necessity, go beyond their subject matter, although some provided information pertinent to a study of the Conservative Party's role in the extreme-right's fortunes.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> R. Blake, *Conservative Party*.

<sup>49</sup> J. Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden and Winds*.

<sup>50</sup> A. J. Davies, *We, The Nation: The Conservative Party and the Pursuit of Power*, Abacus, London (1995).

<sup>51</sup> J. Charmley, *Conservative Politics*.

<sup>52</sup> "... how good they were, and how brave ..." Alan Clark referring to two National Front members in A. Clarke, *Diaries I: Into Politics 1972-1982*, Phoenix, London (2001), 112. See also, Clark, *Tories*.

<sup>53</sup> Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever*.

<sup>54</sup> For example: D. Baker, *Ideology of Obsession: A. K. Chesterton and British Fascism*, Tauris, London (1996). Beckett, *John Beckett*. J. Charmley, *Blackshirts and Roses: An Autobiography by John Charmley*, Brockingday, London (1990). T. Grundy, *Memoir of a Fascist Childhood: A Boy in Mosley's Britain*, Heinemann, London (1998). J. Hamm, *Action*

Studies of extreme-right groups often provide little more than an outline of the Conservative Party's relationship with them. They are usually little more than highlights of personnel antecedents that rarely explore causal relationship.<sup>55</sup> The continuing interest in Mosley, especially his post-war fortunes and impact, provided fascinating evidence of continuities, but again did not assess the role of the Conservative Party, and barely touched upon other extreme-right groups.<sup>56</sup> Links between the National Front and the Conservative Party made by Taylor, Fielding, Nugent and Walker et al, provided excellent examples of individual connections, but were limited in scope, depth and, in one instance, by poor attribution.<sup>57</sup> Articles on the National Front are mainly limited to the causes, and nature, of its support.<sup>58</sup> A book section that assessed the Conservative Party's relationship with the extreme right relied on evidence that was too limited to support its arguments.<sup>59</sup> Even articles that focused on the Monday Club, a movement that straddled the nebulous border between the Conservative Party and the extreme right, did not use this movement as a potential vehicle for deeper study.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, investigations that either utilised theoretical concepts, or focused on cultural representations, were limited by an understandable emphasis on the interwar period, or by too narrow a definition of their subject, which

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*Replay: An Autobiography*, Howard Baker Press Ltd, London (1983). S. Heffer, *Like the Roman: The Life of Enoch Powell*, Weidenfield & Nicholson, London (1998). R. Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley*, Macmillan, London (1990). Wallop, *Knot*.

<sup>55</sup> For example, N. Hillman, 'Tell me Chum, in case I got it wrong. What was it we were fighting during the war?' The re-emergence of British Fascism, 1948-1958', *Contemporary British History*, 14, 4 (2001), 1-34. N. Harman, 'Minor Political parties in Britain', *Political Quarterly*, 33, 3 (1962), 268-281. M. Colwell, *The Radical Right and Patriotic Movements in Britain during 1975: A Bibliographical Guide*, Harvester, Hassocks (1978). G. Thayer, *The British Political Fringe: A Profile*, Arthur Blond, London (1965). A. Sykes, *Radical Right*.

<sup>56</sup> For example: A. Poole, 'Oswald Mosley and the Union Movement: Success or Failure?' in M. Cronin (ed.), *The Failure of British Fascism: The Far Right and the Fight for Political Recognition*, Macmillan, London (1996). R. C. Thurlow, 'The Guardian of the 'Sacred Flame': The Failed Political Resurrection of Sir Oswald Mosley after 1945', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 33, 2 (1998), 241-254. D. S. Lewis, *Illusions of Grandeur: Mosley, Fascism and British Society 1931-81*, Manchester University Press, Manchester (1987).

<sup>57</sup> S. Taylor, *The National Front in English Politics*, Macmillan, London (1982); N. Fielding, *The National Front*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London (1981). N. Nugent, 'The political parties of the extreme Right', in R. King and N. Nugent (eds), *The British Right: Conservative and right wing politics in Britain*, Saxon House, Farnborough (1977). M. Walker, *The National Front*, Fontana/Collins, Glasgow (1977).

<sup>58</sup> For example, S. Taylor, 'The Incidence of Coloured Populations and Support for the National Front', *British Journal of Political Science*, 9, 2 (April, 1979), 250-255.

<sup>59</sup> M. Durham, 'The Conservative Party, the British Extreme Right and the Problem of Political Space', in M. Cronin (ed.), *The Failure of British fascism: The Far Right and the Fight for Political Recognition*, Macmillan, London (1996), 81-98.

<sup>60</sup> P. Seyd, 'Factionalism within the Conservative Party: The Monday Club', *Government and Opposition*, 7, 4 (1972), 464-487.

only served to remove from the study potentially important groups that could provide a clearer understanding of the Conservative Party's role.<sup>61</sup> Why, then, have historians ignored the Conservative Party's role in the failure of the extreme right?

The nature of many extreme-right groups is one possible reason. Most extreme-right groups are little more than 'mushroom' organisations that emerged quickly in the dark and just as quickly collapsed. Many amounted to little more than the actions of one person who ran the 'party' from their home. Some of them were of dubious character. Others believed in conspiracy theory. These characteristics further limited their already slim chances of success. Those that attracted some members were endemically fractious and attracted poor calibre leaders. Very few survived intact for long. The result was that numerous groups that were in a perpetual state of fracture and merger populated the extreme-right. These factors make it difficult for historians to ascertain empirical data and literature on these groups. The lack of any central repository of such material exacerbates this situation. So, too, does the contemporary nature of these events. Some people involved in these events are still alive and do not necessarily wish to discuss them. As private papers become available, any research will quickly face reappraisal. These factors make examination of the Conservative Party's relationship with the extreme right less attractive than investigation of other areas that do not suffer from such frustrations.

However, in one sense the question is inaccurate. Historians have not so much ignored this relationship and its effect as accepted it. References to connections between the Conservative Party and the extreme right are abundant. However, the relationship is at best stated or implied, but not explored. This is probably a consequence of the extreme-right's poor electoral performance. Between 1945 and 1975, the extreme-right did not win a single parliamentary seat. It frequently lost deposits. The highest vote secured by any extreme-right party in a parliamentary election was sixteen percent in a 1973 by-election. At the General Election in

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<sup>61</sup> See R. Eatwell, 'Towards a New Model of Generic Fascism', *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 4, 2 (1992), 161-194, and, R. Griffin, 'The Concept that Came Out of the Cold: the Progressive Historicization of Generic Fascism and its New Relevance to Teaching Twentieth Century History', *History Compass*, (2003), 1-41, and Julie V. Gottlieb and Thomas P. Linehan, *The Culture of Fascism: Visions of the Far Right in Britain*, I. B. Tauris, London (2004).

February 1974, the same individual stood in the same constituency and gained less than half that figure. Nor did the voters elect any extreme-right councillors in this period. These figures proved that the extreme right was as electorally insignificant after the Second World War as before it when its appeal was at its highest and untainted by genocide. Poor electoral performance is probably the most important reason why historians have not investigated the relationship between the extreme right and the Conservative Party fully.

However, subsequent events indicated that the extreme right was politically significant in Britain. In 1976, the National Party gained two council seats in Blackburn. During the Thatcher governments of 1979-90, extreme-right parties performed poorly. The National Front disintegrated. The Conservative Party's performance declined after 1990. John Major headed a weak and frequently attacked government until 1997. Thereafter, three Conservative leaders failed to stop Labour gaining power, which has resulted in the Conservative Party's longest period of opposition since the First World War. In contrast, the extreme right revived. The British National Party gained a council seat in 1993. It has won over fifty council seats and a place on the London Assembly since 1997. Nor is the extreme-right's success limited to those groups easily associated with the neo-Nazi groups of the 1970s. Former right-wing Conservatives dominate in the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), which euro-sceptics formed in 1993 to assail John Major's government. UKIP occupies space to the right of the Conservative Party as an economically liberal, libertarian nationalist party. It has gained twelve European Parliament members, one member of the House of Commons and two members of the House of Lords.<sup>62</sup> It is a reminder that challenges to the Conservative Party from the right do not come solely from fascists and neo-Nazis. These events, which suggested that there was at least a superficial link between the extreme-right's fortunes and those of the Conservative Party after 1975, support the idea that there is a need for an examination of the Conservative Party's relationship with the extreme right.

However, to do so presents two distinct problems. The first problem concerns definition. Primarily, what exactly was the 'extreme right'? This is a difficult

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<sup>62</sup> M. Daniel, *Cranks and gadflies: the story of UKIP*, Timewell, London (2005), *passim*.

question. Accusations of being 'extreme', 'right-wing' and 'fascist' have been so overused as to result in confusion rather than clarity. Webber understood this and opted to refer to dissident Conservatives and Fascists collectively as the 'British Right' rather than identify its different strands.<sup>63</sup> In a similar vein, Blinkhorn argued that 'the definitions, typologies and taxonomies beloved of social scientists tend to fit uncomfortably the intractable realities which are the raw material of the historian.'<sup>64</sup> Blinkhorn was introducing a study of interwar Fascists and Conservatives, a period when the extreme right was more prominent and recognisable. His comments are, therefore, particularly apposite for a study of the extreme right after 1945 when many people associated 'extreme right' with the horrors of the Second World War and the extreme right was, consequently, more circumspect and defensive about its antecedents. Additionally, those whom historians and social and political scientists describe as extreme right do not accept this description. Instead, they often see themselves as holding reasonable, even centrist positions. The term 'extreme' is also a subjective one that reflects the views of those that use it to describe groups they passionately disagree with. Yet, an understanding of what constitutes the extreme right is necessary if we are to understand its failure generally and the Conservative Party's reaction to it in particular.

In one sense, however, the answer to the question is simple: the extreme right was that which was vehemently anti-left, to the extent that it demanded either of the Conservative Party, or itself, strong and concerted action against it. Even simpler, the 'extreme-right' was that which stood further to the right of the Conservative Party. Though simplistic, this approach nevertheless allows for recognition and investigation of any ideological shifts by the Conservative Party along a traditionally accepted linear spectrum. It also avoids the anachronistic error of assuming that today's extreme-right corresponds exactly with that of previous years. This, however, is insufficient as a number of distinct strands ran within the extreme right. There was, for example, a 'Conservative' extreme right, which was authoritarian, supported the institutions of Church, monarchy and parliament, but desired the dictatorship of social elites. The 'Radical' extreme right, likewise, sought an authoritarian dictatorship, but

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<sup>63</sup> G. C. Webber, *The Ideology of the British Right*, Croom Helm, London (1986), 2-4.

<sup>64</sup> M. Blinkhorn (ed), *Fascists and Conservatives: The radical right and the establishment in twentieth-century Europe*, Unwin Hyman, London (1990), 2.

a populist one drawn allegedly from the people, which it delineated whilst criticising existing elites and their institutions. More difficult to determine were groups that can be termed the 'Freedom Right', difficulty resting on their sub-divisions into those that espoused economic liberty and those advocated institutional liberty. In a sense, they were 'liberal', but they were also on the extreme right in the sense that in our period implementation of their programme required hard measures against the unions and welfare state. Finally, there was the 'fascist' and 'neo-Nazi' extreme right that encompassed elements of both the conservative and radical extremes, though not necessarily the 'Freedom Right'. Crucially, this element of the extreme right expressed its views and objectives violently and often had paramilitary organisations. Unlike the conservative and radical right, it was prepared to use violence, be it physical or verbal. These differentiating characteristics, together with shared beliefs such as nationalism and a weak Conservative leadership that failed to reverse a deteriorating and decadent society caused by advancing socialism, formed the parameters that determined the inclusion of particular groups or individuals within the 'extreme right'. These parameters avoid the narrowness associated with attempts to identify a 'fascist minimum', which are theoretical concepts that, if used proscriptively and exclusively, would deny revealing comparisons of the Conservative Party's attitude towards different extreme-right groups. They also allowed for the identification of extreme-right individuals within the Conservative Party itself, a crucial element in assessing the Conservative Party's refractory role towards the extreme right.

These descriptions may be useful in helping to identify different extreme right groups, and therefore the Conservative Party's reaction to them. However, in one important respect arguments about extreme right taxonomy in this period is almost redundant. For, it is important when examining the Conservative Party's relationship with the extreme right in this period not to focus on what we consider extreme, but on what the Conservative Party thought was. It is only by acting thus that we can begin to understand the varying attitudes that the Conservative Party displayed to different groups, and minimise our own understandably subjective opinions of groups whose views clash with our own. Put another way, this research examines the relationship between the Conservative Party and those that it believed were right-wing extremists, and not those that we think were extreme right. It is for this reason that there is

frequent reference to Central Office's identification of groups or individuals as 'extreme' or 'extreme-right' in the text. Notwithstanding this consideration, however, using the parameters outlined within a chronological framework allowed an exploration of any similarities and differences of the Conservative Party's attitude towards the extreme right based on being in either opposition or government. It allowed investigation of the political space occupied by the Conservative Party and the extreme right, via examination of policy statements and objectives, political pronouncements and activities, ideological discourse, electoral fortunes, social connexions and language employed therein at national, regional and local level. Membership of various extreme organisations by specific individuals became apparent. Moreover, it facilitated answers to questions fundamental to an analysis that attempted to prove a negative: the Conservative Party's role in an eventuality, extreme-right success, which failed to materialise. It assisted to place in context, and evaluate, the evidence of this role, whether policies, objectives, personnel, literature or electoral performance. It allowed an assessment of the extent and impact of the nexus between Conservatism and the extreme right and its continuity after the Second World War, and revealed the Conservative Party's dual blocking role. Firstly, how disillusion with the Conservative Party forced extreme-right individuals into actions that were outside the confines and support of this successful, mainstream political leviathan, and thus spawned a number of extreme-right wing groups and parties. Secondly, the existence and role of a reporting mechanism throughout this period run by Conservative Central Office that monitored extreme-right wing activity, and allowed Central Office to block the extreme right effectively.

The second problem in an examination of the Conservative Party's relationship with the extreme right concerns sources. What sources were available and what were their strengths and weaknesses? Films and literature helped to contextualise the research and provided an indication of contemporary perception, especially that of the right. However, they seldom investigated causality and never assessed the relationship between the extreme right and the Conservative Party. Some Television programmes addressed the causality of events, but similarly said nothing about the relationship. A radio programme confirmed that an extreme-right individual assisted Franco, but was limited to one event. Newspapers provided much more information. Their political orientation warranted careful handling but often proved valuable because of it.

Colindale Newspaper Library's extensive collection provided local and regional examples of wider themes. Political memoirs and biographies gave their subjects' viewpoints. Some provided little more than political context. Those of Edward Heath and Donald Johnson addressed the Conservative Party's opinion of the extreme right. However, both did so only minimally, and focused mainly on justifying their own actions or interpretation of events. John Bean's autobiography provided valuable insights into the activities of Britain's post-war extreme right, but did so from the perspective of a prominent extreme-right political activist. Individual's private papers facilitated better analysis. The papers of Oswald and Diana Mosley were perhaps the least effective, in that they only sporadically revealed Mosley's opinion of the Conservative Party and some extreme-right individuals and figures. In contrast, the papers of leading Monday Club member Patrick Wall provided substantial material on the Club's activities, opinions and the image that it wished to project. They included the often dry but detailed minutes of Monday Club meetings as well as Wall's correspondence. Wall's papers explicitly revealed the Monday Club's opinion of the Conservative Party, but only implicitly showed what the Conservative Party thought of the Monday Club. The real weakness in using private papers was not so much in those used in the research, but in those not yet released.

Archival material on extreme-right groups brought similar considerations. The material held on fascist groups at the Working Class Movement Library reinforced the idea that the Second World War was a watershed for the extreme right. Its collection of *Searchlight* magazine was useful in that it highlighted connections between the extreme right and the Conservative Party, but it did not analyse the effect of this relationship. Various groups' election material helped to explain the Conservative Party's attitude towards them, but not its impact on them. The John Beckett Collection at Sheffield University allowed investigation of the British People's Party and the similarity of its views with that of some Conservatives in the years immediately after the Second World War. Other group's more extensive publications did show the Conservative Party's impact on them, albeit again sometimes implicitly. The publications of the League of Empire Loyalists and those of the groups associated with Edward Martell were in this category. The League of Empire Loyalists' publications provided examples of the Conservative Party's counter-measures against individuals as well as the group. However, their author's obvious belief in conspiracy

theory limited their utility and increased the need for corroboration. Edward Martell's publications provided evidence of the corporate impact of the Conservative Party and its changing political orientation. They also spanned three decades, which allowed assessment of the Conservative Party's impact on a specific group and individuals over a substantial period. However, they also suggested that Martell was personally ambitious, which necessitated discussion of this characteristic on the Conservative Party's attitude toward Martell's groups. The British Library's collection of documents published by radical right groups allowed comparison of the Conservative Party's position with the opinions of some obscure groups. However, the lack of any substantial information such as the size of these groups, save for a brief accompanying booklet, made assessment of the relationship between them and the Conservative Party difficult. The same applied to the collection of extreme-right parties' pamphlets at the London School of Economics. However, the LSE's possession of the Tory Reform Group archive assisted in contrasting the Conservative Party's positive attitude between it and its forerunner, the Pressure for Economic and Social Toryism, and its negative attitude towards the Monday Club. Assessment of Monday Club material was problematic due to the lack of a central archive. However, most of it was available in private and institutional papers both in Britain and in America at the Library of Congress. An Arts and Humanities Research Council's Library of Congress scholarship ensured the investigation of all significant Monday Club documents, as well as the documents of other extreme-right groups. It also provided another avenue for discussion in that the Library of Congress's material included a neo-Conservative group's perception that the Conservative Party discriminated against extremists within it. The National Front's papers at Warwick University disappointed. Their statements were often superficial and the material not extensive. However, they did reveal that the National Front held the Conservative Party responsible for its own demise. Taped interviews with former Monday Club members reinforced this opinion. Subjectivity affects their recollections. These individuals were closely involved with views that modern society has firmly rejected as odious. Nevertheless, their willingness to discuss these events revealed valuable insights into the Conservative Party's relationship with the extreme right.

The Conservative Party Archive at the Bodleian Library provided the most extensive material. The scope of the archive allowed wide ranging investigation, which included

party manifestoes, by-election campaigns, constituency affairs and the views of Conservative Party members and supporters. These allowed assessment of individual cases and consideration of specific themes. However, the files of Conservative Central Office within the archive proved the most valuable source. This is because Central Office reflected the party leadership's wishes, and was the pinnacle of the party Organization.<sup>65</sup> The party leader nominated its head, the Party Chairman. A number of Vice-Chairmen acted in an executive capacity, often overseeing specific aspects of the party's work, which varied. They were often retired senior and respected Central Office staff. Responsibility for the daily management of Central Office attracted a number of titles. In the period 1945-75, the General Director occupied this role of 'chief of staff' until 1966 when Central office devolved the position. Central Office acted as a conduit between the party leader and membership via its various departments and its regional network. Central Office contained many and varied departments, including the national offices of organisations that represented various sections of the party, such as the Young Conservatives. Some of these departments disappeared whilst others emerged to meet changed demands. However, some existed throughout the period of research and provided the main framework of it. This included the files that revealed investigations based on the work of Central Office's regional network. This network was extensive and pervasive throughout the wider Conservative Party. Central Office maintained Regional, or Area Offices. The party leadership greatly increased their size after 1945. Central Office employed Area Agents within these regional Offices. Although these local associations were autonomous, Central Office's Area Agents exercised considerable influence on them and their MPs, and formed part of the bureaucratic machinery of decision making within their regions. Amongst Area Agents' functions was the gathering of intelligence on other organisations and the forwarding of information and material on them to Central Office. These files revealed the Conservative Party's attitudes towards various extreme-right groups and individuals, and often the reasons for them. The files of one political party can produce an unbalanced picture that reveals only what that particular party wants to convey. In this instance, a number of considerations argued against this. Central Office's agents regularly forwarded the

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<sup>65</sup> The following is based on S. Ball, 'The National and Regional Party Structure', in A. Seldon and S. Ball (eds), *Conservative Century: The Conservative Party since 1900*, OUP, Oxford, (1994), 169-220.

critical comments of the Conservative Party's right-wing opponents as well their literature containing the views and objectives that differentiated them from it. These files were usually internal correspondence and often confidential, which meant that those involved revealed views that they would not necessarily state openly. Most importantly, these files reveal which groups or individuals that Central Office thought were extreme-right wing, and thus warrant inclusion in this study. Today's Central Office restricts access to some of these files. These files do not always show the Conservative Party in a positive light. Central Office's eventual decision to grant permission to view them supported the impression reached from investigating those that have no such restrictions. Consequently, Central Office's files were a comprehensive resource that answered many questions posed by this research. These questions included, why did the Conservative Party view a particular group as extreme-right, what action did it take against these groups, what determined these actions, did the Conservative Party differentiate between extreme-right groups, did the Conservative Party's attitude change over time, and what evidence was there of a consistent approach?

The answers to these questions commence with a description in chapter one of a stunned Conservative Party shocked by Labour's landslide election victory in 1945 that thereafter adapted to the new paradigm this had created. It investigates the Conservative Party's varied reaction to those right-wing groups that emerged in opposition to this new paradigm from 1945-51, and reveals how the Conservative Party explicitly charged one of the departments within Central Office to investigate of these outside organisations. How the Conservative Party dealt with the extreme right after Churchill regained office in 1951 is the theme of chapter two. It confirms that Central Office based its different actions on its perception of the nature of a group or individual's extremism, and the usefulness of such a group to the Conservative Party. Chapter Three discusses the impact of Conservative governments' domestic and imperial policy on an increasingly alienated and vociferous extreme right. It shows how the Conservative Party alienated and attracted the extreme right whilst maintaining opposition to any groups or individuals that possessed fascist antecedents or characteristics. Chapter Four examines the Conservative Party's relationship with the extreme right after the party returned to opposition in 1964. It describes how the Conservative Party responded to the challenge presented when the external extreme

right coalesced for the first time since 1945 into a viable political party. It also reveals how the extreme right within the Conservative Party posed an even greater threat, and the action taken against it. Chapter Five investigates the climacteric in the Conservative Party's relationship with the extreme right after 1945. It shows how Central Office dealt with the possible incursion of the external extreme right into the Conservative Party.

These chapters show that the Conservative Party leadership and bureaucracy did limit the extreme-right's chances of success. Sometimes, this could include the absorption of some of the extreme-right's themes. It regularly included attempts to deter party members from joining extreme-right groups, which was difficult as some parts of the Conservative Party were sympathetic to these groups' views. The chapters also show that the extent of the Conservative Party's opposition to extreme-right groups and individuals varied. The Party leadership and bureaucracy consistently blocked those who extremism involved connections with fascism or Nazism. In contrast, they often used those whose extremism amounted to little more than political inexpediency or went beyond the consensual image that the Conservative Party wished to portray. When the Conservative Party's stance moved towards these groups after 1964, their 'extremism' diminished. After 1975, they were absorbed during Margaret Thatcher's leadership. Overall, however, this research depicts a Conservative Party that after 1945 constantly investigated extreme-right groups and individuals, and took action against them. It reveals a Conservative Party that kept all of the extreme right at arms length until events reduced some of these groups' extremism, whilst consistently limiting the chances of that part of the extreme right that the Second World War had condemned to pariah status.

## Chapter 1: The Shock of Opposition, 1945-1951

### *A Right Response to Defeat?*

The Conservative Party entered the 1945 General Election suspicious of its leaders and split over social policy.<sup>1</sup> The direction of Party policy was uncertain, as the Tory Reform Group, Progress Trust, Imperial Group and numerous smaller bodies fought for predominance of a Party with a 'moribund and bankrupt' machine.<sup>2</sup> The progressive Tory Reform Committee had already welcomed publication of the Beveridge Report, advocating extensive social reform, but right wing Conservatives had attacked it, noticeably in publications with prior extreme right connexions such as the *National Review* and *Truth*.<sup>3</sup> The right of the Party relished the opportunity to end the wartime coalition with Labour. Sir Herbert Williams MP spoke at the March 1945 Party Conference of being 'free of its chains'.<sup>4</sup> Churchill's Conference address, on the other hand, suggested a desire to maintain it, even of including in government MPs who had defeated Conservative candidates.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, there was a genuine expectation of victory. Conservative MP Christopher Hollis, writing in the *New English Review*, wrote that, 'nobody seriously thinks that the Labour Party have any chance of gaining a clear majority at the election'.<sup>6</sup> Victorious wartime Prime Ministers had won in 1900 and 1918. On polling day, the *Daily Express* announced, 'we are winning', and some regional Conservative supporting papers stated belief in a three-figure majority.<sup>7</sup> However, the Labour Party won such a majority. The Conservative Party was profoundly shocked not only over the electorate's rejection of it, but at the scale of defeat and the size of Britain's first majority Labour administration. Conservatives even feared permanent loss of office. Inability to take a

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<sup>1</sup> Leo Amery's view was that the wartime Cabinet did not possess a single real Conservative, whilst Anthony Eden, speaking also for Churchill, said of the Party: 'how little we liked it and how little it liked us.' J. Charmley, *Conservative Politics*, 110-112.

<sup>2</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 5.

<sup>3</sup> *National Review*, Jan. 1943, 19-20; March 1943, 177-178; Jan. 1944, 17; March 1944, 194. *Truth*, 15 October 1943.

<sup>4</sup> *Onlooker*, (London), April 1945.

<sup>5</sup> P. Addison, *Churchill on the Home Front, 1900-1955*, Pimlico (1993), 381

<sup>6</sup> C. Hollis, 'The Conservative Opportunity', *New English Review*, XI (June 1945), 109.

<sup>7</sup> Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever*, 1. The *Daily Express* 5 July 1945 and the *Liverpool Post*.

single seat in by-elections during the period 1945-50, despite fuel and sterling crises and continuing rationing, appeared to support this fear.<sup>8</sup>

There were a number of reasons for Labour's stunning victory. After the First World War, the government had promised a land 'fit for heroes'. The Depression of the later 1920s and 1930s meant that this promise remained unfulfilled. The Labour Party offered a coherent programme to implement this promise and the electorate voted for it in 1945. That they did so was due to the Labour leadership's positive image. The Labour leadership had made a significant contribution to the war effort. This was especially so in domestic affairs, where Labour leaders had implemented state controls to ensure that the domestic economy endured and funded the massive demands of the war effort. These actions meant that the Labour Party's opponents could not portray it as an inexperienced, unpatriotic party that was unfit for government. Churchill found this out to his cost when his comparison of the Labour Party to the Gestapo during the 1945 General Election brought widespread condemnation. Instead, the electorate saw in the Labour Party the possibility of a better future.

In contrast, the electorate in 1945 viewed the Conservative Party's actions before the Second World War negatively. Economic depression blighted the interwar period. High unemployment affected many electors and their families. A doctrinaire adherence to the prevailing policy of laissez-faire exacerbated the hardship many electors suffered. This policy ruled out state intervention in favour of free trade, and meant that the government was prepared to accept high unemployment until market forces had readjusted the economy. Associating this policy with the Conservative Party was arguably unfair. Although there was a strand within Conservatism that advocated laissez-faire, the most prominent exponent of it during Ramsay MacDonald's National Government was the Labour Chancellor Phillip Snowden. However, three factors ensured that the electorate associated their economic hardship with the Conservative Party. Firstly, the Conservative Party governed for much of the interwar period, either in administrations that were wholly Conservative or in coalitions that they dominated. Secondly, in 1931 the Conservative Neville

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<sup>8</sup> Hoffman, *Opposition*, 185ff.

Chamberlain replaced Snowden as Chancellor and moved away from strict laissez-faire. His equally doctrinaire adherence to balanced budgets meant that he was prepared to accept the existing high levels of unemployment rather than reduce it by deficit financing. Thirdly, and more understandable to the electorate, was Chamberlain's introduction of the 'Means Test' in 1931. This policy disproportionately harmed the poorest. As Ramsden stated, it resulted in the electorate viewing the Conservatives as the hard-faced men of the inter-war slump, callously disregarding their hardship and prepared to see individuals face the iniquity of National Assistance interviews rather than provide adequate social security.<sup>9</sup> Also negatively affecting the electorate's image of the Conservative Party in 1945 was the party's association with the policy of appeasement. Chamberlain had signed the Munich Agreement in 1938 with Hitler that abandoned Czechoslovakia in return for a promise of peace between Germany and Britain. Leading Conservatives fully supported Chamberlain. Dissidents like Churchill were very much in the minority within the Conservative Party. People joyfully welcomed Chamberlain's announcement that the Munich Agreement meant 'peace in our time'. However, the Second World War ended this positive image of Chamberlain and the Conservative leadership. By 1945, people viewed Chamberlain as Hitler's dupe, and possibly even someone who was prepared to pander to fascism.

Therefore, the 1945 General Election also proved that the electorate rejected a Conservative Party that it associated with indifference to economic hardship and appeasement of the country's enemies. The former was a charge of callousness. This meant that it would be difficult for the Conservative Party leadership to advocate policies that could lead to high unemployment, no matter how many Conservatives favoured it. The latter was a charge that bordered on treachery. This charge was particularly difficult for the Conservative Party in 1945. As Charmley stated, 'In Europe, the right was associated with fascism.'<sup>10</sup> The Conservative Party was Britain's right-wing party. It also had clear connections with the extreme right and even fascism before the Second World War. These connections were no longer tolerable. No Conservative leader could take Baldwin's sanguine attitude to

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<sup>9</sup> A. Seldon and J. Ramsden, 'The Influence of Ideas on the Modern Conservative Party, *Contemporary British History*, 10, 1 (Spring, 1966), 168-185.

<sup>10</sup> Charmley, *Conservative Politics*, 120.

connections that were now embarrassing. Consequently, the Conservative leadership took action to adapt to the new circumstances. Even before the Second World War ended, there is evidence that the Conservative leadership understood the need to adapt and counter the party's interwar image. It set up the Post-War Problems Central Committee (PWPCC). It was to the PWPCC that the Tory Reform Committee and Tory Reform Group advocated state interventionism. Central Office tasked one of its existing bodies with investigating outside organisations. After the war, the Conservative leadership openly implemented a policy review that moved significantly away from its interwar stance and accepted much of the Labour programme. Behind the scenes, the leadership strengthened the party bureaucracy. This bureaucracy investigated those extreme-right groups and individuals that could damage the leadership's objective of regaining power. In the period 1945-51, the party bureaucracy monitored the extreme-right and took whatever action it saw fit. It countered vigorously those that it associated in any way with fascism. Those whose extremism amounted to inexpedient economic policies attracted measures that were less refractory.

### *Conservative Reaction to Attlee's First Government and Re-emerging Fascism*

The Conservative Party's public response to the 1945 General Election defeat was a thorough policy review that culminated in the *Industrial Charter* and Maxwell-Fyfe Report. The *Industrial Charter* emphasised traditional Conservative themes, but also accepted some nationalisation and an increased role for the state. Many Conservatives welcomed the charter. The Conservative right, however, thought that it was too much of a step towards Socialism. Conservative publications ran articles under headlines such as 'Under Which Flag', 'Has Anyone Heard of Capitalism?' and 'The Milk-and-Water Charter'.<sup>11</sup> Right-wing Conservative journals such as *Truth* and *National Review* were prominent in this criticism.<sup>12</sup> The Left claimed the charter would 'split

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<sup>11</sup> Respectively, *Daily Express*, 12 May 1947; *Recorder*, 17 May 1947 and 30 August 1947.

<sup>12</sup> For example, *Truth*, 'The Recipe as Before', 16 May, 1947. A. Page, 'Conservative Laodiceans', *National Review*, CXXIX, September 1947, 102. See also *Truth*, 23 and 30 May, 1947, 13 and 20 June 1947.

the Tory Party as it has not been divided for half a century'.<sup>13</sup> The Right agreed, describing the Conservatives as 'split from top to bottom'.<sup>14</sup> The grounds on which right-wing Conservative MPs attacked the charter on its presentation at the 1947 Party Conference is instructive. Sir Herbert Williams informed conference that the charter was a threat not only to the Conservative Party, but also to Great Britain, as it represented an inordinate concession to socialism at a time when Communism in the Soviet Union appeared the more vigorous ideology. The language he employed was unambiguous and emotive: 'There can be no compromise with Socialism or Communism. You must not let the Conservative Party become infected with the Socialist bug. The Conservative Party must stick to its principles or perish.'<sup>15</sup> Sir Waldron Smithers, whom Gilmour later regarded as 'being on the lunatic fringe of the right',<sup>16</sup> told delegates to have no fear of Central Office or the party platform, and to save the Conservative Party and England by rejecting the Charter.<sup>17</sup> Williams and Smithers wished the Conservative Party to maintain its pre-war laissez faire stance. One commentator thought that at least half the conference supported these views.<sup>18</sup> The Party's right wing, however, suffered an overwhelming defeat at Conference. Hoffman, in describing this 'rout of the right', explained that this was because virtually nobody at conference wished to be associated with a doctrine that was associated with the pre-war period and that was now 'out of keeping with the spirit of the times'.<sup>19</sup>

Nor was the Conservative Party's conversion limited to domestic issues. Virtually nobody in Whitehall saw the imminent collapse of Empire in 1945. For many, there was little suggesting anything other than imperial continuance. The British Empire had proved its ability to endure. It had stood alone in 1940 and remained intact until the totalitarian powers collapsed. Thereafter, the number of civil servants that departed annually for the colonies trebled.<sup>20</sup> Only Keynes foresaw the possible

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<sup>13</sup> *Tribune*, 'The Tories are Split', 16 May, 1947.

<sup>14</sup> *City Press*, 20 June, 1947.

<sup>15</sup> *Conference Report*, 1947, 49.

<sup>16</sup> Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever*, 33.

<sup>17</sup> *Conference Report*, 1947, 49.

<sup>18</sup> M. Edelman, 'A Day with the Tories', *New Statesman and Nation*, 11 October 1947, 284.

<sup>19</sup> Hoffman, *Opposition*, 166. See also 161-166.

<sup>20</sup> P. Hennessey, *Never Again: Britain 1945-51*, Penguin, London (2006), 225-227.

consequences for the Empire of Britain's severe economic problems.<sup>21</sup> Nobody actually wanted the end of Empire, other than the anti-colonial Left. Instead, there were expectations of a new, reinvigorated empire. Indian independence was a foregone conclusion, but many, including Labour Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, sought a viable replacement. Expectations focused on creating a revitalised oil and mineral-rich imperial dispensation stretching from Cape Town to Iraq, with Africa identified as the new jewel in the Crown.<sup>22</sup> Academics described a fourth empire arising out of the debris of the third.<sup>23</sup> It was collective political delusion. Britain was unable to withstand the wave of post-war nationalism because it was economically overstretched. Thus, the shock was great when Transjordan (1946), Burma (1948), Ceylon (1948) and Palestine (1948) accompanied Indian Independence, thereby revealing Britain's impotence. Nowhere was this more obvious than in the Conservative Opposition's response. Churchill, hero of the Boer War and a staunch imperialist who consistently opposed Indian Independence before the Second World War, did nothing to obstruct the Indian Independence Bill (1947).<sup>24</sup> Right-wing Conservative MP Sir Herbert Williams complained about the Party's failure to even vote against the bill, but could do little else.<sup>25</sup> Conservative Associations protested, impotently calling on the party to do more to prevent the disintegration of the Empire.<sup>26</sup> One young right-wing researcher at the Conservative Research Department later recalled feeling unable to do anything other than bury his head in his hands.<sup>27</sup>

Shock at the size of the 1945 defeat only partly explained this picture of a lacklustre Conservative opposition. The Conservative Party under Lord Salisbury, facing the demands of extended suffrage in the late nineteenth century, had realigned itself to attract lower middle and working-class votes.<sup>28</sup> Thereafter, imperialism remained at the heart of Conservatism, contributing to electoral success. Doubtless, there were many right-wing Conservative voters in 1945 who were disgusted at the result. Perhaps, therefore, imperialism could perform a similar role in the mid-twentieth

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<sup>21</sup> Hennessey, *Never*, 222-223.

<sup>22</sup> Hennessey, *Never*, 239.

<sup>23</sup> Hennessey, *Never*, 243.

<sup>24</sup> Hennessey, *Never*, 235.

<sup>25</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 194.

<sup>26</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 195.

<sup>27</sup> Hennessey, *Never*, 235.

<sup>28</sup> J. Ramsden, *An Appetite for Power*, Harper Collins, London (1998), 130 ff.

century to win the working class back from Labour. However, as Alan Clark highlighted, the impact of the 1945 General Election was not simply a matter of scale. Many right-wing Conservative MPs had lost their seats. Progressives now dominated the parliamentary party, determined to avoid connection with any embarrassments of the past. One progressive even advocated the Conservative Party changing its name to the 'New Democratic Party'.<sup>29</sup> What was left of the right wing of the parliamentary party was unable, therefore, to impose their views on their colleagues, hence lacklustre opposition. This explains why there were only a limited number of clashes within the parliamentary Conservative Party over decolonisation. Very few MPs, as Murphy explained, actually disagreed with it.<sup>30</sup> Unlike domestic policy, therefore, this conversion would be more difficult to reverse. This was the real rout of the right.

Yet, this image of an ineffective right within a demoralised Conservative Party is not the whole picture. The right was sufficiently strong to propose resolutions at Party Conference that expressed its dissatisfaction at the lacklustre attack on the Labour Government. The chosen motion was heavily defeated, but it indicated that a repository for anti-left voters still existed.<sup>31</sup> Individual Conservative MPs in the *New English Review* openly attacked their own party's ineffective opposition.<sup>32</sup> There were even instances of rebellion against the frontbench when the right thought a bill was 'bad socialist business which should be fought every inch of the way'.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the notion that the Charter's acceptance signalled the complete collapse of the right was misleading. When expectations of victory at the 1949 Hammersmith South by-election were unfulfilled, the Conservatives issued a revised policy statement, *The Right Road for Britain*. The *Daily Express*, *Spectator*, and *Truth* carried articles attacking the policy statement for failing to move sufficiently rightwards.<sup>34</sup> The Conservative Party was presenting a confusing message to those holding extreme-right views or antecedents, whether in the Conservative Party or not. On the one hand, the leadership and even some MPs appeared to be appeasing Socialism. One MP

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<sup>29</sup> Clark, *Tories*, 324.

<sup>30</sup> P. Murphy, *Party Politics and Decolonisation: The Conservative Party and British Policy in Tropical Africa, 1951-1964*, OUP, Oxford (1995), 10.

<sup>31</sup> Conference Minutes, 1946, 9.

<sup>32</sup> W. W. Astor, 'The Conservative Party in Opposition', *New English Review*, XIII (June 1946), 348, and C. Hollis, 'Personalities in Parliament', 567-568.

<sup>33</sup> *The Star*, 22 January 1947, referring to a rebellion over the Statistics of Trade Bill vote, 21 January 1947.

<sup>34</sup> Hoffman, *Opposition*, 187-195.

responsible for drawing up the charter, for example, believed government was impossible if trades unions were hostile.<sup>35</sup> On the other, a body of opinion and representation existed within the Conservative Party that was fundamentally at odds with this position. Thus, extreme-right individuals and groups had to make a choice of whether to act within the Conservative Party or not. Some fought from within, whilst others formed outside pressure groups.

There is strong evidence that pre-war consanguinity between some Conservatives and erstwhile fascists continued. The circumstances in which a dissident BUF leader could claim that thirty MPs and twelve peers were 'ready to pronounce themselves Fascist' may have gone.<sup>36</sup> Yet, former BUF member Arthur Winn revealed in the *Daily Mirror* that he intended to vote Conservative in the 1945 General Election. The reason Winn gave was that the Conservatives would allow him, and presumably those like him, to 'get away with more than we could with any other party'.<sup>37</sup> The *Daily Mirror* reported that the first move of ex-BUF members had been to 'throw themselves and their organisation on the side of the Tory Party'.<sup>38</sup> One local paper reported its belief that Mosley's organisation would re-form to 'keep Toryism alive'.<sup>39</sup> Thus, it appears that the connection between Conservatives and fascists remained. Dorril highlighted this by recounting Mosley's interest in an 'anti-alien' campaign in Hampstead in 1945,<sup>40</sup> where the Conservative MP, Charles Challen, had organised a petition against aliens moving in to the area. Challen's target was Jewish residents. Dorril also described Challen's petition as owing much to an organisation called the Fighting Fund for Freedom (FFF). Leading the FFF was the Conservative MP Sir Waldron Smithers.<sup>41</sup> Dorril described Challen's campaign as intersecting with a similar, national campaign led by the Briton's Vigilante Action League (BVAL), a movement funded by Lord Kemsley. Sir Henry Newnham, former editor of *Truth*, was an advisor

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<sup>35</sup> Untitled letter to Lord Woolton from Col. J. R. H. Hutchinson MP, 10 March 1949. CPA CCO 4/2/83, Literature – *Industrial Charter*, correspondence on, 1949.

<sup>36</sup> A. C. Mills, *Mosley in Motley*, (c.1937), 13. Mills had been the BUF Director of Industrial Propaganda and a Senior Propaganda Officer before resigning 24 February 1936. Details provided by Mills, especially the business connexions of the BUF, add credibility to his statement.

<sup>37</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 28 June 1945.

<sup>38</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 29 June, 1945.

<sup>39</sup> *Hastings Observer*, 4 August 1945.

<sup>40</sup> Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 549-550.

<sup>41</sup> Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 549.

to Kemsley.<sup>42</sup> Dorril also identified Conservative parliamentary candidate Eleonora Tennant having meetings with Jeffrey Hamm during which they discussed their mutual anti-Semitism.<sup>43</sup> Hamm was an ex-BUF internee and instrumental in Mosley's return to politics at the head of Union Movement.<sup>44</sup> It is also in 1945, according to Mosley, that friends tried to secure his return to the Conservative fold.<sup>45</sup>

The radical right, in the shape of the British People's Party, also exhibited anti-Semitism and a fear of communism and support for Franco similar to Conservative MPs. The importance of the BPP lay partly in its survival of the war intact, despite the internment of its leading political figure, John Beckett. However, it also had a pre-war connexion with the Conservative Party. Beckett's association with Lord Lymington in the British Council against European Commitments (BCAEC) linked the British Peoples Party with a number of other extreme-right groups that contained Conservatives.<sup>46</sup> His membership of the British Council for a Christian Settlement in Europe also linked the British Peoples Party with the anti-war faction of the Conservative Party.<sup>47</sup> Linking Beckett personally with the Conservative Party was his friendship with Henry Newnham, editor of *Truth*.<sup>48</sup> However, what revealed the concordance between the BPP and some Conservatives strongest was the BPP's regular post-war publications, which were funded by the Duke of Bedford. Bedford employed euphemistic language in pamphlets that attacked 'international finance', which meant Jews.<sup>49</sup> The BPP's journal, the *Fleet Street Preview*, provided a mine of language that would not have been out of place coming from Sir Waldron Smithers, Charles Challen, Eleonora Tennant and many pre and post-war Conservatives. The journal lauded Franco for being correct in 'exposing the true nature of the undeviating aims of Stalin and his coterie', and compared the silence of others over Stalin's

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<sup>42</sup> Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 549.

<sup>43</sup> Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 549.

<sup>44</sup> Hamm, *Action*.

<sup>45</sup> Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 549.

<sup>46</sup> F. Beckett, *John Beckett*, 153-155. Participating in the BCAEC were Beckett (BUF, BPP), Joyce (BUF, NSL), Leese (IFL), and members of the Anglo-German Brotherhood, Nordic League, White Knights of Britain, the Militant Christian Patriots, British Vigil, the Britons and English Array.

<sup>47</sup> Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 471-486.

<sup>48</sup> Beckett, *John Beckett*, 161.

<sup>49</sup> Duke of Bedford, *The Financiers Little Game: or, the Shape of Things to Come*, Strickland Press, Glasgow (1945).

actions to the outcry over Nazi atrocities.<sup>50</sup> Descriptions of immigrants as a ‘foreign invasion’ coming from the ‘refuse of Europe’, and as ‘trash’, ‘alien’ and ‘poison’ frequently juxtaposed references to ‘true-born Englishmen’.<sup>51</sup> These were similar to the comments raised by Conservative MPs after the disembarkation of the *Empire Windrush* brought New Commonwealth immigrants to Britain.<sup>52</sup> The *Fleet Street preview* also believed unions were ‘holding the country to ransom with impunity’, and denounced their members as ‘oblivious to anybody’s welfare but their own’.<sup>53</sup> These comments particularly resembled *Save England*, a booklet written by Sir Waldron Smithers that denounced the Conservative Party’s surrender to the left.<sup>54</sup> There was also in the *Fleet Street Preview* implicit support for an individual Conservative MP who had proposed that a prospective parliamentary candidate disclose his place of birth,<sup>55</sup> and criticism of the Conservative Party for failing to expose the Labour Government’s shortcomings sufficiently, and its poor performance at the Hammersmith South by-election.<sup>56</sup>

What can we conclude from this evidence? There is clear similarity of views between the extreme right and the right of the Conservative Party. It is also fair to state that this extended to connexions between a long-standing extreme-right Conservative publication, non-parliamentary groups and even pre-war fascists. It is also fair to say that those electors holding views similar to those expressed by former BUF members probably considered that the Conservative Party was the best place for their vote, at least until Mosley’s return to politics. This position also probably applied to British Peoples Party supporters, although the BPP did at least contest one by-election, at Combined English Universities in March 1946, where its candidate, G. S. Oddie, lost his deposit.<sup>57</sup> Yet nothing substantially argues in favour of a witting role by the Conservative Party in these scenarios. Mosley’s claim seems barely credible, and

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<sup>50</sup> H. Alexander, ‘When Red is Black’, *Fleet Street Preview*, 24 April 1948, 1, 6, 2. See also H. Alexander, ‘Prophets Without Honour’, 15 May 1948, *Fleet Street Preview*, 1, 9, 1.

<sup>51</sup> H. Alexander, ‘Britain Importing Labour’, *Fleet Street Preview*, 8 May 1948, 1, 8, 1.

<sup>52</sup> Eatwell, *Fascism*, 332-333.

<sup>53</sup> H. Alexander, ‘The Press Strike’, *Fleet Street Preview*, 14 August 1948, 1, 22, 1-2.

<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever*, 33. Sir Waldron Smithers and Sir Herbert Williams were noted right-wing Conservative dissident MPs, see 51 & 76.

<sup>55</sup> Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever*, 33.

<sup>56</sup> ‘Background News’, *Fleet Street Preview*, 18 September 1948, 1, 27, 2. H. Alexander, *Fleet Street Preview*, 5 March 1949, 1, 51, 1.

<sup>57</sup> F. W. S. Craig, *Minor Parties at British Parliamentary Elections 1885-1974*, Macmillan, London (1975), 9.

possibly no more than exaggeration of casual comments by long-term, or delusional, friends. Mosley quickly attracted many erstwhile members of the BUF when he made his political comeback as head of Union Movement in February 1948. Left wing opponents, and organised Jewish movements such as the 43 Group, determined not to allow Mosley the opportunity of presenting his views unchallenged.<sup>58</sup> These groups monitored and countered Union Movement activity, but failed to reveal any substantial connections with the Conservative Party. Nor should this be surprising given that, despite the comments of ex-BUF members like Arthur Winn, new recruits to Union Movement often joined for reasons of antipathy towards the Conservative Party similar to those expressed by members of the British Union of Fascists in the 1930s. A 1950 recruit of Union Movement summed up his attitude towards the Conservative Party thus: ‘the party as a whole gave the impression of wandering aimlessly along, picking up discarded bits of Attlee brand Socialism as its main commitment to a post-war policy. To me they appeared a party of old-men, where youth and modern viewpoints were suppressed, especially if you did not wear the old school tie.’<sup>59</sup> Therefore, the meeting of one obscure parliamentary candidate with a fascist does not stand on its own as evidence for all Conservatives generally, or the party machinery specifically, and definitely not for Union Movement members. The lack of material in the Conservative Party Archive relating to Union Movement suggests Conservatives avoided it. Thus, all we can conclude from these examples during this period of opposition is that the Conservative Party may have played an unwitting role as the repository for extreme-right votes with nowhere else to go. In addition, the views and actions of some Conservatives may have simply resonated with those possessing fascist antecedents. In contrast are the Conservative Party’s condemnatory comments towards extreme-right organisations. Central Office, for example, dismissed the known racist Britons Publishing Society in an internal memo to all Central Office Agents, and described its proprietor as a ‘notorious anti-Jew’.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> G. Macklin, *Very Deeply Dyed in Black: Sir Oswald Mosley and the Resurrection of British Fascism after 1945*, I. B. Tauris, London (2007), *passim*.

<sup>59</sup> J. Bean, *Many Shades of Black: Inside Britain’s Far-Right*, New Millenium, London (1999), 60.

<sup>60</sup> Internal memo from Miss Maxse to all Central Office Agents, ‘Britons Publishing Society: “Free Britain”’, 4 November 1948, CPA CCO 4/3/209, Outside Societies, 1949-50. Founded before the war as part of the Britons Society, the Britons Publishing Society continued to distribute anti-Semitic and similar material until the 1960s. There is no record of a subsequent relationship with the Conservative Party. See also, O Maolain, *Radical Right*, 324.

The focus of these examples solely on Conservative links with any recrudescence of fascism partly explains these conclusions. However, they do not take into consideration adequately the markedly different post-war political context. It would be natural to assume that the electorate would express any fears it had about the Labour Government's legislation through the Conservative Party. The Conservative Party, however, no longer dominated the political landscape. Fearful of permanent rejection by the electorate, the Conservative Party leadership had produced the *Industrial Charter*. Feelings of betrayal at this response to defeat had led to a siege mentality amongst Conservative activists and voters who did not necessarily trust the Conservative Party to combat socialism. These unusual times produced an unusual phenomenon, one that has remained within the extreme right thereafter. As Paul Martin identified, erstwhile respectable middle-class Conservative voters began to adopt street and platform cultures more usually associated with working-class and extremist politics.<sup>61</sup> These voters attacked the state interference of the Attlee Government, and defended Conservative principles by invoking sentiments of mass Conservatism and adopting tactics of popular protest. The result was a plethora of groups that denounced Socialism vociferously. Not all Conservatives adopted this stance. Some chose less obvious and extreme outlets to achieve their objectives. This is especially apparent, though not exclusively so, in those that championed individual liberty and economic liberalism. However, many did adopt a more vigorous stance. The Conservative Party's response to these various groups revealed differing refractory attitudes that frequently, though not exclusively, depended on Central Office's perception of their extremism.

### *Central Office's Emerging Role*

By 1945, the Conservative Party already contained a mechanism for monitoring outside organisations. On 20 April 1944, the inaugural meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Relations with Outside Societies of the Central Women's Advisory Committee noted that, 'it had been appointed to consider all matters relating to

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<sup>61</sup> P. Martin, 'Echoes in the Wilderness: British Popular Conservatism, 1945-51', in S. Ball & I. Holliday, *Mass Conservatism: The Conservatives and the Public Since the 1880s*, Frank Cass, London (2002), 135. This is not to argue that there are no examples of such tactics beforehand, as the Tarrif Reform Campaign before the Great War proves. See Linehan, *British Fascism*, 18 & 43.

Outside organisations'.<sup>62</sup> After the war, the Maxwell Fyfe report re-invigorated the Conservative Party organisation, restoring its pre-war health. The Voluntary Organisations Section replaced the somewhat makeshift Committee on Relations with Outside Societies. It was located within the Organisation Department of Central Office. Its confidential terms of reference explicitly mandated an intelligence-gathering role that focused on extremist elements,<sup>63</sup> which was perhaps not coincidental, given that this was a few months after Mosley's political comeback. Although applicable to extremists of different political persuasions, there was a specific term of reference charging the Voluntary Organisations Section with investigation of 'voluntary organisations who are definitely Conservative in outlook or sympathetic to Conservatism'.<sup>64</sup> There was also the command to render regular reports and recommendations, including any need for 'tactical action within these organisations'.<sup>65</sup> Thus, there was a clear instruction to interfere in the activities of right-wing organisations, some of which would undoubtedly be extreme. Details on a number of extreme-right groups are indeed within the files of the Voluntary Organisations Section. Some of these groups would later cause the Conservative Party genuine concern. Central Office also already ran a bureaucracy to which local associations and Area Agents reported items deemed of interest regularly, which complemented the remit of the Voluntary Organisations Section. These reports included extreme-right activity. It is from correspondence involving Central Office and the Voluntary Organisations Section that we can understand the motives of these groups during the Attlee governments, and discern reasons for the Conservative Party's varying attitude towards different right-wing groups.

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<sup>62</sup> CPA CCO, 170/1/3/1, Central Women's Advisory Committee Ad Hoc Committee on Relations with Outside Organisations – Minutes. Apr. 1944 – May 1951.

<sup>63</sup> 'The V. O. S. is an Intelligence Section which is concerned mainly with voluntary organisations (other than professional, trade and trade union and definitely party) operating within England and Wales, which owing to their constitution, membership or activities are capable of lending themselves to use or penetration by opposition or extremist elements (Socialist, Communist or Fascist) for political purposes.' Term of Reference No. 1 of the Voluntary Organisations Section, CPA CCO 60/4/31, Outside Organisations 1948-1962, May 1948.

<sup>64</sup> Term of Reference No. 3 of the Voluntary Organisations Section, CPA CCO 60/4/31, Outside Organisations 1948-1962, May 1948.

<sup>65</sup> Term of Reference No. 6 of the Voluntary Organisations Section, CPA CCO 60/4/31, Outside Organisations 1948-1962, May 1948.

Compare, for example, Central Office's attitude towards the National Democrats and The Right Party. The National Democrats' manifesto called for reduced taxation, the restoration of individual rights, a return to free trade and the removal of governmental interference in business.<sup>66</sup> The representative of the National Democrats who forwarded their manifesto claimed that the motive for the party's creation was 'to give expression to the views of a considerable body of industrialists'.<sup>67</sup> Thus, the National Democrats were a sectional interest. The views expressed in the manifesto, however, were in line with many Conservatives' thinking. In addition, there were no viewpoints, methods or obvious extreme personal antecedents likely to embarrass the Conservative Party. The lack of any evidence of further enquiry suggests Central Office did not see the National Democrats as a threat. Lord Woolton, the Chairman of the Party, even expressed willingness to meet the representative of the National Democrats.<sup>68</sup> The agent who brought The Right Party to Central Office's attention, a Mr. Hopkinson, was concerned at the 'publicity it had received locally'.<sup>69</sup> Hopkinson nonchalantly dismissed the Right Party as probably 'quite unimportant', but nevertheless requested information in case a constituent asked him to provide it.<sup>70</sup> Central Office's response mirrored this nonchalance. Vice-Chairman Marjorie Maxse replied with details of the founder of *the Right Party*, Mr. A. C. Cann, and at the same time advised Hopkinson, 'we do not need to take him too seriously'.<sup>71</sup> Yet, Central Office was clearly sufficiently concerned to investigate Mr. Cann's background. Mr. Cann had applied, in May 1946, to be a Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for the Conservative Party, and secured an interview with a Mr. Thomas. Maxse reported that it was after this interview that Cann created the Right Party, and only then that 'we learnt that before the war he had been connected with Sir Oswald Mosley'.<sup>72</sup> We can only surmise at what prompted Cann to create the Right Party. It is unlikely that Cann

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<sup>66</sup> Untitled letter from J. G. Jetley to Lord Woolton, 17 July 1946. CPA CCO 3/1/72, National Democrats, 1947.

<sup>67</sup> Untitled letter from J. G. Jetley to Lord Woolton, 17 July 1946. CPA CCO 3/1/72, National Democrats, 1947.

<sup>68</sup> Untitled letter to Lord Woolton, 17 July 1946. CPA CCO 3/1/72, National Democrats, 1947.

<sup>69</sup> Untitled letter from Mr. Hopkinson to Miss Maxse, 29 December 1947. CPA CCO 3/1/81, The Right Party, 1948.

<sup>70</sup> Untitled letter from Mr. Hopkinson to Miss Maxse, 29 December 1947. CPA CCO 3/1/81, The Right Party, 1948.

<sup>71</sup> Letter from Miss Maxse, 'The Right Party', to Mr. Hopkinson, 1 January 1948, CPA CCO, 3/1/81, The Right Party, 1948.

<sup>72</sup> Letter from Miss Maxse, 'The Right Party', to Mr. Hopkinson, 1 January 1948, CPA CCO, 3/1/81, The Right Party, 1948.

would have done this if he felt that he had a realistic chance of gaining the Conservative Party nomination. However, Maxse's version of events indicates that Central Office had been able to discover Cann's dubious antecedents. This makes Central Office's subsequent actions easier to interpret. Maxse removed Cann from Central Office's lists of approved Conservative Party speakers, receivers of party literature and potential parliamentary candidates.<sup>73</sup> Maxse had moved swiftly to terminate Cann's connection with the Conservative Party on discovering his connections with Mosley. Maxse's actions are in stark contrast to the attitude towards the National Democrats. They reveal a desire to avoid taint by association, and a blocking action forcing Cann to operate without Conservative Party support. This explanation also chimes with Hopkinson's description of the Right Party as, 'of the extreme right',<sup>74</sup> and is early evidence for seeing the post-war Conservative Party's intent to be a barrier to extreme-right groups and individuals.

The Conservative Party's perception of an organisation's exact nature was not, however, always immediately apparent. This did not necessarily stop Central Office taking refractory action when it thought that it was required. The Society for Individual Freedom (SIF), for example, championed the cause of individual liberty above the State. Typical was the case of farmers in South Woodham, Essex. The Labour Government's concern with unemployment, specifically its uneven geographical spread, had resulted in the introduction of 'Development Areas' and the Central Land Board in 1947.<sup>75</sup> This appeared to provide state control of private property, which seemed believable as it came from a Socialist government currently nationalising industry. The South Woodham farmers had agreed to the State requisitioning their land during wartime, as they understood the measure to be temporary. Many of them had enlisted whilst the state utilised their property. The decision by Attlee's government to confiscate the property using a compulsory purchase order, however, was a different matter. SIF became involved, and lobbied

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<sup>73</sup> Letter from Miss Maxse, 'The Right Party', to Mr. Hopkinson, 1 January 1948, CPA CCO, 3/1/81, The Right Party, 1948.

<sup>74</sup> Mr. Hopkinson to Miss Maxse, 29 December 1947, CPA CCO 3/1/81, The Right Party 1948.

<sup>75</sup> Hennessy, *Never*, 181 & 211ff.

local MPs, the relevant ministry, and, securing no redress, Winston Churchill.<sup>76</sup> Regular SIF publications carried articles from individuals denouncing the government. Retired Royal Navy Commander Hyde C. Burton, for example, complained of ‘individualness’ being ‘sacrificed upon the hideous altar of the “Collective”’.<sup>77</sup> SIF’s ‘News Bulletins’ talked about the undermining of free government, realm, religion and monarchy by saboteurs placed in Britain’s vital offices, factories, power plants, railway centres, laboratories and docks.<sup>78</sup> These views certainly locate SIF to the right of a Conservative Opposition propounding the *Industrial Charter*. Nevertheless, Central Office included SIF members on its list of approved speakers. This had potential for embarrassment. A Deputy Central Office Area Agent reported the comments of a SIF member during the 1948 Hampstead Borough Council by-election.<sup>79</sup> A Mr. Jack Norris had complained about the level of foreigners in the area affecting housing for indigenous residents. Norris spoke from a soapbox adorned with a Hampstead Conservatives’ poster, and brandished another poster of the Conservative candidate. At this stage, Central Office files make no comment about SIF’s nature. However, like the leader of the Right Party, Central Office removed Norris from its list of approved speakers.

There is also evidence that Central Office took a more subtle approach to minimise the impact of outside organisations. After Labour’s landslide victory in 1945, many in the Conservative Party realised the need to refocus its literature to attract more working-class voters. Prospective parliamentary candidate Edward Heath, speaking at the 1948 party conference, called for more publicity suitable for the workshop, factory and trade unions.<sup>80</sup> Central Office was understandably interested, therefore, in Conservative organisations attempting to attract this particular electorate. The Workers Forum (WF), for example, prompted an inquiry to Central Office asking

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<sup>76</sup> CPA CCO, 3/1/85, Society of Individualists, 1948-49. See also, Marjorie L. Franklin to Winston Churchill, ‘Dispossessed Smallholders’, 12 January 1951. CPA CCO 3/3/123, The Society for Individual Freedom, 1950-52.

<sup>77</sup> *The Individualist*, 1950; CPA CCO, 3/1/85 Society of Individualists, 1948-49.

<sup>78</sup> *News Bulletin, the publication of The Society For Individual Freedom, incorporating The Society of Individualists and National League for Freedom*, issue no. 21, September 1948, 1. CPA CCO, 3/1/85 Society of Individualists, 1948-49.

<sup>79</sup> Miss Harris to Miss Dodd, 26 May 1948 & report by Miss Genet, ‘Society of Individualists: Mr. Jack Norris’, 25 May 1948. CPA CCO 3/1/85, Society of Individualists, 1948-49.

<sup>80</sup> E. Heath, *The Course of My Life: My Autobiography*, Hodder & Stoughton, London (1998), 129.

whether it was 'part of our Conservative Organisation'.<sup>81</sup> Central Office denied any connection, and declared emphatically that it did not sponsor the WF.<sup>82</sup> This was an interesting comment that indicated that Central Office supported some organisations. It is also evident that Central Office already possessed information on the WF, or that it gathered it once prompted. Having denied a connection with the WF, Central Office advised: 'From what we know of its activities however it is strongly Conservative in outlook and appears to put forward Conservative propaganda.'<sup>83</sup> Subsequent comments suggest that Central Office had not simply relied on its existing files. The inquiry had mentioned a Mr. Alnutt in connection with the WF. Miss Fletcher at Central Office revealed that the inquiry prompted her to speak to Alnutt, and that she had discovered that his connection was limited to providing a speech, at the WF's behest, in 1947.<sup>84</sup> Thereafter, Fletcher stated, Alnutt confined himself 'entirely to work within the Conservative Party Organisations'.<sup>85</sup> It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that Alnutt was a Conservative Party member, and that Fletcher warned him of the possible dangers of being a member of outside organisations, but that the WF's work was acceptable.

Central Office seemed even less concerned with the activities of the Middle Class Union. This appears surprising as the MCU had the potential for a mass, populist appeal of the radical right. The MCU was anti-Socialist, but did not wish to support vested interest, tradition or anything reactionary. H. J. Chapman forwarded the MCU's literature to Lord Woolton and asked for Conservative Party support, and warned him of the potential power of the neglected middle classes.<sup>86</sup> Central Office's intelligence report on the MCU explains why it was unconcerned. The report identified the MCU as a recurrence of a similarly titled inter-war movement that had

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<sup>81</sup> F. R. Fletcher to Mr. P. Acton, 21 November 1949. CPA CCO 4/3/209, Outside Societies, 1949-50.

<sup>82</sup> F. R. Fletcher to Mr. P. Acton, 21 November 1949. CPA CCO 4/3/209, Outside Societies, 1949-50.

<sup>83</sup> F. R. Fletcher to Mr. P. Acton, 21 November 1949. CPA CCO 4/3/209, Outside Societies, 1949-50.

<sup>84</sup> F. R. Fletcher to Mr. P. Acton, 21 November 1949. CPA CCO 4/3/209, Outside Societies, 1949-50.

<sup>85</sup> F. R. Fletcher to Mr. P. Acton, 21 November 1949. CPA CCO 4/3/209, Outside Societies, 1949-50.

<sup>86</sup> Letter from H. J. Chapman to Lord Woolton, 'The Middle Classes and the coming General Election', 20 April 1949, CPA CCO 3/1/66, Middle Class Union, 1947-9.

included two Conservative MPs amongst its membership.<sup>87</sup> The report noted the patriotism and anti-Communism of MCU members, and suggested Central Office respond by highlighting the merits of Conservative Party membership in combating a heightened post-war Communist threat.<sup>88</sup> Subsequent correspondence from the MCU did not alter Central Office's benign attitude. One reason for this is that, despite an implicit threat in Chapman's letter, the MCU was not truly hostile to the Conservative Party. Indeed, MCU correspondence with Central Office revealed that its members saw it as a covert means of spreading Conservatism. A Mr. Louis Dickens, for example, advised Central Office that the MCU agenda was 'powerfully Conservative without calling itself Conservative', and that the MCU would 'immeasurably strengthen Conservatism' as its members were likely to vote Conservative anyway.<sup>89</sup> The MCU did not adopt an extremist posture, nor did it adopt populist activities despite threatening to do so. Consequently, Central Office stuck to the limited counter-measure of advising MCU's members they would better achieve their objectives by joining the Conservative Party. Central Office's advice to its Area Agents that the MCU did not include anyone of high standing in its leadership reveals its lack of concern.<sup>90</sup> There is even a tone of disdain. Marjorie Maxse recalled that apart from one piece of MCU correspondence from a Mr. D. Cobbett, the only other MCU person she remembered having anything to do with was Commander Hyde C. Burton, 'who is definitely a crank'.<sup>91</sup>

The British Houswives League (BHL) likewise sought Conservative Party support. Unlike the MCU, however, the BHL definitely engaged in activities previously thought alien among Conservatives. The BHL emerged during a period of crises and austerity measures. Wartime rationing remained. The Labour Government introduced bread rationing in summer 1946 to avoid famine in Asia and Germany. In January 1947, severe weather, and a fuel crisis caused partly by the Labour government's

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<sup>87</sup> O. W. Stebbings to Mr. Grenville, 'The Middle Class Union', 3 May 1949. CPA CCO 3/1/66, Middle Class Union, 1947-9.

<sup>88</sup> O. W. Stebbings to Mr. Grenville, 'The Middle Class Union', 3 May 1949. CPA CCO 3/1/66, Middle Class Union, 1947-9.

<sup>89</sup> Untitled letter from Louis E. Dickens to Mr. Grevile (sic), 9 July 1949, CPA CCO 3/2/115, Middle Class Union, 1949-50.

<sup>90</sup> M. Maxse to Miss Cook, 'The Middle Classes Union', 30 November 1949. CPA CCO 3/2/115, Middle Class Union, 1949-50.

<sup>91</sup> M. Maxse to Miss Cook, 'The Middle Classes Union', 30 November 1949. CPA CCO 3/2/115, Middle Class Union, 1949-50.

nationalisation of coal, combined to force the government to restrict energy consumption at work and home. The government banned cooking by electricity for three hours in the morning and two in the afternoon. The Conservative press produced the headline, 'Shiver with Shinwell and starve with Strachey', a reference to Labour Ministers involved.<sup>92</sup> The British Housewives League, described by Hennessey as 'already becoming a thorn in ministerial flesh',<sup>93</sup> were thus part of a more widespread, general protest from a sorely pressed public. The British Housewives League spontaneously appeared in line with this dissatisfaction, and struck a chord with many British women. A Miss M. Parsons, writing on behalf of the BHL, expressed to the Minister of Food, J. Strachey, concern at possible further cuts in rations if a dock strike continued.<sup>94</sup> Parson's letter is typical of BHL complaints at conditions under a Labour government. The appearance of Conservative frontbencher David Maxwell Fyfe, MP as the main speaker at the BHL's Albert Hall Rally of 6 June 1947, suggested the Conservative Party was aware of the BHL's potential. Many Labour MPs, and others, even thought the BHL a Conservative front organisation. The Communist Party, for example, showered the Albert Hall Rally with leaflets imploring people not to fool themselves about the true nature of the BHL, focusing on Maxwell Fyfe's presence at the meeting and that of the erstwhile Conservative MP, Mrs. Mavis Tate.<sup>95</sup> Yet, the Conservative Party actually shunned the BHL, despite the BHL having the potential to spread an anti-government appeal to a mass audience. Central Office consistently rejected appeals from BHL representatives for official recognition and funding by the Conservative Party.<sup>96</sup> Conservative Party Chairman, Lord Woolton, explicitly denied any connection with the BHL. Woolton stated in an address to the Conservative Women's conference on 2 July 1947: 'It might save a little of the time of our political opponents if I were to say publicly that the British Housewives League has no connection with nor is it financed by the Conservative Party.'<sup>97</sup> Central Office rigorously adhered to this stance.

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<sup>92</sup> Hennessey, *Never*, 277.

<sup>93</sup> Hennessey, *Never*, 276.

<sup>94</sup> Untitled letter from M. Parsons to The Rt. Hon. J. Strachey M.P., 29 June 1948. CPA CCO 3/1/12, British Housewives League, 1947-9.

<sup>95</sup> 'Don't be Misled by the Housewives League!' Communist Party leaflet, 1947. CPA CCO, 3/1/12 British Housewives League, 1947-9.

<sup>96</sup> CPA CCO, 3/1/12 British Housewives League, 1947-9.

<sup>97</sup> 'Housewives' League Not Linked With Conservatives', *The Western Mail*, 3 July 1947.

There are a number of reasons for Central Office's attitude. A prosaic theme, that will become consistent in examining the Conservative Party's relationships with outside organisations, is that encouraging outside organisations risked damaging the Conservative Party's membership numbers and thus funds. The Conservative Party owed its success with women at a local level mainly because women viewed Conservative Associations as social organisations, unlike the more masculine Labour Party associations.<sup>98</sup> Central Office, perhaps realising the importance of female support, had already accepted the suggestion in the Maxwell Fyfe Report that local Conservative Associations form housewives' committees from among their members to provide co-ordinated criticism of Labour austerity. Membership of the BHL, therefore, could hamper this effort. Hence, Central Office's commented to the wife of a Conservative prospective parliamentary candidate who sought advice on how to deal with the BHL, that, 'Any association which tends to drain membership and funds from the local association is not furthering the interests of the party in any particular district.'<sup>99</sup> The focus on membership and funds was particularly acute as Lord Woolton was at this time engaged in a drive to increase party membership. There is also the possibility that hostility towards the BHL resulted from a belief that it was the personal vehicle of its leading figure, Dorothy Crisp, who may have been attempting to secure election to Parliament. Supporting this is a comment by Maxse that voluntary organisations like the BHL were 'used usually for personal motives'.<sup>100</sup> Yet, Central Office's consistently hostile attitude towards the BHL after Crisp resigned the Chairmanship limits this as an explanation. Crisp offered to write to all BHL members upon resigning and advise them all to vote Conservative. Lord Woolton rejected the offer.<sup>101</sup> There was no thaw in relations.

Central Office's perception of the BHL as an extreme-right organisation that could harm the Conservative Party by association more accurately explains the Conservative Party's attitude. A comparison between the BHL and a similar organisation of the

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<sup>98</sup> G. E. Maguire, *Conservative Women: A History of Women and the Conservative Party*, Macmillan, London (1998), 144.

<sup>99</sup> Miss Maxse to Mrs. Geoffrey Wilson, 'British Housewives League', 12 March 1948. CPA CCO, 3/1/12, British Housewives League, 1947-9.

<sup>100</sup> Miss Maxse to Mrs. Geoffrey Wilson, 'British Housewives League', 12 March 1948. CPA CCO, 3/1/12, British Housewives League, 1947-9. See also, Maguire, *Women*, 145.

<sup>101</sup> Lord Woolton to Miss Crisp, 'British Housewives League', 5 February 1948, CPA CCO, 3/1/12 British Housewives League, 1947-9.

time, the National Federation of Women's Institutes (NFWI), illustrates the BHL's nature. Paul Martin showed that the NFWI sought to promote women's traditional gender roles as part of a wider attempt to secure progressive legislation and recognition of women's contribution to society.<sup>102</sup> The BHL, on the other hand, Martin described as brandishing 'traditional female domesticity as an exclusive weapon wrapped in heavy sentiment which it used to browbeat the Labour government from the right'.<sup>103</sup> Progressive legislation was not part of the BHL's platform. Thus, while the NFWI argued that the government's omission of sick pay for housewives in the National Insurance scheme failed to acknowledge the traditional role of women sufficiently, the BHL remained silent. The NFWI's demands for equal pay for women and a greater provision of school meals met the same response, or even hostility. The BHL's targets, in contrast, included the welfare state. It attacked, for example, the provision of school meals as a state imposition.<sup>104</sup> In addition, whereas the NFWI was, and is, apolitical, the BHL's alliance with trade associations, Martin argued, suggested otherwise. Whether this identifies the BHL as an extreme-right organisation today is anachronistic. For, Central Office clearly viewed the BHL thus, and sought intelligence on it.

Miss Spencer's report for Central Office on the BHL's June 1947 Albert Hall rally mentioned the preponderance of Union Jacks and the singing of patriotic songs.<sup>105</sup> The following July, Miss Spencer reported on the BHL's Trafalgar Square Rally and subsequent march to Hyde Park.<sup>106</sup> These BHL activities were redolent of Oswald Mosley's pre-war British Union of Fascists. Mosley's Union Movement, formed at the same time as the BHL's 1948 rally, soon engaged in exactly the same activities. Central Office would have been aware of these public events. Spencer identified one known Conservative at the BHL rally.<sup>107</sup> Otherwise, Spencer focused on the crowd's reaction to the BHL, and noted hecklers' interrupting with shouts of 'Tories' and

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<sup>102</sup> Martin, 'Echoes', 122.

<sup>103</sup> Martin, 'Echoes', 124.

<sup>104</sup> *Daily Dispatch*, 14 July 1947. CPA CCO, 3/1/12 British Housewives League, 1947-9.

<sup>105</sup> D. Spencer, 'British Housewives League', 6 June 1947. CPA CCO, 3/1/12, British Housewives League, 1947-9.

<sup>106</sup> D. Spencer, 'British Housewives League', 7 July 1947. CPA CCO, 3/1/12, British Housewives League, 1947-9.

<sup>107</sup> This is a Conservative councillor, Mrs. Welfare. There is also reference to a Mrs. Borrowdale of Yorkshire, suggesting that Spencer knew her. D. Spencer, 'British Housewives League', 7 July 1947. CPA CCO, 3/1/12, British Housewives League, 1947-9.

'Fascists'.<sup>108</sup> This was tantamount to admitting that these connections remained in the public's mind. The report on the BHL's meeting of 21 June 1948, at the Kingsway Hall, corroborated the perception that Central Office was gathering intelligence on an extreme-right group.<sup>109</sup> This report, composed by Katherine Wilmot, is more comprehensive and indicated a more formalised approach to intelligence gathering. This may be a consequence of the creation in May 1948 of the Voluntary Organisations Section.<sup>110</sup> Wilmot circulated the report to senior Central Office officials. Its contents again included identification of Conservative individuals, most notably Sir Waldron Smithers MP.<sup>111</sup> It is, however, Wilmot's impression of the audience's attitude that revealed the nature of Central Office's concerns. Commenting on the reception afforded various topics Wilmot stated that, 'The more extreme right element was well received.'<sup>112</sup> By highlighting this feature of the BHL meeting Wilmot made it clear that a re-emerging Conservative Party, only recently armed with a much-changed political programme in the shape of the *Industrial Charter*, wished to avoid any connection with the BHL, because it drew attention to extreme-right views from which the post-war Conservative Party wished to dissociate.

Central Office's relationship with the BHL is also a more enlightening example of how the Conservative Party blocked the extreme right. The relationship is more comprehensive than that with, for example, the Right Party, and reveals how the Conservative Party affected its blocking role. On the one hand, there is the obvious intelligence gathering. Equally obvious is the dissemination of Central Office's disapproval of the BHL to other Conservatives. Lord Woolton, for example, wrote to Colonel A. Gomme-Duncan, MP, regarding an invitation to speak at a BHL meeting, stating that it had, 'long been the policy of this office to dissociate itself from this organisation'.<sup>113</sup> There is also a suggestion of underhand activities by the

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<sup>108</sup> D. Spencer, 'British Housewives League', 7 July 1947. CPA CCO, 3/1/12, British Housewives League, 1947-9.

<sup>109</sup> Katherine Wilmot, 'Report on Meetings: British Housewives League', 21 June 1948. CPA CCO, 3/1/12 British Housewives League, 1947-9.

<sup>110</sup> See 12-13.

<sup>111</sup> Katherine Wilmot, 'Report on Meetings: British Housewives League', 21 June 1948, 1. CPA CCO, 3/1/12 British Housewives League, 1947-9.

<sup>112</sup> Katherine Wilmot, 'Report on Meetings: British Housewives League', 21 June 1948, reverse side, 2. CPA CCO, 3/1/12 British Housewives League, 1947-9.

<sup>113</sup> Lord Woolton to Col. A. Gomme-Duncan, MC, MP, 8 April 1948. CPA CCO, 3/1/12 British Housewives League 1947-9.

Conservative Party. Wilmot reported a remark made from the platform at Kingsway Hall that, 'the Housewives League will carry on their fight for freedom in spite of the vast sums spent by the Opposition to wreck it'.<sup>114</sup> Central Office vehemently denied the inference that it was acting thus.<sup>115</sup> Frustratingly, neither the report nor the response it generated provides any details. Nevertheless, the more transparent refusal to grant official Conservative Party recognition, or to supply funds, did force the BHL to operate without the resources of a financially powerful institution, under its own auspices and therefore subject to full media scrutiny.

However, this political alienation was also the result of another aspect to the Conservative Party's blocking role. Central Office's intelligence material on the BHL reveals this. The Conservative Party's apparent acceptance of Attlee's programme opened political space on its right. The BHL, and others vehemently opposed to Socialism, occupied this vacated space. Thus, the BHL was indeed one of those Conservative groups Martin identified adopting an extreme political culture to attack Socialism and maintain traditional Conservatism. Continued adherence to its changed political stance revealed just how refractory the Conservative Party could be to groups like the BHL. The BHL, from offering to support it and seeking to gain its imprimatur or funds, quickly became critical of the Conservative Party Opposition. Wilmot's report of the BHL's June 1948 Kingsway Hall meeting mentions hostility towards the Conservative Party for the first time. Referring to the creation of the National Health Service and changes in National Insurance, the BHL castigated Shadow Chancellor R. A. Butler for being 'proud to be a sponsor' of this 'terrible infringement of freedom'.<sup>116</sup> The following day Mary A. Parsons, on behalf of the BHL, forwarded to Churchill a resolution that denounced the Opposition for accepting 'the imposition of the totalitarian Insurance and Health Service'.<sup>117</sup> It was a particularly mordant criticism to level against an individual many saw as responsible for the defeat of fascist totalitarianism. It also indicated how the Conservative Party's consistent stance

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<sup>114</sup> Katherine Wilmot, 'Report on Meetings: British Housewives League', 21 June 1948, reverse side, 2. CPA CCO, 3/1/12 British Housewives League, 1947-9.

<sup>115</sup> Internal memo from M. Maxse to the General Director, 'The British Housewives' League, 24 June 1948. CPA CCO, 3/1/12 British Housewives League, 1947-9.

<sup>116</sup> Katherine Wilmot, 'Report on Meetings: British Housewives League', 21 June 1948, reverse side, 2. CPA CCO, 3/1/12 British Housewives League, 1947-9.

<sup>117</sup> Mary A. Parson to The Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill, Leader of the Opposition, 22 June 1948. CPA CCO 3/1/12, British Housewives League, 1947-9.

forced the BHL into political isolation. The result was dwindling attendances at BHL meetings and, save for an isolated attempt at resurrection, political oblivion before the Conservative Party regained power in 1951.

The Conservative Party's relationship with the Fighting Fund for Freedom (FFF) is more difficult to judge. During this period of Opposition, there is evidence of both co-operation and attempts to distance the Conservative Party from the FFF. Sir Waldron Smithers' leadership of the FFF placed this organisation within the Conservative Party's orbit. Smithers had been the Conservative MP for Chislehurst since 1924, and remained a Conservative MP until retiring at the 1955 General Election. The FFF's stated objective was to re-energise the Conservative Party by 'linking the voters with the Conservative M.P.s and the prospective Conservative Candidates'.<sup>118</sup> Furthermore, the FFF's demands for economic liberalism in the shape of denationalisation, whilst running counter to the ethos of the *Industrial Charter*, corresponded with the views of the many Conservatives opposing it. There is also clear evidence that Central Office co-operated with the FFF. In December 1945, Smithers, writing as chairman of the FFF, returned a list of Conservative candidates to Colonel S. Pierssene at Central Office.<sup>119</sup> As the FFF had supported the anti-Semitic campaign of Conservative MP Charles Challen in Hampstead,<sup>120</sup> we could interpret this as Central Office willingness to provide party material to a potentially extreme-right movement. On the other hand, these events occurred in the immediate aftermath of Labour's stunning electoral victory and before the bureaucratic revival of the Conservative Party, which suggests an insufficiently aware, possibly reeling Central Office. Moreover, it is probable that Central Office gave Smithers the list before Challen's anti-Semitic campaign began as it included prospective parliamentary candidates which, given the size of Labour's victory in 1945, was not for an imminently expected election, indicating it pertained to the July 1945 General Election. The petition to remove aliens from Hampstead did not commence until October 1945, making it just possible to absolve Central Office from involvement with the extreme-right on the grounds of ignorance. Such an excuse thereafter,

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<sup>118</sup> B. M. Young, *Fighting Fund For Freedom: Report No. 24*, June 1948. CPA CCO 3/1/52, *Fighting Fund for Freedom*, 1945-8.

<sup>119</sup> Letter from Waldron Smithers, J.P., M.P., to Col. S. H. Pierssene, 10 December 1945. CPA CCO 3/1/52, *Fighting Fund for Freedom*, 1945-8.

<sup>120</sup> See 8.

however, would not apply. Subsequent Central Office correspondence regarding the FFF is interesting in general in that it indicates how the Conservative Party's actions helped to create extreme-right groups. More specifically, however, it reveals that although Central Office was willing to engage with the FFF, there was also an undercurrent of wariness and suspicion that degenerated into panic when Central Office feared the relationship was about to be discovered.

It is clear from its monthly reports that the FFF had come into existence because of a belief that the Conservative Party was not doing what the FFF expected of it. Two FFF organisers reported in June 1948 on their experiences within a constituency formerly held by the Conservatives. They found the local Conservative Association abandoned and neighbouring businesses, local people and even the police unable to state its new location. When the FFF organisers eventually discovered the correct address, they found a 'private house without poster, plate or any indication to show that the Conservative Party operate from that centre'.<sup>121</sup> The local Conservatives may have thought success unlikely in an area recently made solidly working class by council housing construction ordered by the leader of the Greater London Council, Herbert Morrison. It was also inertia. The FFF's reporting of this situation, and determination to redress it, was a criticism of the Conservative leadership. In July 1948, the FFF's monthly report combined this lack of effective leadership with an absence of 'true Conservatism.' It demanded, for example, the updating of local Conservative Associations with the comment that local committees would 'get nowhere if they are slack, self-satisfied or allow themselves to be dominated by the pale-pinks, the theorists or the half-informed', and called for a rejuvenated grassroots to force the Conservative centre to 'revitalise itself'.<sup>122</sup> These sentiments were a common feature of FFF literature. They indicated that the FFF was a coalescence of individuals whose views, compared to the political position adopted by the post-war Conservative Party in the *Industrial Charter*, were now on the extreme right. Their coalescence as a group was, therefore, a product of the changed nature of the Conservative Party.

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<sup>121</sup> B. M. Young, *Fighting Fund For Freedom: Report No. 24*, June 1948. CPA CCO 3/1/52, *Fighting Fund for Freedom*, 1945-8.

<sup>122</sup> B. M. Young, *Fighting Fund For Freedom: Report No. 25*, July 1948. CPA CCO 3/1/52, *Fighting Fund for Freedom*, 1945-8.

Central Office's initial response came in a memo to all of its Area Agents of 24th June 1948. Marjorie Maxse, stating the memo was Central Office's response to 'so many enquiries about the attitude of the Party towards the Fighting Fund for Freedom', denied the existence of any official association, described FFF visits to local Conservative Associations as not sanctioned, and dismissed FFF statements as unhelpful and its actions intended to undermine the *Industrial Charter*.<sup>123</sup> Maxse concluded that there was no need for any MP, candidate or agent to assist the FFF. Yet by September 1948, this attitude appeared to have changed. In that month, Lord Woolton, Conservative Chairman and thus head of Central Office, arranged a luncheon meeting with a member of the FFF's executive committee and officials, ostensibly to establish an acceptable relationship.<sup>124</sup> In March 1949, Maxse wrote again to all Area Agents. The message was very different to that of nine months ago. Maxse now advised that, 'various negotiations have taken place and the Chairman of the party has been in touch with the Chairman of the Fighting Fund for Freedom with a view to establishing more satisfactory relations between them and Central Office'.<sup>125</sup> Instead of warning all Conservative Party officers and officials to avoid members of the FFF, Maxse advised that the FFF would be providing assistance in constituencies deemed most in need of their help.<sup>126</sup> There are a number of possible reasons for this changed attitude. The FFF openly sought the return of a Conservative government: 'we hope the government of our Country will be placed in the hands of the Conservative Party'.<sup>127</sup> It was not, therefore, likely to provide an electoral alternative to the Conservative Party. At a time when the Conservative Party machinery was still recovering from wartime decay, the FFF had assisted at least one Conservative prospective parliamentary candidate,<sup>128</sup> and openly offered this to any

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<sup>123</sup> Internal memo from M. Maxse to all Central Office Agents, 'Fighting Fund for Freedom', 24 June 1948. CPA CCO 3/1/52, Fighting Fund for Freedom, 1945-8.

<sup>124</sup> Untitled letter from Lord Woolton to W. F. Norris, September 1948. CPA CCO 3/1/52, Fighting Fund for Freedom, 1945-8.

<sup>125</sup> Internal memo from M. Maxse to all Central Office Agents, 'Fighting Fund for Freedom', 25 March 1949. CPA CCO 3/2/99, Fighting Fund for Freedom, 1949-50.

<sup>126</sup> Internal memo from M. Maxse to all Central Office Agents, 'Fighting Fund for Freedom', 25 March 1949. CPA CCO 3/2/99, Fighting Fund for Freedom, 1949-50.

<sup>127</sup> B. M. Young, Fighting Fund For Freedom: Report No. 25, July 1948. CPA CCO 3/1/52, Fighting Fund for Freedom, 1945-8.

<sup>128</sup> B. M. Young, Fighting Fund For Freedom: Report No. 25, July 1948, in CPA CCO 3/1/52, Fighting Fund for Freedom, 1945-8.

other who wanted it.<sup>129</sup> Moreover, the FFF claimed to have been more active, compared to the Conservative Party's canvassers, in working-class areas and factories.<sup>130</sup> The FFF's report also highlighted negative impact of the Labour Government's legislation and the 1947 fuel crisis on the working class. These included difficulties in finding the weekly National Insurance contribution, the loss of an additional wage due to the increased school leaving age, and the rising cost of electricity.<sup>131</sup> It is possible, therefore, that a badly shaken Conservative Party saw the FFF as a vehicle to influence a section of the electorate that had overwhelmingly contributed to the Labour landslide of 1945.

Nevertheless, we can detect a degree of disquiet over this relationship from Maxse's comment that the FFF's organisers in the constituencies would be 'still ostensibly operating on behalf of the F.F.F.',<sup>132</sup> rather than the Conservative Party. Disquiet turned to panic, however, when Central Office realised that FFF leaflet No. 67 exhorting the reader to vote Conservative was a potential breach of the Representation of the People Act (1948).<sup>133</sup> Maxse's concern can be seen in her admission to the General Director of Central Office that, 'We are so near an election that I tremble to think of what might happen if a Socialist got hold of leaflet No. 67.'<sup>134</sup> The notion of panic is evident in the pencilled-in note, presumably from the General Director, asking where the envelope and its contents, presumably a reference to the worrisome leaflet, had gone.<sup>135</sup> Electoral impropriety is a sufficient reason for concern in Central Office. Yet, the desire to maintain distance predates panic over a possibly dubious leaflet. In addition, the removal of Sir Waldron Smithers from the FFF's letterheads soon after 1945 ends the overt connection between the FFF and Conservative Party. What, then, accounts for Central Office wariness?

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<sup>129</sup> B. M. Young, *Fighting Fund For Freedom: Report No. 26, August 1948*, in CPA CCO 3/1/52, *Fighting Fund for Freedom, 1945-8*.

<sup>130</sup> B. M. Young, *Fighting Fund For Freedom: Report No. 26, August 1948*, in CPA CCO 3/1/52, *Fighting Fund for Freedom, 1945-8*.

<sup>131</sup> B. M. Young, *Fighting Fund For Freedom: Report No. 24, June 1948*, in CPA CCO 3/1/52, *Fighting Fund for Freedom, 1945-8*.

<sup>132</sup> Internal memo from M. Maxse to all Central Office Agents, 'Fighting Fund for Freedom', 25 March 1949. CPA CCO 3/2/99, *Fighting Fund for Freedom, 1949-50*.

<sup>133</sup> Untitled internal memo from M. Maxse to The Rt. Hon. Earl Stanhope, K.G., D.S.O., M.C., 15 August 1949. CPA CCO 3/2/99, *Fighting Fund for Freedom, 1949-50*.

<sup>134</sup> Internal memo from M. Maxse to the Director General, 'Fighting Fund for Freedom', 11 October 1949. CPA CCO 3/2/99, *Fighting Fund for Freedom, 1949-50*.

<sup>135</sup> Internal memo from M. Maxse to the Director General, 'Fighting Fund for Freedom', 11 October 1949. CPA CCO 3/2/99, *Fighting Fund for Freedom, 1949-50*.

A simple, but understandable, desire for institutional demarcation is possible, but maybe insufficient as an explanation. On the other hand, the Conservative Party presumably knew of the FFF's anti-Semitism from the 1945 campaign of its own MP. Even if Central Office was ignorant of this particularly damaging FFF association from 1945, subsequent evidence made the FFF's anti-Semitism a possible cause for concern. For example, Central Office received a copy of the FFF's monthly report for August 1948. Included in it was a call for a more active campaign in areas where Labour authorities had built council houses in Conservative marginal constituencies. Contained within this call was a clear anti-Semitic reference to a Labour leader, described as a 'Russian Jewess'.<sup>136</sup> Fear of association with anti-Semitism, therefore, could also underlie Central Office's concern over the possible discovery of a close relationship with the FFF. Possessing strong anti-Semitic antecedents made Central Office concern about connection to the FFF understandable. It is consistent with Central Office's attitude towards extreme-right groups, even those with less clear connections to the Conservative Party. Moreover, this concern could also explain the cryptic comment of Lord Woolton, when arranging his luncheon meeting with the Chairman of the FFF, that the latter was, in Woolton's opinion, 'the best person with whom to discuss a certain matter that is at present worrying my colleague and me'.<sup>137</sup> This is, admittedly, insufficient proof. There is no further clarification as to what this matter was, and it could easily be something mundane. Nevertheless, it is difficult to ignore it as a factor in the relationship between Central Office and the FFF, especially considering the propinquity to, and context provided by, the Second World War. In addition, the timing of Woolton's letter, soon after receipt of the FFF's August 1948 monthly report, adds weight to notion of concern over the FFF's anti-Semitism. One possible conclusion is, therefore, that as the Conservative Party approached the 1950 General Election, the relationship between Central Office and FFF had changed. From being distant, Central Office had created a working relationship that subsequently degenerated into deep concern, and that anti-Semitism is a feasible basis for that concern. All that we can conclude at this stage is that the FFF was an extreme-right

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<sup>136</sup> B. M. Young, *Fighting Fund For Freedom: Report No. 26, August 1948*. CPA CCO 3/1/52, *Fighting Fund for Freedom, 1945-8*.

<sup>137</sup> Untitled letter from Lord Woolton to W. F. Norris, September 1948. CPA CCO 3/1/52, *Fighting Fund for Freedom, 1945-8*.

group, and that although Central Office did not yet identify it as such, it took an interest in its activities.

Central Office and its Area Agents also showed interest in another organisation prior to the 1950 General Election, The New British National Reform Party, or New Reform Party (NRP). The NRP's prospectus reinforced the notion that the Conservative Party created extreme-right groups by sloughing off individuals whose ideas no longer suited the Conservative leadership. In the prospectus, the NRP's leader, P. W. Petter, J.P., identified himself as a life-long Conservative who had supported many Conservative candidates by speaking on their election platforms, and as someone who enjoyed realistic prospects of becoming a Conservative parliamentary candidate.<sup>138</sup> Nevertheless, Petter made his disillusionment with the Conservative Party clear: 'The Conservative policy of the last few years has been to run along behind the Socialist Party. Indeed they have presented the Socialists with many of the ideas which they have put in practice.'<sup>139</sup> Petter excoriated the performance of the Conservative Opposition frontbench. He described its performance over the introduction of the National Health Service as a 'cowardly retreat', and held it responsible for the loss of the 1949 Hammersmith South by-election.<sup>140</sup> Conservative MPs fared no better. Petter criticised them for being lazy and poor attendees of the House of Commons. Petter concluded that the Conservative Party was unworthy of support, not to be trusted with Government, and ineffectual in halting the socialist ruination of the country.<sup>141</sup> The only viable solution for the country's ills, Petter stated, was a new party led by a strong man.<sup>142</sup>

It is easy to dismiss Petter as a crank. His views revealed an individual convinced of the existence of an international conspiracy involving the papacy and communism. Nevertheless, Central Office thought it worthwhile paying attention to Petter and his

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<sup>138</sup> P. W. Petter, J.P., Prospectus of The New British National Reform Party, 2 May 1949. CPA CCO 3/2/127, New Reform Party, 1949-50.

<sup>139</sup> P. W. Petter, J.P., Prospectus of The New British National Reform Party, 2 May 1949, 2. CPA CCO 3/2/127, New Reform Party, 1949-50.

<sup>140</sup> P. W. Petter, J.P., Prospectus of The New British National Reform Party, 2 May 1949, 2. CPA CCO 3/2/127, New Reform Party, 1949-50.

<sup>141</sup> P. W. Petter, J.P., Prospectus of The New British National Reform Party, 2 May 1949, 2. CPA CCO 3/2/127, New Reform Party, 1949-50.

<sup>142</sup> P. W. Petter, J.P., Prospectus of The New British National Reform Party, 2 May 1949, 2. CPA CCO 3/2/127, New Reform Party, 1949-50.

new party. The Central Office Agent who forwarded the NRP prospectus advised of its wide distribution, and the Central Office official who received it noted that, 'We are keeping an eye open on the ambitious Mr. Petter.'<sup>143</sup> An enquiry from a Conservative MP elicited the response that Petter was indeed a Conservative, and known to the Yeovil Conservative Association.<sup>144</sup> Central Office circulated subsequent NRP literature to its General Director, Chief Political Officer and four other officials.<sup>145</sup> This action indicated that Central Office saw Petter and his party as potentially harmful to the Conservative Party. Meanwhile, Central Office Agents continued requesting information on the NRP. A memo from Central Office's Agent for the Home Counties South-East Area is typical in that it asked whether the NRP was 'of importance and should be watched?'<sup>146</sup> This is evidence that Central Office Agents knew part of their remit was to monitor groups potentially harmful to the Conservative Party. However, what harm could the politically miniscule Petter do to the Conservative Party? An internal memo to all Central Office Agents and local associations provided an answer. Attached to the memo was evidence of how seriously Central Office considered organisations like the NRP. This evidence was a four-page report by Central Office's Mr. Stebbings. Stebbings argued that the NRP was a 'mushroom organisation' Central Office normally ignored, but for what he described as Petter's specious argument that a vote for the NRP would not harm the Conservatives at the next General Election.<sup>147</sup> Stebbings referred to the potential defection of Conservative voters to the NRP. Yet, how realistic was Stebbing's description of Petter's claim of speciousness? There was just over one year before the compulsory calling of the next General Election. This was not sufficient time for Petter to organise electorally. The most Petter could achieve realistically was a few NRP candidates, most of whom would probably lose their deposits. The experiences of Oswald Mosley, whose New Party and BUF candidates were soundly beaten,

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<sup>143</sup> Letter from Miss Dodd to Brigadier Dudley Clarke, 2 June 1949, annotated by Clarke and initialled 8 June 1949. CPA CCO 3/2/127, New Reform Party, 1949-50.

<sup>144</sup> Confidential letter from M. Maxse to The Viscountess Davidson, O. B. E., M. P., 25 May 1949. CPA CCO, 3/1/77, New Reform Party, 1949.

<sup>145</sup> Letter from J. W. Petter, J.P., 'The NEW REFORM PARTY will NOT Split the Vote: in the ordinary sense of the word', 26 May 1949. CPA CCO 3/2/127, New Reform Party, 1949-50.

<sup>146</sup> Internal memo from Miss Cook to Miss Maxse, 'The New British National Reform Party', 30 May 1949. CPA CCO 3/2/127, New Reform Party, 1949-50.

<sup>147</sup> Internal memo from Miss Maxse, with attached report by Mr. Stebbings, to all Central Office Agents and local associations, 'The New Reform Party', 15 June 1949. CPA CCO 3/2/127, New Reform Party, 1949-50.

shows the likely outcome for a new party that attempted to make a mark on British politics. In addition, Petter, unlike Mosley, was an unknown who operated in a very different political climate to when the BUF did. Stebbings claim, therefore, is unrealistic, and the reason for it is probably no more than the typical response of any party keen to ward off all possible rivals. If, however, Stebbings' claim was dubious, what other potential harm could Petter pose to the Conservative Party?

The NRP's policies place it firmly on the right.<sup>148</sup> It demanded reductions in extravagant spending, particularly on social services, limitations on nationalisation, and a call for economic autarky, especially on foodstuffs. Lightning strikes would be illegal and the Empire supported. More idiosyncratic is the call for the restoration of the Penny Post. The desire for the new party to be a youth party set the NRP at odds with the Conservative Party, and provided a more radical tone. Yet, this was not a political programme with the potential to damage the Conservative Party. Many policies either were in line with current Conservative thinking, or had some support within the Conservative Party. However, religious morality was at the heart of the NRP's taxation and education policies, with Bible based teaching to be compulsory in state schools. This definitely was not prominent in Conservative policy. Stebbings also pointed out that the headquarters of the NRP was the same as the National Union of Protestants, an organisation responsible for disruption of High Church services, and that Petter was a former Governing Director of this organisation.<sup>149</sup> Petter's hard-line Protestantism was the philosophical basis of the NRP, which its prospectus revealed. In the prospectus, there was an acceptance of democracy and the institutions of Parliament and the Crown. However, should the NRP ever form a government it would ensure the exclusion from the institutions of the State those it deemed were not part of the nation.<sup>150</sup> Roman Catholics and Communists could certainly expect restrictions. Central Office could not miss the implications of Petter's views. They are ubiquitous in the NRP prospectus. Moreover, it is likely that the Conservative Party, with a strong Ulster Unionist element, realised there existed a connection between

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<sup>148</sup> The following is taken from, P. W. Petter, J.P., Prospectus of The New British National Reform Party, 2 May 1949. CPA CCO 3/2/127, New Reform Party, 1949-50.

<sup>149</sup> Internal memo from Miss Maxse, with attached report by Mr. Stebbings, to all Central Office Agents and local associations, 'The New Reform Party', 15 June 1949. CPA CCO 3/2/127, New Reform Party, 1949-50.

<sup>150</sup> P. W. Petter, J.P., Prospectus of The New British National Reform Party, 2 May 1949, 3. CPA CCO 3/2/127, New Reform Party, 1949-50.

hard-line Protestantism, Ulster loyalists and the extreme right. The British Protestants League, for example, spread virulent anti-democratic and anti-Semitic literature before and after the Second World War.<sup>151</sup> Central Office probably also knew that public perception would link the Conservative Party with Ulster Unionism, without necessarily distinguishing between its various forms. The Conservative Party had, for example, a long connection with local Orange order movements such as the Liverpool Protestant Party. Therefore, Central Office condemned Petter to all Conservative constituencies.<sup>152</sup> Dissociating the Conservative Party from any religious controversy that placed restrictions on a large section of the electorate, Stebbings reported that the Conservative Party would regard 'as reactionary any attempt to fan sectarian feuds particularly where these are calculated to promote political unrest and distract attention from the real issues of national politics'.<sup>153</sup> To Central Office, Petter was an extreme-right religious bigot, and they wanted no connection with him.

Central Office's concern not to be associated with extreme-right individuals leading up to the 1950 General Election is evident. Its treatment of one of its own parliamentary candidates, rather than a disgruntled individual on the periphery of the party, provided the clearest example of this. Andrew Fountaine fought for Franco in the Spanish Civil War and served in the Second World War.<sup>154</sup> He became a leading Young Conservative in his constituency. His performance at the 1947 Conservative Party Conference, wherein he attacked the Attlee government's policy towards Indian independence, earned a standing ovation. The Chorley Conservative Association adopted Fountaine in 1948 as its candidate in a constituency they expected to gain at the next election. However, Fountaine's speech at the Llandudno Conservative Party Conference in 1948 betrayed sentiments from which the Conservative Party now wished to distance itself. Fountaine described Attlee's Government as, 'that group of national traitors, that hierarchy of semi-alien mongrels, and hermaphrodite Communists that have the impudence to call themselves that which they are not – a

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<sup>151</sup> Rose, *Survey No. 1*, 7.

<sup>152</sup> CPA CCO 3/2/127, *New Reform Party, 1949-50*.

<sup>153</sup> O. W. Stebbings, 'The New British National Reform Party or the New Reform Party', 27 May 1949. CPA CCO 3/1/77, *New Reform Party, 1949*.

<sup>154</sup> For the following on Fountaine, see Taylor, *National Front*, 61ff, and 'Tories "Skeleton"', *Manchester Guardian*, 9 March 1959.

British Government',<sup>155</sup> and thus revealed himself to be anti-Semitic, racist and possibly violently disposed. A nominated parliamentary candidate was not so easy to dismiss, however, as a mere party member. Nevertheless, Central Office made clear such sentiments were not acceptable. Lord Woolton released a statement that Fountaine's viewpoint was, 'completely at variance with the attitude of the Conservative party'.<sup>156</sup> The Chorley Conservatives did not find an alternative candidate to replace Fountaine. This may reflect tension between Central Office, which had an approved list of candidates, and a local association guarding its autonomy, especially concerning selection and treatment of candidates. Alternatively, it may reflect views prevalent within Chorley Conservative Association. Central Office made it clear, however, that Fountaine no longer had official Conservative Party support. In the 1950 General Election, Fountaine polled 46.9% of the vote, and missed election by a mere 361 votes. His views could just as easily have secured votes as lost it. The closeness of the vote may simply parallel that of the overall result of the General Election. Yet, it is at least equally probable, and, arguably more so, that Fountaine's failure to capture Chorley rested on having to stand as an Independent Conservative. Less contentiously, Central Office had acted against an individual it deemed potentially harmful to the Conservative Party, and was willing to lose a seat in a close-run election. It is an action consistent with Central Office's attitude towards other extreme-right individuals before and after the 1950 General Election. Central Office removed all relevant papers from its Chorley constituency file to a private one with strict access conditions, perhaps wishing to limit details of any connection between Fountaine and the Conservative Party. The private file remains inaccessible. More personally, Fountaine's wife, later portrayed as objecting greatly to his 'desertion of the Tory Party', divorced him. As well as being the daughter of Norfolk's Chief Constable, Mrs. Fountaine was a former Central Office worker.<sup>157</sup>

### *After the 1950 General Election.*

The 1950 General Election alleviated Conservative fears that the party would never regain office. The Conservative Party attracted nearly three million more votes,

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<sup>155</sup> 'Tories 'Skeleton'', *Manchester Guardian*, 9 March 1959.

<sup>156</sup> 'Tories 'Skeleton'', *Manchester Guardian*, 9 March 1959.

<sup>157</sup> Bean, *Shades*, 95.

gaining eighty-five more MPs. Labour's impregnable one hundred and forty-five-seat majority became a precarious five. The result brought the Conservatives tantalisingly close to power. Thus, there was cause for Conservative optimism. Britain no longer had a mobilised electorate eager for the implementation of the welfare state. This favoured the Conservative Party. The Conservatives could also point to the fuel, food and sterling crises of the late 1940s as proof of the dangers of the Socialist's policies. Hypothermia, rationing and devaluation were easily associated with Labour government. Labour's manifesto held the prospect of more of the same policies. Moreover, the Labour Government's desire to protect the newly nationalised coal industry from cheaper imports meant it was quickly in an invidious position when, in spring 1950, France surprisingly presented it with the terms of the European Coal and Steel Community. Refusal to enter looked as if the Labour government was putting ideology before the electorate's comfort by turning its back on the cheaper imports that membership would bring. Furthermore, with nationalisation of steel still incomplete, the Labour manifesto had nevertheless marked out sugar, cement and industrial insurance as the next targets for state control. Sugar nationalisation particularly put a bitter taste in the electorate's mouth. Tate and Lyle responded to Labour's manifesto with its 'Mr. Cube' campaign, a pictorial representation of the perils of nationalisation on every sugar packet. Dogma was now affecting the British cup of tea adversely. Churchill, meanwhile, was still an asset for the Conservatives, having, for example, the right credentials should the military manoeuvres occurring between North and South Korea from 1949 escalate as many expected into global conflict. Moreover, his campaign comments showed that he now desired to face the Soviet Union with diplomacy, not bellicosity, and introduced in the process the word 'summit' into the lexicon of diplomacy. Attlee, by contrast, seemed powerless to avoid the split that would occur within his government should the Korean situation and budget deficits either require increased defence spending or welfare cuts, or worse still, both.

Yet there was also cause for the Conservative Party to be concerned. Austerity was not the complete picture. The Marshall Plan had reversed the negative impact of the U.S.A.'s sudden end to wartime lend-lease. The positive effects of the 1949 devaluation were yet to appear, but would undoubtedly result in an improved economy. For some, the post-war era was not one of unremitting gloom. Hennessy

revealed the positive cultural milieu that alleviated the postscript of continuing wartime privations. Billy Butlin exploited provisions in the 1938 Holidays with Pay Act and created holiday camps that provided a safety valve for spending demands unrealised so long as rationing remained. Attendances at sports events mushroomed. Parisian fashions returned, albeit beyond the reach of many. The formation in 1948 of the National Film Production Council and the passage of the Film Act may not have helped the British film industry. Yet, Britain's large cinema-going audiences enjoyed a resurgence of British films, such as David Lean's adaptation of *Great Expectations* (1946), Orson Welles in *The Third Man* (1949), Alec Guinness in *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949), and Laurence Olivier in *Hamlet* (1948).<sup>158</sup> Television, too, began to have an impact. In the four years between 1947 and 1950, the number of licences issued for television sets rocketed from 15,000 to 344,000, a trend that would continue.<sup>159</sup> This phenomenon increased the potential for variety, but for the Conservative Party it also carried risks. In May 1951, the appearance of *The Goon Show* heralded an explosion of satire and influenced later shows lampooning stuffy, outdated politicians.<sup>160</sup> The Conservative Party, a status-based and class-ridden party, faced the prospect of derision becoming a frequent feature of politics. Little wonder, then, that Labour's vote had actually increased by over one million in 1950. This also indicated approval, rather than rejection, of Labour's radical legislation. The acceptance of most of its legislation in the Conservative manifesto *This is the Road*, save for vague comments on halting or reversing the pace of nationalisation, implicitly acknowledged the electorate's approval of Labour's legislation. The Welfare State and governmental intervention were here to stay. This meant, however, that the tensions between the economically liberal and the more collectively minded of the Conservative Party were never far beneath the surface in the post-war years, as Cockett realised.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Other examples include *Oliver Twist* (1948), *Odd Man Out* (1947), *A Matter of Life and Death* (1946), *Black Narcissus* (1946), *The Red Shoes* (1948) and *Whisky Galore* (1948). See also S. Harper and V. Porter, *British Cinema of the 1950s: The Decline of Deference*, OUP, Oxford (2003).

<sup>159</sup> P. Hennessey, *Having It So Good: Britain in the Fifties*, Penguin, London (2006), 112.

<sup>160</sup> Hennessey, *So Good*, 113.

<sup>161</sup> R. Cockett, *Thinking the Unthinkable: Think-Tanks and the Economic Counter Revolution 1931-1983*, Harper Collins, London (1994), 98

This situation had potentially negative consequences for the Conservative Party. Political space on the right of the Conservative Party had opened because of their failure to challenge the Labour government effectively and the formulation of the *Industrial Charter*. The manifesto's confirmation that this would continue to be the Conservative Party's position meant organisations to the right of the party would remain problematic. Central Office had worked assiduously to avoid post-war connections between the Conservative Party and the extreme right. It is unlikely, however, that the Conservative's political opponents, let alone the electorate, forgot pre-war links between Conservatives and the extreme right. Two examples show that Conservative Central Office remained keen to minimise such negative associations. Firstly, correspondence between Central Office and the Conservative Research Department in March 1950 revealed concern at the association of the epithet 'Conservative' with right-wing European parties by the B.B.C., the Labour Party and its publications.<sup>162</sup> The Conservative Party of Great Britain wished to avoid association with European right-wing parties whose political alliances with fascism contributed to the worst excesses of fascism and Nazism. Secondly, Central Office continued to monitor the activities of the Fighting Fund for Freedom, and collected information on its general opposition to nationalisation and specific commitment to railway denationalisation.<sup>163</sup> This revealed that the FFF appeared to be attempting the creation of a cell-structure within the Conservative Party to propagate its ideology.<sup>164</sup> Central Office responded by continuing to monitor FFF activity, and received reports from a number of constituencies.<sup>165</sup> Yet, Central Office did not want knowledge of any association between the Conservative Party and the FFF to become widely known. Central Office's desire to minimise outside knowledge of their monitoring came when, in July 1950, a Central Office employee released information about the Fighting Fund for Freedom without checking the file for the Conservative Party's official position. Miss Maxse responded with a severe rebuke,<sup>166</sup> which showed that

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<sup>162</sup> Miss Branston to Miss Maxse, 'The Conservative Label', 7 March 1950. CPA CCO 4/3/95, Foreign Affairs – Relations with Right Wing Parties, 1949-50.

<sup>163</sup> Untitled internal memo from Mr. Oddy to Mr. Graham, 6 December 1950. CPA CCO 3/3/81, Fighting Fund for Freedom, 1950-52.

<sup>164</sup> Untitled internal memo from Mr. Oddy to Mr. Graham, 6 December 1950. CPA CCO 3/3/81, Fighting Fund for Freedom, 1950-52.

<sup>165</sup> Lord De L'Isle to Mr. Pierssene, 1 August 1951. CPA CCO 3/3/81, Fighting Fund for Freedom, 1950-52.

<sup>166</sup> 'Personal' internal memo from Miss Maxse to Miss Dodd, 'Outside Organisations', 19 July 1950. CPA CCO 4/3/207, Outside Organisations.

Central Office was unwilling to acknowledge any possibility of connections with the extreme right, not even that it was monitoring it. Nevertheless, Central Office continued monitoring these external groups, and revealed in the process varying attitudes towards them.

Like the British Housewives League, Aims of Industry (AIMS) sought a positive relationship with the Conservative Party. Unlike the BHL, however, AIMS secured it. Central Office agreed to Conservative Associations using AIMS' speakers during Attlee's first administration.<sup>167</sup> However, attempts to elicit an admission from AIMS of a close relationship with the Conservative Party were vigorously denied and a full report of the attempt forwarded by AIMS to Central Office.<sup>168</sup> In doing so, AIMS acted as part of Central Office's intelligence gathering mechanism. Central Office agreed to create a Liaison Officer between the Conservative Party and AIMS after the 1950 General Election had reduced Labour's majority, which AIMS made known to its Area Secretaries on a strictly confidential basis.<sup>169</sup> There are a number of reasons for Central Office's positive attitude towards AIMS. AIMS assisted Central Office in intelligence gathering, albeit marginally. More importantly, there was no evidence that AIMS promoted its objectives in a manner usually associated with extremists. Nor is there any evidence of overt hostility towards the Conservative Party. On the contrary, AIMS' objectives complimented those of the Conservative Party. Increased support for Labour at the 1950 General Election may have meant that the Conservative's could not promise whole-scale denationalisation. It did not mean, however, that Central Office could not co-operate with outside organisations that did. Indeed, such was the co-operation that Central Office accepted a financial relationship with AIMS. In October 1950, Central Office accepted 80,000 free copies of *The Road Ahead*.<sup>170</sup> This publication chimed, in title and content, with the Conservative Party's 1949 policy document, *The Right Road for Britain*, and its 1950 General Election manifesto *This is the Road*. Central Office distributed *The Road Ahead* to all

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<sup>167</sup> Joan Dodd to Central Office Area Agent, Miss Mann, 1 December 1949. CPA CCO 3/2/56, Aims of Industry, 1949-50.

<sup>168</sup> Roger W. Sewill to Lord Woolton, 14 December 1949. CPA CCO 3/2/56, Aims of Industry, 1949-50.

<sup>169</sup> Roger W. Sewill to Miss Maxse, 6 October 1950. CPA CCO 3/2/56, Aims of Industry, 1949-50.

<sup>170</sup> Letter to Mr. Stokes, 'The Road Ahead', 16 October 1950. CPA CCO, 3/2/56, Aims of Industry, 1949-50.

Conservative constituency agents.<sup>171</sup> There is also evidence that Central Office distributed other AIMS publications, including *British Industry at the Crossroads*, attacking nationalisation in general, and *No Appeasement*, which, like 'Mr. Cube', fought the nationalisation of the sugar industry. AIMS, therefore, did not pose a threat due to embarrassing activities, nor was it likely to present an electoral alternative to the Conservative Party. Its 'extremism' amounted to no more than occupying political space the Conservative Party felt incapable, at the time, of occupying. The extent of Central Office's refractory action against AIMS remained limited, therefore, to advising its Area Agents that it was 'better not to over advertise the fact that they are assisting us'.<sup>172</sup>

Central Office's relationship with AIMS contrasts starkly with its attitude towards The New Crusade (TNC). Central Office's March 1950 report on the TNC included the names of prominent, distinguished members.<sup>173</sup> Amongst the names is Lady Rennell Rodd, widow of the Conservative and Unionist MP for St. Marylebone from 1928-1933. Lord Rennell Rodd had also been a member of the pre-war Nazi-sympathising Anglo-German Fellowship. The Rodd's third son, Peter, married Nancy Mitford. Although Nancy Mitford was not a fascist sympathiser, many of the Mitfords were. Her parents had supported Mosley's British Union of Fascists. Sister Unity was a prominent Nazi who had resided in Germany before the Second World War and whom British intelligence services watched carefully. Most notable was Diana Mitford, the wife of Oswald Mosley. These were all well-known facts in Central Office. Therefore, it is not surprising that the report's author, Miss Fletcher, informed Miss Maxse at Central Office that TNC was a 'fascist organisation' that was connected to 'Nazi Youth Parties in Germany'.<sup>174</sup> Fletcher also noted that Special Branch at Scotland Yard was investigating the TNC, which would have been especially worrying for a Central Office determined not to resurrect charges of Conservative links to right-wing extremism. Fletcher informed Maxse that a Special

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<sup>171</sup> Letter to Mr. Stokes, 'The Road Ahead', 16 October 1950. CPA CCO, 3/2/56, Aims of Industry, 1949-50.

<sup>172</sup> Joan Dodd to Central Office Area Agent, Miss Mann, 1 December 1949. CPA CCO 3/2/56, Aims of Industry, 1949-50.

<sup>173</sup> Miss Fletcher to Miss Maxse, 'The New Crusade', 22 March 1950. CPA CCO 4/3/209, Outside Societies, 1949-50.

<sup>174</sup> Miss Fletcher to Miss Maxse, 'The New Crusade', 22 March 1950. CPA CCO 4/3/209, Outside Societies, 1949-50.

Branch officer had unsuccessfully attempted to meet the TNC's Secretary, a Colonel Miller, on a number of occasions on the pretext of seeking TNC literature.<sup>175</sup> Thwarted, the Special Branch officer revealed to the property owner his identity, having previously claimed to be a Young Conservative.<sup>176</sup> This was a reminder to Central Office, even if unnecessary, that others maintained a connection in their mind between the Conservative Party and the extreme right. Fletcher concluded to Maxse that TNC 'should be investigated'.<sup>177</sup>

Central Office increased its refractory action when, soon after it decided to investigate The New Crusade, it once again encountered sectarian and anti-Semitic extremists, albeit ones who were not necessarily Nazi sympathisers. The Guild of Good Neighbours (TGGN) seemed typical of the Conservative activism Martin identified, in that it was anti-Socialist and wished to overthrow the Labour government.<sup>178</sup> In April 1950, Central Office's Miss Fletcher advised Miss Maxse of arrangements for gathering information on TGGN, and that more information would be forthcoming pending further enquiries.<sup>179</sup> In the meantime, Fletcher identified a Mrs. Proctor as the TGGN's Assistant Organiser, and noted that Proctor 'wears a Conservative badge' and was 'on the Committee of St. Marylebone'.<sup>180</sup> This shows that Central Office was keen to note the involvement of Conservative Party members. Fletcher also advised Maxse that TGGN possessed a 'chart' outlining its views, which its leader, a Captain John Hutchings, had forwarded to approximately eight hundred people.<sup>181</sup> Fletcher subsequently informed Maxse of her inability to 'ascertain to whom this has been sent'.<sup>182</sup> Again, this revealed Central Office's concern to monitor the activities of outside organisations. The information it gathered would allow Central Office to

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<sup>175</sup> Miss Fletcher to Miss Maxse, 'The New Crusade', 22 March 1950. CPA CCO 4/3/209, Outside Societies, 1949-50.

<sup>176</sup> Miss Fletcher to Miss Maxse, 'The New Crusade', 22 March 1950. CPA CCO 4/3/209, Outside Societies, 1949-50.

<sup>177</sup> Miss Fletcher to Miss Maxse, 'The New Crusade', 22 March 1950, 2. CPA CCO 4/3/209, Outside Societies, 1949-50.

<sup>178</sup> P. Martin, 'Echoes', 135.

<sup>179</sup> F. R. Fletcher to Miss Maxse, 'The Guild of Good Neighbours', 21 April 1950. CPA CCO 4/3/209 Outside Societies, 1949-50.

<sup>180</sup> F. R. Fletcher to Miss Maxse, 'The Guild of Good Neighbours', 21 April 1950. CPA CCO 4/3/209, Outside Societies, 1949-50.

<sup>181</sup> F. R. Fletcher to Miss Maxse, 'The Guild of Good Neighbours', 21 April 1950. CPA CCO 4/3/209, Outside Societies, 1949-50.

<sup>182</sup> F. R. Fletcher to Miss Maxse, 'The Guild of Good Neighbours', 21 April 1950. CPA CCO 4/3/209, Outside Societies, 1949-50.

make its views known to any Conservative recipients of the 'chart', and thereby minimise any possible embarrassment by association and curtail TGGN's chances of growth. Although further enquiries produced TGGN's 'chart', Fletcher went personally to the TGGN's headquarters as she decided that the information was insubstantial.

Fletcher's second report, of June 1950, revealed TGGN had few members, sought wealthy donors, and although it claimed to be non-party political and open to all, Conservatives ran it.<sup>183</sup> However, Fletcher also detected a 'strong under-current of anti-Roman Catholic feeling, and also more strongly still, anti-Jewish'.<sup>184</sup> At one juncture, Fletcher reported, 'the idea was conveyed that the main troubles of the world sprang from the Jews'.<sup>185</sup> Fletcher, in highlighting such views, revealed Central Office's aim of identifying them. By also identifying Conservatives, Fletcher reinforced the notion that Central Office's objectives were the curtailment and avoidance of associated guilt. Fletcher gave her private address when asked by Captain Hutchings to identify herself.<sup>186</sup> Pressed as to whether she had any connection with some other organisation, Fletcher informed Maxse she was evasive.<sup>187</sup> Only when Hutchings persisted did Fletcher reply, 'that I interested myself mildly in various organisations, as I was generally interested in women, but had called purely out of interest, privately'.<sup>188</sup> It was a disingenuous and opaque reply designed to hide the Conservative Party's connection to the extreme-right. Why relate this to Maxse otherwise? The information Fletcher gleaned revealed much about Central Office's objectives towards extreme-right organisations. In addition, Fletcher's methods showed Central Office was careful not to make their intelligence gathering known.

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<sup>183</sup> F. R. Fletcher to Miss Maxse, Guild of Good Neighbours, 15 June 1950, 1. CPA CCO 4/3/209, Outside Societies, 1949-50.

<sup>184</sup> F. R. Fletcher to Miss Maxse, Guild of Good Neighbours, 15 June 1950, 3. CPA CCO 4/3/209, Outside Societies, 1949-50.

<sup>185</sup> F. R. Fletcher to Miss Maxse, Guild of Good Neighbours, 15 June 1950, 3. CPA CCO 4/3/209, Outside Societies, 1949-50. See also Hennessy's comments about anti-Catholicism in *Never*, 395-396.

<sup>186</sup> F. R. Fletcher to Miss Maxse, Guild of Good Neighbours, 15 June 1950, 3. CPA CCO 4/3/209, Outside Societies, 1949-50.

<sup>187</sup> F. R. Fletcher to Miss Maxse, Guild of Good Neighbours, 15 June 1950, 3. CPA CCO 4/3/209, Outside Societies, 1949-50.

<sup>188</sup> F. R. Fletcher to Miss Maxse, Guild of Good Neighbours, 15 June 1950, 3. CPA CCO 4/3/209, Outside Societies, 1949-50.

This supports the notion that Central Office knew that association with the extreme right could damage the Conservative Party.

We can also see Central Office's desire to avoid embarrassing associations when its opinion of an organisation changed after discovering a connection with the Conservative Party. L. N. Tomlinson was a veteran of both world wars.<sup>189</sup> He created Clan Briton, probably after the Conservative Party lost the February 1950 General Election.<sup>190</sup> His views, as revealed in correspondence bearing a Union Flag with a white crucifix superimposed, both with the Conservative Party and others, revealed an extreme-right individual. Anti-left sentiment is endemic in Tomlinson's correspondence. In the *Sunday Express* Tomlinson stated his belief that the Labour Government was 'devoted to the destruction of the Empire'.<sup>191</sup> He also wrote to Churchill and demanded that it was more correct to refer to all Labour MPs as 'COMSOT (Communitistic Socialist)'.<sup>192</sup> Like Burton of the Society for Individual Freedom, Tomlinson thought Britain was under threat from Communist subversives.<sup>193</sup> Tomlinson shared these views with the Society for Individual Freedom,<sup>194</sup> and found reflection in the Boulting Brothers film, *High Treason* (1951), in which left-wing plotters including a Labour MP planned to take over Britain's power stations at the same time as a Soviet invasion.<sup>195</sup> Tomlinson probably saw the film as realistic, and made no distinction between the Labour Party of Great Britain and Communists.<sup>196</sup> Racism and anti-Semitism was prevalent in his writings, sometimes mixed with anti-left comments and a belief in decadence. On 19 March 1951, Labour MP Sidney Silverman read in the House of Commons a letter sent by Tomlinson to a Reverend Fielding Clarke. Tomlinson, after implying that Mr. Silverman as a Jew was unqualified to speak on matters concerning the Church of

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<sup>189</sup> Confidential internal memo from E. S. Adamson to Lady Maxwell Fyfe, 'Clan Briton' and Mr. L. N. Tomlinson', 20 March 1951. CPA CCO 3/3/56, Clan Briton, 1950-2.

<sup>190</sup> The first reference in CPA concerns Tomlinson's letter to the *Sunday Express* of 27 August 1950. CPA CCO 3/2/72, Clan Briton, 1949-50.

<sup>191</sup> Letter from L. N. Tomlinson to the Editor, 'First-rate, Mr. Shinwell', *Sunday Express*, 27 August 1950. CPA CCO 3/2/72, Clan Briton, 1949-50.

<sup>192</sup> L. N. Tomlinson to Winston Churchill, 'The Other Side of the Gangway', 19 March 1951. CPA CCO 3/3/56, Clan Briton, 1950-52.

<sup>193</sup> See 15.

<sup>194</sup> See 15.

<sup>195</sup> D. Sandbrook, *Never Had it so Good: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles*, Abacus, London (2006), 231-2.

<sup>196</sup> Letter from L. N. Tomlinson to Mr. Churchill, 'The Other Side of the Gangway', 19 March 1951. CPA CCO 3/3/56, Clan Briton, 1950-52.

England, castigated other Jewish Labour MPs for failing to serve in the recent war.<sup>197</sup> In an attached document was the statement: 'Today our public life is impregnated with the breeders of greed, jealousy, corruption and self-glorification who are all too often non-Christian, of alien blood, interested only very superficially indeed in the well-being of Britain and Britons. Their loyalties are to themselves alone, and the parasite occupations which find them wealth at the expense of the British people who have given them sanctuary.'<sup>198</sup> Tomlinson concluded by referring to the murder of British soldiers in Palestine by Jewish terrorists led by Menachim Begin, and castigated Attlee for placing control of the armed forces 'in the hands of two blood-brothers of this murderer, i.e. Shinwell and Strauss', who had 'NEVER condemned the outrages committed'.<sup>199</sup>

Anti-internationalism entered the mix. In a number of letters addressing the issue of 'World Government', Tomlinson argued that the United Nations was 'an Anti-Christian Communist conception' that would result in the Union Jack's replacement by some 'international rag'.<sup>200</sup> Approbation of the 'truly British' and demands of 'Britain for the Britons' ran alongside xenophobic references to 'aliens' and 'anti-Christian Asiatics.' All this resembled the ideas of the BUF and British People's Party.<sup>201</sup> There was also a clear desire to limit the electorate according to specific, exclusive criteria. Tomlinson argued that immigrants who were not 'absorbed racially within the British family' remained in Britain solely as guests, and had to accept 'our Christian way of life', and demanded the government of Britain had to be '100% in the hands of Christian British people'.<sup>202</sup> Tomlinson indicated that disenfranchisement might not have been the limit of his aims in a letter to the Editor of *Reynolds News*:

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<sup>197</sup> Letter from L. N. Tomlinson to Mr. Churchill, 'The Other Side of the Gangway', 19 March 1951. CPA CCO 3/3/56, Clan Briton, 1950-52.

<sup>198</sup> 'Another letter shock for MPs - 'Privilege' ruling', *Daily Mirror*, 20 March 1951. CPA CCO, 3/3/56, Clan Briton, 1950-52.

<sup>199</sup> L. N. Tomlinson to S. H. Pierssene Esq., 'The Revolt' by Menachem Begin, Head of Irgun, & Jewish M.P.', 3 September 1951. CPA CCO 3/3/56, Clan Briton, 1950-52.

<sup>200</sup> Open letter from L. N. Tomlinson, "World Government". An open letter addressed to Mr. R. Reader Harris, MP', 22 June 1951. CPA CCO 3/3/56, Clan Briton, 1950-52. See also in same file L. N. Tomlinson to Maurice Hill Esq., "World Government", 22 June 1951, and to S. H. Pierssene Esq., "World Government", 22 June 1951.

<sup>201</sup> Letter from L. N. Tomlinson to the Editor, 'First-rate, Mr. Shinwell', *Sunday Express*, 27 August 1950. CPA CCO 3/2/72, Clan Briton, 1949-50. Letter from L. N. Tomlinson to Mr. Rossiter Esq., 14 October 1951, and CB/POL/1, (nd) CPA CCO 3/3/56, Clan Briton, 1950-52.

<sup>202</sup> Undated policy statement, CB/POL/1, CPA CCO 3/3/56, Clan Briton, 1950-52.

'all foreigners in Britain should be deprived of their rights'.<sup>203</sup> Finally, there was violence. Tomlinson likened Communists to mad dogs, and argued that, 'as such they must be eliminated'.<sup>204</sup> A journalist at *Reynolds News* voiced his belief that Clan Briton was 'an organiser of planned hooliganism'.<sup>205</sup> These are all characteristics of the extreme right, even of fascism. Expressing them was an individual who claimed that Clan Briton had a 'County Branch Office' and 'members in most of the Counties of Britain'.<sup>206</sup> He was also a member of the Conservative Party.

Central Office's response to Tomlinson is enlightening. An internal party memo showed some knowledge of Tomlinson. It described him as 'a rather decent fellow, obsessed with flag-waving, a violent patriot, with probably slight fascist tendencies'.<sup>207</sup> However, the author also stated, 'I never encourage the recruiting of this type of person because it tends to a confusion of ideas.'<sup>208</sup> The description of an individual having 'slight fascist tendencies' as a 'decent fellow', is intriguing. It could betray fascist sympathies on the memo writer's part, or a generosity of spirit based on Tomlinson being a double war veteran, or simply careless language. It does show, however, that the author believed violence and patriotism to be constituent parts of fascism. What is clear is that the author either did not realise Tomlinson was a Conservative Party member, or regretted it if he was. As there is no clear indication of membership, either in this letter, or in previous correspondence, the former is more probable. What is unarguable, however, is the view that individuals with such views should not be part of the Conservative Party. In this sense, the Conservative Party was keen to block extreme-right individuals, even if only for the expeditious desire to avoid 'confusion of ideas.' Compare this attitude, however, with the one displayed when Central Office became aware of Tomlinson's Conservative Party membership.

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<sup>203</sup> Letter from L. N. Tomlinson to the Editor, *Reynolds News*, 14 August 1951. CPA CCO 3/3/56, Clan Briton, 1950-52.

<sup>204</sup> Tomlinson explicitly called for Communists to 'be destroyed.' Letter from L. N. Tomlinson to S. V. Sturtz, 'The 'Peace' Petition', 19 September 1950, CPA CCO 3/2/72, Clan Briton, 1949-50.

<sup>205</sup> Letter from L. N. Tomlinson to the Editor, *Reynolds News*, 14 August 1951. CPA CCO 3/3/56, Clan Briton, 1950-52.

<sup>206</sup> Letter from L. N. Tomlinson to Mr. Churchill, 'The Other Side of the Gangway', 19 March 1951. CPA CCO 3/3/56, Clan Briton, 1950-52. Letter from L. N. Tomlinson to S. H. Pierssene Esq., "World Government", 22 June 1951. CPA CCO 3/3/56, Clan Briton, 1950-52.

<sup>207</sup> Internal memo from E. S. Adamson to Miss Maxse, "Clan Briton' and the Peace Petition: Mr. L. N. Tomlinson', 22 September 1950. CPA CCO 3/2/72, Clan Briton, 1949-50.

<sup>208</sup> Internal memo from E. S. Adamson to Miss Maxse, "Clan Briton' and the Peace Petition: Mr. L. N. Tomlinson', 22 September 1950. CPA CCO 3/2/72, Clan Briton, 1949-50.

Central Office swung into action after Sidney Silverman's expose of Tomlinson's views in the House of Commons. The next day a confidential internal memo revealed Tomlinson was an ex-member of the Heston and Isleworth Conservative Association, where he was quite prominent as a member of a Ward Committee, but was now living in Lytham St. Annes.<sup>209</sup> Tomlinson was also described as having a 'distinct and bitter anti-semitic prejudice which gives the impression of Fascism, but I am told he is not Fascist'.<sup>210</sup> Putting aside frustration at a lack of further elucidation of what Central Office thought fascism was, this correspondence leaves the impression of a less sanguine attitude, yet one that may also have been informed by a belief that as an ex-member of a local association, Tomlinson had left the Conservative Party. However, Central Office's attitude markedly after Tomlinson subsequently advised that he was an 'ardent Tory' and a member of the Lytham Conservative Club, which he described as a 'very respectable association of Britains',<sup>211</sup> Central Office's responses became curter, and they quickly reached a decision not to respond to Tomlinson. Their comments had gone from sympathetic to dismissive in six months.<sup>212</sup>

Relations between the Conservative Party and extreme right in the aftermath of the Second World War are not usually as clear as in the Tomlinson example. The extent and content of Central Office material on right-wing groups varies. Nonetheless, there was an identifiable point when Tomlinson became persona non grata as far as Central Office was concerned. However, we must exercise caution in taking this as proof of the Conservative Party's blocking role in the fortunes of the extreme right. We do not know of action taken to remove Tomlinson's party membership. Even if none occurred, the autonomous nature of local Conservative associations would limit it as evidence. Furthermore, Clan Briton was but one extreme-right organisation operating to the right of the Conservative Party. Other factors were also at work in these relationships. Many extreme-right groups were small, often no more than one-man-bands, and therefore not strictly speaking 'groups'. It is, consequently, difficult to judge the extent of the support attracted or repelled by the Conservative Party's

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<sup>209</sup> Confidential internal memo from E. S. Adamson to Lady Maxwell Fyfe, 'Clan Briton' and Mr. L. N. Tomlinson', 20 March 1951. CPA CCO 3/3/56, Clan Briton, 1950-52.

<sup>210</sup> Confidential internal memo from E. S. Adamson to Lady Maxwell Fyfe, 'Clan Briton' and Mr. L. N. Tomlinson', 20 March 1951. CPA CCO 3/3/56, Clan Briton, 1950-52.

<sup>211</sup> Letter from L. N. Tomlinson to S. H. Pierssene Esq., 'World Government', 22 June 1951, CPA CCO 3/3/56, Clan Briton, 1950-52.

<sup>212</sup> CPA CCO 3/2/72, Clan Briton, 1949-50 and 3/3/56, Clan Briton, 1950-52.

treatment of these extreme-right groups. Central Office correspondence revealed disdain for the size of these groups, and therefore we cannot discount this as a factor in the Conservative Party's attitude. There is even an example where the attitude displayed towards an extreme right group rested on lines that are more obvious. The Conservative Christian League, for example, employed similar, if less violent, language as Clan Briton and aims that were in tune with other extreme-right groups. It even boasted the support of that ubiquitous right-wing Conservative MP, Sir Waldron Smithers.<sup>213</sup> Central Office was interested enough to investigate, but its decision to have nothing to do with the Conservative Christian League resulted from discovering its leading figure's criminal past, not any right-wing extremism.<sup>214</sup>

Nevertheless, there was a clear difference in the attitudes of the Conservative Party towards specific external extreme-right groups. Perception of the extreme-right group as fascist or not was a determining factor. The fascist extreme right were clearly cut-off. This attitude towards domestic groups of the fascist extreme right is also in line with the Party's stated view of its position in relation to contemporary right-wing European Parties. The Conservative Party had no wish to be associated with any outside organisation whose stance could link it, in any way, with the sufferings caused by aggressive, racist right-wing extremism. Central Office also investigated non-fascist extreme-right groups. It tolerated some and nipped others in the bud. It is reasonable to suggest, therefore, that individuals within groups amenable to the Conservative Party probably supported it electorally, and that those repelled sought other areas for their support. If so, then the Conservative Party had acted as a barrier to the development of some extreme-right groups almost by de facto incorporation. However, it had also sloughed off, or prevented association with, those it deemed anathema, forcing them to act without the assistance of the Conservative Party. This remained constant when the Conservative Party regained office and came under pressure from more highly organised and better supported extreme-right movements.

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<sup>213</sup> Letter from Philip Clifford to Colin Mann, 21 February 1949. CPA CCO 3/1/41, Conservative Christian League (bogus organisation), 1949.

<sup>214</sup> CPA CCO 3/2/74, Conservative Christian League (bogus organisation), 1949-50.

## **Chapter 2. Consensus Conservatism and Extreme Right Revival, 1951-1957.**

Defeat at the 1950 General Election went some way to exorcise the Conservative Party's shock at the 1945 defeat, and held the promise that success was near. Labour's one hundred and forty five-seat majority was now a mere five. A number of high calibre individuals among the 1950 intake of new MPs reinvigorated the Conservative parliamentary party. They quickly formed the One Nation Group, which was a modernizing organisation that Walsha argued played a pivotal role in reshaping Conservatism.<sup>1</sup> Not that the Conservative leadership lacked advantages; Eden's war-record meant he was the expected and accepted successor to Churchill. Thus, the Conservative Party leadership looked settled. This compared favourably to a tired Labour leadership damaged by the resignations of left wing Bevanites, and assailed by a concerted campaign by the Conservative Opposition to counter its political programme. A seemingly clearer stance of anti-Communism, commitment to competition and denationalisation in the 1951 General Election manifesto assuaged the right of the Conservative Party. Conservative Party machinery and organisation remained prepared for an expected General Election. Opinion polls in 1951 moved decidedly in favour of the Conservative Party. By-elections showed swings towards the Conservatives of 4% and there were many gains in local elections. The possibility of gaining a large number of Liberal votes increased the prospects of Conservative success. Compared to 1950, when 475 Liberal candidates stood, there were only 109 Liberal candidates in the 1951 General Election. The result was still close. The Conservatives under Churchill won. Labour, however, actually polled more votes. Moreover, the Conservative majority of seventeen depended on the nineteen seats won by National Liberals allied to the Conservative Party by the Woolton-Teviot Pact of 1947. Nevertheless, the Conservative Party had regained office six years after a seemingly catastrophic defeat.

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<sup>1</sup> R. Walsha, 'The One Nation Group: A Tory Approach to Backbench Politics and Organization, 1950-55', *Twentieth Century British History*, 11, 2 (2000), 182-214.

Churchill's administration was the first overtly Conservative government since 1929. The less than convincing nature of its victory in 1951, however, meant that it was not a government suffused with confidence. As Labour had polled 1.2 million more votes than the Conservatives had, and 2 million more than in 1945, there was an obvious need to reach out to that part of the electorate that viewed the Labour Party as more likely to deliver its requirements. Churchill's government therefore adopted a cautious approach. There was no wholesale reversal of Labour legislation, and virtually all nationalisation remained untouched. Cockett argued that any ideological drive to reverse Labour's legislation foundered when it came 'up against cold political logic'.<sup>2</sup> However, it is doubtful that right-wingers acknowledged the impact of political realities, and questioned instead just how 'Conservative' the new government was. Indeed, so similar were the policies of Chancellor Butler and his Labour predecessor, Gaitskell, that the *New Statesman* conflated the two to form 'Mr. Butskell'.<sup>3</sup> Henceforth, 'Butskellism' became synonymous with consensus. Moreover, an ageing leader, whose interest in domestic issues paled besides foreign ones, gave the impression of lethargy. The 1952 Conservative Party conference reflected this situation, and contained many complaints of apathy and discontent, just one year after the election victory.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, there were successes. The Chancellor's introduction of emergency economic measures in late 1951 and early 1952 ameliorated poor economic conditions. Consumer goods became more plentiful and diverse at the same time as a staged abolition of rationing. The national budget increased and thus so did the amount of public expenditure. House building was a great success. Harold Macmillan, the Housing Minister, proudly delivered on the election promise to build 300,000 new homes. By-elections contrasted favourably with the period of opposition. A general swing to the Conservatives meant no by-elections were lost, and one, Sunderland South, even gained from Labour in 1953. Consequently, when Anthony Eden succeeded Churchill in April 1955, the Conservative Party's electoral prospects looked bright. The following month's contest resulted in a sixty seat Conservative majority, the first time since 1841 that a party had improved its performance in three successive General Elections.

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<sup>2</sup> R. Cockett, *Thinking*, 98.

<sup>3</sup> *The Economist*, 13 February 1954.

<sup>4</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 239-240. See also NUC, 15 May 1952, Central Council Report for 1952, CPA NUA 2/2/18. A. Seldon, *Churchill's Indian Summer: the Conservative Government, 1951-1955*, Hodder and Stoughton, London (1981) 54.

In less than two years, however, Eden had resigned. Gilmour described Eden's premiership as a period of dithering.<sup>5</sup> Without the kudos of Churchill, Eden proved incapable of a firm hand in cabinet appointments. The decision to promote quickly the most promising of the 1950 intake of Conservative MPs drew criticism from Conservative newspapers.<sup>6</sup> Marking foreign policy was the initial stages of imperial decline, most obvious in the decision to withdraw British forces from east of Suez. It was, however, economic and industrial concerns that initially caused Eden's popularity to decline. The necessity of higher and more widespread taxes in the 1955 Autumn Budget, plus further deflationary measures the following year, combined with a number of strikes, most noticeably in the docks and railways, to reduce Eden's popularity rating by 30% even before the fiasco of the Suez Crisis.<sup>7</sup> An extreme-right protester at Bradford physically attacked the Prime Minister. Poor by-election results reflected declining popularity. In February 1956, the Liberals reduced the Conservative majority at Hereford by over three-quarters, whilst at Taunton Edward du Cann barely won with a majority of 657 votes. Walthamstow in March produced a 7.5% swing to Labour. The Tonbridge by-election of June 1956, where a Conservative majority of 18,000 fell to 1,600, appeared to presage electoral disaster. Eden was widely criticised as an ineffective leader who caused the malaise pervading much of the Conservative Party. The only probable remedy, save an unlikely party coup, was a serious international crisis that enabled Eden to unite party and country behind him. Eden's poor handling of such an eventuality when it occurred in the guise of the Suez Crisis was, therefore, the final straw.

The impression derived of this period of Conservative Government is one of steady success, built on a consensual approach, followed by acute leadership failure. Yet, underlying this was unease amongst the Conservative Party's right wing about the party's direction. Churchill, working with a small majority, had attempted on becoming Prime Minister to form a Conservative-Liberal government rather than a purely Conservative one.<sup>8</sup> The government contained National-Liberals, although the

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<sup>5</sup> Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever*, 93.

<sup>6</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 289-92.

<sup>7</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 289-93.

<sup>8</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 245.

Liberal Party leader refused a Cabinet post. The 1922 Committee of Conservative backbench MPs voiced suspicions at Churchill's attempts to include even more Liberals in Cabinet.<sup>9</sup> Churchill's appointment of individuals to key ministries whose sympathies were in keeping with the spirit of the *Industrial Charter* reinforced these suspicions. Ramsden described R. A. Butler's appointment as Chancellor, for example, as 'a pledge to the nation that the spirit of the *Industrial Charter* would hold good in office'.<sup>10</sup> The Conservative Right's long-standing perception of Butler, with his acceptance of Keynesian economics, was that he was little better than a Socialist. They viewed 'Butskellism' as synonymous with socialism. Similarly, the appointment of Walter Monckton to the Ministry of Labour, a politician known to be on the left of the party and even to prefer to be above party description, would not have reassured the Right in their desire to counter trade unions. Likewise, the decision to entrust the Ministry of Housing to Harold Macmillan, a pre-war advocate of government controls and economic interference as seen in his book *The Middle Way* (1938), concerned those who equated increased government spending with socialism. Macmillan had proposed changing the Conservative Party name to 'The National Democrats'.<sup>11</sup> Right-wingers were notably absent from Churchill's government. Progressive groups that accepted the consensus, by contrast, attracted the approbation of the party machine. Formed in 1951, for example, the Bow Group became swiftly one of the most prominent progressive Conservative groups. By August 1952, Central Office viewed the Bow Group's work as 'an asset to the Party'.<sup>12</sup> The Bow Group's Annual Report for 1952 acknowledged Central Office assistance, and named the individuals concerned.<sup>13</sup> Thereafter, Central Office entered into a 'Memorandum of Agreement' with the Bow Group, a legal document that outlined the financial and publishing terms under which it distributed Bow Group publications.<sup>14</sup> Right-wingers may have been ignorant about the legal relationship between Central Office and the Bow Group,

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<sup>9</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 245. 1922 Committee Minutes, 11 1952.

<sup>10</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 245.

<sup>11</sup> See 7.

<sup>12</sup> Miss B. L. Turner to Mr. H. V. Armstrong, 'The Bow Group', 6 August 1952. CPA CCO 3/4/32, Bow Group, 1952-56.

<sup>13</sup> James Lemkin, 'Bow Group Annual Report for the Year 1952', 30 January 1953. CPA CCO 3/4/32, Bow Group, 1952-56.

<sup>14</sup> James Lemkin, 'Memorandum of Agreement', 31 July 1956. CPA CCO 3/5/38, Bow Group, 1956-59. This CPA file contains other letters revealing Central Office's positive attitude towards the *Bow Group* and the considerations leading up to signing the Memorandum of Agreement.

but they can hardly have failed to notice distribution via official channels of material they viewed as too left wing.

Churchill's reputation, seen as an electoral asset against Labour, probably muted the degree of right-wing criticism. However, it was never silent. As early as 1952, there were complaints that the government was not carrying out a 'Conservative policy'. Monckton settled the 1953 railway dispute on terms favourable to the unions, which drew open criticism from Conservative MPs.<sup>15</sup> Butler's utilisation of the 'peace dividend' to produce tax cuts as well as increased spending avoided serious criticism from the right. Nevertheless, opposition from the right remained. Right-wing Conservative MPs opposed pension increases.<sup>16</sup> New circumstances provided other avenues for the right to criticise the government. The docking of the *Empire Windrush* in 1948, which symbolised that Britain was no longer simply an exporter of people to the Empire, had introduced into British politics the issue of New Commonwealth, i.e. coloured, immigration. At the end of 1952, Churchill raised the issue of immigration in Cabinet. Gilmour revealed that the government was hamstrung by delusions of Empire and concerned not to disrupt the nascent Commonwealth, and contrasted the complacency of Conservative ministers over immigration with restiveness among Conservative supporters.<sup>17</sup> Nor did a change of leader alleviate right-wing concerns. Ramsden highlighted continuing restiveness amongst Constituency Associations after Eden became Prime Minister. This included complaints that Eden's government was not taking a strong enough line against trade unions, whilst the middle class increasingly bore the financial burdens of government.<sup>18</sup> Stephen Pierssene, Central Office General Director, warned Eden of the possible consequences in the wake of the March 1956 West Walthamstow by-election. The middle-class, Pierssene warned, had not had a fair deal and 'were looking for somewhere else to go'.<sup>19</sup>

Concerns existed in imperial and foreign policy also. Churchill's staunch imperialism, known from his personal history, failed to stem criticism of imperial policy. His anti-

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<sup>15</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 258-259.

<sup>16</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 266-267.

<sup>17</sup> Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever*, 79.

<sup>18</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 294-295.

<sup>19</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 296. See also CPA CCO 120/2/41-5, General Director's File – By-Elections.

Communism, a matter of public record since his 'Iron Curtain' speech, failed to prevent criticism over foreign policy. Conservative local associations castigated the government for a perceived lack of emphasis on the Empire and 'Britishness'.<sup>20</sup> The government, lacking support from the USA to maintain a military presence in the Middle East, commenced negotiations to withdraw British forces from east of Suez. This seemed to justify local associations' complaints. The parliamentary right responded by forming the Suez Group in December 1953. Among its members was Enoch Powell, the dejected Conservative Research Department member who had buried his head at the granting of Indian Independence.<sup>21</sup> In December 1953, forty-one Conservative MPs signed an Early Day Motion that rejected their own Government's policy. Crossman's comment that these MPs thought that the government propounded policies deemed 'Bevanite by the right wing of the Labour Party only twelve months ago',<sup>22</sup> showed the anger they felt towards their own government.<sup>23</sup> Ramsden identified this period as the 'moment at which the Conservative right started to move away from the front bench's international policy',<sup>24</sup> a fracture within the Conservative Party that would continue for the remainder of the century. More immediately, however, the number of Conservative rebels actually declined to twenty-eight when the bill proposing British withdrawal from Egypt appeared in the House of Commons in October 1954. Thus, right-wing Conservative MPs' objective of halting this ignominy seemed remote when Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, the individual most closely associated with withdrawal from East of Suez, succeeded Churchill in April 1955. To those outside the parliamentary party Imperial decline probably appeared the policy of collusive frontbenches.

Therefore, the Conservative Governments of 1951-1957 were not ones of Conservative reaction. They were centrist administrations that realised that the electorate approved of Labour's post-war programme. This meant that there was little prospect of a substantial return to the Conservatism of the interwar years. They were also governments with a leadership apparently unable to deal with domestic and

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<sup>20</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 262. East Midlands Area Council, 16 May 1953. NUEC 4, September 1952.

<sup>21</sup> See 6.

<sup>22</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 264. J. Charmley, *Descent to Suez: diaries 1951-1956*, Wiedenfield and Nicolson, London (1986), 131.

<sup>23</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 264. Charmley, *Descent*, 131.

<sup>24</sup> Ramsden, *Appetite*, 332.

foreign affairs. This situation alienated the Conservative Party's right wing, who joined groups that attacked the government from the right. Discontent over domestic policies led Conservatives to seek redress in movements that promised economic liberty. Die-hard imperialists occupied the space on the Conservative Party's right flank as the government 'scuttled' from empire. The Conservative leadership's objective, however, was to remain in power. Consequently, it adopted a consensual economic policy that did not alienate the electorate, and sought disentanglement from costly overseas commitments. They were difficult policies for a party that contained supporters of laissez-faire and imperialism, but essential for one that had decided to adapt to new circumstances. This also meant that the Conservative Party could not afford to let the extreme right succeed.

Central Office remained the leadership's foremost agent in meeting its objective of limiting the extreme-right's impact. It continued to collect information on groups that it had investigated whilst the Conservative Party was in opposition. Sometimes, this resulted in Central Office deciding that a group was 'extreme' rather than just right wing. New groups emerged. Those that had no pretensions to political representation did not attract Central Office condemnation. Some of these groups even enjoyed a positive relationship with Central Office. This was especially so if a group could assist the Conservative Party to disseminate views on economic policy that remained inexpedient for the government to endorse openly. In contrast, Central Office had a negative relationship with those groups that openly and vociferously sought to cajole the Conservative leadership into adopting economically liberal policies. Central Office commissioned reports on these groups and took measures to counter their impact.

However, Central Office saved its strongest counter-measures for those individuals or groups that it believed had fascist antecedents, or advocated policies that the Conservative Party's opponents could portray as characteristics of fascism or Nazism. These individuals and groups could rekindle memories of the Conservative Party's interwar association with the extreme right, especially if they exhibited the anti-Semitism or racism that was commonly associated with right-wing extremism. The emergence of skin colour as a phenomenon in British politics exacerbated these fears. Consequently, Central Office blocked the political career of at least one former

member of Mosley's British Union of Fascists. It strongly advised party officers and members not to join groups with connections to Nazism, no matter how tangential these connections were. Central Office also mobilised the party bureaucracy against these groups and sometimes openly accused them of fascism. This was an especially risky strategy as these groups contained Conservative Party members.

### *Existing concerns*

Central Office correspondence made it clear that the Conservative Party's desire to avoid association with the extreme right remained consistent, and overrode fears of alienating its own right wing. In February 1952, a Central Office Area Agent requested information on the Fighting Fund for Freedom. This desire for information could have been due to ignorance on the Agent's part. Alternatively, it may have reflected Central Office's successful avoidance of too obvious an association with the FFF. The dissemination of incorrect information on the FFF had previously resulted in a rebuke.<sup>25</sup> Central Office's response to the Agent showed, however, that its opinion of the FFF had now hardened, and why. Mr. Watson at Central Office advised a colleague that he would not respond in writing to the Agent, as he would 'prefer the matter to be dealt with verbally',<sup>26</sup> and thus revealed an unwillingness to acknowledge any connection with the FFF. This is a reminder that written comments were only one medium by which Central Office blocked the extreme right. Watson felt sure that his colleague had 'the necessary information in your files which, together with your own recollections', enabled him to provide the Agent with the information requested.<sup>27</sup> An attached memorandum explained Watson's circumspection. It advised that, the FFF was an 'Extreme Right Wing Organisation', which supported the Conservative Party but was 'likely to compromise us in their zeal'.<sup>28</sup> This is the first time Central Office revealed clearly its opinion of the FFF's political nature. It is perhaps not coincidental that Sir Waldron Smithers was no longer associated with the FFF.<sup>29</sup> In addition,

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<sup>25</sup> See 36.

<sup>26</sup> Mr. Watson to Mr. Bagnall, 'Fighting Fund for Freedom', 12 February 1953. CPA CCO 3/4/62, Fighting Fund for Freedom, 1952-6.

<sup>27</sup> Mr. Watson to Mr. Bagnall, 'Fighting Fund for Freedom', 12 February 1953. CPA CCO 3/4/62, Fighting Fund for Freedom, 1952-6.

<sup>28</sup> Initialled memo, probably from Mr. Bagnall, to Mr. Watson, 'Fighting Fund for Freedom', 11 February 1953. CPA CCO 3/4/62, Fighting Fund for Freedom, 1952-6.

<sup>29</sup> See 27.

Central Office continued to monitor those it had already deemed either incorrigible or too extreme. Central Office noted, for example, the *Daily Mail's* report of Andrew Fountaine's attempted formation of a National Front Movement in 1952.<sup>30</sup> This suggested that concern remained within Central Office at the harm Fountaine, an erstwhile Conservative parliamentary candidate, could still potentially cause to the Conservative Party. This type of anxiety is also evident when the British Housewives League reappeared. The BHL threatened a revival in Rochdale, angered at Chancellor Butler's imposition of Purchase Tax on household and kitchen articles in the Autumn Budget of 1955. Central Office instructed the informing Agent to 'watch this carefully in your Area and, if you find evidence of activity of this kind in any constituency, perhaps you would let me know'.<sup>31</sup>

However, it is not always possible to be definite about the reasons for Central Office's attitudes towards certain organisations. For example, Central Office continued to receive reports of, and material from, The Society for Individual Freedom (SIF). SIF maintained a benign position to the right of the Conservative Party in Opposition, with a stated objective of a co-ordinated attempt 'to resist the drift towards collectivism'.<sup>32</sup> Now that the Conservative Party was in Government, SIF criticised it when it felt it did not fulfil SIF aims. Marjorie L. A. Franklin, for SIF, forwarded in February 1952 a copy of a SIF article regarding the 1951 General Election titled, 'For the enlightenment and disillusionment of such members of the Conservative Party as may be disposed to be complacent regarding the result.'<sup>33</sup> The SIF article chided the Conservative government for failing to promise tough measures in its manifesto, such as repeal of the Trades Dispute Act, and warned that the economy was a tottering ruin.<sup>34</sup> Now that they were in Office, the article continued, the Conservatives had

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<sup>30</sup> Internal Central Office Reference Sheet regarding *Daily Mail* article of 6 March 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/102, National Front, 1950-2.

<sup>31</sup> N. E. Finnie to E. C. Bradbury Esq., 'Housewives League – Rochdale', 24 November 1955, and B. Brooke to Mr. Bradbury, 28 November 1955. CPA CCO 3/4/15, British Housewives League, 1952-56.

<sup>32</sup> C. Brogan, *Individualism: the Journal of The Society For Individual Freedom*, Bulletin Series No. 1, January 1953, 1.

<sup>33</sup> Marjorie L. A. Franklin, 22 February 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/123, The Society for Individual Freedom, 1950-2.

<sup>34</sup> Marjorie L. A. Franklin, 22 February 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/123, The Society for Individual Freedom, 1950-2.

failed to curb the National Coal Board and the unions.<sup>35</sup> Central Office might have thought SIF already had fixed attitudes regarding the Conservative government, as this was a mere four months after the 1951 General Election. Those named as responsible for this situation by the article would have reinforced such a view. The article identified Monckton and Butler as the appointments that were 'enough to force the most docile and house-trained eyebrows to elevate in surprise'.<sup>36</sup> SIF had specifically attacked cabinet members identified as being on the left wing of the Conservative Party, with Butler's emergency Budget attracting particular criticism.<sup>37</sup>

Central Office responded to this attack on a Conservative government with only minimal counter-measures. SIF's Director General requested assistance in approaching Conservative members six months after their critical article. Central Office Area Agent Brigadier Rawcliffe replied that Conservative Associations might see such an action as harmful to their interests and thus be unhelpful.<sup>38</sup> Rawcliffe informed Central Office of his reply, and stated that, 'I am inclined to feel that we have enough troubles of our own and that if we encourage our own supporters to join we might lose them.'<sup>39</sup> Rawcliffe's comments support three possible conclusions: a basic desire not to lose members; a belief that SIF would bring problems; and that SIF's objectives appealed to Conservative members. By discouraging membership, they also limited SIF's chances of success. Rawcliffe's correspondence encapsulated many similar between Central Office and its Area Agents regarding SIF. However, there is little evidence of any stronger counter-measures by Central Office, save for an anodyne response after Eden became Prime Minister that identified SIF as a 'small right wing association'.<sup>40</sup> The problem facing Central Office, apart from concern over the impact on party membership, is that the ubiquitous Sir Waldron Smithers MP consistently promoted SIF and was one of its leading members. Smithers had

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<sup>35</sup> Marjorie L. A. Franklin, 22 February 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/123, The Society for Individual Freedom, 1950-2.

<sup>36</sup> Marjorie L. A. Franklin, 22 February 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/123, The Society for Individual Freedom, 1950-2.

<sup>37</sup> Marjorie L. A. Franklin, 22 February 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/123, The Society for Individual Freedom, 1950-2.

<sup>38</sup> Brigadier J. M. Rawcliffe to Mr. Lowe, December 1952. CPA CCO 3/4/97, The Society for Individual Freedom, 1952-6.

<sup>39</sup> Brigadier Rawcliffe to Mr. Watson, 'Society for Individual Freedom', 10 December 1952. CPA CCO 3/4/97, The Society for Individual Freedom, 1952-6.

<sup>40</sup> Mr. C. Gill to Mr. Carrick, 'The Society for Individual Freedom', 9 July 1954. CPA CCO 3/4/97, The Society for Individual Freedom, 1952-6.

instructed Franklin to forward SIF's warning to the newly elected Conservative government. Smither's wrote personally to John Hare at Central Office and lauded *SIF's* activities, asked Hare and his friends to become members, and requested a donation.<sup>41</sup> Smithers also requested that Central Office distribute a SIF-sanctioned publication that addressed the world's spiritual and moral crisis.<sup>42</sup> Central Office could hardly take severe measures against Smithers. Such an action would result in awkward questions that possibly re-ignited memories of embarrassing associations. Central Office could not afford to denounce SIF as extremist when a Conservative MP was a prominent member and whilst the government enjoyed only a slim majority. Therefore, Central Office acted cautiously. The Chief Publicity Officer at Central Office requested 7,500 copies of the publication Smithers asked to be distributed, and enquired how many would be free of charge.<sup>43</sup> However, Central Office files do not contain any 'Memorandum of Agreement' setting out a formal relationship with SIF, unlike that with the Bow Group.<sup>44</sup> Nor was the publication concerned written by SIF. Nevertheless, the Chief Publicity Officer's request does show that Central Office was prepared at this stage to have a relationship with SIF that was similar to the one it had with Aims of Industry.<sup>45</sup>

Central Office's relationship with Aims of Industry (AIMS), if anything, became closer. AIMS continued to assist Central Office's intelligence gathering, although the material was hardly secret. For example, AIMS Director Roger Sewill forwarded to Central Office positive media responses to Government legislation, such as that in *World's Press News* which supported the introduction of commercial television outlined in the November 1953 Queen's Speech.<sup>46</sup> Central Office also accepted the results of AIMS' research into industry. The General Director at Central Office informed a colleague of a conversation he had with Roger Sewill and stated that he

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<sup>41</sup> Sir Waldron Smithers to Lt. Colonel The Hon. J. H. Hare, O.B.E., M.P., October 1953. CPA CCO 3/4/97, The Society for Individual Freedom, 1952-6.

<sup>42</sup> Waldron Smithers, 24 March 1953. CPA CCO 3/4/97, The Society for Individual Freedom, 1952-6.

<sup>43</sup> Chief Publicity Officer, 26 March 1953. CPA CCO 3/4/97, The Society for Individual Freedom, 1952-6.

<sup>44</sup> See 49.

<sup>45</sup> See 36-37.

<sup>46</sup> Roger Sewill to Lord Woolton, 12 November 1953; *World's Press News*, 6 November 1953. CPA CCO 3/4/27, Aims of Industry, 1952-6.

welcomed 'any research into industry which his organisation could undertake'.<sup>47</sup> This comment was a reference to AIMS' 'Industrial Information Service'. When Central Office accepted use of this service, it once again entered into a financial relationship with AIMS. AIMS also embarked on a campaign to explain the country's problems to the electorate in simple terms. The first plank of this campaign was the production of explanatory films. AIMS requested permission to use a quotation from one of Churchill's wartime speeches. This request resulted in the Prime Minister's office asking Central Office for 'your observations on the standing of the organisation and your advice on whether the Prime Minister should allow them to use this quotation in the way suggested'.<sup>48</sup> This showed that the Prime Minister's office knew that that Central Office had become the accepted repository of information on outside organisations. Whether Churchill acceded to AIMS request is unclear, but Central Office unarguably supported AIMS' films. In October 1952, Central Office arranged for senior officials, including Chairman Lord Woolton and General Director Stephen Pierssene, to view the AIMS production *Point of No Return*. Woolton and Pierssene were unable to attend on the day, but Central Office nevertheless sent representatives. These officials sent a report of the film to the General Director and Chief Publicity Officer, and described the film as 'first-class propaganda from our point of view'.<sup>49</sup> However, AIMS laissez-faire views were just to the right of a Conservative government that had accepted much of the Attleean settlement. Central Office carefully avoided overt connections with any organisation that the party's opponents could portray as right wing. Hence, when the officials reported that AIMS was to be removed from the credits in *Point of No Return* as it had been accepted for public viewing, they added that 'we should not be connected with it in any way ourselves at this stage'.<sup>50</sup>

Nevertheless, Central Office was unarguably more positive towards AIMS than other extreme-right groups. The fact that AIMS' 'extremism' amounted to no more than a

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<sup>47</sup> S. H. Pierssene to Mr. Greville, 'Industrial Information Service', 24 November 1954. CPA CCO 3/4/27, Aims of Industry, 1952-6.

<sup>48</sup> P. G. Oates to the Rt. Hon. Richard Greville, 8 August 1952. CPA CCO 3/4/27, Aims of Industry, 1952-6.

<sup>49</sup> W. M. Ridgwell to the G.D., 'Aims of Industry Film 'Point of No Return'', 17 October 1952. CPA CCO 3/4/27, Aims of Industry, 1952-6.

<sup>50</sup> W. M. Ridgwell to the G.D., 'Aims of Industry Film 'Point of No Return'', 17 October 1952. CPA CCO 3/4/27, Aims of Industry, 1952-6.

focus on economic liberalism substantially explained Central Office's attitude. AIMS' objectives and methods resonated with the views of Conservatives who realised their party had to adapt to the new paradigm revealed by Labour's victory in 1945, and not just those like Smithers who wished to return to pure laissez-faire. Prominent amongst such Conservatives was the One Nation Group. E. H. H. Green described the One Nation Group as seeking 'to construct a distinctive Conservative position on the role of the State which avoided 'me-tooing Socialist solutions ... to blend judicious Statism with strong inflections of liberal market, laissez-faire ideas'.<sup>51</sup> Central Office gathered information on the One Nation Group in accord with its remit. Its attitude towards the One Nation Group was benign, even positive, from the beginning. This was because, as Walsha showed, the One Nation Group attempted the acceptable objective of demonstrating how 'Conservatism would meet the demands of postwar Britain'.<sup>52</sup> In early 1952, for example, Central Office supported the 'One Nation Campaign', a countrywide tour in which the One Nation Group disseminated its views on how the Conservative Party could remain relevant in post-1945 Britain.<sup>53</sup> Central Office also supported the One Nation Group because its members worked with Central Office. Angus Maude, founder member of the One Nation Group, worked at the Conservative Political Centre within Central Office. The General Director, S. H. Pierssene, asked Maude for his fellow One Nation Group member's reactions to the 'One Nation Campaign'. Maude's response revealed that the One Nation Group members put themselves at the disposal of the Speakers' Department at Central Office, and went where that department instructed.<sup>54</sup> Pierssene responded encouragingly, and suggested meeting to discuss further arrangements.<sup>55</sup> However, Maude also identified a problem. He stated that most audiences were bad because they were mainly Conservative supporters, and argued that there was no point in going to strongly Conservative constituencies, whereas the One Nation Campaign had

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<sup>51</sup> E. H. H. Green, *Ideologies of Conservatism: Conservative Political Ideas in the Twentieth Century*, OUP, Oxford (2002), 247.

<sup>52</sup> R. Walsha, 'One Nation', 213.

<sup>53</sup> Miss Joan Dodd to the Chairman, GD and CPO, 'One Nation' Campaign', 15 January 1952, and Maurice Chandler to Miss Joan Dodd, 'One Nation' Tour', 18 February 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/111, One Nation Group, 1950-2.

<sup>54</sup> Angus Maude to S. H. Pierssene, 'Speaking Tour of 'One Nation' M.P.s', 19 February 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/111, One Nation Group, 1950-2.

<sup>55</sup> S. H. Pierssene to Angus Maude, 'Speaking Tour of 'One Nation' M.P.s', 20 February 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/111, One Nation Group, 1950-2.

achieved a positive reaction on the few occasions it ventured into Labour areas.<sup>56</sup> However, Maude's problem was in line with Central Office's own objectives. Maude had identified the One Nation Campaign with the same problem Central Office had of how to disseminate the Conservative Party's message to a section of the electorate that had voted heavily for Labour after the Second World War. Thus, the One Nation Group complimented Central Office's work. This explained Central Office's positive attitude toward the One Nation Group.

Similarity of objectives also explained Central Office's less-overtly positive attitude towards AIMS. Like the One Nation Group, AIMS also organised a series of meetings, known as the 'Brains Trust'.<sup>57</sup> AIMS formulated these meetings ostensibly to provide audiences with a broad range of opinion. The meetings attracted Central Office attention. Mr. Hearn at Central Office deputed a Mr. Chandler to attend the 1954 Nottingham meeting of the Brains Trust. Hearn concluded from Chandler's subsequent report that the meeting was 'probably too broad to be partisan', but nevertheless advised that, 'it is predominantly right-wing and Aims of Industry always make sure that is the majority view of the platform'.<sup>58</sup> Reports provided to Central Office by AIMS showed that the audiences' questions supported Conservative views. This was a consistent feature of Brains Trust meetings, which local newspapers reported. In Rochdale, strikes unsupported by unions had been the dominant topic.<sup>59</sup> Such strikes were occurring in the docks and railways at the time. Restrictive practices that adversely affected Cardiff and Bristol docks generated most interest at the Cardiff meeting.<sup>60</sup> At the Wigan meeting, negative comments on Attlee's argument that China should control Formosa vied with condemnation of poor road conditions.<sup>61</sup> Strikes, housing and local government were among the issues discussed at Stirling.<sup>62</sup> The audience raised similar topics in areas as diverse as Falkirk and

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<sup>56</sup> Angus Maude to S. H. Pierssene, 'Speaking Tour of 'One Nation' M.P.s', 19 February 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/111, One Nation Group, 1950-2.

<sup>57</sup> See R. Weight, *Patriots: National Identity in Britain 1940-2000*, Pan, London (2003), 46, for the BBC's wartime version of this.

<sup>58</sup> Mr. Hearn to Mr. Horton, 'Aims of Industry Brains Trust', 9 April 1954. CPA CCO 3/4/27, Aims of Industry, 1952-6.

<sup>59</sup> *The Rochdale Observer*, 20 October 1954.

<sup>60</sup> *Western Mail*, 27 October 1954.

<sup>61</sup> *Wigan Observer and District Advertiser*, 30 October 1954.

<sup>62</sup> *Stirling Journal and Advertiser*, 18 November 1954.

Grangemouth.<sup>63</sup> AIMS provided, therefore, a service that propagated Conservative Party thinking to a polarised people. This was valuable to a party that sought to attract non-Conservative voters. Hearn revealed this thinking when he said that, 'From our point of view the hope is that floaters, particularly, will be convinced by the majority arguments of the Aims of Industry platform and when they hear something similar from a Conservative platform also will take our side.'<sup>64</sup> This is evidence that Central Office saw AIMS actions as complimenting its own. Furthermore, there is also a hint of collusion between AIMS and Central Office. Mr. Horton at Central Office commented on the locations of future Brains Trust meetings and wrote that, 'I am glad to know that the Aims of Industry are running their next season's Brains Trust in our marginal areas.'<sup>65</sup>

Indeed, the location of AIMS' Brains Trust meetings provided the key to Central Office's positive attitude. Butlin's holiday camps had mushroomed after the Second World War. New sites at Skegness and Clacton added to pre-war camps at Filey (1945), Pwllheli (1947), Ayr (1947) and Mosney (1948). In the 1950s, Billy Butlin acquired hotels in Blackpool, Brighton and Cliftonville. Northern towns decamped virtually en-masse for holiday activities that went far beyond the ubiquitous 'knobbly-knees' contest. Butlins in the 1950s provided middle and even highbrow entertainments to a clientele that was more diverse than subsequent ones. As represented in *Hindle Wakes* (1951), when almost whole towns' inhabitants decamped to Blackpool, social interaction between different classes often ensued. Therefore, Butlins potentially provided a sizeable audience for AIMS' propaganda away from the divisions of the factory and shop floor, and thus also the Conservative Party's. In April 1954, Roger Sewill boasted to Lord Woolton at Central Office that AIMS' Brains Trust meetings had been successful, and that AIMS planned a further eighteen, which it had arranged at Butlins holiday camps.<sup>66</sup> This, Sewill indicated, meant that the Conservative message would reach large audiences, and that this provided

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<sup>63</sup> *The Falkirk Sentinel*, 19 November 1954 and the *Grangemouth Advertiser*, 20 November 1954.

<sup>64</sup> Mr. Hearn to Mr. Horton, 'Aims of Industry Brains Trust', 9 April 1954. CPA CCO 3/4/27, Aims of Industry, 1952-6.

<sup>65</sup> P. R. G. Horton to Mr. Hearn, 'Aims of Industry Brains Trust', 12 April 1954. CPA CCO 3/4/27, Aims of Industry, 1952-6.

<sup>66</sup> Roger Sewill to Lord Woolton, 'Brains Trust', 27 April 1954. CPA CCO 3/4/27, Aims of Industry, 1952-6.

'audiences of 1000 per time guaranteed',<sup>67</sup> which Sewill underlined for emphasis. Woolton forwarded this information to Mr. Chapman-Walker at Central Office, and showed his interest in the terse but revealing comment: 'You ought to see this.'<sup>68</sup> Within five months, the press had reported the impact of using Butlin's for Brains Trust meetings. The *Recorder*, for example, mentioned Billy Butlin's decision to become involved, focusing on the audiences' response to specific questions. It referred to the adverse effects of nationalisation, and opined, 'It might be thought that to make such remarks in front of an audience, the majority of which must have been Labour-inclined, would be flaunting with the possibilities of a riot.'<sup>69</sup> This shows that the *Recorder* understood AIMS' objectives. Its report that no riot ensued also reinforced the idea that shared objectives was the reason for Central Office's positive relationship with AIMS.<sup>70</sup> Nor was the positive response of Brains Trust audiences limited to domestic issues. Sewill forwarded to Central Office a report by a Mr. Hunt, Head of the Public Relations at Aims of Industry, which focused on a particular audience's response. Hunt also thought that the audience was 'predominantly Labour supporters', but reported that the answer given by a right-wing panellist to a question regarding the impropriety of Attlee, and other Labour leaders, visit to the newly Communist China, received a tumultuous response.<sup>71</sup> Central Office's political exploitation of the cultural phenomenon provided by Billy Butlin is, therefore, the basis for its positive relationship with AIMS.

This does not mean that Central Office took no counter-measures against AIMS. In Lowestoft, an AIMS representative sought contacts with local industrialists, and requested the assistance of the local Conservative Association. In return, the representative offered to disseminate propaganda useful to the Conservative Party. However, the representatives' additional offer to contribute to the local association from funds he had collected for AIMS caused concern. The Secretary of Lowestoft Conservative Association informed the Central Office Area Agent, Brigadier

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<sup>67</sup> Roger Sewill to Lord Woolton, 'Brains Trust', 27 April 1954. CPA CCO 3/4/27, Aims of Industry, 1952-6

<sup>68</sup> Lord Woolton to M. Chapman-Walker, 29 April 1954. CPA CCO 3/4/27, Aims of Industry, 1952-6.

<sup>69</sup> 'The Story of the Aims of Industry Brains Trust Programme', *Recorder*, 11 September 1954. CPA CCO 3/4/27, Aims of Industry, 1952-6.

<sup>70</sup> 'The Story of the Aims of Industry Brains Trust Programme', *Recorder*, 11 September 1954. CPA CCO 3/4/27, Aims of Industry, 1952-6.

<sup>71</sup> D. F. Hunt, Aims of Industry, 1 October 1954. CPA CCO 3/4/27, Aims of Industry, 1952-6.

Rawcliffe, that, 'This scheme would be quite unofficial and known only to the Officers of the Association and one or two leaders in local industry.'<sup>72</sup> However, the Secretary thought the offer might be improper, and asked Rawcliffe if such a scheme was advisable or operated elsewhere.<sup>73</sup> Rawcliffe sought clarification from Central Office, but made his view known. He stated that it was, 'a pity to encourage organisations which collect subscriptions from people who might otherwise support us and which make no comparable contribution to the maintenance of our own organisation'.<sup>74</sup> General Director Piersenne replied that as, 'Aims of Industry professes to be a non-political organisation it would not be right for it to make money-raising arrangements with Conservative Associations', and added that AIMS's actions could deflect money from the local Conservative Association, as they were 'in some sense in competition'.<sup>75</sup> This event showed that Central Office placed definite limits on the relationship it was prepared to have with AIMS.

It is unlikely that Piersenne was unaware of the existing financial relationship with AIMS. What, therefore, explained Central Office reluctance? Acceptance of cash, rather than services in kind, may have been a step too far. On the other hand, political circumstances had changed. Hitherto, most contact between Central Office and AIMS occurred during a Labour government with a large majority, or a Conservative one with a small majority. Piersenne, however, was writing after the 1955 General Election of 26 May, when Eden increased the Conservative majority to a comfortable fifty-nine. It is therefore possible that opportunism and necessity played a role in Central Office's previous decisions. Now that the Conservative government was more secure, Central Office may have wished to distance itself from this external right-wing organisation. For, although AIMS had proved useful in the objective of appealing to Labour voters when the party's hold on power was not secure, its particular form of 'extremism' was always potentially problematic for a Conservative government that had adopted the consensual approach to domestic issues of

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<sup>72</sup> G. Howard to Brigadier Rawcliffe, 6 September 1955. CPA CCO 3/4/27, Aims of Industry, 1952-6.

<sup>73</sup> G. Howard to Brigadier Rawcliffe, 6 September 1955. CPA CCO 3/4/27, Aims of Industry, 1952-6.

<sup>74</sup> Brigadier Rawcliffe to Miss Spencer, 'Lowestoft: Aims of Industry', 12 September 1955. CPA CCO 3/4/27, Aims of Industry, 1952-6.

<sup>75</sup> S. H. Piersenne to Miss Spencer, 15 September 1955. CPA CCO 3/4/27, Aims of Industry, 1952-6.

Butskellism. Eden removed R. A. Butler from the Chancellorship, but he made no philosophical change to domestic affairs. The consensual approach of Butskellism remained. Quite simply, the Conservative Party no longer needed AIMS. Therefore, Central Office did not want to draw attention to its connection with AIMS. There is evidence to support this. The Chief Publicity wrote to Pierssene on the same day that Pierssene rejected the Lowestoft offer. He enclosed a draft letter to all Constituency Agents, Central Office Area Agents and Assistant Publicity Officers, in which he advised that he intended to accept an AIMS offer to supply literature to the Conservative Associations.<sup>76</sup> The Chief Publicity Officer had been in consultation with AIMS about such a possibility before the General Election.<sup>77</sup> He advised Piersenne that, 'we are very short of material that we have produced ourselves for the use of the Constituency Associations,' and stated that this literature would be useful without the Conservative Party incurring any costs.<sup>78</sup> This was no different to previous co-operation between AIMS and Central Office. This time, however, Piersenne declined the offer, and justified the decision by pointing out that 'Aims of Industry are at pains to proclaim themselves non-political and I don't think it would do them or us any good if we were distributing their material from here.'<sup>79</sup> The changed political context had altered Central Office's financial and possibly collusive relationship with this particular right-wing organisation.

Other organisations, however, remained beyond the pale as far as Central Office was concerned. For example, the Anti-Communist Guardian (ACG), although purporting to be a new organisation, was in reality a resurrection of the Conservative Christian League.<sup>80</sup> Central Office based its decision to shun the ACG on the knowledge that its proprietor, a Mr. George De Courtenay, was a crook. He had convictions for larceny, false pretences and house breaking.<sup>81</sup> Central Office noted that after Parliament and

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<sup>76</sup> Chief Publicity Officer to the General Director, 'Aims of Industry Posters', 15 September 1955. CPA CCO 3/4/27, Aims of Industry, 1952-6.

<sup>77</sup> Chief Publicity Officer to the General Director, 'Aims of Industry Posters', 15 September 1955. CPA CCO 3/4/27, Aims of Industry, 1952-6.

<sup>78</sup> Chief Publicity Officer to the General Director, 'Aims of Industry Posters', 15 September 1955. CPA CCO 3/4/27, Aims of Industry, 1952-6.

<sup>79</sup> Chief Publicity Officer to the General Director, 'Aims of Industry Posters', 15 September 1955. CPA CCO 3/4/27, Aims of Industry, 1952-6.

<sup>80</sup> See 44.

<sup>81</sup> Charles Gill to Mr. Carrick, 'Anti-Communist Guardian (formerly Conservative Christian League)', 8 October 1953. CPA CCO 3/4/28, Anti-Communist Guardian, 1952-6.

the Press exposed this, De Courtenay had ceased to use the title 'Conservative' in his bogus organisations.<sup>82</sup> Central Office also realised that despite public exposure De Courtenay continued his criminal activities, and noted a conviction in January 1954.<sup>83</sup> However, De Courtenay, like all good confidence tricksters, included an element of plausibility in his schemes. He had claimed the support of prominent Conservatives in the ACG's literature, which included the name of Sir Waldron Smithers MP.<sup>84</sup> Central Office denounced De Courtenay and attempted to entice him into legal action against the Conservative Party.<sup>85</sup> This showed that Central Office was vigilant in taking action against organisations that it believed could damage the Conservative Party's reputation. The main determinant in the ACG's case was De Courtenay's disreputable character. Yet there is evidence that Central Office also used political criteria when it judged the ACG. Central Office noted that the ACG had a possible association with anti-Semitism. Mr. Gill at Central Office referred a colleague to the ACG publication *Voice of Freedom*, and stated, 'I would draw attention to the advertisement on page 3 for the Britons Publishing Society, an extreme anti-Semitic body which publishes scurrilous attacks on Jews.'<sup>86</sup> The fact that the Britons Publishing Society also printed the *Voice of Freedom* emphasised this connection.<sup>87</sup> Mr. Gill's comments are consistent with previous Central Office comments regarding the Britons Publishing Society.<sup>88</sup> These comments by Central Office revealed a consistently hostile attitude towards known anti-Semitic extreme-right organisations. These comments are also consistent with the view that Central Office acted as the Conservative Party's gatekeeper by denying official approval to potentially embarrassing individuals or groups.

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<sup>82</sup> Charles Gill to Mr. Carrick, 'Anti-Communist Guardian (formerly Conservative Christian League)', 8 October 1953. CPA CCO 3/4/28, Anti-Communist Guardian, 1952-6.

<sup>83</sup> R. K. Carrick to Mr. Cohen, 18 January 1954. CPA CCO 3/4/28, Anti-Communist Guardian, 1952-6.

<sup>84</sup> George De Courtenay, *Voice of Freedom*, issue no. 51, 1953. CPA CCO 3/4/28, Anti-Communist Guardian, 1952-56.

<sup>85</sup> George De Courtenay, *Voice of Freedom*, issue no. 51, 1953 (find attached memo). CPA CCO 3/4/28, Anti-Communist Guardian, 1952-56.

<sup>86</sup> Charles Gill to Mr. Carrick, 'Anti-Communist Guardian (formerly Conservative Christian League)', 8 October 1953. CPA CCO 3/4/28, Anti-Communist Guardian, 1952-6.

<sup>87</sup> George De Courtenay, *Voice of Freedom*, issue no. 51, 1953. CPA CCO 3/4/28, Anti-Communist Guardian, 1952-56.

<sup>88</sup> See 11.

However, stopping individuals with embarrassing antecedents from joining the party was not always possible because of the autonomous nature of local Conservative Associations. Former members of Mosley's British Union of Fascists had expressed their intention to vote Conservative immediately after the Second World War.<sup>89</sup> Some undoubtedly joined the Conservative Party. Some may have explained membership of the BUF as misguided youthful indiscretion. Those at the margins of Mosley's fascist party probably attracted little attention if they joined the Conservative Party. John Charnley, however, was not a peripheral BUF figure. All four of the Charnley brothers had joined Mosley's BUF.<sup>90</sup> When the authorities closed down the BUF's publication *Action* in 1940, it was John and a few others who had kept Mosley's message going that published an eight-page booklet, *British Freedom*, to keep Mosley's message alive.<sup>91</sup> By this stage, John had risen within the BUF, and become its prospective parliamentary candidate for a Hull constituency.<sup>92</sup> However, John Charnley did not contest the General Election that many expected to occur in 1940. Instead, Charnley spent the bulk of the war years interned, keeping company with fellow Mosleyites and members of other extreme-right organisations such as Admiral Sir Barry Domvile.<sup>93</sup> Charnley resumed his bakery business after the war, and soon became prominent in his local chamber of trade. He mixed with civic leaders and even enjoying the hospitality of Conservative MP Ernest Maples on the House of Commons Terrace.<sup>94</sup> However, Charnley also became involved with Union Movement, Mosley's post-war attempt at a political comeback. He claimed that he 'did not play a very active part in Union Movement affairs', but Charnley spoke at Union Movement meetings and contributed to the 'Small Shopkeepers Front' section in Mosley's publications *Union* and *Action*.<sup>95</sup> He understood that his continued support for Mosley meant that he had to be 'circumspect in the expression of my views'.<sup>96</sup> Charnley nevertheless soon experienced problems. Charnley had continued to receive the monthly 'Mosley News Letter' and even attended meetings with

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<sup>89</sup> See 8.

<sup>90</sup> John, Peter, Alfred and Sydney. Charnley, *Blackshirts*, 128-9.

<sup>91</sup> Charnley, *Blackshirts*, 94.

<sup>92</sup> Charnley, *Blackshirts*, 107.

<sup>93</sup> Charnley, *Blackshirts*, 109. See 4.

<sup>94</sup> Charnley, *Blackshirts*, 170ff & 195.

<sup>95</sup> Charnley, *Blackshirts*, 203.

<sup>96</sup> Charnley, *Blackshirts*, 186.

Mosley from 1946.<sup>97</sup> One meeting received press coverage and became public knowledge. This forced Charnley to defend his actions before his local chamber of trade, which he described as keen to avoid depiction as a platform for neo-fascists.<sup>98</sup> However, Charnley's election as President of his local Chamber of Trade in 1952 seemed to prove that his connections with Mosley were no bar to civic advancement.<sup>99</sup>

Indeed, by 1950 the local Conservative Association considered Charnley a pillar of the community. The Conservative Party regained Ormskirk, the constituency in which Charnley lived, at the 1950 General Election. Ormskirk's Conservative MP, Sir Ronald Cross, tried to entice Charnley into joining the Conservative Party on a number of occasions. Charnley believed this to be a precursor to his eventual adoption as a parliamentary candidate for the Conservative Party, and thus accepted an invitation to visit the home of the treasurer of the Ormskirk local Conservative Association. Charnley did not name the Treasurer, but described him as well known and influential. He was also, Charnley claimed, aware of Charnley's support for Mosley and even hinted that he too was a Mosleyite but thought Mosley's political prospects were nil. The Treasurer offered Charnley the chairmanship of the Burscough and Latham Branch of the Conservative Party, plus support should Charnley seek parliamentary nomination. Charnley accepted the offer, and cited that he had done so to enable him to further Mosley's cause 'through less obvious channels.'<sup>100</sup> Thereafter, Charnley helped successive Conservative Ormskirk MPs and stood as a Conservative in a local council election. As in civic life, it appeared that Charnley's support for Mosley was not a barrier to political advancement. Therefore, he applied to become a parliamentary candidate for the Conservative Party on 5 June 1954, after he had secured the support of three sponsors.<sup>101</sup> Central Office invited Charnley to an interview after he had gained the support of Area Office in Manchester. Here, however, Charnley's political career met a Central Office

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<sup>97</sup> Charnley, *Blackshirts*, 196.

<sup>98</sup> Charnley, *Blackshirts*, 196-199.

<sup>99</sup> Charnley, *Blackshirts*, 204.

<sup>100</sup> Charnley, *Blackshirts*, 206.

<sup>101</sup> Charnley, *Blackshirts*, 207. Jeremy McIlwhaine, the CPA Archivist, confirmed that Charnley's sponsors were D. Glover, Conservative MP for Ormskirk, R. Fleetwood-Hesketh, Conservative MP for Southport and John Heynes, Chairman of the Ormskirk Conservative Association. Jeremy McIlwhaine email 6 September 2007.

roadblock. Asked at the interview whether he ‘did not consider that my earlier commitment might be a deterrent against my acceptance’, Charnley, perhaps unwisely, responded by pointing out that Churchill had changed allegiance during his political career. Central Office rejected Charnley’s candidacy.<sup>102</sup>

Why did Central Office reject Charnley? His comment about Churchill was a faux pas, but insufficient to disbar him as Churchill’s political career was not a secret. It was not beyond the capabilities of the Conservative Party machine to ensure a candidate avoided making such comments in public. That is provided Central Office wanted the individual in the first place. So why, if Central Office never wanted Charnley as a candidate, did they interview him? It would have been difficult for Central Office to refuse Charnley the courtesy of an interview as he had gained acceptance at a local level, both in business and politics, and secured nominations from prominent members of the party. Central Office may also have been intrigued, and possibly even used the interview to elicit intelligence on former Mosleyites and their intentions. Immigration from the New Commonwealth was rising and Conservative MPs and PPCs had previously become embroiled in Mosley’s ‘anti-alien’ campaigns immediately after the war.<sup>103</sup> Such a scenario fits the picture of Central Office guarding against the public recollection of the Conservative Party’s embarrassing pre-war connections. It is likely, therefore, that when Central Office interviewed Charnley they were meeting two objectives, one a matter of form, the other consonant with its role gathering intelligence on extreme-right groups and individuals. That Central Office never intended to sanction Charnley’s parliamentary candidature is easy to surmise. Central Office did not even bother to inform him of their rejection.<sup>104</sup> Charnley’s subsequent failure to secure nomination to a safe council seat further proved that Central Office was determined to block his political career. When Central Office had the final decision over a local council nomination, it rejected Charnley,<sup>105</sup> despite the local Conservative Association previously having considered him suitable to be a parliamentary candidate. Charnley was in no doubt why this had happened: ‘This small example of inside jiggery-pokery to prevent the election of a

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<sup>102</sup> Charnley, *Blackshirts*, 207-208.

<sup>103</sup> See 8.

<sup>104</sup> Charnley, *Blackshirts*, 209.

<sup>105</sup> Charnley, *Blackshirts*, 208.

one-time Blackshirt rather dismayed me, and at the first suitable opportunity I withdrew from local politics.’<sup>106</sup> Thus, not only had Central Office acted to deny any national association between Charnley and the Conservative Party becoming widely known, it had additionally thwarted his local ambitions, and thereby minimised his connection with the party at a local level. It is hard to disagree with Charnley’s claim that his attempt to become a Conservative Party parliamentary candidate ‘must have been a dead duck from the start’.<sup>107</sup>

### *New Concerns*

The Conservative Party’s information network continued bringing new organisations to Central Office’s attention. A Mr. Lee, the Chief Agent of the Bradford Conservative and National Liberal Association, wrote to General Director Stephen Pierssene at Central Office in February 1952 and requested information on a group called Common Cause.<sup>108</sup> The events Lee set in motion showed how, and why, Central Office interest in an outside organisation developed. Lee included a Common Cause leaflet outlining its objectives and asked whether Conservative members should support this new organisation. An invitation to one of Lee’s ward secretaries to act as a local secretary for Common Cause had prompted his action.<sup>109</sup> Central Office ascertained that people interested in combating Communism had attended Common Cause’s inaugural meeting in November 1951, and had agreed on a six-day conference in London for May 1952.<sup>110</sup> The General Director saw little cause for alarm regarding party members, and responded with only a minimal counter-measure. He advised Lee that, ‘I feel that at this stage we should not give active party support to the movement, although there does not seem to be any reason why individual

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<sup>106</sup> Charnley, *Blackshirts*, 208.

<sup>107</sup> Charnley, *Blackshirts*, 209. Also hampered thereafter was Charnley’s civic career. Asked to serve as a local magistrate, Charnley was the only individual nominated by his sponsor ever denied this position. Nor, despite despite working for many trade associations and NHS Tribunals, did Charnley receive any official recognition, which Charnley later ascribed to ‘behind-the-scenes chicanery.’ See 209-210.

<sup>108</sup> H. Lee to S. H. Piersenne, ‘Common Cause’, 2 February 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/57, Common Cause, 1950-2.

<sup>109</sup> H. Lee to S. H. Piersenne, ‘Common Cause’, 2 February 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/57, Common Cause, 1950-2.

<sup>110</sup> Internal Central office memo from C. Gill to Mr. Watson, “Common Cause”, 4 February 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/57, Common Cause, 1950-2.

Conservatives should not join it.’<sup>111</sup> Yet, Piersenne’s caution about an outside organisations’ potential to embarrass the Conservative Party remained, which meant that he advised a slightly firmer line regarding the ward secretary. Pierssene stated that, ever, ‘the position of the ward secretary of your Association may be a little difficult if he is to become secretary of the local branch of Common Cause as well, and if I were you I should tactfully discourage him from accepting the office’.<sup>112</sup> Nevertheless, Piersenne’s response portrayed an initial nonchalance towards Common Cause. However, this attitude had changed within one month. Lee had continued to supply Central Office with Common Cause literature, plus information on its leadership structure.<sup>113</sup> Piersenne circulated the literature to others within Central Office.<sup>114</sup> The Chief Publicity Officer suggested making unofficial enquiries and deferentially asking the aristocratic Chairman of Common Cause for his comments, before Central Office provided advice to all constituencies.<sup>115</sup> Pierssene agreed to enquiries, and added that, ‘it would be just as well to see the lines on which it is developing and what its plans and prospects are’.<sup>116</sup> This exchange revealed that Central Office had become more concerned about Common Cause. What explains this altered attitude?

The method by which Common Cause created its ‘groups’ questioned its claim of political neutrality. A Central Office report described how ‘prosperous and leisured people’ initially gathered as a ‘group’; only when supporters of all three political parties joined the ‘group’ was it transformed into a ‘branch’.<sup>117</sup> Thus, there is a status and class perspective. Some of the names associated with Common Cause, such as Major-General Richard Hilton and Field Marshall Wilson, supported this notion.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> S. H. Pierssene to H. Lee, 5 February 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/57, Common Cause, 1950-2.

<sup>112</sup> S. H. Pierssene to H. Lee, 5 February 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/57, Common Cause, 1950-2.

<sup>113</sup> H. Lee to S. H. Pierssene, ‘Common Cause’, 12 February 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/57, Common Cause, 1950-2.

<sup>114</sup> S. H. Pierssene, 13 February 1952. Attached to H. Lee to S. H. Pierssene, ‘Common Cause’, 12 February 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/57, Common Cause, 1950-2.

<sup>115</sup> Chief Publicity Officer to the General Director, Lady Maxwell Fyfe and Mr. Hare, ‘Common Cause’, 22 February 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/57, Common Cause, 1950-2.

<sup>116</sup> S. H. Pierssene to the Chief Publicity Officer, ‘Common Cause’, 7 March 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/57, Common Cause, 1950-2.

<sup>117</sup> F. R. Fletcher, ‘Common Cause’, 5 January 1953. CPA CCO 3/4/40, Common Cause, 1952-6.

<sup>118</sup> Chief Publicity Officer to the General Director, Lady Maxwell Fyfe and Mr. Hare, ‘Common Cause’, 22 February 1952. Un-attributed 1952 list of members, ‘Common Cause’. CPA CCO 3/3/57, Common Cause, 1950-2, and 3/4/40, Common Cause, 1952-6.

The existence of trade unionists in Common Cause,<sup>119</sup> on the other hand, provided the possibility of socialist influence. This indicated two reasons for Central Office's increased concern. Common Cause was either another manifestation of the Conservative dissent that it had encountered during the Attlee government. Alternatively, socialists had used Common Cause to infiltrate and subvert an otherwise benign organisation. Support existed for both possibilities. Piersenne expressed the fear in March 1952 that Common Cause could become another Fighting Fund for Freedom or Society for Individual Freedom.<sup>120</sup> This indicated that Central Office based its decision to investigate Common Cause on its perception that it was a right-wing organisation. In August 1952, however, a Central Office Area Agent reported concerns over the presence of two socialists acting as organisers of Common Cause's Sheffield branch.<sup>121</sup> Central Office despatched two observers as a result of this information resulted.<sup>122</sup> Thus, Central Office may equally have based its decision to investigate Common Cause on its perception of it as a vehicle for the left wing. However, there are stronger reasons to support the notion that Central Office was concerned about the extreme right.

Common Cause's aims did not seem extreme. The Common Cause literature forwarded to Central Office welcomed 'all who support political democracy, cultural freedom and the rule of Law against totalitarianism and dictatorship'.<sup>123</sup> Common Cause claimed many regional, and professional, branches, plans for an information centre and the imminent creation of a parliamentary group.<sup>124</sup> However, its requests for assistance and funds negated these grandiose claims.<sup>125</sup> Its claims of various political and religious affiliations apparently lessened the possibility of sectarianism

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<sup>119</sup> Un-attributed 1952 list of members, 'Common Cause'. CPA CCO 3/4/40, Common Cause, 1952-6.

<sup>120</sup> S. H. Piersenne to Lady Maxwell Fyfe, Mr. Hare, the Chief Publicity Officer, Mr. Gill and The Registry, 'Common Cause', 27 February 1952. CPA CCO, 3/3/57 Common Cause, 1950-2.

<sup>121</sup> S. A. Walker to Mr. Goldman at Conservative Research Department, 25 August 1952. CPA CCO, 3/4/40 Common Cause, 1952-6.

<sup>122</sup> Private and Confidential letter from T. F. Watson to S. A. Walker, 28 August 1952. CPA CCO 3/4/40, Common Cause, 1952-6.

<sup>123</sup> *Common Cause: 'Freedom, The Common Cause of Mankind'*, 1952. CPA CCO 3/4/40, Common Cause, 1952-6.

<sup>124</sup> *Common Cause: 'Freedom, The Common Cause of Mankind'*, 1952. CPA CCO 3/4/40, Common Cause, 1952-6.

<sup>125</sup> *Common Cause: 'Freedom, The Common Cause of Mankind'*, 1952. CPA CCO 3/4/40, Common Cause, 1952-6.

or sectional interest.<sup>126</sup> Thus, it is unlikely that fear of a potential rival or sectarianism caused Central Office's concerns. Common Cause declared its opposition to fascism, and sought to distance itself from the pre war British right and its links with fascism. It represented fascism as an alien ideology. Common Cause proclaimed that, 'It opposes fascism of every hue (whether black, brown or red) and of every nationality (whether Italian, German, Russian, Spanish or British).'<sup>127</sup> Yet, this was simply special pleading, a self-serving smokescreen by which Common Cause attempted to hide embarrassing pre-war antecedents. It is unlikely that this fooled Central Office. The address provided to forward funds to, 66c Elizabeth St, London, SW1,<sup>128</sup> may have alerted Central Office. Central Office possibly knew that the proprietor of this address was Hugh Grosvenor, the Second Duke of Westminster.<sup>129</sup> Central Office may not have known that Grosvenor provided this office free of charge, nor necessarily that Common Cause shared this address with an organisation assisting a known Nazi collaborator.<sup>130</sup> However, it is inconceivable that Central Office was ignorant of Grosvenor's pre-war connection to the extreme right and the suspicion he was a fifth columnist.<sup>131</sup> Moreover, Central Office definitely did know that Lord Malcolm Douglas-Hamilton was the Chairman of Common Cause. The Chief Political Officer had identified Douglas-Hamilton as such when he responded to the circulated Common Cause material.<sup>132</sup> Recently released MI5 documents show Lord Douglas-Hamilton secretly flew aircraft to assist Franco in the Spanish Civil War.<sup>133</sup> It is feasible to assume that the Conservative Home Secretary knew this, and that senior Central Office officials did so too given their well-known connections to the intelligence services.<sup>134</sup> Therefore, the commonly known fact of Lord Douglas-Hamilton also being a Conservative and Unionist MP posed the potential to provide

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<sup>126</sup> *Common Cause: 'Freedom, The Common Cause of Mankind'*, 1952. CPA CCO 3/4/40, Common Cause, 1952-6.

<sup>127</sup> *Common Cause: 'Freedom, The Common Cause of Mankind'*, 1952. CPA CCO 3/4/40, Common Cause, 1952-6.

<sup>128</sup> *Common Cause: 'Freedom, The Common Cause of Mankind'*, 1952. CPA CCO 3/4/40, Common Cause, 1952-6.

<sup>129</sup> S. Dorril and R. Ramsay, 'In a Common Cause: the Anti-Communist Crusade in Britain 1945-60, *Lobster* no. 19.

<sup>130</sup> Dorril and Ramsay, 'Common Cause'. See also *Lobster* no. 11 for other Common Cause members.

<sup>131</sup> See 4.

<sup>132</sup> Chief Publicity Officer to the General Director, Lady Maxwell Fyfe and Mr. Hare, 'Common Cause', 22 February 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/57, Common Cause, 1950-2.

<sup>133</sup> 'Franco's British Friends' *Document*, BBC Radio 4, 29 January 2007.

<sup>134</sup> Davies, *Nation*, 238-245.

the Conservative Party's enemies ammunition with which to rekindle embarrassing, and potentially damaging, charges of consorting with the extreme right. If so, Westminster's involvement would only have added to Central Office concern. This explained Central Office's desire to investigate further this particular recurrence of the extreme right. This replacement of Piersenne's nonchalance with an atmosphere of vigilance, action and discouragement in Central Office by the end of January 1953 supports this scenario. Miss Fletcher personally questioned a member of Common Cause as she had with The Guild of Good Neighbours.<sup>135</sup> Fletcher admitted that Common Cause's aims were unexceptionable. However, when Fletcher stated that she had 'gained the impression that this is an organisation which we would be unwise to ignore, and I think we should do well to watch it',<sup>136</sup> she revealed an understanding that Common Cause was a cause for concern. Central Office consequently altered its advice not to join Common Cause to include all Conservative Party supporters, not just its officials.<sup>137</sup> This was a stronger counter-measure than that revealed by Pierssene's initial nonchalance.

Central Office's contrastingly positive attitude displayed towards another new outside organisation further supported this picture of alertness to embarrassing extreme-right connections. As usual, Area Agents requested information on the organisation, the first record of such being for March 1952.<sup>138</sup> The organisation's name, Drake's Drum, suggested the dawn of a new Elizabethan Age. Elizabeth II had succeeded George VI on 6 February 1952. The name of this organisation, a reference to an earlier English golden age, possessed connotations of palingenesis. Griffin argued that this was one characteristic of fascist groups.<sup>139</sup> Later theories cannot be attributed retrospectively to the thinking of 1950s Central Office officials. However, we can expect them to be alert to possible connections between right-wing groups. The signature of Drake's Drum leader, Mary Parsons, matched that of the Mary Parsons of the British

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<sup>135</sup> See 38-40.

<sup>136</sup> F. R. Fletcher, 'Common Cause', 5 January 1953. CPA CCO 3/4/40, Common Cause, 1952-6.

<sup>137</sup> For example, Lady Maxwell Fyfe to Brigadier Pearce Smith, 28 January 1953. CPA CCO 3/4/40, Common Cause, 1952-6.

<sup>138</sup> CPA CCO 3/3/65, Drake's Drum, 1950-52.

<sup>139</sup> Griffin, 'Concept'.

Housewives League.<sup>140</sup> It would be understandable, therefore, if Central Office was wary. Instead, requests for information about Drake's Drum consistently attracted minimally refractory advice, saving for officials or the institutional. There was, for example, 'no objection to individual Conservatives supporting this effort if they so desire, in a private capacity'.<sup>141</sup> The Conservative Party was 'not in any way officially (or even mildly unofficially) connected with it'.<sup>142</sup> Indeed, Central Office even appeared to sanction Drake's Drum. The Chief Publicity Officer described Drake's Drum as 'a perfectly respectable organization and one of which we approve'.<sup>143</sup> This was far from the hostility Central Office exhibited towards the British Housewives League.

Expediency and opportunism explained Central Office's attitude towards Drake's Drum. Churchill's Administration lacked confidence, realised the true message of the 1951 General Election, and sought to widen its appeal. Instantaneous electoral change was, however, unrealistic. The rejection of the Conservative Party by nearly 57% of the electorate in 1950 and 52% in 1951 proved this,<sup>144</sup> despite ideological change in the *Industrial Charter*. The anti-Conservative vote appeared substantial and recalcitrant. This presented the Conservative Party with a problem. It needed to attract non-Conservative voters, but they might reject overt appeals by the Conservative Party, perhaps unconvinced by the Conservative Party's sincerity and commitment to the Attleean settlement. Yet, reliance on its own appeals was insufficient to attract these voters. Consequently, as seen with AIMS,<sup>145</sup> the Conservative Party adopted a longer-term, covert strategy that complimented the realignment of its literature to attract hitherto hostile voters. Like Aims of Industry, Drake's Drum fitted this approach. Drake's Drum attempted to spread an anti-Communist appeal to the

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<sup>140</sup> Compare, for example, Mary A. Parsons, 6 April 1952 with Mary A. Parson to The Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill, Leader of the Opposition, 22 June 1948 and M. Parsons to The Rt. Hon. J. Stachey M.P., 29 June 1948. CPA CCO 3/3/65, Drake's Drum, 1950-52, and CCO 3/1/12, British Housewives League, 1947-9.

<sup>141</sup> Lady S. Maxwell Fyfe to Mr. Bradbury, 'Drake's Drum', 1 April 1953. CPA CCO 3/4/48, Drake's Drum, 1952-6.

<sup>142</sup> Brian Willis to Miss de Jonghe, "Drake's Drum", 11 March 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/65, Drake's Drum, 1950-52.

<sup>143</sup> Chief Publicity Officer to Mrs. Phillips, 1 September 1952. CPA CCO 3/4/48, Drake's Drum, 1952-56.

<sup>144</sup> The combined Conservative Party and National Liberal Party vote was 43.4% and 48% in the 1950 and 1951 General Election respectively.

<sup>145</sup> See 56-61.

working class, and used Conservative trade unionists to distribute its literature because it believed that, 'through them we reach the most vital fields for our activities'.<sup>146</sup> It described the realities of Communist rule in the Soviet Union, identified 'Moscow stooges' in the trade unions and warned of 'Soviet laws' coming to Britain unless the workers 'fight Communism – and win!'.<sup>147</sup> Thus, Drake's Drum provided Central Office, and the Conservative government, with a useful and non-attributable medium for achieving their objective of spreading the Conservative message. Numerous comments supported the existence of, and reasons for, this positive relationship. They also showed Central Office's desire to keep it secret. A Mr. Chapman-Walker at Central Office secured adequate supplies for Drake's Drum at a time when paper remained in short supply. In April 1952, Parsons thanked Chapman-Walker for his 'generous help in supplying paper'.<sup>148</sup> Central Office reassured Conservative officials of the legal vetting of all Drake's Drum literature.<sup>149</sup> Parsons promised not to use the Conservative Party organisation to spread Drake's Drum literature.<sup>150</sup> Central Office revealed Parson's promise not to implicate the Conservative Party 'in any way' despite doing 'some quite useful propaganda work in our interests',<sup>151</sup> and denied the existence of any institutional connection. Parsons stressed to distributors that Drake's Drum 'must remain entirely unofficial and dissociated from Conservative Party activities'.<sup>152</sup> The Chief Publicity Officer, meanwhile, revealed that Drake's Drum could reach 'people whom we cannot get at in the normal way'.<sup>153</sup> Regardless of Parson's previous affiliations, and the name of her organisation, it is clear that Central Office stuck to its least refractory stance towards Drake's Drum because it was useful to the Conservative Party.

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<sup>146</sup> Mary A. Parsons to Mr. Chapman-Walker, 6 April 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/65, Drake's Drum, 1950-52.

<sup>147</sup> *Workers of the World Unite! – To Smash Communism*, 1953. CPA CCO 3/4/48, Drake's Drum, 1952-6.

<sup>148</sup> Mary A. Parsons to Mr. Chapman-Walker, 6 April 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/65, Drake's Drum, 1950-52.

<sup>149</sup> Brian Willis to Miss de Jonghe, "Drake's Drum", 11 March 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/65, Drake's Drum, 1950-52.

<sup>150</sup> Brian Willis to Miss de Jonghe, "Drake's Drum", 11 March 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/65, Drake's Drum, 1950-52.

<sup>151</sup> Lady S. Maxwell Fyfe to Mr. A. N. Banks, "Drake's Drum", 12 March 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/65, Drake's Drum 1950-52.

<sup>152</sup> Mary A. Parsons to Mr. Chapman-Walker, 6 April 1952. CPA CCO 3/3/65, Drake's Drum, 1950-52.

<sup>153</sup> Chief Publicity Officer to Mrs. Phillips, 1 September 1952. CPA CCO 3/4/48, Drake's Drum, 1952-56.

Fear of Communism also lay behind the emergence of the League of Empire Loyalists (LEL), an extreme-right group that focused on communism's impact on the British Empire. Churchill and Eden's government had adopted a harsher stance to imperial tensions, which suggested a desire to maintain overseas possessions. British forces brutally crushed the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya and contained communist insurgency in Malaya. Opposition to British involvement in Cyprus resulted in the jailing of the Greek Cypriot leader Archbishop Makarios in 1956. However, this picture of a government determined to withstand threats to the Empire was illusory. In June 1952, Eden presented his assessment of Britain's overseas commitments to the Cabinet. Eden highlighted Britain's inability to meet current demands, and recommended 'transferring' the country's "real burdens".<sup>154</sup> In the same year, Britain withdrew its Governor from the Gold Coast, which allowed Kuame Nkrumah to become Prime Minister one year after the British released him from prison. In Asia, a solution to racial tensions between Malays and Chinese looked unlikely against a background of an increasingly powerful Communist China plus recent Indonesian independence and colonial war in Indo-China.<sup>155</sup> In Europe, the jailing of Makarios had only served to provide the Cypriot Independence movement, Enosis, with a martyr barely one year after its creation in 1955. The Conservative governments may have tried to give the impression that it possessed the stomach to fight and was not retreating from Empire, as Hennessey argued.<sup>156</sup> However, it is unlikely that the extreme right, already suspicious at the direction of domestic policy, saw it this way.

Only Cabinet secrecy prevented knowledge of Eden's recommendations and stopped confirmation of these suspicions. However, the coronation oath of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953, which contained far vaguer claims to imperial domination than that of George VI's in 1937, had set the tone.<sup>157</sup> Additionally, the government's policy towards Egypt provided tangible proof of imperial abandonment, and confirmed right-wing fears. In 1953, Churchill had stressed that Britain's actions in Egypt 'will set the

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<sup>154</sup> 'British Overseas Obligations', Memorandum presented to Cabinet by A. Eden, June 1952. Hennessey, *So Good*, 38-42.

<sup>155</sup> Hennessey, *So Good*, 304-305.

<sup>156</sup> Hennessey, *So Good*, 304.

<sup>157</sup> Hennessey, *So Good*, 271.

pace for us all over Africa and the Middle East'.<sup>158</sup> Churchill realised the strategic significance of Egypt, even if he did not elaborate on what the 'pace' was. The Suez Canal provided access to the Red Sea and Britain's eastern territories. Thus, when Churchill acquiesced in the agreement Foreign Secretary Eden forged with Egypt to remove all British soldiers by June 1956 it seemed that the Empire was truly going. Eden's failure when Prime Minister to secure Egypt's signature to the Baghdad Pact of February 1955 as a quid pro quo looked weak. The Pact's objective, to prevent the spread of Communist Russia's influence to the Middle East and North Africa by forming a buffer comprised of Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and Turkey, lay in shreds. The Conservative government looked like it could neither maintain the Empire nor counter the left's most extreme ideology. It had confirmed the imperial-right's worst fears by its abandonment of the Conservative Party's link with imperialism, and opened political space on its right flank. The League of Empire Loyalists stepped into this space.

Founded in 1954, the LEL presented a more serious threat to the Conservative Party than all the other extreme-right movements hitherto. The LEL operated 'on a firmer footing than any other Right Wing or Fascist movement since Mosley's pre-war heyday',<sup>159</sup> mainly because an expatriate living in Chile financially assisted it. Its leader, A. K. Chesterton, was able from 1953 to produce a regular publication, *Candour*, and had subsequently attracted a substantial membership in his quest to save the British Empire. Chesterton focused on the Empire and conflated the Soviet Union and America as the cause of imperial decline. This explanation appealed to many Conservatives' fear of Communism and cultural anti-Americanism. Chesterton's military and literary credibility no doubt helped too. He had served in both world wars and gained the Military Cross in the process, which attracted many military figures to the LEL. Employment at senior levels in Conservative publications provided Chesterton with an air of respectability. From April 1953, for example, Chesterton was the literary advisor and personal journalist to Lord Beaverbrook and a senior writer for the *Daily Express* group. His co-authorship, with the Jewish J. Leftwich, of *The Tragedy of Anti-Semitism* (1948), added to this impression of

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<sup>158</sup> N. Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain made the Modern World*, Penguin, London (2004), 355.

<sup>159</sup> Bean, *Shades*, 98.

respectability. So, too, did the presence of establishment-sounding individuals on the LEL's Grand Council, such as Field Marshall Lord Ironside, The Earl of Buchan, Elizabeth Lady Freeman and Lieutenant-General Sir Balfour Hutchinson. From the beginning, however, the Conservative Party leadership exhibited a hostile attitude towards the LEL. Central Office abandoned its usual advice that individual members were free to join other organisations, and quickly adopted firmer counter-measures. It commissioned substantial reports that detailed the LEL's membership, and collected intelligence material that far out-stripped those it had acquired for any other outside organisation. Central Office made it clear that membership of the LEL by any Conservative was unacceptable.

The LEL's written attacks and publicity stunts partly explained increased interest and action by Central Office. Chesterton produced a series of publications titled 'Sound The Alarm' to accompany the launch of the LEL in 1954. These publications, occurring at the height of concerns over withdrawal from east of Suez, overwhelmingly attacked the Conservative government. Chesterton exonerated Churchill of treasonable intent, but laid the charge of self-delusional culpability at the leader of the Conservative government nevertheless. He stated that, 'Sir Winston, after all his brave words, now presides over the liquidation of the British Empire, but so potent is the alchemy of his mind that no doubt he persuades himself that the process is really one of wafting the Empire to the sunlit uplands of his wartime imagining.'<sup>160</sup> Chesterton did not extend any leniency to other government leaders or the Conservative Party. The Labour Government had lost Ceylon and Burma, weakened Britain's position in Malaya, and negatively affected Britain's oil supplies by abnegating Britain's sphere of interest in Persia.<sup>161</sup> The Conservative Party's acceptance of these policies in Opposition, and their continuance of them when in power, had, Chesterton believed, resulted in the 'rot at the core of Churchillian Conservatism'.<sup>162</sup> He described Conservative leaders as collectively giving 'every appearance of working for the abrogation of our national sovereignty as their supreme

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<sup>160</sup> A. K. Chesterton, *Sound The Alarm! A Warning To The British Nations*, Candour Publishing Company, Croydon, (1954), 8.

<sup>161</sup> Chesterton, *Alarm!* 9.

<sup>162</sup> Chesterton, *Alarm!* 9.

political objective',<sup>163</sup> and thereby levelled a charge of treachery. Nor did the parliamentary party fare any better. Chesterton portrayed the Conservatives as giving the Empire away as quickly as the Socialists had done, and noted there had been 'only one or two protests from those whom some have supposed, too charitably, to be the custodians of the imperial cause'.<sup>164</sup> Thus, Chesterton argued, all Conservative MPs were complicit in this treachery. This was a particularly odious and irritating charge to put whilst memories of the Second World War were still fresh, and was a recurring theme in Chesterton's 'Sound The Alarm' series.

However, this charge was not as irritating or embarrassing as the LEL's publicity stunts. Churchill's resignation in April 1954 had triggered a wave of LEL protests focused on his successor, former Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden. Eden was the man most closely associated with the policy of 'scuttle' from Empire. The LEL protested against the first visit of Soviet leaders in April 1956, and delivered a wreath in memory of those killed under communist rule and a ten-foot long silver spoon to 10 Downing St.<sup>165</sup> In the following month LEL member John Bean interrupted a Conservative gathering at Warwick Castle. Bean loudly presented Eden with a black scuttle, and stated that it was 'in view of the development of your Empire policies'.<sup>166</sup> In August 1956, Bean was one of the LEL protesters who gate crashed the Suez Conference at Lancaster House.<sup>167</sup> A female LEL member hid backstage at a Young Conservative meeting at the Royal Festival Hall in late 1956 and walked straight on to the platform whilst Eden was speaking and protested against suppression of the recent Hungarian uprising. John Bean shouted slogans from the rear of the Hall before stewards physically removed him.<sup>168</sup> The right-wing individual that attacked Eden at Bradford was an LEL member.<sup>169</sup> Bean was also the 1950 recruit to Mosley's Union Movement who had rejected the Conservative Party as not reflecting his views.<sup>170</sup> He had joined the League of Empire Loyalists in 1955 in desperation at Union Movement's tactics, but only after a two-month spell in the Conservative Party in

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<sup>163</sup> Chesterton, *Alarm!* 8.

<sup>164</sup> Chesterton, *Alarm!* 18.

<sup>165</sup> Bean, *Shades*, 100-101.

<sup>166</sup> Bean, *Shades*, 102.

<sup>167</sup> Bean, *Shades*, 113.

<sup>168</sup> Bean, *Shades*, 113-114.

<sup>169</sup> See 48.

<sup>170</sup> See 11.

1953 had confirmed his earlier views.<sup>171</sup> The publicity stunts Bean and his LEL colleagues engaged in occurred in an increasingly televisual age, and thus brought the image of Conservatism divided and a government assailed by many erstwhile voters irritated at imperial betrayal into the living room of millions of voters. More prosaically, it made the Conservative leader look a fool.

Central Office's adoption of more stringent counter-measures proved how seriously it took the threat posed by the LEL. Urgent and negative replies replaced the usual nonchalant advice that individual members were free to join outside organisations. In May 1955, for example, a Colonel Harrison of Eye Division informed Central Office of a meeting he had had with a constituent given a place on the LEL's Council. Central Office responded with the formulation of a 'short but forceful brief' for Harrison to show the constituent why the Conservative party 'do not approve of their activities'.<sup>172</sup> The description of this task as 'top priority' and the command to produce it at the 'earliest possible moment' revealed Central Office's sense of urgency.<sup>173</sup> In the same month, the Conservative Parliamentary Prospective Candidate for Darlington, Sir Fergus Graham, sought elucidation from Central Office of the full case against the LEL after discovering that his 'most eloquent and able' lieutenant supported the LEL.<sup>174</sup> The General Director feared legal action and did not give extensive comments. The LEL's willingness to use legal action when it felt defamed, winning at least fourteen libel cases during its existence, explained the General Director's reticence.<sup>175</sup> However, when he referred to the 'full case against the League',<sup>176</sup> the General Director revealed that Central Office was indeed making 'a case'. He also inferred that this 'case' was stronger than that usually constructed, and that Central Office would probably disseminate it via more than the usual channels. The existence of press articles within Central Office files that reported party officials'

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<sup>171</sup> Bean, *Shades*, 59-93.

<sup>172</sup> Barbara Brooke to Mr. Adamson, 'The League of Empire Loyalists', 24 March 1955. CPA CCO 3/4/75, League of Empire Loyalists, 1952-56.

<sup>173</sup> Barbara Brooke to Mr. Adamson, 'The League of Empire Loyalists', 24 March 1955. CPA CCO 3/4/75, League of Empire Loyalists, 1952-56.

<sup>174</sup> Sir Fergus Graham to Sir Stephen Pierssene, 10 May 1955. CPA CCO 3/4/75, League of Empire Loyalists, 1952-56.

<sup>175</sup> Bean, *Shades*, 99.

<sup>176</sup> S. H. Pierssene to Sir Fergus Graham, 12 May 1955. CPA CCO 3/4/75, League of Empire Loyalists, 1952-56.

comments about the LEL supports the idea of a co-ordinated campaign against it.<sup>177</sup> This is not surprising as the LEL's publications and actions had angered Central Office. The General Director, for example, failed to understand how any Conservative member could have any connection with an organisation engaged in the 'violent denigration of the Prime Minister'.<sup>178</sup> There is also a tangible sense of alarm over the potential impact on the Conservative Party. Central Office introduced 'careful scrutiny' of membership applications when it feared that the LEL was attempting to infiltrate the Conservative Party.<sup>179</sup> Yet, no matter how irritating or embarrassing the LEL comments and stunts were, they do not explain adequately the increased level of refractory activity, or the fear of legal action by the LEL and concern that the LEL was acquiring a foothold within the Conservative Party. This is because these comments and the LEL's stunts mask the main reason for Central Office's attitude.

The earliest LEL publications revealed that anti-Semitism was the central platform of its philosophy.<sup>180</sup> They portrayed Jews systematically setting about the destruction of national institutions, countries and empires as they sought the creation of one-world government. In their place, Jews wanted to create internationalist organisations as a stage towards their ultimate objective. Jews were, therefore, the hidden hand behind all the wars and revolutions that had resulted in the fall of monarchies, and any subsequent disingenuous attempts at collectivist guarantees against their repetition. Thus, the Jews removed the Bourbons by means of the French Revolution, whilst the Habsburgs, Romanovs and Hohenzollerns fell during a Jewish-financed Great War. However, the British monarchy had proved resilient to the anti-monarchism the Jews had unleashed across Europe. Thus, as the League of Nations, the initial vehicle of one-world government, had proved incapable of delivering their objective, the Jews set about the destruction of the British monarchy at its periphery, i.e. the British

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<sup>177</sup> For example, 'League of Empire Loyalists: Correction and apology', *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 6 February 1956. CPA CCO 3/5/88, League of Empire Loyalists – general, 1956-59.

<sup>178</sup> S. H. Pierssene to The Rt. Hon. Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith, 31 October 1956. CPA CCO 3/5/88, League of Empire Loyalists – general, 1956-59.

<sup>179</sup> Internal general directions from S. H. Pierssene to Mrs. Brooke, Mr. Karberry and Mr. Adamson, 'League of Empire Loyalists', 13 October 1955. CPA CCO 3/4/75, League of Empire Loyalists, 1952-56.

<sup>180</sup> The following synopsis derives from the 1954 'Sound the Alarm' series of LEL publications written by A. K. Chesterton: *SOUND THE ALARM! A Warning To The British Nations*; *STAND BY THE EMPIRE: A Warning To The British Nations*; *BEWARE THE MONEY POWER: A Warning To The British Nations*.

Empire. Consequently, Jews instigated the Second World War to cripple Britain financially. However, to ensure that there would be no repetition of the League of Nations failure, the Jews created a frightening post-1945 scenario of two opposed ideologies that possessed nuclear weapons and struggled for world domination. Therefore, American capitalism and Soviet Communism were the twin pillars of a bogus contest, the Cold War, containment of which the Jews provided for in the shape of new, more powerful international organisations, such as the United Nations, NATO, SEATO and the Common Market. Nations' eventual subservience to these internationalist organisations would, Chesterton implied, enable the Jewish denouement of one-world government. There was, Chesterton argued, substantial evidence that supported his world-view. Churchill had become Prime Minister as an ardent opponent of Nazism and supporter of Empire. Yet he had succumbed to American pressure and commenced dismantling the Empire in return for American assistance in the 'Lend-Lease' programme. The American president who had applied this pressure was a Jewish emplacement, like many American presidents. The 'New York Money Power' had provided American finance for 'Lend-Lease'. It had abruptly ended Lend-Lease at the end of war in Europe and forced Britain to borrow heavily from America to finance domestic war damage and military commitments in the unfinished conflict in the East, which had increased the advantage of their nominee, the American president, in securing further concessions from British Prime Ministers to dismantle the Empire. Should there be any doubt as to the real identity of the 'New York Money Power', the names of institutions and individuals Chesterton identified were all Jewish.

Moreover, the LEL engaged in violent language and actions, and possessed the capacity to escalate it in search of its objectives. The LEL operated in a political milieu very different to that existing before the Second World War, one that eschewed political violence due to inter-war Fascism and Nazism. Nevertheless, the LEL advocated policies that necessitated violent solutions. Indian Independence had already provided a substantial impetus for colonies that desired independence. The LEL's objective of maintaining the Empire would require substantial force to deny aspirations that this impetus had fuelled. The LEL condemned the decadent parliamentary democracy it perceived as incapable of halting imperial decline. Its comments implied the possibility of limiting the franchise to those patriots who

agreed with LEL objectives. Disenfranchising a part of the electorate would also require force. More direct was the charge of treason levelled at the Conservative government. Chesterton argued that dismantling the Empire was, 'treason, beyond doubt it is treason, to dissipate the heritage of a thousand years: to destroy the values which those thousand years have created, and prepare to hand over the sovereign right to our obedience'.<sup>181</sup> The sentence for treason was capital punishment, and remains so until 1998. However, the gravity of this charge within a decade of the end of existential conflict carried more weight. It is unlikely that Chesterton did not realise this, or that those he accused, or his readers, failed to notice. Less ephemeral was the LEL's actual activities. Violence frequently ensued. The LEL's protest against the visiting Soviet dignitaries in April 1956, for example, resulted in its Organising Secretary, Leslie Greene and her fellow-protester receiving criminal convictions.<sup>182</sup>

Thus Chesterton, less than a decade after a war against a regime that exterminated Jews as the cause of Germany's and the world's ills, held Jews responsible for the British Empire's collapse as part of a wider conspiracy to secure a one-world, Jewish-dominated government. This conspiracy theory, together with language and objectives that suggested the LEL was capable of violent solutions, smacked of a British version of 1930s Germany. The antecedents of individuals in the LEL supported the view that the LEL was a 1950s British throwback to right-wing extremism. Chesterton epitomised this. After leaving the British Union of Fascists, Chesterton had maintained his extreme-right credentials in 1939 by joining the Nordic League and becoming the editor of Lord Lyvington's *New Pioneer*.<sup>183</sup> Chesterton was also responsible for the failed attempt to form the National Front after Victory, a coalition of extreme-right organisations including the British People's Party.<sup>184</sup> There were others in LEL with fascist connections too. Leslie Greene's husband, Ben, was a former member of the British People's Party.<sup>185</sup> Anthony Gittens, a partner in Clair Press, the printers of the LEL's *Candour*, provided a link with the Britons Publishing

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<sup>181</sup> Chesterton, *Alarm!* 19.

<sup>182</sup> Bean, *Shades*, 101.

<sup>183</sup> Griffiths, *Patriotism*, 54 See above.

<sup>184</sup> R. C. Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain: from Oswald Mosley to the National Front*, London, I. B. Tauris, 211.

<sup>185</sup> Internal Central Office report, 'Candour', November 1954, 1. CPA CCO 3/4/75, League of Empire Loyalists, 1952-56.

Society.<sup>186</sup> P. J. Ridout, founder of the extreme-right British Empire Party that contested one seat in the 1951 General Election,<sup>187</sup> was also a former member of the pre-war Imperial Fascist League.<sup>188</sup>

Nor was the LEL's connection with the pre-war extreme right limited to these individuals. Historians have depicted members of the *LEL* as Colonel Blimp types determined to preserve a fast-disappearing world who gingered up the Conservative Party into preserving the Empire.<sup>189</sup> The cartoonist David Low intended his Colonel Blimp creation to symbolise a reactionary right-wing establishment, but the subsequent film *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* (1943) sanitised Blimp into a confused but essentially harmless patriot. The LEL membership is replete with names that fitted the 'Blimp' epithet. However, these individuals were often far from the sanitised version. Major-General Richard Hilton, for example, was a member of Common Cause. Air Commodore G. S. Oddie was a pre-war member of the British People's Party, and stood as its candidate in the March 1946 in the Combined Universities by-election.<sup>190</sup> Furthermore, in Field Marshall Ironside, the LEL risked, in a way similar to Common Cause, rekindling the link between the Conservative Party and a possibly treacherous pre-war extreme right. Ironside's involvement with the pre-war Nazi-sympathising Anglo-German Fellowship countered any benign Blimp-type characterisation.<sup>191</sup> At a meeting on 12 November 1939, Major-General J. F. C. Fuller had revealed to Admiral Barry Domville that Ironside supported the attempts of extreme-right groups like the Anglo-German Fellowship to halt the war with Nazi Germany.<sup>192</sup> Domville was a member of many extreme-right organisations, and the government subsequently interned him under Defence Regulation 18B during the war as a potential threat to national security.<sup>193</sup> His recollections are therefore open to dismissal as confused, justificatory recollections. On the same basis, so could Fuller's as he was as a member of the Nordic League and involved in Lymington's

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<sup>186</sup> Internal Central Office report, 'Candour', November 1954, 1. CPA CCO 3/4/75, League of Empire Loyalists, 1952-56.

<sup>187</sup> Craig, *Minor*, 6.

<sup>188</sup> Internal Central Office report, 'Candour', November 1954. CPA CCO 3/4/75, League of Empire Loyalists, 1952-56.

<sup>189</sup> Eatwell, *Fascism*, 334. However, see Baker, *Obsession*, 197.

<sup>190</sup> See 10 and Craig, *Minor*, 9.

<sup>191</sup> See vii.

<sup>192</sup> Griffiths, *Patriotism*, 221.

<sup>193</sup> Griffiths, *Patriotism*, *passim*.

*New Pioneer*.<sup>194</sup> Pugh described 'Boney' Fuller as Britain's 'most remarkable Phoney War fascist', and argued that he was more a candidate for internment than promotion.<sup>195</sup> Nevertheless, as Pugh recounted, Ironside attempted to have Fuller appointed his deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff.<sup>196</sup> The War Cabinet overruled Ironside, no doubt aware of Fuller's sympathies. Yet Ironside had supported Fuller at the highest political level. Therefore, it is difficult to accept that Fuller's claim to Domvile of Ironside's support was idle gossip. It is hardly credible that Fuller would intentionally harm such a powerful patron. Fuller was also an LEL member. Even if Central Office was unaware of these connections and their potential for embarrassment, which seems unlikely, there was always Chesterton. As the post-war deputy-editor of the Conservative publication *Truth*,<sup>197</sup> Chesterton was also an example of the remaining nexus between the Conservative Party and the extreme right.

Thus, regardless of whether the LEL as a whole was fascist, the actions, activities and antecedents of its members, plus its racist philosophy, made it possible to suggest that it was. Its multifarious connections with the Conservative Party made it potentially an extreme embarrassment to the Conservative Party. Central Office's actions revealed that it was aware of this potential embarrassment. They also showed the reasons why the LEL's posed such a problem to the Conservative Party. Central Office commissioned a report on the LEL and *Candour* in the same year that Chesterton launched them. The report highlighted individual's fascist antecedents and anti-Semitic connections and identified members of the LEL's National Council and National Executive.<sup>198</sup> It concluded that Chesterton's publications contained 'the familiar strain of Fascism and anti-American Semitism',<sup>199</sup> and thus revealed why Central Office thought the LEL posed a serious problem. The consequence of Central Office's investigation was a circular to all Conservative MPs, prospective parliamentary candidates, Constituency Agents and Central Office Area Agents. This

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<sup>194</sup> Pugh, *Hurrah*, 297.

<sup>195</sup> Pugh, *Hurrah*, 297. See also A. J. Trythall, *'Boney' Fuller: The Intellectual General*, (1977), 215.

<sup>196</sup> Pugh, *Hurrah for the Blackshirts*, 297. See also Trythall, *Fuller*, 215.

<sup>197</sup> Baker, *Obsession*, 194.

<sup>198</sup> Internal report, 'Candour', November 1954. CPA CCO 3/4/75, League of Empire Loyalists, 1952-56.

<sup>199</sup> Internal report, 'Candour', November 1954, p. 2. CPA CCO 3/4/75, League of Empire Loyalists, 1952-56.

circular stated that all enquiries about the LEL should receive the comment that the Conservative Party could not recommend it because of its fascist 'outlook'.<sup>200</sup> The LEL's fascist antecedents troubled Central Office most. Party Chairman Lord Woolton responded to a Captain Duncan's concerns about the LEL's publicity stunt during the Soviet leaders' visit and advised that: 'The driving forces behind these attacks are former members of Fascist and anti-Semitic organisations.'<sup>201</sup> Herbert Lee, the Chief Conservative Agent for Bradford, informed the *Yorkshire Post* that the LEL appeared 'to be of similar character to that of the pre-war British Fascist Movement'.<sup>202</sup> The Right Honourable Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith, former Governor of Burma, complained that the LEL had 'raped my Young Conservative Branch', and described it as 'being almost more Fascist than Oswald's lot'.<sup>203</sup> These comments were both ironic and credible, as Dorman-Smith had been a member of Lord Lymington's pro-Nazi English Array before the war.<sup>204</sup> However, proof that a desire not to be associated with any post-war manifestation of fascism motivated Central Office did not come from Conservative Party officials alone, but from Chesterton too. Chesterton denied he was a fascist and complained that Central Office was engaged in a deliberate smear campaign. He also publicly turned the accusation back on the Conservative Party. Chesterton dismissed his former membership of the British Union of Fascists as an 'ancient fact', and added that he was considering 'publishing a list of Tory candidates and Members of Parliament who had also been members of the movement'.<sup>205</sup> This threatened to remind the electorate of the Conservative Party's interwar association with fascism and explain Central Office eagerness to block the LEL.

Central Office's reaction when faced at the same time with another organisation it considered fascist reinforced the idea that it based the degree of its refractory

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<sup>200</sup> Barbara Brooke, 'The League of Empire Loyalists. The Elizabethan Party', 1 February 1955. CPA CCO 3/5/88, League of Empire Loyalists – general, 1956-59.

<sup>201</sup> Lord Woolton to Captain Duncan, 15 April 1955. CPA CCO 3/4/75, League of Empire Loyalists, 1952-56.

<sup>202</sup> 'League of Empire Loyalist: Correction and apology', *Yorkshire Post*, 6 February 1956. CPA CCO 3/5/88, League of Empire Loyalist – general, 1956-59.

<sup>203</sup> Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith to Sir Stephen Pierssene TD, 'League of Empire Loyalists', 25 October 1956. CPA CCO 3/5/88, League of Empire Loyalist – general, 1956-59.

<sup>204</sup> See vi and Griffiths, *Patriotism*, 53.

<sup>205</sup> A. K. Chesterton, 'Plain Words to Lord Woolton', *Candour*, II, 24 & 25, 8 & 15 April 1955. CPA CCO 3/4/75, League of Empire Loyalists, 1952-56.

comments and actions on its perceived nature of an organisation's extremism. In this instance, however, Central Office also revealed some methods it deemed acceptable to determine an organisation's nature and potential threat. The Elizabethan Party possessed, like Drake's Drum, a name evocative of a previous golden age. It operated in the West Country and presented itself as a new type of political party that stood against the established ones. Adverts placed in 'personal' columns of local newspapers entitled 'England Expects' sought individuals willing to stand as Elizabethan Party candidates in their own constituencies,<sup>206</sup> unlike the strangers often adopted by the Conservative, Labour and Liberal parties. The information that the Elizabethan Party produced for these putative members placed it to the right of the Conservative government. The literature demanded reductions in direct and indirect taxation and the size of civil service, restrictions on price and wage increases, and a reversal of nationalisation and the need for increased productivity.<sup>207</sup> However, the information also revealed imperialism similar to the LEL when it blamed all post-war governments for the loss of 'vast tracts of the Empire which are vital to our future existence'.<sup>208</sup> The accusation that all post-war governments were treacherous for ceding British territory revealed that the Elizabethan Party was another manifestation of extreme-right reaction to the dismantling of the Empire.<sup>209</sup> Additionally, the Elizabethan Party claimed to be 'recognised as the centre of resistance to all that is rotten in the policies of the old parties'.<sup>210</sup> This language was redolent of Oswald Mosley.

Central Office considered the Elizabethan Party to be similar to the LEL and made this view known in the same communication, and with the exact same wording, that alerted Conservative Party officials to LEL's nature.<sup>211</sup> However, Central Office lacked the detailed knowledge it possessed for the LEL. Consequently, it decided to

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<sup>206</sup> *Exeter Express & Echo*, 10 July 1956. CPA CCO 3/5/63, Elizabethan Party, 1956-59.

<sup>207</sup> Information for prospective Parliamentary candidates and Members of the Elizabethan Party, July 1956, 2. CPA CCO 3/5/63, Elizabethan Party, 1956-59.

<sup>208</sup> Information for prospective Parliamentary candidates and Members of the Elizabethan Party, July 1956, 1. CPA CCO 3/5/63, Elizabethan Party, 1956-59.

<sup>209</sup> Information for prospective Parliamentary candidates and Members of the Elizabethan Party, July 1956, 3. CPA CCO 3/5/63, Elizabethan Party, 1956-59.

<sup>210</sup> Information for prospective Parliamentary candidates and Members of the Elizabethan Party, July 1956, 1. CPA CCO 3/5/63, Elizabethan Party, 1956-59.

<sup>211</sup> Barbara Brooke, 'The League of Empire Loyalists. The Elizabethan Party', 1 February 1955. CPA CCO 3/5/88, League of Empire Loyalists – general, 1956-59.

act on the Elizabethan Party's request for local candidates. In July 1956, Mr. Kaberry at Central Office responded to an Area Agent who had forwarded an Elizabethan Party advert for candidates and asked, 'I wonder if you could arrange for some suitable, reliable person to reply to the advertisement.'<sup>212</sup> The Area Agent fully understood Kaberry's comments and advised that he had immediately arranged 'for someone to reply to the advertisement'.<sup>213</sup> The insouciant language does not hide what Kaberry wanted the 'suitable' and 'reliable' person to do. This person, a Mr. Lewis, acquired the material that revealed the Elizabethan Party's right-wing nature.<sup>214</sup> Thus, Kaberry had arranged for a trusted individual to collect intelligence on a possibly embarrassing right-wing organisation just as preceding Central Office officials had. This was similar, for example, to action taken regarding the Guild of Good Neighbours, only in this instance distance from London necessitated the use of a local investigator. Unlike earlier examples, however, Central Office had arranged for someone to pose as a supporter of an extreme-right party. Central Office now possessed an increasingly adept and bold intelligence-gathering channel capable of gaining information on extreme-right organisations.

However, it would be incorrect to assume that Central Office's only, or even most, important concern was imperialist extreme-right wing organisations that occupied the political space vacated by the Conservative Party. Most attention from July 1956 was admittedly on foreign matters after Egyptian President General Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal. Britain commenced a military attempt to seize the Canal within five weeks of Nasser's action at the end of 1956. American financial pressure forced a halt, an ignominious failure of great magnitude that led swiftly to Eden's resignation in early January 1957. However, during this period Central Office maintained surveillance of right-wing organisations that were angry at Conservative government's domestic policies. The Middle Class Alliance (MCA) and the People's League for the Defence of Freedom (PLDF) attracted particular attention, the latter of which Ramsden believed was much more worrying for Central Office.<sup>215</sup> Central Office's investigation of the MCA and PLDF revealed just how formularised and

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<sup>212</sup> Donald Kaberry to Mr. Slinn, 12 July 1956. CPA CCO 3/5/63, Elizabethan Party, 1956-59.

<sup>213</sup> Mr. Slinn to Mr. Kaberry, 13 July 1956. CPA CCO 3/5/63, Elizabethan Party, 1956-59.

<sup>214</sup> Eric E. Phillips to Mr. M. J. Lewis, 16 July 1956. CPA CCO 3/5/63, Elizabethan Party, 1956-59.

<sup>215</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 298.

systematic its surveillance of right-wing organisations could be. Central Office formulated a 'Committee of Investigation',<sup>216</sup> which the General Director instructed with a remit to discover the history, methods and prospects of the MCA and PLDF.<sup>217</sup> This committee possessed specific terms of reference.<sup>218</sup> Central Office instructed the discovery of both organisations' activities, strength and geographical spread. In addition, Central Office requested details of policies and methods, chief personalities and the type of people appointed as officials. The request for a judgement of the potential impact on support for the Conservative and Liberal parties, and the probable reaction of the Press, showed that Central Office was concerned about possible adverse consequences. Finally, Central Office requested advice on how to improve the Conservative Party's intelligence on both organisations in the lead up to the next General Election, which showed that Central Office intended to continue to monitor both groups.

The MCA seemed a recurrence of irritated sectional interest akin to the earlier, similarly titled Middle Class Union.<sup>219</sup> Its formation was due to the actions of one person, Henry Price, Conservative MP for Lewisham West since 1950. In July 1954, the Labour Party dominated London County Council and sought to purchase Price's home compulsorily to build new council houses.<sup>220</sup> Price had a personal axe to grind. He also believed inefficient unions were behind such schemes.<sup>221</sup> In April 1956, Price announced the MCA's formation.<sup>222</sup> Price's announcement coincided with a period of acute middle-class irritation, which was unfortunate for the Conservative government. In March, the Conservatives had performed badly at the West Walthamstow by-election, which prompted Central Office's General Director Stephen Pierssene to warn Eden that the middle-class was deserting the Conservative government.<sup>223</sup> With

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<sup>216</sup> CPA CCO 120/3/1-6, Committee to examine the People's League for the Defence of Freedom and the Middle Class Alliance (Mr. Cohen's Committee), 1956-7.

<sup>217</sup> S. H. Pierssene to Percy Cohen, Chairman of the Investigating Committee, 29 November 1956. Filed under CPA CCO 3/5/88, League of Empire Loyalists – general, 1956-59.

<sup>218</sup> The following is taken from the 'Report of the Committee of Investigation in to the Peoples League for the Defence of Freedom and the Middle Class Alliance', November 1956, p. 1. CPA CCO 120/3/1-6, Committee to examine the People's League for the Defence of Freedom and the Middle Class Alliance (Mr. Cohen's Committee), 1956-7.

<sup>219</sup> See v.

<sup>220</sup> 'Compulsory order sought for MP's home', *The Times*, 23 July 1954.

<sup>221</sup> 'Parliament', *The Times*, 22 February 1956.

<sup>222</sup> 'Formation of 'Middle Class Alliance'', *The Times*, 24 April 1956.

<sup>223</sup> See 50.

portents for the June 1956 Tonbridge by-election so poor, the local Tory-owned *Kent and Sussex Courier* vied with the national press in criticising Eden's government.<sup>224</sup> The result at Tonbridge was a ninety percent drop in the Conservative vote whilst the Labour vote remained static. This suggested that Pierssene was correct, and that the middle class had refused to vote for the Conservative government. *The Times* printed letters that praised the Tonbridge voters for refusing to support a party that implemented socialist policies.<sup>225</sup> The middle-classes had had to pay higher interest rates on mortgages without the benefit yet of annual reviews of salary and clearly resented government policy. It is in this context Price launched the MCA and stated its objective was, 'to preserve the middle classes for the service of the nation'.<sup>226</sup>

Central Office's Committee of Investigation reported in November 1956 that the MCA had a membership of approximately 50,000.<sup>227</sup> This is not surprising as many Conservative MPs attended MCA meetings. Price claimed that over forty MPs supported the MCA.<sup>228</sup> However, Central Office rejected the idea that membership of the MCA should result in expulsion from the Conservative Party, and decided to limit counter-measures to discouraging financial or official support so as not to antagonise members of the MCA.<sup>229</sup> Central Office based its decision partly on a belief that the MCA was an amateurish organisation without 'a single person on its Executive Committee of any consequence'.<sup>230</sup> More charitably, the MCA was not the personal vehicle of an ambitious right-wing individual. The Conservative government had chosen Price to give the Loyal Address to the Queen's Speech in 1952.<sup>231</sup> This was traditionally the role of a rising backbencher, not a troublemaker. Moreover, the MCA possessed essentially the same objectives, if not policies, of the Conservative Party, and, as Ramsden argued, the MCA would decline as the economic situation

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<sup>224</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 296. See also CPA CCO 120/2/46 General Director's file, Tonbridge, Apr. – June 1956.

<sup>225</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 297.

<sup>226</sup> 'Middle Class Alliance', *The Times*, 25 April 1956.

<sup>227</sup> 'Report of the Committee of Investigation in to the Peoples League for the Defence of Freedom and the Middle Class Alliance', November 1956. CPA CCO 120/3/1-6.

<sup>228</sup> 'Report of the Committee of Investigation in to the Peoples League for the Defence of Freedom and the Middle Class Alliance', November 1956, 8. CPA CCO 120/3/1-6.

<sup>229</sup> 'Report of the Committee of Investigation in to the Peoples League for the Defence of Freedom and the Middle Class Alliance', November 1956, 8. CPA CCO 120/3/1-6. See also Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 298.

<sup>230</sup> 'Report of the Committee of Investigation in to the Peoples League for the Defence of Freedom and the Middle Class Alliance', November 1956, 8. CPA CCO 120/3/1-6.

<sup>231</sup> 'Dinner Parties for the Government', *The Times*, 31 October 1952.

improved.<sup>232</sup> These considerations informed the Committee of Investigations' recommendation of a benign response to the MCA, and its specific instructions that local Constituency Agents should befriend individual members of it in their area. Hence, Central Office's minimal refractory stance towards the MCA.

In some senses, the PLDF, founded in 1956, appeared to pose less of a threat from the right than the MCA. Its leaders included former Liberal Party parliamentary candidates and office holders, and only three Conservatives sat on the PLDF's eleven-man National Committee.<sup>233</sup> Central Office had instructed its Area Agents to ascertain as much as possible about the PLDF, which Ramsden argued revealed it had made little headway among leading local Conservatives.<sup>234</sup> However, the PLDF's existence troubled Central Office more than the MCA, despite nearly forty percent of the PLDF's Area Convenors being non-Conservatives.<sup>235</sup> The Committee of Investigation believed having Area Convenors signified that the PLDF's intended to 'create branches in all Parliamentary constituencies'.<sup>236</sup> This probably raised doubts in Central Office about the intentions of the PLDF's leadership. Either the PLDF represented an attempt to form a new party, or it sought to influence the Conservative Party by infiltrating it at local level using its Area Convenors. The PLDF had a regular newspaper and publishing company with which to disseminate its views in the shape of *The People's Guardian* and the Free Press Society respectively. Moreover, the PLDF leader's ambiguous denial that he intended to form a new party 'at the moment',<sup>237</sup> would not have assuaged Central Office doubts.

The PLDF's philosophy and methods also probably contributed to Central Office's wariness. It possessed a libertarian economic philosophy that nevertheless countenanced the use of extreme interventionism to weaken the power of organised

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<sup>232</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 298.

<sup>233</sup> 'Report of the Committee of Investigation in to the Peoples League for the Defence of Freedom and the Middle Class Alliance', November 1956. CPA CCO 120/3/1-6.

<sup>234</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 299.

<sup>235</sup> 'Report of the Committee of Investigation in to the Peoples League for the Defence of Freedom and the Middle Class Alliance', November 1956, 5. CPA CCO 120/3/1-6.

<sup>236</sup> 'Report of the Committee of Investigation in to the Peoples League for the Defence of Freedom and the Middle Class Alliance', November 1956, 5. CPA CCO 120/3/1-6.

<sup>237</sup> Speech by Edward Martell, Liverpool, 16 October 1956. Quoted in 'Report of the Committee of Investigation in to the Peoples League for the Defence of Freedom and the Middle Class Alliance', November 1956, 9. CPA CCO 120/3/1-6.

labour.<sup>238</sup> This viewpoint logically necessitated the creation of a strong, even authoritarian, government that was prepared to crush those rights that workers had gained as democracy expanded and despite decades of employers' reluctance. Therefore, the PLDF's objectives carried an implication of violence. As Ramsden stated, the PLDF was only 'Liberal' in the sense that it was like European 'Liberals' who operated on the right.<sup>239</sup> In this regard, the PLDF appeared to be an example of the 'ethnocratic perversions of liberalism' identified by Griffin as one of the 'ideological mutations' taken by the 'fascist species of the radical right' in a hostile post-war milieu.<sup>240</sup> The PLDF's leadership had definitely travelled towards an extreme-right destination and was currently 'manoeuvring at the extreme rightward end of the political spectrum'.<sup>241</sup> The presence of a former Mosleyite in the PLDF's leadership supported the suspicion that it was at least an extreme-right organisation, and possibly a nascent fascist one.<sup>242</sup>

Furthermore, Edward Martell, the leader of the PLDF, was potentially a greater threat than the MCA's Henry Price was. Martell initially attracted public attention by campaigning for a fund to celebrate Churchill's eightieth birthday in 1954, and subsequently gained prominence for strike breaking activity.<sup>243</sup> He acquired *The Recorder* in the mid-1950s and appealed for £10,000 to maintain production during the 1955 Press strike.<sup>244</sup> Martell secured double the amount asked for, which enable him to create the Free Press Society from which the PLDF sprang.<sup>245</sup> He clearly possessed the ambition, drive and vehicles to pursue whatever his ultimate objectives were. In the summer and autumn of 1956, Martell held PLDF meetings before large audiences in Liverpool and Edinburgh respectively. This arguably smacked of 1930s British Union of Fascist meetings. It suggested Martell was willing to make a populist appeal directly to the electorate. Martell's actions, and the perception they engendered

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<sup>238</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 299.

<sup>239</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 299.

<sup>240</sup> R. Griffin, 'Interregnum or Endgame? Radical Right Thought in the 'Post-fascist' Era', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 5, 2 (2000), 163-178.

<sup>241</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 299.

<sup>242</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 229. 'Report of the Committee of Investigation in to the Peoples League for the Defence of Freedom and the Middle Class Alliance', November 1956, 9. CPA CCO 120/3/1-6.

<sup>243</sup> Thayer, *Fringe*, 66.

<sup>244</sup> Thayer, *Fringe*, 67-77.

<sup>245</sup> Thayer, *Fringe*, 67-77. Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 299.

within Central Office of the PLDF, probably influenced Party Chairman Oliver Poole's decision to attack fringe organisations in July 1956. Poole singled out the PLDF.<sup>246</sup> If so, it backfired. Nearly eight hundred letters poured into Central Office from Conservative Party voters and members, the overwhelming majority of which supported Martell's activities.<sup>247</sup> The Committee of Investigation provided a synopsis of the letters. The synopsis revealed that the letter-writers were predominantly dissatisfied with the Conservative government's failure to curtail trade union power effectively and only limited comfort in that only twenty specifically stated that they had ceased subscribing to the Conservative Party.<sup>248</sup> Martell clearly appealed to a section within the Conservative Party. The Committee of Investigation warned that the Conservative Party should have nothing to do with the PLDF,<sup>249</sup> a decision based on its perception that the PLDF was an extreme-right wing organisation led by a dangerous populist. Thus, although Ramsden correctly argued that the PLDF blunted its own appeal when it patriotically supported the government over the Suez Crisis,<sup>250</sup> Central Office would continue to watch it, and Edward Martell, long after the main political casualty of Suez, Prime Minister Anthony Eden, resigned in January 1957.

Indeed Central Office would maintain surveillance of right-wing organisations and individuals, regardless of what prompted their actions, whether they were inside or outside the Conservative Party. It would do so, however, in a society that was different to that when the Conservative Party had formed the Voluntary Organisation Section within Central Office to investigate such organisations and individuals. On the positive side, rationing had disappeared and consumer choice increased. More people took annual holidays at resorts like Butlins. New fashions in clothing displaced wartime drabness. Electrical appliances had mushroomed, revolutionising work and home. Opportunity for social mobility had increased, notably referenced in the Kingsley Amis novel *Lucky Jim* (1954) that charted the career of Jim Dixon as he attempted to take advantage of the new possibilities available in a wealthier society.

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<sup>246</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 299-300.

<sup>247</sup> 'Report of the Committee of Investigation in to the Peoples League for the Defence of Freedom and the Middle Class Alliance', November 1956, 11. CPA CCO 120/3/1-6.

<sup>248</sup> 'Report of the Committee of Investigation in to the Peoples League for the Defence of Freedom and the Middle Class Alliance', November 1956, 11. CPA CCO 120/3/1-6. See also CCO 4/7/374, 'Public Opinion'.

<sup>249</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 299.

<sup>250</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 300-301. See also CPA CCO 4/7/374, 'Public Opinions – surveys, 1956-8.'

Yet there were negatives too. For, not everyone appreciated these changes. To some right-wing individuals, Jim Dixon epitomised much that was wrong about these changes, having attained a position in society to which he was simply unfit.<sup>251</sup> Additionally, a denuded and fading empire had replaced the image of the heroic imperial power victorious over Hitler. Suez had laid bare Britain's imperial impotence. Deference had declined as criticism of the still dominant social structure and establishment that many thought responsible for Suez increased. Mid-1950s Britain was, therefore, a time when the imperial verities of British world power no longer held sway. Literary representations of this changed Britain, such as John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* (1956), attracted for their authors in the summer of 1956 the sobriquet 'Angry Young Men'.<sup>252</sup> These novels reflected their authors' perceptions of the everyday realities that this transformed society posed for ordinary people. Many of these novels became films. They also presaged the realism of the 'New Wave' in literature and the 'kitchen sink dramas' of television, a cultural phenomenon that reflected a less deferential attitude which would become increasingly prominent during the premiership of Eden's successor.

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<sup>251</sup> Sandbrook, *Never*, 153-155.

<sup>252</sup> *Daily Express*, 26 July and 4 September 1956.

### **Chapter 3. Macmillan and Home: ‘Pink Socialism’ and ‘True-Blue’ Conservatism.**

Eden’s successor, Harold Macmillan, advised the Queen in January 1957 that his new government might not last six weeks. Macmillan said this only ‘half in earnest’,<sup>1</sup> which revealed his nervousness after the Suez fiasco. His first objective was to steady the Conservative government after Suez. He could not afford to lose many by-elections. Therefore, Macmillan maintained his predecessors’ cautious economic policies and avoided confrontation with organised labour. The economy continued to grow. After three losses in early 1958, the Conservative Party did not lose any more seats. Macmillan appeared a languid continuity with previous Conservative leaders. However, Macmillan was more progressive than either Churchill or Eden. He gave some indications of where his sympathies lay from the beginning of his premiership. In public, he supported progressives. In Cabinet, Macmillan preferred government spending to tackling inflation, and favoured accelerating decolonization. After Macmillan secured an increased majority at the 1959 General Election, these progressive views came to the fore. Domestically, this meant a turn leftwards. Macmillan introduced policies that provided a larger role for the state, which Ramsden described as ‘a shift to a neo-corporatist doctrine of indicative planning’.<sup>2</sup> In imperial affairs, Macmillan made his views clear in a dramatic speech that warned the South African government to accept the inevitability of decolonization.

Macmillan’s policies had continuities with previous Conservative governments. State interventionism occurred in the Conservative-dominated National Governments of the interwar years, and arguably harked back to earlier Tory paternalism. Decolonization was underway from the later 1940s and continued under Churchill and Eden. However, the scope and extent of Macmillan’s policies suggested that he was more left wing than any previous Conservative leader. This was how many increasingly disgruntled Conservatives viewed matters. Economic liberals proceeded to attack Macmillan’s government from the right. Conservative governments had effectively

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<sup>1</sup> H. Macmillan, *Autobiography: Riding the storm, 1956-1959*, Macmillan, London (1971), 182-185.

<sup>2</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 7.

marginalised such groups before the 1959 General Election by working with some, such as Aims of Industry and Drake's Drum, and by opposing others such as the People's League for the Defence of Freedom. Now, the PLDF returned and coalesced with others into a sizeable pressure group. Existing 'die-hard' imperialist groups such as the League of Empire Loyalists maintained their attack on a 'treacherous' Conservative leadership. New groups emerged. Often, these groups opposed decolonization in openly racist terms. A group even formed within the Conservative Party containing all of these attacks from the right. This group, the Monday Club, worryingly appeared to include the issue of skin colour amongst its concerns.

Initially, there was little detectable change in the Conservative Party's relationship with the extreme right under Macmillan's leadership. Central Office continued to investigate extreme-right groups, and its agents provided intelligence. Yet, there was a change. Central Office took more vigorous action against the extreme right than hitherto. It interviewed leaders of extreme right groups, and attempted to identify Conservative members that were involved in them and pressurised them to desist. Central Office acted proactively when the extreme right contested by-elections, inferring that these groups had links with fascism and devising strategies that limited their chances of success. Central Office was even prepared to extend such charges to the PLDF, a group whose 'extremism' was of the economic kind, not racial. Central Office's actions are unsurprising in the circumstances in which Macmillan succeeded. However, these were not isolated incidents. Central Office watched economically right-wing groups particularly closely. It defended the party's stewards when they physically attacked extreme-right protesters. Central Office even rebuffed the Conservative Party's own extreme right when it asked for assistance, whilst at the same time assisting the party's progressive groups. Nor was action against the extreme right limited to Central Office. Macmillan's Government marginalised that part of the extreme right that was concerned about immigration by enacting legislation that appealed to their voters without ever conceding to their demands fully.

The result was that the extreme right could do little to affect the Conservative Party's electoral fortunes during Macmillan's leadership. Macmillan secured the Conservative Party's third successive electoral victory in 1959. In July 1957, Macmillan had commented, 'indeed let us be frank about it; most of our people have



never had it so good'.<sup>3</sup> The media subsequently paraphrased this into, 'You've never had it so good', which summed up the Macmillan government's appeal. The electorate was like the characters in John Braine's *Room at the Top* (1957) and Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958), contemporary 'New Wave' fiction produced after Macmillan's accession and subsequently turned into films,<sup>4</sup> in that they had indeed never had it so good. The Conservative Party focused the electorate's mind on improved living conditions with its election slogan, 'Life's better under the Conservatives.' The Conservatives increased their vote for the third successive General Election, the first time since the mid-nineteenth century that a governing party achieved this, and secured a majority of over one hundred. Macmillan was now 'Supermac', the unflappable leader.<sup>5</sup> However, this electoral success was misleading. It obscured an increasingly divided Conservative Party. Moreover, it also obscured the extreme right becoming a much more vociferous, organised and potentially dangerous entity than it had since the Second World War. This was because by following progressive policies, Macmillan's government opened up political space for the extreme right. This was especially so in areas such as decolonisation, immigration, the economy and trade unions, and less so over Europe, the USA and defence. Consequently, the extreme right was not defeated during Macmillan's leadership of the Conservative Party, but an increasingly prominent phenomenon in British politics.

### *The Conservative Party's Left-Wing Leader*

Macmillan was originally seen as the right wing candidate in the battle to succeed Eden, but was in reality according to Gilmour, 'probably slightly to the left of Butler' in a contest with no obvious right-wing candidate.<sup>6</sup> Macmillan openly supported the Bow Group as Prime Minister and quickly made his 'progressive' sympathies apparent. In July 1957, the Bow Group invited Macmillan to the launch of its new

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<sup>3</sup> H. Macmillan addressing audience at Bedford, 20 July 1957.

<sup>4</sup> *Room at the Top* was released in cinemas in January 1959 and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* in October 1960. In both films, the main characters live their lives in a manner, and with a freedom, not available to their parents' generations.

<sup>5</sup> 'Vicky' (pseud.), 'Introducing Super-Mac', *Evening Standard*, 6 November 1958. This was a pre-election caricature intended to mock Macmillan, but backfired.

<sup>6</sup> Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever*, 129.

periodical *Crossbow*. Although Macmillan had substantial engagements, his Secretary, who believed that Macmillan 'may feel that the Bow Group is so worthy of support that he should come up especially in order to help them',<sup>7</sup> sought advice from Lord Poole at Central Office. Poole advised 'that if Mr. Macmillan could manage to go to their meeting it would be a very good thing',<sup>8</sup> and thus revealed Central Office's approval of the Bow Group. On 1 October 1957, Macmillan publicly launched *Crossbow*.<sup>9</sup> Central Office officials also attended.<sup>10</sup> This would have irritated right-wing Conservatives and disillusioned those who viewed Macmillan as Eden's right-wing successor. However, irritation and disillusionment would have been far greater if the right wing knew just how extensively Central Office assisted the Bow Group. In August 1958, Earl Woolton sought Central Office advice about a Bow Group invitation to become Patron of its appeal fund.<sup>11</sup> Woolton clearly understood Central Office's intelligence gathering role. Lord Poole responded that although he thought groups of this kind should stand on their own feet and remain independent from Central Office, and had therefore always refused to give any assistance from Conservative Party funds, the Bow Group nevertheless did valuable work for the party and therefore advised Woolton becoming its patron.<sup>12</sup> Poole's comments reflect the standard Central Office position that disclaimed any association with other organisations. Central Office stuck rigidly to this position. For example, when the Secretary of *Crossbow* sought confirmation of the way in which Central Office would be promoting it, Deputy Chairman Sir Toby Low advised of need to include wording approved by Central Office that pointed to the separate identities of both parties.<sup>13</sup> Legally, such claims may have been correct, but Central Office's publishing relationship with the Bow Group, limited the reality of this disclaimer.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, Central Office was also complicit on at least one occasion in securing funds for the Bow Group. It was on Low's advice that the Bow Group's Chairman sought funding

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<sup>7</sup> Philip du Zulueta to Miss F. Yonge, 9 July 1957. CPA CCO 3/5/38, Bow Group, 1956-59.

<sup>8</sup> F. Yonge to P. du Zulueta Esq., 12 July 1957. CPA CCO 3/5/38, Bow Group, 1956-59.

<sup>9</sup> James Lemkin, 'CROSSBOW – A NEW POLITICAL QUARTERLY', 23 September 1957. CPA CCO 3/5/38, Bow Group, 1956-59.

<sup>10</sup> G. Howe to Lord Hailsham, 20 September 1957. CPA CCO 3/5/38, Bow Group, 1956-59.

<sup>11</sup> The Earl of Woolton to the Rt. Hon. Lord Poole, 25 August 1957. CPA CCO 3/5/38, Bow Group, 1956-59.

<sup>12</sup> Oliver Poole to the Earl of Woolton, 29 August 1958. CPA CCO 3/5/38, Bow Group, 1956-59.

<sup>13</sup> Geoffrey R. Fox to the Rt. Hon. Sir Toby Low, 6 May 1960, and Sir Toby Low to Geoffrey R. Fox Esq., 11 May 1960. CPA CCO 3/6/38, Bow Group, 1960-65.

<sup>14</sup> See 49.

from the United Industrialists Association (UIA).<sup>15</sup> Barr and Davies argued that the UIA and its later guise as the British United Industrialists supported, amongst others, AIMS, the Progress Trust, Central Office and the wider Conservative Party.<sup>16</sup> Davies also claimed that the Conservative Party set up the British United Industrialists as one of ‘a series of “cut out” organisations which laundered funds through seemingly neutral sources’.<sup>17</sup> If correct, and there is nothing to suggest the contrary, then Central Office’s disclaimer regarding its connections with the Bow Group is even more tendentious.

Central Office clearly felt positively towards the Bow Group. Many invitations to attend Bow Group functions are included within its files, as is evidence of collusion with the Bow Group. Collusion is particularly evident regarding the Bow Group’s areas of investigation. Murphy believed that Macmillan’s Government might even have used the Bow Group as an instrument of policy over decolonization.<sup>18</sup> Ian Macleod’s identification of the Bow Group as an organisation from where the Conservative leadership could fly ‘useful kites’ regarding the Commonwealth and Colonies supported Murphy’s claim.<sup>19</sup> So too did the presence within Central Office files of a Bow Group Memorandum that supported government policy and was timed to coincide with the release of the critical Devlin Commission Report on events in the Central African Republic.<sup>20</sup> Some Conservatives did voice their opposition to the group. T. P. Tierney, an active member since 1945, responded to the Bow Group’s advocacy of comprehensive education in 1957 and threatened to leave the party if it adopted the policies of group whose only method of combating socialism was ‘by absorbing large doses of socialism into official Conservative policy’.<sup>21</sup> Although the party’s relationship with the Bow Group was obscure, some Conservatives raised their suspicions about it. Major Becket, Chairman of the North Dorset Conservative

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<sup>15</sup> Tom Hooson to J. B. Hobbs of the United Industrialists Association, 24 October 1960. CPA CCO 3/6/38, Bow Group, 1960-65 (Aldington’s inserted file).

<sup>16</sup> J. Barr, *The Bow Group: A History*, Politicos, London (2001), 24-46. Davies, *Nation*, 179-184.

<sup>17</sup> Davies, *Nation*, 180.

<sup>18</sup> P. Murphy, *Decolonization*, 216ff.

<sup>19</sup> CPA CRD 2/53/29, Future Policy correspondence and notes; letters to R. A. Butler, Feb. – Nov. 1958, 24 February 1958, 3. Macleod identified the One Nation Group as another avenue for this.

<sup>20</sup> *Central Africa: The Challenge of 1960*, July 1959. CPA CCO 3/5/38, Bow Group, 1956-59.

<sup>21</sup> T. P. Tierney to Lord Hailsham, 16 December 1957. CPA CCO 3/5/38, Bow Group, 1956-59, 3.

Association, identified Conservative Political Centre printing of Bow Group publications as probable evidence of a financial relationship, but instead of asking whether there was any organisational or financial relationship of any kind with the Bow Group, Beckett asked a series of easily evaded questions.<sup>22</sup> What was clear was that the new party leader actively supported the Bow Group, and enough evidence existed to suggest Central Office acted accordingly. Richard Rose noted that just after the 1959 General Election the non-party London *Observer* referred to the Bow Group as an example of 'that secret and unacknowledged alliance between the leadership and the younger progressives'.<sup>23</sup> This was important for one reason. Notwithstanding Ramsden's argument regarding the error of describing the Bow Group as left wing,<sup>24</sup> this is exactly how many contemporaries saw it. Richard Rose showed that even non-Conservative newspapers thought the Bow Group was 'a shorthand phrase for the Tory Left'.<sup>25</sup> This view was especially prevalent amongst right-wing Conservatives. T. E. Utey, for example, thought the Bow Group 'hardly to be distinguished from radical liberalism and sometimes even from socialism'.<sup>26</sup> Nor did the extreme right miss it. Edward Martell stated that, 'It is obvious that the Bow Group speak mainly for a clique of people who should really be in the Socialist party. And yet the Prime Minister, who has the final say in these matters allows them to continue their disastrous sway over the fortunes of the Conservative Party.'<sup>27</sup> These views led to an increasingly divided party when the Bow Group's right-wing opponents responded. Therefore, for right-wing Conservatives already disillusioned with the leadership's policies, Macmillan's accession had resulted in a turn leftwards.

The clearest sign of a leftwards turn came in a rush to decolonisation. In *Race and Power* (1956), the Bow Group advocated decolonization. Such a policy would unarguably anger the right wing of the party. Macmillan informed the Cabinet swiftly in January 1957 of his intentions to accelerate decolonisation,<sup>28</sup> perhaps realising that

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<sup>22</sup> Major E. F. Beckett to R. A. Butler, 7 January 1961. CPA CCO 3/6/38, Bow Group, 1960-65.

<sup>23</sup> R. Rose, 'The Bow Group's Role in British Politics', *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Dec., 1961), 865.

<sup>24</sup> Seldon and Ramsden, 'Ideas', 168-185.

<sup>25</sup> Rose, 'Bow', 865.

<sup>26</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 18 February 1960, quoted in J. Barr, *Bow*, 68.

<sup>27</sup> 'Helping Mr. Gaitskell', *The New Daily*, (nd, but probably 1962 as it refers to the Liberal revival seen at the Orpington by-election).

<sup>28</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 22.

Eden's resignation provided the opportunity to pursue a policy unpalatable to many in the Conservative Party. Abstentions and resignations during the Suez Affair suggested caution. However, Macmillan realised the difficulty of implementing faster decolonisation if divisions revealed by Suez and other imperial disentanglements were allowed to widen and had acted to isolate the probable head of any revolt. Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, Lord Salisbury, symbolised High Tory imperialism. He was the grandson of the Conservative Prime Minister responsible for associating the Conservative Party with the Empire. Salisbury was also a scion of the Cecil family, a family whose connections with the Conservative Party and Conservatism reached back over four hundred years. Moreover, Salisbury knew that Macmillan had minimised opposition in Eden's Cabinet to the military attempt to recover the Suez Canal, only to be one of the first critics when it failed, because he had been Macmillan's partner in ensuring the Cabinet's acquiescence.<sup>29</sup> Thus, in a deferential party, Lord Salisbury was especially dangerous to Macmillan. Macmillan therefore marginalised Salisbury by instructing the civil service to brief the press on Salisbury's limited importance to the Government.<sup>30</sup> He then orchestrated Salisbury's isolation in Cabinet over the less contentious issue of the release of the imprisoned Greek nationalist leader Archbishop Makarios in March 1957, knowing that Nasser would soon reopen the nationalised Suez Canal.<sup>31</sup> Nasser reopened the Canal the following month. Macmillan had succeeded in putting distance between his government and Eden's over the Suez embarrassment, at the cost of Salisbury's resignation as Lord President of the Council. In that same year, Ghana and Malaya gained independence. Sandbrook argued that literary representations, such as Anthony Burgess' 'Malayan Trilogy' (1956-9), depicted not only a deflated and worn down imperial ideal, but mother country too.<sup>32</sup> Such a view was unacceptable to many on the right. Inflaming this situation, after the October 1959 General Election with an increased majority and a personal mandate, was a less circumspect Macmillan. Six days after the General Election, Macmillan replaced the right-wing Colonial Secretary, Alan Lennox-Boyd, with the more liberal Iain Macleod. Just prior to departing on a month-long tour of

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<sup>29</sup> Harold Evans, *Downing Street diary: the Macmillan years 1957-1963*, Hodder and Stoughton, London (1981), entries for 24 & 28 August 1956.

<sup>30</sup> S. J. Ball, 'Banquo's Ghost: Lord Salisbury, Harold Macmillan, and the High Politics of Decolonization, 1957-1963', *Twentieth Century British History*, 16, 1 (2005), 77.

<sup>31</sup> Ball, 'Salisbury', 77-81.

<sup>32</sup> Sandbrook, *Never*, 301.

African colonies early in 1960, the Bow Group released *Africa – New Year 1960*, calling for Kenyan independence.<sup>33</sup> On 3 February 1960, Macmillan addressed the Parliament of South Africa and left no doubt about his intentions when he proclaimed that, ‘The wind of change is blowing through this continent. Whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact.’ These comments signalled that Macmillan had decided to abdicate Britain’s imperial role in Africa. Historians have debated the reasons behind it ever since.<sup>34</sup> Right-wing reaction to it, both outside and within the Conservative Party, hardened immediately.

Macmillan had also signalled that a liberal attitude would similarly prevail in the Home Office when he moved Chancellor R. A. Butler to the Home Office in the January 1957 reshuffle. Thus, it is unlikely that right-wing individuals who demanded restrictions on immigration were hopeful of success. Although all citizens of the Empire technically had a right to reside in Britain, it was not until post-war decolonisation began that immigration became a potentially serious issue. The Churchill and Eden governments unwisely ignored it. D. W. Dean showed that a combination of not wanting to antagonise the Commonwealth, the desire to present an image of enlightened Conservatism, limited experience of domestic issues, and Suez meant that these governments left these concerns over immigration to fester.<sup>35</sup> The problem of such a stance is that it created a vacuum that the extreme right exploited. Tensions erupted a year after Macmillan became Prime Minister. Two weeks of race riots in Nottingham in 1958 foreshadowed more notorious rioting in Notting Hill in August. Oswald Mosley stepped into the trouble. Mosley utilised the propensity of ‘Teddy Boys’, youths who supported the new cultural phenomenon of American ‘rock and roll’ who were identified with violence and racism from the start,<sup>36</sup> to form gangs and fan racial hatred against coloured immigrants. Conservative MPs raised the issue at the October party conference. Sir Cyril Osborne’s motion, which called for entry controls, gained the delegates’ support.<sup>37</sup> The government limited its response to

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<sup>33</sup> Barr, *Bow*, 57-58.

<sup>34</sup> R. Ovendale, ‘Macmillan and the Wind of Change in Africa, 1957-1960’, *The Historical Journal*, 38, 2 (Jun., 1995), 455-477. See also Murphy, *Decolonization*, passim.

<sup>35</sup> D. W. Dean, ‘Conservative Governments and the Restriction of Commonwealth Immigration in the 1950s: The Problem of Constraint’, *The Historical Journal*, 35, 1 (March 1972), 171-194.

<sup>36</sup> Sandbrook, *Never*, 335-447.

<sup>37</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 43.

negotiating with Commonwealth countries.<sup>38</sup> The clear intent was to buy time. Mosley's failure to secure election at Kensington North in the 1959 General Election, despite being confident of success in the constituency containing the worst of the rioting,<sup>39</sup> indicated that the Government was correct not to act precipitately.

However, the problem of incorporating immigration policy in the 1959 General Election manifesto, plus local Conservative Associations' hostility and activists' reports that voters persistently raised the issue, meant that Macmillan's government lost the option of doing nothing about immigration thereafter.<sup>40</sup> The actions of its own MPs and councillors after the 1959 General Election reflected the government's limited room for manoeuvre. Newly elected Birmingham MPs formed a committee to secure controls on immigration, as did local Conservatives in Brixton and Birmingham. The Conservatives bucked the national trend by taking control of Smethwick council on a platform that called for immigration restrictions.<sup>41</sup> Demands for action, which became increasingly prominent at party conference as immigration and unemployment both increased, resulted in the Commonwealth Immigration Bill of 1961. However, Party concerns were not the only considerations Butler faced as he drafted this government response. Dean argued that immigration restrictions, especially if seen to be racist, would limit Britain's moral authority as leader of the Commonwealth.<sup>42</sup> He added that the creation in 1958 of the Institute for Race Relations, based on a belief in the international importance of race relations, ensured that race related legislation had an international perspective, which meant that Butler could not consider immigration a purely domestic issue.<sup>43</sup> Thus, Dean concluded that immigration problems gave Butler an opportunity to present 'a multi-racial Commonwealth as a new enlightened force in the world'.<sup>44</sup> Butler chose to present this enlightened view of Conservatism. The Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 did not preclude further increases in the rate, or plan effectively for the consequences of immigration. However, by doing so it still left some political space on the right for the dissatisfied to exploit.

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<sup>38</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 43.

<sup>39</sup> Thurlow, *Fascism*, 217.

<sup>40</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 43-44.

<sup>41</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 150-151.

<sup>42</sup> Dean, 'Immigration', 173.

<sup>43</sup> Dean, 'Immigration', 174.

<sup>44</sup> Dean, 'Immigration', 174.

Britain had a confused relationship with Europe and the USA that was inherently associated with lost Empire, as was defence issues. Having lost an Empire and impoverished itself in the process, Britain sought a new paradigm that allowed it a leading role whilst maintaining its defensive integrity. Large defence spending was impossible in peacetime, especially if Conservative governments were to honour commitments to the Welfare State. The Commonwealth, with its emerging nationalisms, would not necessarily prove a vehicle for this new role, which left Europe or the USA as the only viable alternatives. Both presented problems. Britain was ambivalent to Europe from the time of Monnet's ECSC proposal.<sup>45</sup> Membership of the European movement would also have an impact on the Conservative Party. The National Farmers Union (NFU), bitterly opposed to the EEC's agricultural policies, influenced a substantial number of Conservative MPs on this matter. Iain Gilmour was Conservative MP for Central Norfolk from 1964, and thought that the NFU influenced approximately eighty Conservative MPs, with up to fifty of them actively opposing entry into the Common Market.<sup>46</sup> Central Office officials watched local Conservative Associations for signs of anti-Common Market revolt.<sup>47</sup> Monitoring external Conservative organisations also revealed worrying beliefs, including the Common Market as another 'Popish Plot' by Catholic Europe to undermine Protestant England.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, entry risked revealing party divisions. Procrastination was also risky. Unfavourable economic comparison could result in the electorate returning a Labour government. This could magnify Conservative Party divisions because many Conservative MPs influenced by the NFU represented rural constituencies with large majorities, and therefore among the last to be removed in a Labour election victory, leaving them disproportionately influencing the parliamentary party. Small wonder, then, that Macmillan later cited fears of splitting the Conservative Party for initially vacillating over Europe.<sup>49</sup> These fears combined with Conservative leaders' belief in a special relationship with the USA,<sup>50</sup> and the electorate's view of Europe as a troublesome continent that had unnecessarily embroiled Britain in two vast

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<sup>45</sup> See 33.

<sup>46</sup> Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever*, 161.

<sup>47</sup> Davies, *Nation*, 365.

<sup>48</sup> Davies, *Nation*, 365.

<sup>49</sup> H. Macmillan, *At the end of the day, 1961-1963*, Macmillan, London (1973), 31.

<sup>50</sup> Davies, *Nation*, 365.

conflicts,<sup>51</sup> resulted in the government looking to the USA as the alternative focus to Empire.

However, positive attitudes towards the USA were not universal within the Conservative Party. Many Conservatives had voted against American financial aid after 1945 because they understood the negative cost to empire of the USA's wartime assistance.<sup>52</sup> The USA's initial adoption of an isolationist nuclear policy had forced Britain to seek an independent nuclear deterrent in economically straitened circumstances.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, the USA wanted Britain to join and lead Europe as it was hostile to the British Empire and thought that the Commonwealth evinced a continued 'colonial mindset'.<sup>54</sup> American hostility towards British military intervention in Suez had amply demonstrated this belief. In 1962, former USA Secretary of State Dean Acheson rubbed salt into British imperialists' wounds when he claimed that, 'Britain has lost an empire and has not yet found a role'.<sup>55</sup> However, Macmillan desired to maintain the 'special relationship' and sought the USA's approval prior to applying for membership of the Common Market. This indicated that Britain was unwilling to put Europe before its relationship with the USA, which, Gilmour believed resulted in de Gaulle applying France's veto in 1963.<sup>56</sup> To many Conservatives, the USA must have seemed at best a conditional, and at worst an untrustworthy ally. Nowhere was this more evident or more troubling for Macmillan than over a failed defence policy in the autumn of 1962. On 19 December 1962, the USA unilaterally jettisoned the air-launched ballistic missile Skybolt. This left Britain with no credible nuclear deterrent. Britain seemed reliant on an ally with its own national interests at heart, not those of the fading British Empire. The Nassau Agreement of December 1962, wherein Britain leased its submarine base at Holy Loch to the USA in return for nuclear-armed Polaris missiles, amplified an unequal relationship that seemed determined to weaken the remaining British Empire.

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<sup>51</sup> Weight, *Patriots*, London (2002), 101.

<sup>52</sup> Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever*, 25-26.

<sup>53</sup> Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever*, 40.

<sup>54</sup> Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever*, 73.

<sup>55</sup> Hennessey, *So Good*, 274.

<sup>56</sup> Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever*, 160 & 214.

Unfortunately, for Macmillan, his political troubles occurred at a time when British deference was clearly breaking down. The 'Angry Young Men' movement in literature and film,<sup>57</sup> and satire on television and radio, exemplified this change. *Beyond the Fringe* satirised the impotent government that the Nassau Agreement had revealed. It attacked the Conservative establishment mercilessly, and to a vastly increased audience than its precursor, *The Goon Show*, evidenced by the issuing of over 10 million television licences by 1960.<sup>58</sup> Peter Cook portrayed the hapless Prime Minister reflecting on the Nassau Agreement. Cook showed Macmillan saying in reference to his conversations with President Kennedy: 'We talked of many things, including Great Britain's position in the world as some kind of honest broker. I agreed with him when he said no nation could be more honest, and he agreed with me when I chaffed him and said no nation could be broker.'<sup>59</sup> The Conservative government's apparent incompetence in economic matters and geo-politics seemingly confirmed right-wing fears that it was ready to ditch the Empire and compromise British sovereignty. Painfully for the government, liberal comedians lampooned it. Europe, the USA and defence were, unsurprisingly therefore, issues that right-wing critics of the Conservative government frequently raised.

The government's economic policies and attitudes towards trade unions attracted right-wing attacks even more consistently. Right-wing criticisms continued from attacks during Churchill and Eden's administrations, but became more vociferous and voiced suspicious of Macmillan's true political persuasion.<sup>60</sup> Macmillan's government tried to avoid industrial unrest in the immediate aftermath of Suez, probably fearful of a collapse in sterling.<sup>61</sup> It climbed down swiftly after encouraging employers' resistance, which resulted in more strikes in 1957 than for over thirty years and angered Conservatives in the process.<sup>62</sup> Macmillan's failure to support Chancellor Thorneycroft's demands for expenditure cuts resulted in the resignation of the whole

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<sup>57</sup> See 92.

<sup>58</sup> Sandbrook, *Never*, 384.

<sup>59</sup> Sandbrook, *Never*, 574.

<sup>60</sup> Hennessey recounts Attlee's belief that Macmillan was moving to join the Labour Party and, but for the war, would have been Labour's next prime minister. It is unlikely that such a view was exclusive to Attlee. Hennessey, *So Good*, 557.

<sup>61</sup> Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever*, 135. See also Ramsden, *Appetite*, 364.

<sup>62</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 29-30. Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever*, 135. See also N. Fisher, *Iain Macleod*, Deutsch, London (1973), 120 and R. Shepherd, *Iain Macleod*, Hutchinson, London (1994), 122.

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Treasury frontbench on 6 January 1958 and exposed economic division within the party leadership. Ramsden identified these resignations as the moment when ‘Macmillanite Conservatism chose the primrose path of inflation rather than the narrow gate that led to sound money’.<sup>63</sup> Many party activists made known their support for Thorneycroft.<sup>64</sup> The Conservatives lost three successive by-elections at Rochdale in February, and Glasgow Kelvinside and Torrington in March. The fact that Labour’s vote held or dipped proportionately to a reduced turnout highlighted the plummet in Conservative votes as irritated Conservatives abstained. However, the defeat in summer 1958 of a poorly executed London Bus Strike raised the Government’s popularity. Additionally, the inflationary impact of the government’s economic policies had yet to materialise. Consequently, five by-elections on 12 June 1958 produced no shocks, and heralded a reversal of fortunes that Macmillan carried through to the 1959 General Election. However, this was a temporary respite.

A doubling of strikes in the decade to 1960, 90% of them unofficial, provided satirists’ with material of a unionised Britain. Socially realistic ‘British New Wave’ films flourished between the late 1950s and 1964 and focused predominantly on the realities of living in a changing society for the working class, lives in which strikes loomed large. Thus strikes, in particular, were a worrying undertone to General Election victory. Thereafter, the ‘inflationary seed-corn’ that Clark identified in Macmillan’s first term germinated,<sup>65</sup> which led to price increases and fears of more to come. Macmillan was unwilling to contemplate using unemployment as a fiscal measure; a position based on pre-war experiences of unemployment as MP for Stockton-on-Tees and revealed in his book *The Middle Way*. Instead, Macmillan adopted the ‘New Approach’ in 1961. It aimed to forge harmony between government, industry and the unions, and was essentially the reinforcement of state intervention, planning and controls that was anathema to the right. In 1962, the formation of the National Economic Development Council and National Incomes Commission, which apparently institutionalised trade unions’ role in the economy, symbolised Macmillan’s corporatist approach. This grated with many in the party.

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<sup>63</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 33.

<sup>64</sup> CPA CCO 3/5/88, League of Empire Loyalists – general, 1956-9, and CCO 20/8/2, Correspondence with the Party Leader, Macmillan, Jan. – Dec. 1957, and 20/8/3, Correspondence with the Party Leader, Macmillan, Jan. – Dec. 1958.

<sup>65</sup> Clark, *Tories*, 382.

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Party activists passed resolutions at local and national level and revealed an increasingly hard-line approach to unions after the 1959 election.<sup>66</sup> An Area Chairman reported defeatism amongst party workers and identified the government's taxation and trade union policies as the culprit.<sup>67</sup> Many questioned whether Macmillan or the party leadership was truly Conservative by arguing that there was little difference between the government and opposition, especially in areas such as the Welfare State.<sup>68</sup> Macmillan's search for economic consensus had paradoxically divided the Conservative Party in a similar manner as his attempts to deal with decolonisation, immigration, relations with Europe and the USA, and defence. It was against this background of a bifurcating party that Central Office contended with existing and new threats from the right, both outside and within the Conservative Party. These threats materialised extremely quickly after Macmillan became Prime Minister.

### *Outside Right.*

Macmillan faced a by-election barely one month into his premiership at Lewisham North. The Conservatives had won the constituency in 1955 on a 77% turnout. Labour's support at the by-election remained virtually unchanged on a still healthy 70% participation and secured victory. This was understandable in the immediate aftermath of Suez. Moreover, as three candidates stood at the by-election instead of the two in 1955, the Conservative's second place with a loss of over 4000, was hardly disastrous. However, the third candidate was not a Liberal, but Leslie Greene of the League of Empire Loyalists. She gained 1487 votes, which exceeded Labour's majority. Therefore, it is probable that the LEL had damaged the Conservative Party at the ballot box by attracting disgruntled right-wing Conservatives. This was arguably the first time that an extreme-right group had affected the Conservative Party in this manner after the Second World War. Central Office correspondence during the contest suggested, despite an initial air of nonchalance, that it realised the possible harm that the LEL could inflict in the by-election. This led to consideration of other counter-measures during the campaign. Revealed thereafter is continuing alienation

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<sup>66</sup> NUEC 7 April 1960, 7 September 1961. Reigate CA minutes 3 February 1961 and 16 February 1962.

<sup>67</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 157.

<sup>68</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 157. Area Correspondence file CCO 2/6/15, Wessex, July 1960 – Dec. 1964.

of Conservative members and supporters as the Conservative Party blocked the LEL. There was also an indication that the Conservative Party had replaced its tolerance of fascist groups before the Second World War with an attitude that was wholly negative.

Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith visited Central Office on 4 January 1957 and presented to the General Director, Sir Stephen Pierssene, some notes on the LEL should they contest the Lewisham North by-election. Dorman-Smith warned of the need to brief the Conservative candidate thoroughly, and described the LEL as a 'thoroughly reactionary semi-fascist organisation'.<sup>69</sup> He commented on the LEL's pre-war connections to Oswald Mosley and drew attention to anti-Semitic, anti-black, white supremacist views in its literature.<sup>70</sup> Pierssene believed that a response from the Conservative Party provided such opponents with sought-after publicity, and so advised that it was 'generally better to ignore freak candidates and not to attack them.'<sup>71</sup> However, he acknowledged Dorman-Smith's argument that the LEL may fight Lewisham North as it came so soon after Suez, and accepted his suggestion of a 'carefully worded and well-timed letter to the Times or the Telegraph, or indeed one of the Express newspapers'.<sup>72</sup> When Pierssene requested a Mr. Adamson and two other Central Officer officials considered this action and report back, he showed that Central Office was willing to increase its level of activity against an extreme-right wing organisation. By 17 January, Deputy Chairman Oliver Poole was sufficiently concerned to inform Macmillan of the possible harmful effect on the Party of losing the seat. Poole argued that the LEL's attraction of 'a certain amount of dissident middle class vote and some right wing extremists' complicated the issue.<sup>73</sup> Poole also advised that Henry Price, Conservative MP and leader of the Middle Class Alliance, had promised support for the Conservative candidate.<sup>74</sup> This information, together

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<sup>69</sup> Internal memo from S. H. Pierssene to Mr. Adamson, 'League of Empire Loyalists', 7 January 1957, attachment. CPA CCO 120/2/63, Lewisham North, Jan. – June 1957.

<sup>70</sup> Internal memo from S. H. Pierssene to Mr. Adamson, 'League of Empire Loyalists', 7 January 1957, attachment. CPA CCO 120/2/63, Lewisham North, Jan. – June 1957.

<sup>71</sup> Internal memo from S. H. Pierssene to Mr. Adamson, 'League of Empire Loyalists', 7 January 1957, attachment. CPA CCO 120/2/63, Lewisham North, Jan. – June 1957.

<sup>72</sup> Internal memo from S. H. Pierssene to Mr. Adamson, 'League of Empire Loyalists', 7 January 1957, attachment. CPA CCO 120/2/63, Lewisham North, Jan. – June 1957.

<sup>73</sup> Confidential letter from Oliver Poole to the Prime Minister, 'North Lewisham Bye-Election', 17 January 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/63, Lewisham North, Jan. – June 1957.

<sup>74</sup> Confidential letter from Oliver Poole to the Prime Minister, 'North Lewisham Bye-Election', 17 January 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/63, Lewisham North, Jan. – June 1957.

with details of reinforcements Poole had had drafted into the constituency, suggested that it was concern over the possible non-democratic actions of extremists within the LEL that concerned Central Office most rather than middle-class dissidents.<sup>75</sup>

The following day, 18 January, Mr. Adamson reported the results of his considerations to Pierssene, and agreed with Dorman-Smith's suggestion of placing a letter in the newspapers.<sup>76</sup> Adamson suggested that Dorman-Smith should attack the LEL's campaign as futile and likely to result in the Socialists winning.<sup>77</sup> However, when it came to the LEL's nature Adamson suggested a more circumspect stance. For, whilst Adamson advocated questions about the LEL's anti-Semitism, he nevertheless emphatically warned against mentioning Oswald Mosley and fascism.<sup>78</sup> His reasoning provided fascinating insight into how perception of 'fascism' and an organisation's nature now shaped Central Office's position. Adamson initially justified this stance by describing Mosley as inconsequential, but also suggested that the term 'fascism' had altered: 'The man does not count today and the term has a changed connotation.'<sup>79</sup> Unfortunately, Adamson did not elaborate. Genocide had indelibly imprinted fascism with anti-Semitism in public perception. The Conservative Party wanted to forget its pre-war connections with fascism. If Central Office highlighted the LEL's anti-Semitism but avoided accusing it of fascism, it could associate the LEL with Nazi brutality without raising potentially embarrassing questions for the Conservative candidate. This is why Adamson warned that mentioning Mosley and fascism only provided the LEL's leader, Chesterton, with the opportunity to counter-accuse that, 'there are Members of Parliament in the House who were nearer Mosley than he was and then goes on the attack against the Tories'.<sup>80</sup> Therefore, it would seem that Central Office had quickly learned that earlier attempts

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<sup>75</sup> Confidential letter from Oliver Poole to the Prime Minister, 'North Lewisham Bye-Election', 17 January 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/63, Lewisham North, Jan. – June 1957.

<sup>76</sup> E. A. Adamson to S. H. Pierssene, 'League of Empire Loyalists', 18 January 1957, 1. CPA CCO 120/2/63, Lewisham North, Jan. – June 1957.

<sup>77</sup> E. A. Adamson to S. H. Pierssene, 'League of Empire Loyalists', 18 January 1957, 1. CPA CCO 120/2/63, Lewisham North, Jan. – June 1957.

<sup>78</sup> E. A. Adamson to S. H. Pierssene, 'League of Empire Loyalists', 18 January 1957, 1. CPA CCO 120/2/63, Lewisham North, Jan. – June 1957.

<sup>79</sup> E. A. Adamson to S. H. Pierssene, 'League of Empire Loyalists', 18 January 1957, 1. CPA CCO 120/2/63, Lewisham North, Jan. – June 1957.

<sup>80</sup> E. A. Adamson to S. H. Pierssene, 'League of Empire Loyalists', 18 January 1957, 1. CPA CCO 120/2/63, Lewisham North, Jan. – June 1957.

to describe the LEL as fascist rebounded against the Conservative Party,<sup>81</sup> and adopted instead a more subtle approach of smearing opponents whilst distancing the Conservative Party from any prior connections. It is in this context that we should see the *Daily Telegraph's* description on 28 January of Greene as a 'crackpot candidate'.<sup>82</sup>

By the end of January, one of the Central Office employees with whom Adamson had concocted this approach felt confident and advised Pierssene that the LEL was not making much headway.<sup>83</sup> However, two days after losing Lewisham North on 14 February, this official, Mr. Bagnall, reported to Pierssene the conclusions of a post-mortem meeting held at the local Conservative Association. Bagnall identified Labour's misrepresentation of the recent Rent Act as the main reason for loss, but thought that the LEL candidacy was the second cause.<sup>84</sup> He described this as an 'interesting new development', and highlighted the LEL's anti-American comments and posters as particularly important.<sup>85</sup> There was also a jolt for those who thought the LEL would attract votes equally from both main political parties. Bagnall reported that, 'Most of those present this morning were convinced that the Independent Candidate took most of her votes from us.'<sup>86</sup> Even more worryingly, 'It was even known that members of our own association in Lewisham stated that after Suez and the abortive action they were going to give Miss Greene a vote to show what they thought of the Tories.'<sup>87</sup> The report's comments made clear that whatever counter-measures Central Office took against the LEL, it was insufficient in the immediate post-Suez circumstances. However, Macmillan was intent on accelerating decolonisation and could not tolerate the existence of an organisation that exploited the vacuum of imperial disgruntlement on the right of the Conservative Party. Central Office's subsequent actions proved just how intolerable the existence of the LEL was

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<sup>81</sup> See 84.

<sup>82</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 28 January 1957.

<sup>83</sup> R. Bagnall to S. H. Pierssene, 'North Lewisham', 31 January 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/63, Lewisham North, Jan. – June 1957.

<sup>84</sup> R. Bagnall to S. H. Pierssene, 'Lewisham North Bye-Election', 15 February 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/63, Lewisham North, Jan. – June 1957.

<sup>85</sup> R. Bagnall to S. H. Pierssene, 'Lewisham North Bye-Election', 15 February 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/63, Lewisham North, Jan. – June 1957.

<sup>86</sup> R. Bagnall to S. H. Pierssene, 'Lewisham North Bye-Election', 15 February 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/63, Lewisham North, Jan. – June 1957.

<sup>87</sup> R. Bagnall to S. H. Pierssene, 'Lewisham North Bye-Election', 15 February 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/63, Lewisham North, Jan. – June 1957.

to the party leadership. They also show how Lewisham North proved a watershed in the actions it was prepared to sanction, endorse or acquiesce in, against the extreme right.

Publicity stunts remained the most obvious aspect of LEL activity during Macmillan's premiership. In March 1957, an LEL protester interrupted Macmillan's first major public speech.<sup>88</sup> At the October 1957 Party Conference John Bean tolled a bell for an empire that the Conservative Party had allegedly betrayed.<sup>89</sup> The LEL even managed to break into the BBC's programmes in 1958 and denounce the government's decision to integrate Britain's forces with NATO.<sup>90</sup> Meanwhile, the Conservative bureaucracy continued to gather intelligence on the LEL and report its impact on specific areas and local Conservative Associations. One report identified the Branch Chairman of the Cambridge Conservative and Unionist Association as an active member of the LEL.<sup>91</sup> An internal report highlighted Conservative Party connections with the LEL, which included LEL members Field Marshal Lord Ironside and Major-General Richard Hilton, the former an erstwhile President of the Conservative's Central Norfolk Area until 1954, the latter involved in the Young Conservatives.<sup>92</sup> One Area Agent noted the simultaneous nature of LEL protests in many Yorkshire constituencies on the morning of government proposals for Cyprus in 1958, which raised the possibility that this was a co-ordinated campaign fuelled by inside knowledge.<sup>93</sup> These are but a few examples. The Conservative Party and Central Office's reactions revealed an increasing preparedness to use tougher measures against the LEL. For example, the Area Agent responsible for the Cambridge and Unionist Association reported that party members had attempted to oust the Branch Chairman and members of his family for their sympathies towards the LEL.<sup>94</sup> The author of the internal report that identified Ironside and Hilton, although not wishing to commit firm instructions to

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<sup>88</sup> Bean, *Shades*, 104.

<sup>89</sup> Bean, *Shades*, 114-115.

<sup>90</sup> Thayer, *Fringe*, 59.

<sup>91</sup> Lewis G. Martell to Sir Stephen Pierssene, 3 April 1957. CPA CCO 3/5/88, League of Empire Loyalists – general, 1956-59.

<sup>92</sup> Internal memo to the Chairman, 'League of Empire Loyalists. Peoples League for the Defence of Freedom', 5 July 1957, 2. CPA CCO 3/5/88, League of Empire Loyalists – general, 1956-59.

<sup>93</sup> John Winning to the Chief Organisation Officer, 'League of Empire Loyalists', 30 June 1958. CPA CCO 3/5/88, League of Empire Loyalists – general, 1956-59.

<sup>94</sup> Lewis G. Martell to Sir Stephen Pierssene, 3 April 1957. CPA CCO 3/5/88, League of Empire Loyalists – general, 1956-59.

paper, made it clear that, 'Area Agents should be informed and asked to make the point known' that membership of the LEL was incompatible with Conservative Party membership.<sup>95</sup> Central Office demanded that Conservative organisations identified individuals sympathetic to the LEL.<sup>96</sup> However, Central Office's response to the LEL's stunts presented the best evidence of how far it was prepared to go to thwart this particular extreme-right organisation.

Mr. G. E. Higham of Stockton Heath, Warrington, encapsulated alienation from the Conservative Party and hostile reaction to its counter-measures against the LEL. He wrote to Oliver Poole at Central Office in June 1957. Higham identified himself as 'a lifelong Conservative, by birth, upbringing and inclination', and protested about the Conservative Party's treatment of LEL activists.<sup>97</sup> He highlighted manhandling and threats of violence and asked Poole how Conservatives could act in this manner towards individuals whose principal loyalty was to 'her Majesty, The Empire (or what is left of it), and the White British way of Life'.<sup>98</sup> Higham compared the actions Conservatives had meted out to LEL members to the leniency he claimed to have witnessed to 'Communist TRAITORS' at Conservative party meetings, and thus expressed his anger in similar manner to Clan Briton's Tomlinson.<sup>99</sup> He also stated that many others shared his views and warned Poole of the consequences for the Conservative Party unless it returned to 'the ordinary common decencies and Loyalties which people like me have been brought up to believe in'.<sup>100</sup> This letter was the first in a number between Higham and Central Office over more than twelve months. Poole's responded by implying that Higham was misguided due to ignorance. He set out the errors of the LEL's disruptive activity at Conservative events and

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<sup>95</sup> Internal memo to the Chairman, 'League of Empire Loyalists. Peoples League for the Defence of Freedom', 5 July 1957, 2. CPA CCO 3/5/88, League of Empire Loyalists – general, 1956-59.

<sup>96</sup> Barbara Brooke to Mr. Howard Davies of the Wales and Monmouth Branch of the Conservative Party, 5 November 1957. CPA CCO 3/5/88, League of Empire Loyalists – general, 1956-59.

<sup>97</sup> G. E. Higham to Major Oliver Poole, M.C., 1 June 1957. CPA CCO 3/5/88, League of Empire Loyalists – general, 1956-59.

<sup>98</sup> G. E. Higham to Major Oliver Poole, M.C., 1 June 1957. CPA CCO 3/5/88, League of Empire Loyalists – general, 1956-59.

<sup>99</sup> G. E. Higham to Major Oliver Poole, M.C., 1 June 1957. CPA CCO 3/5/88, League of Empire Loyalists – general, 1956-59. Also, see 40.

<sup>100</sup> G. E. Higham to Major Oliver Poole, M.C., 1 June 1957. CPA CCO 3/5/88, League of Empire Loyalists – general, 1956-59.

denied that Conservative stewards had been violent.<sup>101</sup> Higham comprehensively rebuffed Poole's interpretation and elaborated, which in the process expanded upon extreme-right characteristics evident in his initial letter. He reiterated disgust at the Conservative Party's treatment of LEL activists compared to their tolerance towards Communists. Higham claimed that officials at a Warrington Conservative Association meeting, at which he was present, granted permission to a 'Communist interloper' to question the platform and, thereafter, distribute copies of the *Daily Worker*.<sup>102</sup> Higham interpreted this as evidence that the party did not adhere to true Conservatism and was becoming soft on socialism. Whilst he admitted that he did 'not altogether agree' with the LEL's actions, he saw no other way people could 'protest against the behaviour of a so-called Conservative Government which is perpetually letting the country down and behaving in the Liberal-Socialist-Fabian manner which was expected of its predecessors'.<sup>103</sup> When Higham complained about the futility of writing to MPs, Ministers, newspapers and even the BBC, and of the consequent lack of an alternative, Higham revealed his frustration with contemporary democracy.<sup>104</sup> Thus, Higham implied that only by making non-parliamentary protests like the LEL could he and likeminded individuals achieve their objectives.<sup>105</sup> Higham showed just how far to the right of the Conservative government he had become when he demanded redress for injuries that the Conservative Party had perpetrated or acquiesced. These grievances included, 'The Liquidation of the Empire under the supervision and influence of the U.S.A.', 'The appalling influx of Coloured people into the country', 'The perpetual subservience to the U.S.A. in all matters', 'The European Free Market', and 'Taxation'.<sup>106</sup> Higham's correspondence was a futile exercise. Central Office stuck to Poole's position of blaming the LEL and denying Conservative violence. Nevertheless, Higham was another example of how the

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<sup>101</sup> Oliver Poole to G. E. Higham Esq., 6 June 1957. CPA CCO 3/5/88, League of Empire Loyalists – general, 1956-59.

<sup>102</sup> G. E. Higham to Oliver Poole, CBE, TD, 'Miss Green & The Empire Loyalists', 8 June 1957, 1. CPA CCO 3/5/88, League of Empire Loyalists – general, 1956-59.

<sup>103</sup> G. E. Higham to Oliver Poole, CBE, TD, 'Miss Green & The Empire Loyalists', 8 June 1957, 1. CPA CCO 3/5/88, League of Empire Loyalists – general, 1956-59.

<sup>104</sup> G. E. Higham to Oliver Poole, CBE, TD, 'Miss Green & The Empire Loyalists', 8 June 1957, 1. CPA CCO 3/5/88, League of Empire Loyalists – general, 1956-59.

<sup>105</sup> G. E. Higham to Oliver Poole, CBE, TD, 'Miss Green & The Empire Loyalists', 8 June 1957, 2. CPA CCO 3/5/88, League of Empire Loyalists – general, 1956-59.

<sup>106</sup> G. E. Higham to Oliver Poole, CBE, TD, 'Miss Green & The Empire Loyalists', 8 June 1957, 2. CPA CCO 3/5/88, League of Empire Loyalists – general, 1956-59.

Conservative parliamentary Party isolated an extreme-right supporter sufficiently enough to consider leaving the Conservative Party.

Despite Poole's denials Conservative violence occurred. Many witnessed it. It reached its apogee at the 1958 Blackpool Conservative Party Conference where an LEL interruption to proceedings resulted in assaults on the individuals concerned. Centre-Right publications were outraged. Bernard Levin, writing under the pseudonym 'Taper' in the *Spectator*, condemned the Conservatives for the punching and kicking of a defenceless LEL protester whilst on the floor. There was, Levin charged, only one conclusion: 'There lies perilously close to the surface in some of the members of the Tory Party a layer of brutal, Fascist thuggery that breaks through at the sign of resolute disagreement.'<sup>107</sup> Levin's comments were in more than one sense ironic. Leaving aside Chesterton's charge of fascism within the Conservative Party,<sup>108</sup> Levin had touched on how far Central Office was prepared to go now in smothering the Conservative Party's association with any organisation that rekindled its erstwhile association with fascism. The legal consequences of these events support this interpretation. Media coverage of the violence was extensive. The LEL identified Conservative member George Finlay as the chief culprit and sued for assault. The judge acquitted Finlay and awarded him costs,<sup>109</sup> a decision that vindicated Poole's assertion to Higham that the LEL caused trouble to peaceful Conservatives. Finlay may have been innocent. The Conservative Party may not have organised the violence. However, that does not mean that Central Office was not prepared to defend it. Numerous letters from Conservative witnesses that supported the LEL's version of events poured into Central Office.<sup>110</sup> How Central Office handled these letters showed it was prepared to go to great lengths to defend the party's action against the LEL. Despite possession of this contrary evidence, Central Office made a legal deposition that denied the LEL's claims.<sup>111</sup> If Central Office disclosed these letters, it meant that it was willing to contradict individuals who, by being present at party conference, had indicated at least some level of support for the Conservative government. However, nothing in its files showed that Central Office disclosed these

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<sup>107</sup> 'Taper', 'Violence at Blackpool', *Spectator*, 17 October 1958.

<sup>108</sup> See 84.

<sup>109</sup> Obituary, 'George Irvine Finlay', *Herald*, 5 January 1999.

<sup>110</sup> CPA CCO 3/5/93, League of Empire Loyalists, 1956-59.

<sup>111</sup> CPA CCO 3/5/89, League of Empire Loyalists, 1956-59.

letters. This showed that Central Office was prepared to alienate more supporters to defeat the LEL, and indicated the actions it deemed acceptable to counter this threat from the right. It also meant that Central Office was possibly prepared to distort evidence when it made its legal deposition. If correct, Central Office was prepared to go to extraordinary lengths to harm the LEL. Whichever action Central Office actually took, these events and their legal fall-out indicated that the Conservative Party was willing to go further than ever to block the extreme right.

From 1958, the League of Empire Loyalists declined. Thayer stated that this was because the Conservative hierarchy had made it known that membership of the *LEL* 'meant political death' to any Conservative with ambitions.<sup>112</sup> Complaints in *Candour* of actions against the LEL supported Thayer's assertion. These actions included the removal of the Cambridge Conservative Association chairman and the expulsion of a member of the Conservative Hackney Association.<sup>113</sup> *Candour* also highlighted negative employer reaction and a general social exclusion, which it categorised as 'silent treatment, vituperation, ridicule and abuse'.<sup>114</sup> In this climate, it is not surprising that a Conservative parliamentary candidate who was associated with the LEL felt compelled to resign his candidacy.<sup>115</sup> It is not possible to attribute these incidents to Central Office solely. Considering the likely social arenas in which the LEL's members experienced 'social exclusion', such as the workplace, golf club and other socially conservative organisations, some of these incidents probably reflected wider Conservatism's disapproval of the LEL. However, they were probably also the avenues via which local party activists channelled their leaders' warnings about LEL membership to aspirant Conservatives. Moreover, from 1960 onwards the Conservative Party employed stewards with specific instructions to block LEL attempts to disrupt the Party Conference, a development noted by national newspapers.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Thayer, *Fringe*, 60.

<sup>113</sup> *Candour*, 6, 181, 12 April 1957, 120 & 14, 398, 9 June 1961, 184.

<sup>114</sup> *Candour*, 1, 10, 1 January 1954, 2 & 10, 275, 30 January 1959.

<sup>115</sup> Case of Major Friend, *Daily Mirror*, 13 October 1958. Confirmed by Adrian FitzGerald, interview, 20 May 2008.

<sup>116</sup> *Daily Mail*, 13 October 1960.

Consequently, the ability of the LEL to harm Macmillan's government lessened. The LEL's disruption of the 1962 Party Conference received little press coverage.<sup>117</sup> The LEL failed partly because the post-war electorate was no more than lukewarm about the British Empire. Prosaic cultural symbols of empire such as Camp coffee and 'Empire Made' toys formed part of day-to-day existence in the 1950s, but, as Hennessey showed, 'by the time decolonisation had been achieved, Empire was already forgotten, surviving in the national consciousness as little more than a source of nostalgic philately'.<sup>118</sup> Nowhere was this more obvious than in imperial commemorations. The Empire Day Movement, founded in 1903 by an ardent supporter of Edwardian patriotic movements, advocated annual celebration of Empire. From 1916 onwards, Britons throughout the Empire celebrated 'Empire Day'.<sup>119</sup> It was a major event involving school parades, the BBC, Church and Crown, and reached its apogee in 1925 when 90,000 attended a thanksgiving service held at Wembley Stadium as part of the Empire Exhibition.<sup>120</sup> Interest thereafter declined and state institutions' support for it diminished. Save for a brief resurgence during the 1953 Coronation, Britons had rejected the imperial ideal even before the Suez Affair. Weight noted that Ministers were aware of the people's lack of interest in or knowledge of the Commonwealth, and surmised that the government based its determination to provide vigorous governmental support to change 'Empire Day' into 'Commonwealth Day' in 1958 on a desire to appease the Conservative Party's right wing.<sup>121</sup> When the change came, in 1959, it was instead to a 'Commonwealth Week', not merely a day, with a touring exhibition visiting British cities. The exhibition soon proved a total failure, however, and the government abandoned 'Commonwealth Week' for lack of support in 1962, a decision meekly accepted by the Empire Day Movement, which dissolved itself the same year.<sup>122</sup>

The failure of other imperialist right-wing groups to make any headway supported this image. In November 1957, for example, internal Central Office correspondence

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<sup>117</sup> *Candour*, Interim Report, October 1962, 8.

<sup>118</sup> Hennessey, *So Good*, 274.

<sup>119</sup> Celebrated from 1906 in overseas territories, Empire Day only gained British government support in 1916. See *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* for Reginald Brabazon, 12<sup>th</sup> Earl of Meath.

<sup>120</sup> Weight, *Patriots*, 285.

<sup>121</sup> Weight, *Patriots*, 289.

<sup>122</sup> Weight, *Patriots*, 289.

reported on the Elizabethan Party. It noted Central Office's previous highlighting of the Elizabethan Party's anti-Americanism and fascism, and dismissed claims of extensive membership.<sup>123</sup> It also highlighted anger at Conservative policy towards India, Sudan and Suez, and a fear of unchecked communist infiltration within the establishment and trade unions.<sup>124</sup> E. S. Adamson, who was a Central Office official and not a mere Area Agent, interviewed the leader of the Elizabethan Party, Frederick Guest. This indicated that Central Office took its surveillance activity towards this extreme-right organisation seriously. The report quoted Guest's belief that 'the wretched' Conservatives were 'too cowardly to work for anyone or even have a policy of their own',<sup>125</sup> which was a typically extreme-right belief that there was little difference between Conservative and Labour. Guest claimed there was a deliberate attempt to hinder the Elizabethan Party by a 'news blackout imposed by the party newspapers and the State controlled B.B.C.'. <sup>126</sup> If true, Guest's accusations revealed that the Conservative Party used a new, more extensive method to marginalise the extreme right. More substantial was the Elizabethan Party's irritation at Conservative policy under Macmillan. Demands for reductions in the cost of living and taxation, offset by increased production, showed the Elizabethan Party's anger at government economic policy.<sup>127</sup> Calls for the removal of nationalised industries as the first stage in improving industrial relations reinforced the idea that the government pandered to the trade unions.<sup>128</sup> However, the Elizabethan Party's overwhelming focus on a foreign policy based on the Empire and British interests alone, closer Empire ties, limiting NHS access to non-foreigners, and an independent nuclear deterrent with the Empire as a defence polity, revealed that imperialism was at its heart.<sup>129</sup> However, not one single Elizabethan Party candidate stood for election in 1959. Considering that domestic issues remained the focus of the overwhelming majority of people, this is

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<sup>123</sup> E. S. Adamson, 'Elizabethan Party', 19 November 1957. CPA CCO 3/5/63, Elizabethan Party, 1956-59.

<sup>124</sup> E. S. Adamson, 'Elizabethan Party', 19 November 1957. CPA CCO 3/5/63, Elizabethan Party, 1956-59.

<sup>125</sup> E. S. Adamson, 'Elizabethan Party', 19 November 1957, 1. CPA CCO 3/5/63, Elizabethan Party, 1956-59.

<sup>126</sup> 'Prospective Elizabethan Candidate', *Elizabethan Party* (1958), 1. CPA CCO 3/5/63, Elizabethan Party, 1956-59.

<sup>127</sup> 'Prospective Elizabethan Candidate', *Elizabethan Party* (1958), 4. CPA CCO 3/5/63, Elizabethan Party, 1956-59.

<sup>128</sup> 'Prospective Elizabethan Candidate', *Elizabethan Party* (1958), 4. CPA CCO 3/5/63, Elizabethan Party, 1956-59.

<sup>129</sup> 'Prospective Elizabethan Candidate', *Elizabethan Party* (1958), 4. CPA CCO 3/5/63, Elizabethan Party, 1956-59.

not surprising. Inability to mobilise an electorate apathetic to imperialism meant increasing marginalisation for organisations that were already marginal.

In opposing the LEL and investigating the Elizabethan Party, the Conservative Party played a part in this marginalisation. It continued to do so when LEL members defected to Edward Martell's People's League for the Defence of Freedom,<sup>130</sup> an extreme-right wing group that, unlike the LEL, was not anti-Semitic. Also unlike the LEL, the PLDF focused on issues that more obviously affected the electorate. Like the LEL, the PLDF's prominence early in Macmillan's government had resulted from contesting a by-election. With an appeal based on domestic issues, the PLDF arguably posed a greater threat than the LEL. The by-election at East Ham North in July 1957 showed that Central Office realised this, and that it had learned from the LEL's challenge at Lewisham North by adopting a more proactive refractory stance.

Edward Martell, the PLDF's chairman, believed that political trends made it impossible for Conservatives to overturn a Labour majority exceeding five thousand, but nevertheless thought that, 'an anti-Socialist not tied to the Conservative Party might conceivably deprive the Socialists of the seat'.<sup>131</sup> He argued that the Conservatives stood no chance in the East Ham North by-election, and suggested to Conservative party chairman Oliver Poole that he allow the PLDF to challenge Labour instead. Therefore, unlike the LEL Martell sought Conservative party co-operation. Indeed, whilst he admitted that the PLDF was often critical of government policy, Martell proposed to Poole a meeting to discuss a co-ordinated anti-Socialist campaign.<sup>132</sup> General Director Pierssene acted according to the conclusions of prior Central Office investigations into Martell,<sup>133</sup> and curtly advised him there was no point in further discussion as selection was a matter for the local Conservative Association.<sup>134</sup> Martell's subsequent attempt to gain co-operation of the local Conservative Association received the same curt response, which show the

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<sup>130</sup> Thayer, *Fringe*, 60.

<sup>131</sup> Edward Martell to Oliver Poole, 7 March 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

<sup>132</sup> Edward Martell to Oliver Poole, 7 March 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

<sup>133</sup> See 91-92.

<sup>134</sup> S. H. Pierssene to Mr. Martell, 8 March 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

Conservative Party's centre and periphery acted in unison.<sup>135</sup> Central Office was suspicious of Martell and determined not to have any association with the PLDF. Some Central Office Area Agents saw an opportunity to 'follow out the excellent North Lewisham arrangements without too much difficulty when it comes to fighting East Ham'.<sup>136</sup> This suggested that Central Office Agents' were aware of the conclusions reached in the wake of the LEL's campaign on how to counter the extreme right, and welcomed the opportunity to implement them.

Martell reacted to these rebuffs on 13 March with a populist appeal in the PLDF's newspaper, *The People's Guardian*. Always replete with letters and articles that criticised trade unions and their leaders, *The People's Guardian* articulated the views of a large section of the electorate, and implicitly criticised the government at the same time. This particular edition of *The People's Guardian* was no different.<sup>137</sup> It is easy to see why Central Office would be concerned. It listed PLDF meetings throughout the country, including verifiable details of venues, attendees and platform speakers such as Commander Hyde C. Burton, and thus reflected the countrywide extent of PLDF support and Conservative alienation.<sup>138</sup> *The People's Guardian* printed Martell's correspondence with Central Office over the East Ham North by-election.<sup>139</sup> It portrayed the PLDF's candidature at East Ham as, 'An opportunity to show both Tories and Socialists that the public has had enough of party antics',<sup>140</sup> which increased fears that Martell actually intended to harm the Conservative government despite his attempts to secure Central Office co-operation. Martell's request that readers participated in a referendum to support a PDLF candidacy in East Ham North indicated a worrying ability to harness disillusioned Conservative populism to attack Conservative government policies.<sup>141</sup> Finally, Martell used *The*

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<sup>135</sup> E. Martell to M. Ogram, 11 March 1957 and M. W. Ogram to E. Martell, 13 March 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. - June 1957.

<sup>136</sup> P. R. G. Horton to S. H. Pierssene, 'East Ham North Bye-Election', 11 March 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. - June 1957.

<sup>137</sup> 'Political Objectives Of The Railway Union Exposed', and 'Closed Shop Tactics', *The People's Guardian*, 13 March 1957, 3, are typical of headlines in this, and subsequent Martell publications.

<sup>138</sup> 'Local Activities And Business Meetings', *The People's Guardian*, 13 March 1957, 3. This was also a regular feature of Martell publications. Burton regularly contributed to *The People's Guardian*, which serialised his book.

<sup>139</sup> 'Our Offer To Mr. Poole', *The People's Guardian*, 13 March 1957, 1.

<sup>140</sup> *The People's Guardian*, 13 March 1957, 1.

<sup>141</sup> *The People's Guardian*, 13 March 1957, 1 & 3.

*People's Guardian* to increase PLDF membership and activism, which gave the impression that he wanted to create a new political party on the right of the Conservative Party.<sup>142</sup> Such a party would undoubtedly harm a Macmillan government that followed a centrist path. If Martell succeeded in providing an alternative for disgruntled Conservatives, he could potentially harm the Conservative Party permanently, especially if future Conservative governments failed to counter socialism. Consequently, Central Office, as the bureaucratic echo of the Conservative leadership, opposed this particular threat from the right determinedly.

By 20 March, even before confirmation of a PLDF challenge, Central Office exhibited a resolve that was swifter and firmer than during the LEL challenge at Lewisham. General Director Pierssene, part of the triumvirate that co-ordinated the Conservative Party's response to the PLDF, stated his belief that, 'I think we should go ahead at once and prepare a plan of action and a line of attack.'<sup>143</sup> In a contrast with his usual nonchalance towards 'freak candidates', Pierssene stated that, 'I do not think that this is a case where the best policy would be to ignore them altogether.'<sup>144</sup> The responses to Pierssene's comments mirrored this more proactive attitude and showed that Central Office was prepared to learn from, and take advantage of, any developments or consequences of the PLDF candidacy. Percy Cohen, the second member of the triumvirate, viewed a PLDF candidacy as likely to exploit present industrial troubles, and raised the possibility that East Ham North was only the beginning of a concerted PLDF campaign. Cohen argued that whoever the PLDF candidate turned out to be, they might only be 'a guinea-pig in order to judge whether future by-elections should be contested'.<sup>145</sup> He advised caution until the PLDF revealed the identity of its candidate and until Central Office knew 'whether any prominent local Conservatives are to be associated with him'.<sup>146</sup> Cohen thus showed that Central Office realised the PLDF's potential to occupy political space to the right

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<sup>142</sup> 'A Page To help You Enrol New Members', *The People's Guardian*, 13 March 1957, 4.

<sup>143</sup> S. H. Pierssene to Mr. Cohen and Mr. Adamson, 'East Ham North: People's League', 20 March 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham North, Mar. – June 1957.

<sup>144</sup> S. H. Pierssene to Mr. Cohen and Mr. Adamson, 'East Ham North: People's League', 20 March 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

<sup>145</sup> P. Cohen to the General Director, 'East Ham North: People's League', 21 March 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

<sup>146</sup> P. Cohen to the General Director, 'East Ham North: People's League', 21 March 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957. This also shows caution before making innuendoes of fascist support!

of the Conservative government and attract prominent dissidents. In the meantime, Cohen advised that Central Office relied on reports from its Area Agents on any PLDF developments in the constituency.<sup>147</sup> Should they confirm a PLDF candidacy, Cohen argued, Central Office 'should have an observer there throughout the campaign'.<sup>148</sup> Cohen identified four duties of this observer: to study tactics; provide the Conservative candidate with information and guidance; report regularly to Central Office and other interested departments; and draft questions to be put at PLDF election meetings.<sup>149</sup> He ended by stating that focus at all elections should be the defeat of Socialist candidates. Nevertheless, Cohen had argued in favour of systematic and coherent counter-measures against the PLDF challenge. The third triumvir's comments supported the view that Central Office acted more proactively in this by-election. Mr. Adamson referred to the LEL's use of outside supporters in the Lewisham by-election and raised with Pierssene the probability of similar methods by the PLDF.<sup>150</sup> Adamson acknowledged that any action against the PLDF 'in respect of this by-election must be taken within the Constituency', but considered 'whether some action on our part is necessary to curtail an ingress of League supporters from the Home Counties'.<sup>151</sup> Adamson was not kite flying, but making a serious recommendation about how Central Office could counter the PLDF. He also considered tougher measures and looked to the future when he concluded that, 'One most important point is whether now, or after the by-election, the attention of Conservatives should not be drawn to the departure of the League from its original stated intentions, and inferring that Conservative Members of the League must consider the question of loyalties.'<sup>152</sup> Adamson's language showed that he thought Conservative PLDF supporters to be disloyal, and that Central Office should consider further action against them.

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<sup>147</sup> P. Cohen to the General Director, 'East Ham North: People's League', 21 March 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

<sup>148</sup> P. Cohen to the General Director, 'East Ham North: People's League', 21 March 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

<sup>149</sup> P. Cohen to the General Director, 'East Ham North: People's League', 21 March 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

<sup>150</sup> E. A. Adamson to the General Director, 'East Ham North: People's League', 26 March 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

<sup>151</sup> E. A. Adamson to the General Director, 'East Ham North: People's League', 26 March 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

<sup>152</sup> E. A. Adamson to the General Director, 'East Ham North: People's League', 26 March 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

Central Office was also aware of developments within the PLDF. The same day that Adamson sent his comments, Pierssene received intelligence from Harold Soref, an unsuccessful Conservative candidate at the 1955 General Election.<sup>153</sup> Soref reported that a meeting to determine the PLDF candidate was occurring that morning and wagered that Martell would secure the nomination, a view that Pierssene immediately forwarded to Chairman Poole.<sup>154</sup> Poole responded quickly with a report to Macmillan, which suggested that Central Office was concerned to counter the PLDF challenge regardless of Cohen's comments about focusing on defeating the Socialist candidate.<sup>155</sup> Poole highlighted the government's failure to enforce secret ballots on trade unions and end their restrictive practices, and warned Macmillan that it was 'inevitable that Martell will take away a number of Conservative votes'.<sup>156</sup> This showed that Poole understood the basis of Martell's appeal to Conservative voters. Poole pinned his hopes for a Conservative victory in the by-election on the positive effects of the forthcoming Budget, but recommended that the party put 'a considerable effort into fighting this bye-election'.<sup>157</sup> However, instead of focusing on the Labour candidate, Poole argued that Conservatives should 'devote most of our attentions to the People's League candidate, as we cannot in any circumstances win'.<sup>158</sup> This was not a counsel of despair, but a reasoned appraisal of the likely result and from whence damage to the Conservative Party would come. Nor was it defeatist. Poole requested Macmillan's permission for two Cabinet ministers to participate in the by-election,<sup>159</sup> and subsequently referred to the assistance of hundreds of party workers,<sup>160</sup> which showed that Poole was determined to resist the PLDF challenge. Just how seriously Central Office intended to counter the PLDF, and by what methods, soon became clear.

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<sup>153</sup> Dorril, *Blackshirt*, 632.

<sup>154</sup> S. H. Pierssene to Oliver Poole, 'East Ham North Bye-Election', 26 March 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

<sup>155</sup> See 120.

<sup>156</sup> Oliver Poole to the Prime Minister, 'East Ham North Bye-Election', 27 March 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

<sup>157</sup> Oliver Poole to the Prime Minister, 'East Ham North Bye-Election', 27 March 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

<sup>158</sup> Oliver Poole to the Prime Minister, 'East Ham North Bye-Election', 27 March 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. June 1957.

<sup>159</sup> Oliver Poole to the Prime Minister, 'East Ham North Bye-Election', 27 March 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

<sup>160</sup> Oliver Poole to Colonel Urton, Mr. Horton, the Hon. Derek Moore-Brabazon and the General Director, 4 April 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

On 27 March, R. Bagnall, the Chief Organisation Officer, explained to Pierssene why Central Office had sent an un-proofed letter to the Chairman and members of the local Conservative Association in the East Ham North constituency. This was an administrative error. Nevertheless, the content of the letter, which asked recipients to resist the PLDF's attempts to secure enough support from Conservatives for their candidacy, showed that Central Office tried to strangle the PDLF at birth.<sup>161</sup> Subsequent events showed how. On 1 April, Cohen forwarded further information to Pierssene and Adamson. Cohen pointed to strikes that were occurring, and argued that Martell was certain to use them as proof of his warnings about trade union power and Conservative government weakness.<sup>162</sup> He developed his earlier comment that East Ham was a springboard for future PLDF challenges, and warned that Martell intended, if he saved his deposit, to use East Ham as the pilot-scheme for these putative challenges.<sup>163</sup> Cohen had also acquired further intelligence on Martell's intentions. He was aware that Martell had rejected LEL assistance.<sup>164</sup> This made it more difficult to level the same charges against Martell as those levelled at the LEL candidate at Lewisham. However, Cohen nevertheless advocated that Conservative activists used the accusation of fascist connections against the PLDF. He called for the preparation of reasoned criticisms of the PLDF's demands and heckling material for Martell's meetings, and argued that if any LEL involvement was detected, 'our line might be to hint, through hecklers, that Martell has Fascist allies'.<sup>165</sup> The resignation of the chairman of the Young Conservatives in East Ham, a Mr. Bell, proved that a personal attack on Martell formed part of Central Office's campaign in the by-election. Bagnall forwarded a *Daily Telegraph* cutting to Pierssene and a report on the resignation.<sup>166</sup> The cutting described the Young Conservative chairman's disgust at the conduct of the campaign, and quoted him stating that, 'it would appear that Mr. Bangay [the Conservative candidate] is preparing to conduct his campaign in

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<sup>161</sup> R. Bagnall, 'East Ham North', 27 March 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

<sup>162</sup> P. Cohen to Pierssene and Adamson, 'East Ham North – Peoples League', 1 April 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

<sup>163</sup> P. Cohen to Pierssene and Adamson, 'East Ham North – Peoples League', 1 April 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

<sup>164</sup> P. Cohen to Pierssene and Adamson, 'East Ham North – Peoples League', 1 April 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

<sup>165</sup> P. Cohen to Pierssene and Adamson, 'East Ham North – Peoples League', 1 April 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

<sup>166</sup> R. Bagnall to the GD, 'East Ham Y.C.'s', 25 April 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

the form of one long attack against Mr. Martell'.<sup>167</sup> Bell was evidently aware of the existence of such a campaign, if not Central Office's concern about Martell that informed it.

There was also evidence that Central Office implemented a greater degree of activity against Martell and the PLDF in the constituency. In the month of the poll, Central Office's unsuccessful attempt, with Prime Minister Macmillan's assistance, to enlist Churchill's support revealed the extent of its concern.<sup>168</sup> Undaunted by its failure, Central Office continued to seek to control the situation. With more success, it imported Central Office intelligence officers for work in the East Ham constituency. In a letter to the Central Office Area Agent responsible for east Ham North, Pierssene noted the recruitment of a James Hankey who had 'undertaken to perform some intelligence duties'.<sup>169</sup> Pierssene demanded that Hankey consulted with officials involved in the Lewisham campaign, and requested information from the Area Agent, Mr. Horton, of what plans had evolved and whether Hankey had begun preliminary investigations.<sup>170</sup> Horton responded that Hankey had already read the report on the Lewisham defeat and had visited East Ham on a number of occasions, which reinforced the notion of a more alert Conservative party machine that was readier to meet the extreme-right threat of the PLDF.<sup>171</sup> Moreover, when Horton advised that he would endeavour to carry the 'additional expenditure' caused by Hankey's activities,<sup>172</sup> he revealed that this was beyond the normal activities borne by Conservative constituencies or areas.

These actions represented more vigorous counter-measures actions than the party had deployed in the Lewisham by-election. The result at East Ham North, a halving of the Conservative vote, a similar sized Labour majority and a saved PLDF deposit,

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<sup>167</sup> 'Chairman Quits: East Ham Young Conservatives', *The Daily Telegraph*, 25 April 1957.

<sup>168</sup> Oliver Poole to the Prime Minister, 3 May 1957, H. Macmillan to W. S. Churchill, 14 May 1957, W. S. Churchill to H. Macmillan (nd), and H. Macmillan to S. H. Pierssene, 18 May 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

<sup>169</sup> S. H. Pierssene to Mr. Horton, 'East Ham North', 3 May 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

<sup>170</sup> S. H. Pierssene to Mr. Horton, 'East Ham North', 3 May 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

<sup>171</sup> Mr. Horton to S. H. Pierssene, 'East Ham North', 6 May 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

<sup>172</sup> Mr. Horton to S. H. Pierssene, 'East Ham North', 6 May 1957. CPA CCO 120/2/61, East Ham, Mar. – June 1957.

justified Central Office's tougher stance. An ineffective response to the PLDF could have resulted in a stronger PLDF performance. Instead, Central Office revealed that it was determined to counter the government's critics on the right.

Central Office's actions during 1957 also reflected the political tenor of the new Macmillan government and his two primary objectives. In line with Macmillan's comments to the Queen, the first objective was to ensure the government's survival. This meant that the party had to maintain distance from 'extreme' organisations and individuals. Central Office's changed attitude towards the Society for Individual Freedom (SIF) confirmed that the party's priority was to maintain the Conservative Party's distance from extreme groups. It had previously identified the SIF as a small, right-wing organisation,<sup>173</sup> but Central Office considered it in March 1957 as 'very right-wing in character'.<sup>174</sup> It was a small, but significant, difference coming so soon after Macmillan had become Prime Minister. The candidacy of former Conservative parliamentary candidate Andrew Fountaine at the Norfolk South West by-election of March 1959 further supported the idea that the Conservative Party maintained distance from extremists. Ramsden described Fountaine as 'disowned by the Party in 1950 and now on the far right', and argued that Fountaine's candidacy caused worry within Central Office.<sup>175</sup> Without evidence to the contrary, Ramsden assumed that Central Office wished to avoid embarrassing connections with an extreme-right individual. The evidence that supported the second objective is clearer: a three-figure majority at 1959's General Election. This result further limited the potential of extreme-right groups to harm the government. However, it did not mean that they would meekly acquiesce. On the contrary, despite this comfortable mandate, Macmillan now faced opposition from a right wing that the government's policies, and the society it represented, alienated to an extent unequalled by any other post war Conservative prime minister.

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<sup>173</sup> See 55.

<sup>174</sup> CCO 170/1/3/2 Women's National Advisory Committee Outside Organisations Sub-Committee - Minutes, July 1951 – Oct. 1960, 26 March 1957.

<sup>175</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 37. CPA CCO 120/2/83, South West Norfolk, Jan. – Mar. 1959.

## *Moving Right?*

In *A Kind of Loving* (1960),<sup>176</sup> sexual desire conflicted with social mores. Apprenticed in a white-collar occupation, Victor is a man of solidly blue-collar working-class background. The object of his desire, the lower-middle class Ingrid, becomes pregnant, which compelled Victor to marry her. Financially forced to live with Ingrid's mother, Victor is soon bored with their gossiping, game show-watching vacuity, and irritated at the elder woman's criticism of striking busmen and miners. Almost inevitably, Victor walked out, but, receiving short shrift from his parents, Victor reconciled with Ingrid and settled for 'A Kind of Loving' in dingy premises away from her mother. *A Kind of Loving* also reflected late-fifties and early-sixties continuity and change. Victor's parents envisioned better jobs, even social advancement for their three children. Ingrid and her mother lived in a semi-detached house with modern amenities, especially the television set, a house that was typical of many built when Macmillan was the Housing Minister. Yet, predominantly working-class football supporters still attended matches in suits, men and women who worked for the same company remained segregated on the shop floor and canteen. Victor's decision to marry Ingrid reflected surviving conventions of shame and honour, hilariously captured by the registrar intoning the marriage service as if a prison sentence, whilst his sister's incredulity when he admitted marrying Ingrid only for the sake of the baby mirrored changing attitudes. *A Kind of Loving* was a snapshot of a society undergoing change. Victor struggled against contemporary society's constraints and long held mores, yet stood at the gate of the 'permissive society.' In this, *A Kind of Loving* typified other works of the time, such as John Braine's *Life at the Top* (1962), which was a sequel to *Room at the Top* (1957). Braine's main character prospered in this changing, affluent society, but he was not necessarily contented with the results it afforded him. For many right wing individuals these changes were not necessarily for the better and the society portrayed by authors like Barstow and Braine was alien and troubling.

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<sup>176</sup> Made into a film in 1962, it is part of a trilogy covering Vic Brown's life, the other two novels being, *The Walkers on the Shore* (1966) and *The Right True End* (1976). They form part of the 'Realism' movement of the 1960s, which also included John Braine, author of *Room at the Top* (1957), and later a convert to the Monday Club.

New groups reflected this alienation, from society generally and the Conservative Party particularly. For example, Major-General Richard Hilton, formerly of Common Cause and the League of Empire Loyalists,<sup>177</sup> formed the True Tories in 1960.<sup>178</sup> He complained that a lack of religious instruction had left students with ‘practically no knowledge of right and wrong’,<sup>179</sup> and implicitly accused the more liberal Home Secretary, Butler, of failing to redress the situation. In arguing thus, Hilton reflected a wider concern about juvenile delinquency. Films such as *No Trees in the Street* (1958), *Violent Playground* (1958), *And Women Shall Weep* (1960) and *Some People* (1962), associated juvenile degeneracy with period’s lazy prosperity. Hilton highlighted the soft punishments that the judiciary meted out to offenders, and decried, ‘No wonder our standards of morality have gone to pieces, and with them our British character.’<sup>180</sup> Hilton also argued that there was ‘a general lack of courage in tackling the evil trends of post-war society’.<sup>181</sup> He stated that the blame for these ‘evil trends’ was the, ‘positive poison, mostly from America, which is poured into the minds of Britons by almost every form of propagandist machinery – the cinema, television, sound radio, cheap books, the “gutter press”, and above all by that American device for destroying juvenile minds – ‘the comic strip’.<sup>182</sup> Here, Hilton identified many prominent social features of society under the Conservatives that books and films of this period referenced. When he called for a return to the ‘unalterable principles upon which British greatness was established’,<sup>183</sup> which he identified as ‘a robust religious faith’ and ‘healthy moral standards, dependent on rigid distributions between right and wrong’,<sup>184</sup> he showed that he was utterly opposed to the society that had emerged under Conservative governments.

Hilton opposed imperial decline just as Colonel Renfrew, wistfully remembering the end of empire in India, did in John Osborne’s *Look Back in Anger* (1957).<sup>185</sup> However, unlike Colonel Renfrew, Hilton did not simply pine for long-gone imperial grandeur. Nor did Hilton accept the imperial apathy of an electorate that contentedly

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<sup>177</sup> See 110.

<sup>178</sup> Colwell, *Radical*, 15.

<sup>179</sup> The Tenets of True Toryism. Leaflet 2: The British Character (1960), 7.

<sup>180</sup> The Tenets of True Toryism. Leaflet 2: The British Character (1960), 7.

<sup>181</sup> “True Tory’ Campaign 1961: Manifesto (1)’, 2.

<sup>182</sup> The Tenets of True Toryism. Leaflet 2: The British Character (1960), 7.

<sup>183</sup> “True Tory’ Campaign 1961: Manifesto (1)’, 2.

<sup>184</sup> “True Tory’ Campaign 1961: Manifesto (1)’, 2.

<sup>185</sup> J. Osborne, *Look Back in Anger*, London (1957), 70.

watched comic depictions of imperial bureaucratic impotence in films such as *Carlton-Browne of the FO* (1959) and *The Mouse That Roared* (1959) whilst they minimally participated in commemorations of Britain's overseas role.<sup>186</sup> Instead, Hilton attacked. He held Conservative governments responsible, especially that of Macmillan. In the True Tories' Political Manifesto of 1961, Hilton began by describing the Conservative Party, in former times as, without question, 'traditionally the patriotic party'.<sup>187</sup> Its return to power in 1951, Hilton stated, had reassured right-wing patriots who believed it would avert the fall of the British Empire, restore Britain's prestige and redress the decadence affecting society.<sup>188</sup> However, Hilton argued, 'appeasement of anti-British agitators, the betrayal of Her Majesty's loyal subjects abroad, and a general lack of courage in tackling the evil trends of post war society ... continued unabated throughout the Conservative period'.<sup>189</sup> Hilton went further and commented that despite its 'unchallengeable size', the Conservative government after 1959 'surpassed its predecessors in the shameful characteristics of appeasement and betrayal, which are the hall-marks of "official" Conservatism today'.<sup>190</sup> Therefore, Hilton explicitly attacked Macmillan and his government with two particularly wounding charges, one ageless, the other still resonant in 1960s Britain.<sup>191</sup>

However, the True Tory manifesto was more than a generalised attack on Conservative governments. For example, it denounced the Commonwealth as a 'spineless agglomeration of nations, no longer, even on paper, under British leadership', and thus revealed a specific belief that Conservative governments were trying to obscure the reality of decolonisation.<sup>192</sup> Hilton cited the treatment of Archbishop Makarios as an example. Makarios was the charismatic leader of Greek Cypriot attempts to gain independence. Eden had exiled Makarios as a troublemaker. In 1959, however, the Queen welcomed Makarios as an honoured guest. Although this was part of a wider process to resolve conflict in Cyprus, Hilton nonetheless saw this as similar to the appeasement of anti-British agitators who terrorised British subjects, as occurred before Ghana gained independence in 1957, and was occurring

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<sup>186</sup> Sandbrook, *Never*, 304.

<sup>187</sup> "True Tory' Campaign 1961: Manifesto (1)', 2.

<sup>188</sup> "True Tory' Campaign 1961: Manifesto (1)', 2.

<sup>189</sup> "True Tory' Campaign 1961: Manifesto (1)', 2.

<sup>190</sup> "True Tory' Campaign 1961: Manifesto (1)', 2.

<sup>191</sup> "True Tory' Campaign 1961: Manifesto (1)', 2.

<sup>192</sup> "True Tory' Campaign 1961: Manifesto (1)', 2.

in the Kenyan Mau Mau uprising.<sup>193</sup> Hilton contrasted this appeasement with the government's treatment of another colony. The Central African Republic, formed in 1953 by a coalition of Nyasaland and South and North Rhodesia, was a penumbra of white colonial rule. Macmillan's government believed independence was inevitable and, under pressure from the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, it pressurised its constituent parts towards decolonisation. According to Hilton, this was unsurprising because it was white settlers, not 'black demagogues', being threatened with force by Colonial Secretary Macleod if they did not 'accept Whitehall's betrayal with good grace'.<sup>194</sup> Hilton thus revealed his belief in the Conservative government's willingness to appease 'a few anti-British Commonwealth politicians'.<sup>195</sup> Moreover, when Hilton bemoaned Britain's lack of any fighting forces worthy of the name and claimed that Britain's existence was now dependent on a 'none too genuine ally or upon the condescension of the United Nations,'<sup>196</sup> he also revealed anti-Americanism and anti-internationalism.

Nor did Hilton miss changes that occurred at home, especially those within organised labour. Leader of the London Bus Strike in 1958 was Frank Cousins, General Secretary of the Transport and General Worker's Union. Elected in 1956, Cousins' appointment heralded a changing of the guard from moderate to left wing leadership.<sup>197</sup> Peter Hennessey described Cousin's leadership of the TGWU as 'the toughest industrial opposition any postwar premier had had to face so far', and remembered commuter's rage during the Bus Strike.<sup>198</sup> Hilton specifically criticised the Conservative government's industrial policy in the True Tories' 1961 'Manifesto', and pointed to their failure to prevent victimisation or unofficial strikes by enacting legislation as an example of appeasement.<sup>199</sup> The Manifesto also highlighted rising living costs in general and the Welfare State in particular. Hilton deemed the former most detrimental to those on fixed incomes but less so to the industrial worker, who he described as the 'pampered child of socialism and false toryism alike'.<sup>200</sup> The

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<sup>193</sup> "True Tory' Campaign 1961: Manifesto (1)', 2.

<sup>194</sup> "True Tory' Campaign 1961: Manifesto (1)', 2.

<sup>195</sup> "True Tory' Campaign 1961: Manifesto (1)', 2.

<sup>196</sup> "True Tory' Campaign 1961: Manifesto (1)', 3.

<sup>197</sup> Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever*, 135. Hennessey, *So Good*, 371.

<sup>198</sup> Hennessey, *So Good*, 568.

<sup>199</sup> "True Tory' Campaign 1961: Manifesto (1)', 3.

<sup>200</sup> "True Tory' Campaign 1961: Manifesto (1)', 3.

Welfare State attracted condemnation for appeasing the 'idle and feckless at the expense of the industrious and enterprising'.<sup>201</sup> Hilton attacked the Conservative government's corporatist economic policies. However, his irritation did not end at economic matters. R. A. Butler's five-and-a-half-year tenure of the Home Office had brought a liberalisation in categorising homicide, resistance to the reintroduction of corporal punishment and a relaxation of laws governing licensing hours, betting and gambling, and obscene publications.<sup>202</sup> This brought the opprobrium of party activists upon Butler's head annually at Party conference.<sup>203</sup> Hilton's views accorded with many these activists. Hilton pointed to violent crime levels and described Butler's refusal to comply with calls for tough measures as appeasement of 'a few cranky psychiatrists at the cost of flouting those who put him in office'.<sup>204</sup> Hilton made many such criticisms of contemporary society that mirrored the alienation of many Conservatives towards their Home Secretary. The True Tories' Manifesto was, thus, a directed attack on the specific policies of Conservative governments, Macmillan's in particular.

The remedies suggested in the True Tories' Manifesto of 1961 were extreme. They included social service cuts in order to fund an independent national defence,<sup>205</sup> heavier penalties for violent crime, penalising young offenders' parents, and allowing police to kill certain criminals on sight.<sup>206</sup> Yet, the Manifesto was more than the demands of an extreme-right individual. It also evidenced Hilton's continuing rightwards journey. The methods Hilton suggested showed this best. Formerly a Conservative Party member, Hilton claimed that the initial objective of the True Tories at its inception in 1960 was the 'gradual re-education of the Conservative electorate, as a whole, in the temporarily forgotten principles of "true toryism"'.<sup>207</sup> A reawakened Conservative electorate that pressurised the leadership by their votes and withdrawn funds would bring the party 'back into the path of patriotism'.<sup>208</sup> However, by the time of the Manifesto, with Macmillan's New Approach commencing, Hilton's

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<sup>201</sup> "True Tory' Campaign 1961: Manifesto (1)', 3.

<sup>202</sup> Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever*, 162-163.

<sup>203</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 30.

<sup>204</sup> "True Tory' Campaign 1961: Manifesto (1)', 3.

<sup>205</sup> "True Tory' Campaign 1961: Manifesto (1)', Appendix.

<sup>206</sup> "True Tory' Campaign 1961: Manifesto (1)', Appendix.

<sup>207</sup> True Tory' Campaign 1961: Manifesto (1)', 3.

<sup>208</sup> True Tory' Campaign 1961: Manifesto (1)', 3.

attitude had changed. Hilton now described his initial plan as unworkable due to the leadership only being in touch with the electorate at election time. He accused Macmillan's government of holding the electorate in contempt, especially on crime and coloured immigration, and argued that, 'Right-wing patriots must, therefore, bring *pressure* on this obstinate leadership in the legitimate ways that are open to us.'<sup>209</sup> Despite using the word 'legitimate', Hilton's appeal did not quite rule out other means. Moreover, although he mentioned democratic measures such as letter-writing and cancelled subscriptions, Hilton's italicisation of 'pressure' indicated he was an individual who at least contemplated the possibility of non-democratic measures. In opinions and remedies as well as methods, Major-General Richard Hilton was an example of a wider trend in which the Conservative Party alienated right-wing individuals by adopting policies and a political stance they considered was hitherto associated with the left. The Conservative Party's action against the extreme right in this instance was that it forced such individuals into the political spotlight without the comforts of belonging to a monolithic, mainstream political party and had no relationship henceforth with them whatsoever. However, the Conservative Party's opposition to Hilton and the True Tories was more than mere repulsion. In this instance, attraction played as great a part.

Skin colour was central to Hilton's weltanschauung. In the third True Tory leaflet of 1960, 'Who are the British?', for example, Hilton advocated the creation of a new British Empire and denounced the vagueness of the Commonwealth as reflected in the Coronation oath.<sup>210</sup> This new empire, united under one monarchy, would become one economic and defensive unit, in which British minorities enjoyed the protection of Her Majesty's Government.<sup>211</sup> Therefore, being British conferred substantial privileges regardless of domicile. Whom did Hilton regard as 'British' however? Hilton stated that the term 'British' 'should be reserved for those whose home country is the United Kingdom', but added a caveat that 'even here caution is needed'.<sup>212</sup> He posed the question of whether a Jamaican living in Britain was British because of his

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<sup>209</sup> True Tory' Campaign 1961: Manifesto (1)', 3.

<sup>210</sup> The Tenets of True Toryism. Leaflet 3: Who are the British? (1960), 1-2. This is the most obvious example of the centrality of Hilton's views on skin colour. Nevertheless, they are also present in the other *True Tories* publications of 1960 and the Manifesto of 1961.

<sup>211</sup> The Tenets of True Toryism. Leaflet 3: Who are the British? (1960), 2-3.

<sup>212</sup> The Tenets of True Toryism. Leaflet 3: Who are the British? (1960), 3.

residence, and answered emphatically: 'Obviously not, say True Tories, if there is any meaning at all in race.'<sup>213</sup> Even if the individual concerned was the most loyal subject, who for Hilton included those who adhered to the proper rules and mores of British society, 'this does not, and never can, make him "British" by race'.<sup>214</sup> It is clear from this alone that race was to be the determining characteristic in Hilton's new British Empire. It is doubly ironic that Hilton's views found reflection in *Winds of Change* (1961), a film that utilised Macmillan's Pretoria speech, and contained the juvenile violence that Hilton deplored.<sup>215</sup> Moreover, Hilton clearly distinguished between being 'British', as determined by race, and being a 'British subject', which he saw as a description that applied to all within the Empire. Hilton stated that both terms had become indistinguishable due to lax language and attitudes, and argued that this gave rights of entry to individuals with no real loyalty to Britain as they were, by race, not really British.<sup>216</sup> To Hilton, this laxity threatened Britain's existence: 'True Tories insist that such laxity is illogical, suicidal and must be stopped at once.'<sup>217</sup> By 'suicidal', Hilton meant the dilution of the 'white race'. This was a contemporary racist view that the film *Sapphire* (1959) successfully portrayed with a 'respectable' white mother killing her son's mixed race fiancé.<sup>218</sup> Along with remedies of an immediate end to non-British immigration, repatriation of immigrants arriving in the last five years and an end to the betrayal of white settlers,<sup>219</sup> Hilton called for a colour bar on all immigration to avoid the consequences evident in *Sapphire*. Unfortunately, for any political ambitions that Hilton harboured, a colour bar on immigration was exactly what the Conservative government provided.

Despite immigration providing an 'undercurrent of dissent',<sup>220</sup> the Conservative governments of 1951 onwards had avoided it. By 1955, the Eden government, was increasingly aware of the protests from local Conservative Associations regarding the effects on housing and public health, and concluded that immigration controls were inevitable, only to decide that the time was not ripe. This reflected divisions within

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<sup>213</sup> The Tenets of True Toryism. Leaflet 3: Who are the British? (1960), 3.

<sup>214</sup> The Tenets of True Toryism. Leaflet 3: Who are the British? (1960), 3.

<sup>215</sup> Sandbrook, *Never*, 342.

<sup>216</sup> The Tenets of True Toryism. Leaflet 3: Who are the British? (1960), 3.

<sup>217</sup> The Tenets of True Toryism. Leaflet 3: Who are the British? (1960), 3.

<sup>218</sup> Sandbrook, *Never*, 342.

<sup>219</sup> "True Tory' Campaign 1961: Manifesto (1)', Appendix.

<sup>220</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 41.

the Conservative Party hierarchy over immigration. Lord Salisbury, for example, urged Eden to take action before it was too late, only for the Commonwealth Relations Secretary, Lord Home, to counter effectively by warning that the issue was 'a red-hot question within the Commonwealth and we must if at all possible avoid it'.<sup>221</sup> Additionally, Suez had made it less likely that a government that needed allies would wilfully antagonise potentially separatist parts of the Empire. Thus, for foreign and domestic reasons, the Conservative government avoided the immigration issue. Nevertheless, grassroots concerns about it remained. In 1958, Sir Cyril Osborne angrily told the press that, 'it was time someone spoke out for the white man in this country'.<sup>222</sup> Party Conference supported his call for entry controls.<sup>223</sup> The government did gain some respite. Negotiations with Commonwealth countries ensured that the issue remained off the agenda at the 1959 General Election.<sup>224</sup> Oswald Mosley's failure to convert exploitation of the 1958 race riots into electoral success in 1959 provided additional respite. Polling 8.1%, Mosley lost his deposit in Kensington North, an area badly affected by the riots.<sup>225</sup> However, respite was minimal.

The 1959 General Election produced the paradoxical effect of a Prime Minister with a much-increased majority but also potentially far more hostility from the right. Some newly elected Birmingham Conservative MPs united and pressed for action against an issue they claimed that the electors had raised during the campaign.<sup>226</sup> In January 1961 Harold Gurden, Conservative MP for Birmingham Selly Oak, arranged a meeting to campaign for immigration controls that was comprised of party backbenchers who represented areas where immigration was keenly felt.<sup>227</sup> The following month, Osborne put a motion to the Commons that provided seemingly coherent and reasonable arguments in favour of immigration control.<sup>228</sup> However, coherence and reasonableness disappeared when Osborne explicitly identified

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<sup>221</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 42.

<sup>222</sup> D. Sandbrook, *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties*, Little, Brown, London (2006), 628.

<sup>223</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 43.

<sup>224</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 43.

<sup>225</sup> Craig, *Minor*, 1.

<sup>226</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 151. Fred R. van Hartesveldt, 'Race and Political Parties in Britain, 1954-1965', *Phylon*, 44, 2 (2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr., 1983), 129.

<sup>227</sup> Van Hartesveldt, 'Race', 130. Race Relations Institute, *Newsletter*, February 1961, 6.

<sup>228</sup> Van Hartesveldt, 'Race', 130. Hansard, 634 (February 17, 1961): 1933.

coloured immigrants as the major problem.<sup>229</sup> His comment, 'This is a white man's country and I want it to remain so',<sup>230</sup> was more in tune with Hilton. Debate within the Commons was openly racist at times, with Norman Pannell, Conservative MP for Liverpool Kirkdale, especially prominent. This presented the government with a dilemma. If the leadership granted immigration controls, they would be open to the charges of racism that would refresh memories of embarrassing pre-war connections with fascism. However, if the leadership failed to act it would inflame the right wing, which seemed to be coalescing and more organised after 1959. The government spokesman's comments in the debate Osborne's motion initiated reflected this dilemma. David Renton, the Joint Under-Secretary of State for the Home Office, assured the Commons that the government was against discrimination when he denied or minimised every problem that those seeking immigration controls raised.<sup>231</sup> Yet, paradoxically, Renton argued that immigration would become a more severe problem if it continued. The admission that the government, nevertheless, was indeed considering possible solutions questioned Renton's conclusion that the motion was impractical and the government not ready to act.<sup>232</sup>

Late in 1961, the government introduced the Commonwealth Immigration Bill. Rising unemployment, especially severe amongst New Commonwealth immigrants, contributed to the government's decision.<sup>233</sup> Worsening economic conditions resulted in the government's poor performance in four by-elections in spring 1962 and culminated in the shocking loss at Orpington on a 27% swing to the Liberals. Therefore, this Bill was largely a response to the electorate's economic fears. However, there is also little doubt that immigration per se also increasingly concerned the electorate. Investigations revealed that the number of those thinking immigration too high had increased, and reached 84% of those polled by 1963.<sup>234</sup> In one sense, therefore, the decision to introduce the Bill after many years of delay was a consequence of pressure exerted from outside the government and party. Yet, internal pressure also played a powerful role. Many letters from party members in the

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<sup>229</sup> Hansard, 634 (February 17, 1961): 1993.

<sup>230</sup> Hansard, 634 (February 17, 1961): 1991.

<sup>231</sup> Hansard, 634 (February 17, 1961): 2009-2019.

<sup>232</sup> Hansard, 634 (February 17, 1961): 2009-2019.

<sup>233</sup> Van Hartesveldt, 'Race', 131.

<sup>234</sup> David Butler and Donald Stokes, *Political Changes in Britain: Forces Shaping Electoral Choice*, New York (1969), 350, Table 15.7, in Van Hartesveldt, 'Race', 133.

Conservative Party Archive support this.<sup>235</sup> The actions of Conservative MPs Gurden, Osborne, Pannell, et al added weight to this view. More cynically, as Ramsden argued, the Bill allowed the Conservative government to 'get back in touch with the views of its grass roots'.<sup>236</sup> It may also have pacified those Conservative MPs that the extent and speed of decolonisation had alienated.<sup>237</sup> This also had implications for the Conservative Party's relationship with the extreme right. The Bill did not place limits on future immigration, or address the issue of repatriation. Both omissions allowed the government to combat charges of racism and memories of painful pre-war associations resurfacing.<sup>238</sup> However, the implementation of a colour bar, made clear by exempting Southern Irish immigrants from stringent entry requirement, did meet one of the extreme right's most substantial demands. In doing so, the government extended its reach into extreme-right political space it hitherto avoided. This presented problems for the extreme right. The politically involved, like Hilton, may have understood the Bill's limitations. However, its enactment in 1962 provided those who were considering supporting extreme-right groups with a dilemma. Should they vote for a Conservative government that, despite some members' obvious distaste for the Bill,<sup>239</sup> and despite extensive and swift decolonisation, now passed a law that addressed their fears of coloured immigration? Alternatively, should they cast their vote for a miniscule group such as the League of Empire Loyalists or True Tories? The lack of any electoral breakthrough in any by-elections in the 1959-64 Parliament, suggests that extreme-right voters, maybe reluctantly, stuck with the Conservative Party.<sup>240</sup> 'Extremism' not being synonymous with 'stupidity', most of these voters undoubtedly knew that their objectives had more chance of realisation by voting Conservative. Regardless of intent, therefore, the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 cut the feet from under the True Tories and further limited the appeal of the League of Empire Loyalists.

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<sup>235</sup> CPA CCO 4/9/225, Immigration, 1961-6.

<sup>236</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 150.

<sup>237</sup> Such is the gist of Edward Heath's comments describing the Act of 1962, in the eyes of these MPs, as being 'the start of a programme through which coloured immigration could eventually be stopped altogether.' Heath, *Life*, 455.

<sup>238</sup> Hansard, 648 (October 31, 1961): 26. 649 (November 16, 1961): 792, 796, 803. 654 (February 27, 1962): 1228-29, 1231, 1235.

<sup>239</sup> Garnett and Gilmour, *Whatever*, 164.

<sup>240</sup> Craig, *Minor*, passim.

Many people in Britain may have shared Hilton's views on immigration. Some undoubtedly shared his views on race. Few shared his imperial ambitions, especially after 1945. Interwar parties that advocated the imperial cause had achieved respectable levels of support. However, between the war and Hilton's launch of the True Tories in 1960 their results were derisory. For example, the Empire Free Trade Crusade (1929-31) and the United Empire Party (1930-31) secured votes of 24-37% at by-elections in 1930 and 1931.<sup>241</sup> In contrast, the British Empire Party of P. J. Ridout (1951-52) gained only 3.4% in the one constituency it contested in the 1951 General Election. The subsequent vehicle for Ridout's views, the League of Empire Loyalists, had secured only 4% at Lewisham North in February 1957.<sup>242</sup> Those that focused their British Nationalism domestically rather than imperially fared no better. Whilst Mosley was performing badly at Kensington North in the 1959 General Election, John Bean, erstwhile member of Mosley's Union Movement and the League of Empire Loyalists, unsuccessfully campaigned for the National Labour Party candidate at St. Pancras North, who gained just over 4%.<sup>243</sup> These results supported Hennessy's view that the electorate was apathetic towards a moribund Empire.<sup>244</sup> There was other evidence too. Contemporary observers, such as John Osborne, believed traditional working-class entertainments such as music hall to be declining.<sup>245</sup> Instead, just as Barstow depicted in *A Kind of Loving*, people watched their modern equivalent, television productions such as *Saturday Night at the London Palladium* and game shows like *What's My Line*, in the isolation of their homes. In 1960, the same year that Hilton formed the *True Tories*, the film version of *The Entertainer* based on Osborne's play of 1957 coincidentally premiered. Osborne used the disappearing music hall genre as a metaphor for the declining Empire in *The Entertainer*.<sup>246</sup> He portrayed Britannia naked save for a trident and helmet, which represented cinematically the weakness of Britain's imperialism just as Hilton represented it politically. It was a view that Britons themselves increasingly voiced.<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Craig, *Minor*, 35 & 109.

<sup>242</sup> See 109.

<sup>243</sup> Craig, *Minor*, 66. Bean, *Shades*, 129-139.

<sup>244</sup> See 115.

<sup>245</sup> Sandbrook, *Never*, 134 no. 156.

<sup>246</sup> Wight, *Patriots*, 288.

<sup>247</sup> Wight, *Patriots*, 288. A. Aldgate, *Censorship and the Permissive Society: British Cinema and Theatre 1955-1965*, Clarendon Press, Oxford (1995), 66-72.

Not all groups alienated by societal changes focused on immigration and race. Fears about the changing morals that *A Kind of Loving* exemplified provided an impetus to Moral Re-Armament. Moral Re-Armament emerged from the Oxford Group founded in 1938 by Reverend Frank Buchman. It intended to bring Christian values to the fore in political and social issues. This objective was acceptable to many Conservatives. However, in 1946 prominent Labour MPs had highlighted the Oxford Group's associations with leading members of the Nazi Party.<sup>248</sup> Any connection with Moral Re-Armament, therefore, carried the danger of resurrecting the Conservative Party's connections with interwar fascism. Central Office and progressive Conservatism could not tolerate this. In April 1962, a Conservative MP narrowly missed de-selection for his membership of Moral Re-Armament, and received the instruction to spend more time with his constituency.<sup>249</sup> Central Office objected to Conservatives using party platforms to make Moral Re-Armament speeches.<sup>250</sup> Similar to the stance towards R. W. Pether and the New Reform Party, Central Office objected also to the religious bigotry inherent within an exclusively Christian political organisation that promoted just one religious creed.<sup>251</sup> Some Conservatives complained that Central Office issued directives that warned local associations against associating with Moral Re-Armament, and sought clarification from it.<sup>252</sup> These brought the by now standard Central Office reply that denied any connection or association with such organisations.<sup>253</sup> Within Central Office, correspondence revealed the belief that Moral Re-Armament was 'ultra right wing.'<sup>254</sup> Central Office may or may not have issued written directives, but its opinion of, and therefore attitude towards, Moral Re-Armament was consistent with the post-1945 desire to avoid embarrassing connections with organisations it perceived as extremely right wing.

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<sup>248</sup> 'Return of the Prophet', *Time*, 13 March 1946.

<sup>249</sup> 'Victory for Mr. Wolridge Gordon', *Daily Telegraph*, 26 April 1962.

<sup>250</sup> Miss F. Yonge to Sir Michael Fraser, 'Moral Re-Armament', 22 April 1964. CPA CCO 3/6/120, Moral Re-Armament, 1960-65.

<sup>251</sup> Mr. Dear to Miss Yonge, 'Moral Re-Armament', 30 April 1962. CPA CCO 3/6/120, Moral Re-Armament, 1960-65.

<sup>252</sup> Basil Buckland, 14 April & The Rt. Hon. R. H. Turton, 9 June 1964. CPA CCO 3/6/120, Moral Re-Armament, 1960-65.

<sup>253</sup> William Urton to The Rt. Hon. R. H. Turton, MC, MP, 11 June 1964. CPA CCO 3/6/120, Moral Re-Armament, 1960-65.

<sup>254</sup> Chief Organisation Officer, 'MRA', 10 June 1964. CPA CCO 3/6/120, Moral Re-Armament, 1960-65.

The problem for extreme-right individuals such as Hilton was that they backed an imperial horse that the electorate now considered lame whilst massive sales of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, after jurors acquitted its publishers of indecency charges on 2 November 1960, suggested that Moral Rearmament flogged a dead one. The centrality of race in the thinking of the extreme right had been proved equally limited by Mosley's inability to exploit the issue. If the most recognisable character amongst the extreme right could not harness genuinely held concerns about immigration, what chance had those with much less public recognition? Economic considerations were far more pressing for the electorate. The ubiquitous nature of economic concerns, affected all electors and not just right-wing extremists, and thus made this issue potentially far more problematic for the Conservative party and government. Here, however, two factors provided scope for the extreme right to attack Macmillan's government on a non-imperial front: poor economic management and a failure to counter increased trade union militancy.

### *The Right to Work.*

Chancellor Amory's 1959 give-away budget might have helped Macmillan win the 1959 General Election, but it also increased the trade gap and inflation as imports increased to meet consumer demand. Affected by pre-war experiences of unemployment in Stockton-on-Tees, Macmillan balked against harsh remedial measures that would produce it. Amory realised the necessity of overturning the pre-election budget and offered to resign, but Macmillan refused. Amory consequently produced a neutral budget in April 1960. On Amory's eventual resignation in June 1960, Macmillan made Selwyn Lloyd Chancellor, a promotion Sandbrook thought indicated Macmillan's determination to run the Treasury himself. However, when the measures introduced by Lloyd also appeared to be failing, evidenced by the shattering loss of Orpington in March 1962, the axe quickly fell on Lloyd. Macmillan mishandled the resulting reshuffle, the 'Night of the Long Knives' wherein Macmillan sacked a third of the Cabinet, which destroyed Macmillan's unflappable public image. Importantly when considering the opinions of the right wing, however, Macmillan's effective takeover of the Treasury in 1960 identified its policies with the Prime

Minister personally. Viewed in this light, the *New Approach* of 1961, a turn towards corporatism and state planning,<sup>255</sup> becomes even more a product of Macmillan's political philosophy. Macmillan was the author of *The Middle Way*, a book that advocated state intervention and consensus with labour. It was a philosophy born from witnessing the depredations caused by economic slump in the inter-war years as Stockton's MP. Macmillan's firm control of the Treasury was consistent with these views. However, his philosophy was unacceptable to many on the right.<sup>256</sup> Macmillan's actions, which arguably revealed to right-wingers a Prime Minister incapable of managing the economy due to a personal penchant for socialistic economic theory, would not have lessened their suspicions about a Prime Minister that they held responsible for the staggeringly swift dismantling of the British Empire.

Apparent appeasement of organised labour exacerbated these suspicions. Organised labour was the domestic vanguard of Communism for many right-wingers, but not exclusively so. For example, the Boulting Brothers, who produced *I'm All Right, Jack* (1959), a film satire of union selfishness and incompetence that the left viewed as an unpardonable assault on the Labour movement, supported the Liberal Party.<sup>257</sup> The film depicted ostracism, a Lenin-worshipping shop steward who refused to accept a union member's incompetence as sufficient grounds for dismissal, a wildcat strike that spread throughout British industry and a government minister who was incapable or unwilling to become involved. The film struck a chord with many due to the increased incidence of such action in the real economy.<sup>258</sup> The composition in the film of those demonstrating against the unofficial action was also revealing when considering the right's attitude towards this phenomenon and the government's inertia. Amongst the protesters that supported the right to work the only two organisations explicitly depicted are the British Housewives League and the League of Empire Loyalists. This suggested that the Boulting brothers knew exactly who was prepared to confront the unions when the Conservative government would not. Much harder hitting was the winner of the 1961 BAFTA Award for Best British Screenplay,

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<sup>255</sup> See 105.

<sup>256</sup> Sandbrook cites several senior Cabinet members unhappy with this position. Sandbrook, *Never*, 367.

<sup>257</sup> Sandbrook, *Never*, 354.

<sup>258</sup> See Correlli Barnett, *The Verdict of Peace: Britain Between Her Yesterday and the Future*, Pan, London (2002), 179ff.

*The Angry Silence* (1960). It opened with a pre-arranged meeting between a naïve union official and an imported communist agitator, and made clear that what followed resulted from communist design. The communist manipulated the union man into escalating petty grievances into a wildcat strike. Tom Curtis was an employee at the factory who was struggling to make ends meet with two children and a pregnant wife in an inadequate flat and faulty television brought on hire purchase. Curtis ignored the unofficial strike because it was unpaid. The union official, unaware that the communist agitator worked under instruction from his political masters to disrupt the factory's contribution to the Cold War effort, accepted the agitator's plan to utilise Curtis' stance. Curtis was ostracised and intimidated. Sympathy strikes occurred. National press and television became involved. Alan Whicker devastatingly interviewed juvenile strikers and revealed the ignorance and callousness of those who had victimised Curtis. Schoolchildren attacked Curtis' son, and Curtis lost sight in one eye when beaten by two of Whicker's interviewees. Vilified in the left wing press, Conservative newspapers praised *The Angry Silence* for dealing with an issue many thought that the government ignored.<sup>259</sup> *The Angry Silence* was simplistic, inaccurate and even paranoid. British unions were much less active than their European counterparts and many British workers held long-standing grievances in an unequal society. However, that is to miss the point. The film succeeded because it resonated with an electorate that personally or vicariously experienced the effects of union action. The criticism of union excesses by those who wrote, filmed, directed and starred in it reflected this experience. Many of them deferred their salaries for 'a labour of love rooted in political conviction'.<sup>260</sup>

The fact that the British electorate could only experience circumstances in Britain minimised charges that industrial relations were worse elsewhere. It is unlikely many electors soothed their irritation by comparing British industrial relations with those in Europe, Japan or America. Instead, what was evident was that the government appeared incapable or unwilling to act against increased industrial action. The average number of strikes lost in the decade to 1964 increased by nearly 50% on the previous

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<sup>259</sup> Sandbrook, *Never*, 355. Tony Shaw, *British cinema and the Cold War: the State, propaganda and consensus*, I. B. Tauris, London (2006), 165. *The Times*, 14 March, 18 May and 20 May 1960.

<sup>260</sup> Sandbrook, *Never*, 354.

decade, and working days lost nearly doubled. Wildcat strikes increasingly predominated.<sup>261</sup> Macmillan's government submitted to union demands or introduced poorly thought out policies. Soon after the General Election of 1959, for example, Macmillan agreed a 5% rise for railway workers to avoid a crippling strike. It did not work. Strikes followed in the docks, car and construction industries and the Post Office in 1960 and 1961. Similarly ineffective was Chancellor Lloyd's attempts to curb economic pressures. His 'pay pause' of July 1961 to March 1962 applied only to public sector workers and had no statutory enforcement. The unions were outraged. Pay awards simply ignored the 'pay pause'. Therefore, the 'pay pause' failed dismally. Such was the concern that *The Stagnant Society* (1961), which attacked the restrictive role played by unions in achieving a more prosperous society, became an unlikely best-selling book for the Industrial Editor of the *Financial Times*. *The Stagnant Society*, which favoured planning as a remedy for economic malaise and intellectual torpor, reflected Macmillan's views in *The Middle Way*. It was in this atmosphere that Macmillan had openly turned corporatist and introduced the National Economic Development Council. However, regardless of whether the Conservative government's response was a product of benign inertia, woolly-minded appeasement or something more sinister, the effect was similar to that which had favoured the emergence of Hilton and the True Tories. Macmillan's government had opened political space on the right by failing to remedy economic problems. This failure performed a similar role to that over immigration in that it forced disillusioned extreme-right figures to choose whether to operate beyond the comforts provided by party membership or accept party discipline. As one right-wing MP who unsuccessfully attempted to remain inside the Conservative Party subsequently put it: 'Into the vacuum of political leadership thus created ... stepped the dynamic personality of Edward Martell.'<sup>262</sup>

Since the 1957 East Ham by-election, Edward Martell's People's League for the Defence of Freedom (PLDF) had been quiescent. Redundancies at Martell's printing presses and reduced publications of *The People's Guardian* suggested that Martell's political impact had ended.<sup>263</sup> However, disgruntled Conservatives continued to voice

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<sup>261</sup> Sandbrook, *Never*, 357 ff.

<sup>262</sup> Donald McIntosh Johnson, *A Cassandra at Westminster*, Johnson (London), 110.

<sup>263</sup> Ramsden, *Churchill and Eden*, 302.

their discontent in Martell's publications. In April 1960, Martell felt that the circumstances were propitious enough to re-enter the political spotlight. He therefore launched *The New Daily*. This newspaper advocated 'a return to Christian principles',<sup>264</sup> and criticised the government's failure to counter inflation, union strength, falling moral standards and government spending persistently.<sup>265</sup> Like Hilton, Martell tapped into the morality debate that Hennessy identified as a particular phenomenon of the time.<sup>266</sup> Unlike Hilton, Martell's comments focused almost exclusively on domestic issues. These comments soon took an exasperated and irritated tone. For example, Martell responded to the government's justification of its non-intervention in industrial action with the response. He stated that, 'If this is the best that Tory intellectuals can do in their approach to the menace which trade unionism in its present form presents to the nation we might as well put our money on the London School of Economics and be done with it.'<sup>267</sup> Martell argued that the current Conservative Party leadership was too entrenched to effect the necessary changes, and in *The New Daily* suggested its removal.<sup>268</sup> When regional Conservative newspapers, such as the *Hornsey Conservative News*, extolled the government's achievements, *The New Daily* retorted that the government was failing in areas including independent defence capability, trade union power, crime, transport, inflation and productivity.<sup>269</sup>

*The New Daily's* comments harked back to a golden age and sought a charismatic individual to run the country. Theoreticians who focus on the primacy of culture in identifying fascism see these features as hallmarks of fascism. These features were present in Martell and *The New Daily*. For example, when Sir Cyril Osborne decried Protestantism's lost influence resulting in a soft generation unwilling to endure the discipline necessary to withstand communism's challenge to Christendom, *The New*

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<sup>264</sup> 'An Experiment in Independence: Our Policy and Why', *The New Daily*, 3 May 1960.

<sup>265</sup> 'The Guilty Party', *The New Daily*, 9 May 1960, is one of many examples.

<sup>266</sup> Hennessy cites in particular the Devlin-Hart Debate from 1959 onwards. Occurring against a backdrop of rising crime and falling church attendance, Judge Patrick Devlin and the philosopher Herbert Hart publicly examined the issue of personal morality and the role of the state well into the sixties, only ending, Hennessy argues, with Tony Blair's announcement in 2004 of the end of the liberal consensus on law and order. Hennessy, *So Good*, 505-509. More sensational was the 'Lady Chatterley Trial', see Sandbrook, *Never*, xv ff.

<sup>267</sup> 'Whose Freedom?', *The New Daily*, 12 July 1960.

<sup>268</sup> 'The Cross Bowmen', *The New Daily*, 12 October 1960.

<sup>269</sup> 'Comfort and Joy!' *The New Daily*, 19 October 1960.

*Daily* agreed.<sup>270</sup> Osborne's comments reflected sharply declining attendance at Protestant services,<sup>271</sup> but they also tapped into the Orange strand within Conservatism that other extreme-right figures such as Petter of the New Reform Party had displayed.<sup>272</sup> For *The New Daily*, the solution was obvious. It lauded Oliver Cromwell as the epitome of Englishness and bemoaned that no such leader was currently available.<sup>273</sup> Nevertheless, it continued, 'he certainly exists and may we hear from him very soon'.<sup>274</sup> Whom did *The New Daily* mean? Additionally, although it did not advocate like Hilton the restoration of a British Empire based on skin colour, Martell's publication embroiled itself in the immigration issue. It identified 'coloured immigrants' as the source of problems in housing, vice, crime, unemployment and the welfare state.<sup>275</sup> *The New Daily* called for a check on coloured immigration yet denied any prejudice, which resembled right-wing Conservative MPs rather than Oswald Mosley. Nevertheless, it is unsurprising that *The New Daily* had to deny charges of fascism from the outset,<sup>276</sup> or that it was 'secretly backed by Sir Oswald Mosley and his so-called "Union Party"'.<sup>277</sup> The author of the article that denied these accusations described Mosley as a 'demagogue' and was incredulous that anyone would think *The New Daily* 'would ever accept support of any kind from a Fascist source', and concluded that malice lay behind these rumours.<sup>278</sup> Yet, it was *The New Daily's* comments on immigration that had made such an accusation credible.

Frustratingly, *The New Daily* did not identify its accusers. However, it is the same damnation by inference that Central Office suggested its activists used on Martell's People's League for the Defence of Freedom at the East Ham by-election.<sup>279</sup> Central Office had continued to monitor Martell. His literature continued to circulate within

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<sup>270</sup> 'Unto Caesar', *The New Daily*, 28 November 1960.

<sup>271</sup> Sandbrook, *Never*, 130. Although Weight argues that 1945-60 was an Indian Summer for British Protestantism, and 1961 a particularly good year, the evidence utilised excludes non-conformism, and rather than analysing attendance figures prefers the looser indicators of membership, readership and even the ordination of the captain of the England cricket team. Weight, *Patriots*, 223.

<sup>272</sup> See 28-32.

<sup>273</sup> 'Unto Caesar', *The New Daily*, 28 November 1960.

<sup>274</sup> 'Unto Caesar', *The New Daily*, 28 November 1960.

<sup>275</sup> 'A Problem Than Can No Longer Be Avoided', *The New Daily*, 7 December 1960.

<sup>276</sup> 'An Experiment in Independence: Our Policy and Why', *The New Daily*, 3 May 1960.

<sup>277</sup> 'Our True Colours', *The New Daily*, 3 November 1960.

<sup>278</sup> 'Our True Colours', *The New Daily*, 3 November 1960.

<sup>279</sup> See 122.

constituencies,<sup>280</sup> and enquiries about them to Central Office received the same emphatic denial of support as hitherto.<sup>281</sup> This effective intelligence system provided both the means and opportunity to act against Martell's organisations. Moreover, Central Office possessed a motive for describing *The New Daily* as fascist because of the similarity of Martell's views expressed in it and those of right-wing Conservative MPs who were increasingly at odds with the party leadership since the 1959 General Election.<sup>282</sup> If effectively made, such charges would diminish the credibility of *The New Daily's* attacks against the government. It would also remove an avenue of support to dissident Conservative MPs. Central Office had proved consistently hostile to any extreme-right organisations that displayed what it thought were fascist or racist characteristic or antecedents. Thus, whilst it is unclear whether Central Office or any other Conservative organisation made the specific charges against *The New Daily*, or whether it resulted from their previous inference at East Ham, their agency in them is likely. Unfortunately, for Macmillan's government, the accusations appeared not to stick as *The New Daily* and Martell prospered. The frequency of *The New Daily's* comments on immigration declined after the introduction of the Commonwealth Immigration Bill in 1961. This was perhaps not coincidental, considering the impact of the Bill on *The New Daily's* readers. It may also have helped Martell's publication as it reduced the likelihood that *The New Daily* would comment on immigration, the one issue that its opponents could link with fascism. However, this left Macmillan's government with an even bigger problem. It could no longer simply smear *The New Daily* as a fascist or racist organisation as it now presented coherent arguments on less contentious issues from the right that resonated with irritated Conservative MPs and voters.

Commander Hyde C. Burton was a regular contributor to Martell's publications who epitomised Conservative irritation. *The New Daily* serialised Burton's comments under the heading 'The Great Betrayal: An Indictment of a Decade of Conservative

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<sup>280</sup> For example, letter from Sir Thomas More, Bart., CBE, MP, to The Rt. Hon. Sir Toby Low, KCMG, CBE, DSO, MP at Central Office, 16 November 1960. CPA CCO 3/6/136, Peoples League for the Defence of Freedom 1960-65.

<sup>281</sup> Untitled letter from Sir Toby Low to Sir Thomas Moore, MP, 24 November 1960. CPA CCO 3/6/136, Peoples League for the Defence of Freedom, 1960-65.

<sup>282</sup> See 101.

Socialism, 1952-1962'.<sup>283</sup> A retired naval officer and veteran of both world wars, Burton had commercial interests in Malaya.<sup>284</sup> However, his concerns about decolonisation had not led him to the imperialist stance of Chesterton or Hilton. Instead, Burton criticised from the direction of the 'Freedom Right'. He believed in economic liberalism, which placed him and those of similar views outside those of contemporary Conservative governments. Burton also understood that many dissident Conservative and extreme-right groups existed because of Conservative governments' actions in other areas. He identified, interestingly, the Society for Individual Freedom, Middle Class Alliance, Elizabethan Party, Fighting Fund for Freedom, and Aims of Industry as examples.<sup>285</sup> Nevertheless, Burton's articles overwhelmingly focused on Conservative governments' mishandling of domestic and economic issues. In January 1961, for example, Burton lambasted 'weak Conservative governments' for betraying the country by their failure 'to protect the general community against the demands of the militant trade union leaders and semi-Communist shop stewards who call the tune'.<sup>286</sup> In September 1961, he described Chancellor Lloyd's 'pay pause' as a panic measure, and claimed this was the 'direct and inevitable result of ten years of Socialism administered by so-called Conservative Governments'.<sup>287</sup> Instead of proving the trustees of private property and individual liberty, Conservative governments had 'sold the country down the river'.<sup>288</sup> Burton threw the Prime Minister's words back at him when he argued that Macmillan had duped the electorate with phrases such as 'You have never had it so good' whilst he unscrupulously pursued socialist policies that Burton thought was, 'bringing us to national bankruptcy'.<sup>289</sup> Burton condemned Chancellor Lloyd for being Macmillan's puppet and giving in to threats by the President of the Electricians Trade Union.<sup>290</sup> Burton viewed this surrender, which proved the impotence of the pay pause, as reviving 'an inflating wage spiral'.<sup>291</sup> If readers missed Burton's inference of political

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<sup>283</sup> Subsequently published including comments for 1952 and 1963 as *The Great Betrayal: An Indictment of the Conservative Governments' Departure from Conservative Principles, 1951-1963*, Johnson, London (1963), this provides extensive coverage of a Conservative's growing irritation at what is viewed as a betrayal of Conservatism.

<sup>284</sup> Burton, *Betrayal*, 3 & 114-116.

<sup>285</sup> Burton, *Betrayal*, 96.

<sup>286</sup> Burton, *Betrayal*, 184-186.

<sup>287</sup> Burton, *Betrayal*, 194.

<sup>288</sup> Burton, *Betrayal*, 194.

<sup>289</sup> Burton, *Betrayal*, 194.

<sup>290</sup> Burton, *Betrayal*, 204.

<sup>291</sup> Burton, *Betrayal*, 204.

cowardice, or what was required, he made it clear when he compared ‘Our weak-kneed “Conservative” politicians’ who never have ‘the “guts” to throw down that challenge’, with de Gaulle and Roosevelt who had made strikes in nationalised industries illegal.<sup>292</sup> Successive Conservative Governments had ‘run away every time a national industry has put in a wage claim’, and the ‘latest surrender’ to the Electricians had finally squashed any hopes that the ‘correct and resolute action’ of implementing a true free market economy would ever occur.<sup>293</sup> By the end of 1961, Burton wondered whether, ‘after ten years of Socialism administered by pseudo-Conservatives, free enterprise in Britain has come to an end’.<sup>294</sup>

What Central Office thought of attacks like this is unknown. However, it was sufficiently concerned by November 1961 to ascertain Martell’s financial situation.<sup>295</sup> Martell plainly operated in fertile soil and echoed views held by many Conservatives. On 1 January 1962, he responded to their perception that Conservative governments had failed by forming The National Fellowship. He claimed that 2000 people backed him.<sup>296</sup> This included Conservative MPs Dr. Donald Johnson and Captain Henry Kerby,<sup>297</sup> who frequently spoke at large meetings of The National Fellowship in places like London’s Caxton Hall.<sup>298</sup> Members sported a badge declaring ‘Resurgat Britannia’.<sup>299</sup> Funds appeared plentiful.<sup>300</sup> Martell seemed to be making a significant move.

Martell used *The New Daily* to spread The National Fellowship’s views. It reached a circulation of approximately 100,000,<sup>301</sup> and was therefore capable of making an impact. This meant that Commander Burton’s criticisms of the Conservative government’s economic mismanagement and adherence to what he perceived as socialist philosophy reached a wider audience. In February 1962, on the establishment

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<sup>292</sup> Burton, *Betrayal*, 205.

<sup>293</sup> Burton, *Betrayal*, 205-206.

<sup>294</sup> Burton, *Betrayal*, 208.

<sup>295</sup> E. S. Adamson to the Chief Organisation Officer, ‘Monday Club’, 30 November 1961. CPA CCO 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

<sup>296</sup> ‘Anti-Socialist Movement: 2000 Supporters’, *The New Daily*, 1 January 1962.

<sup>297</sup> ‘Anti-Socialist Movement: 2000 Supporters’, *The New Daily*, 1 January 1962.

<sup>298</sup> Johnson, *Cassandra*, 111.

<sup>299</sup> Johnson, *Cassandra*, 110.

<sup>300</sup> Johnson, *Cassandra*, 111.

<sup>301</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 149.

of the National Economic Development Council, Burton warned that Britain was moving towards 'an era of governmental dictatorship'.<sup>302</sup> The following month, Burton attacked 'the present left-of-Centre leadership which continues to impose Socialism on both Parliament and the country'.<sup>303</sup> Burton believed that the government had failed to recognise the significance of the by-election defeat at Orpington, explained it when he claimed that, 'the true Conservative feels that he has to revolt against what he considers to be the Government's mischief and unwisdom'.<sup>304</sup> He also believed that Macmillan and the rest of the Cabinet would 'not be deflected from their Socialism',<sup>305</sup> and denounced the Conservative Party's failure to do anything to stop them. He did reveal some racist sentiment when he denounced the Conservative Party as 'a party of expediency, a party of retreat, the party of cowardice, the party of surrender to the blackmail of organised trade unions at home and to the black demagogues abroad'.<sup>306</sup> Yet there was little substantial that suggested racism akin to that of Hilton. The summer of 1962 brought some relief from Burton's offensive. According to Burton, the 13 July 'Night of the Long Knives' Cabinet reshuffle presented an opportunity to fight the forthcoming General Election on: 'Conservative principles and not on Socialist expediency'.<sup>307</sup> However, whatever relief summer brought it was gone by the autumn. On 3 October 1962, *The New Daily* carried an open letter from Burton to Macmillan. Inconvenienced by a rail strike, Burton once again levelled the charge of cowardice against a government that failed to deal with organised labour. Burton ended with the claim that Macmillan was doing as much harm domestically as he had in Africa, and implicitly called for a revolt to remove him.<sup>308</sup> By attacking from the right, The National Fellowship posed a threat to the Conservative government as it provided critics like Burton with a regular medium.

Central Office kept The National Fellowship at arms length and monitored it throughout 1962. Donald Johnson MP explained why it did so when he stated that official disapproval of his link with it was 'virtually guaranteed' because it was

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<sup>302</sup> Burton, *Betrayal*, 216.

<sup>303</sup> Burton, *Betrayal*, 225.

<sup>304</sup> Burton, *Betrayal*, 226.

<sup>305</sup> Burton, *Betrayal*, 226.

<sup>306</sup> Burton, *Betrayal*, 234.

<sup>307</sup> Burton, *Betrayal*, 249.

<sup>308</sup> Burton, *Betrayal*, 256-260.

‘considered dreadfully Right-Wing to be with the National Fellowship’.<sup>309</sup> More specifically, Johnson continued, in 1962 it was still ‘considered to be the extreme of Right-Wingism to criticise the trade unions even for their most irresponsible actions’.<sup>310</sup> Additionally, Johnson made it clear that it was from Central Office specifically that this disapproval was forthcoming.<sup>311</sup> The warning not to become involved with Martell that Central Office sent to the Conservative candidate at the July 1962 Leicester North East by-election supported Johnson’s claim of Central Office involvement.<sup>312</sup> Admittedly, Johnson memoirs are frustrating. His claim that official disapproval was ‘perhaps natural on account of the type of support it attracted’,<sup>313</sup> was unexplored. Nor can we ignore the possibility that official disapproval of Johnson may have resulted from his own actions. Johnson engaged in personality clashes and supported awkward parliamentary Motions, which would not have endeared him to Central Office.<sup>314</sup> Yet, that does not lessen Johnson’s belief that Central Office frowned on membership of The National Fellowship because it viewed it as extremist. Indeed, Johnson’s comments simply confirmed the view that Central Office was the Conservative Party’s vehicle for counter-measures against perceived extremists, which it had also demonstrated in official attitudes towards Martell’s earlier vehicle the Peoples League for the Defence of Freedom. In this instance, the word ‘vehicle’ appropriately explained Central Office’s caution. For in 1962, Martell joined the Conservative Party.<sup>315</sup> His aim, according to Johnson, was to make his views dominant within the Conservative Party by 1975.<sup>316</sup> Martell may have desired political advancement. Ramsden thought it was a possibility and noted that Martell swiftly became a ward chairman in the Hastings Conservative Association.<sup>317</sup> If so, Central Office faced an extreme-right organisation that sought entry into, and maybe domination of, the Conservative Party. Support from Conservative MPs made countering Martell problematic. Charges of fascist antecedents, for example, were untenable with The National Fellowship as it had two Conservative MPs on its

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<sup>309</sup> Johnson, *Cassandra*, 111.

<sup>310</sup> Johnson, *Cassandra*, 112.

<sup>311</sup> Johnson, *Cassandra*, 114.

<sup>312</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 157.

<sup>313</sup> Johnson, *Cassandra*, 111.

<sup>314</sup> Johnson, *Cassandra*, 112.

<sup>315</sup> Ramsden, *Winds of Change*, 149.

<sup>316</sup> Johnson, *Cassandra*, 112.

<sup>317</sup> Ramsden, *Winds of Change*, 149.

National Executive. Subsequent actions showed that Central Office understood the need for careful and subtle handling of The National Fellowship.

The events of 1963 proved how careful Central Office needed to be. Martell brought his various organisations together under the umbrella title 'Freedom Group' and increased his campaign against Macmillan's government. Mass, organised Freedom Group meetings provided evidence of the scale of Conservative discontent. The Freedom Group orchestrated letter-writing campaigns that ensured ministers were aware of this discontent. Unofficial referenda campaigns organised via *The New Daily* and mainstream newspapers targeted unpopular policies and ministers. Given front-page prominence in *The New Daily*, the results of these referenda made clear that Conservative's irritation focused on the Government's 'pink-socialism' and those who administered it. These were radical methods aimed to effect radical policies. Both were anathema to traditional Conservatives. At the same time, the Government looked increasingly inept. In January, President de Gaulle ended Macmillan's hopes of Britain entering the EEC, and at a stroke removed the Prime Minister's chance to deflect attention away from domestic concerns. In June, the Profumo Affair erupted. It dealt a severe blow to the government and to the Prime Minister. Macmillan's support for Profumo did not reflect the public's sense of scandal, and therefore reinforced the notion of an increasing disconnection between the government and the electorate. Thus, it appeared that as well as creating political space on the right of the Conservative Party, Macmillan had also created a political vacuum at the head of government.

Martell commenced 1963 with an article in *The New Daily* titled 'A Year of Great Activity For Us All'.<sup>318</sup> Having placed comprehensive adverts in the previous day's *Times* and *Daily Telegraph*, Martell launched an 'Independence Campaign' that urged rejection of the Nassau Agreement.<sup>319</sup> He advocated a staged letter-writing campaign that involved successively the reader's MP, Chairman of the local Conservative Association, national newspapers and the Prime Minister, and tapped Conservative anti-Americanism exhibited by the likes of Hilton to reinforce demands for an

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<sup>318</sup> *The New Daily*, 1 January 1963.

<sup>319</sup> See 103.

independent British nuclear deterrent. However, perhaps more worrying was Martell's intention to increase the Freedom Group's potential impact by a recruitment drive, and the publication of *A Book of Solutions* that suggested a rudimentary political manifesto.<sup>320</sup> Whether this heralded a new party or not Central Office took no chances. On 8 January, Central Office decided that all Chairmen of Conservative local associations had to provide the names of constituents who had joined Martell's organisation.<sup>321</sup> A letter of 9 January from a Chairman in the North West Area that asked Martell, as a 'gesture of goodwill', for the names of constituents in his area showed that local association Chairmen acted quickly on this directive.<sup>322</sup> This was a vigorous act by Central Office. In one sense, it was more vigorous than the attempted identification of members of the League of Empire Loyalists within the Conservative Party as that did not include constituents. This does not prove that Central Office intended a witch-hunt against Freedom Group members in the party. However, at the very least it is evidence that Central Office attempted to counter Martell's impact on the Conservative Party at the local level. Added to Central Office's previous comments about Martell's organisations, and Donald Johnson's views regarding Central Office's opinions, this directive indicated that Central Office saw Martell's Freedom Group as a viable extreme-right organisation that posed a potential threat to the Conservative Party. If so, Martell's subsequent actions suggested Central Office was correct.

The year 1963 did indeed prove to be a year of 'Great Activity' for *the Freedom Group*. At the end of January, *The New Daily* began a referendum on Cabinet changes that asked readers which members they trusted, which they wished to see promoted, and whom they wanted demoted.<sup>323</sup> Shortly after came some evidence of Freedom Group influence in the citadels of traditional Conservatism. Under the liberator-pseudonym of 'Brutus', a regular contributor to *The New Daily* highlighted an article

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<sup>320</sup> *The New Daily*, 1 January 1963, 8. See also article on 4 February, which suggests that the Freedom Group held unions to blame for Polaris and the Nassau Agreement.

<sup>321</sup> R. J. Webster to the General Director, 'National Fellowship', 8 January 1963. Incorrectly dated 1962, this letter is clearly responding to a Martell letter of 29 December 1962. CPA CCO 3/6/128, *The National Fellowship*, 1960-65.

<sup>322</sup> H. Hornby Fairclough to Mr. Martell, 9 January 1963. CPA CCO 3/6/128, *The National Fellowship*, 1960-65.

<sup>323</sup> 'How Would You Change The Cabinet', *The New Daily*, 26 January 1963.

in *The Daily Telegraph* titled: 'Is It Too Late For The Tories?'<sup>324</sup> The use of the soubriquet *Daily Torygraph* reflects the common view that the *Daily Telegraph* is the Conservative Party's 'house-paper'. The article 'Brutus' highlighted, written by Colin Welch, advocated Freedom Group policies. Brutus' requested that *The Daily Telegraph*, 'adopt Mr. Welch's policy and campaign for it with all the undoubted authority they possess'.<sup>325</sup> This showed that Welch's views were not the paper's official stance. Nevertheless, 'Brutus' saw the article as a positive step and pointed to another encouraging sign. Under the sub-heading 'Light Is Breaking Through', 'Brutus' identified two Motions at the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Surrey Young Conservatives as especially noteworthy, one that called for tough anti-union measures, the other critical of the lack of 'Conservative' policies under the current government.<sup>326</sup> Brutus thought that, 'The fact that the powers-that-be which control such Conferences have allowed two such Motions to get on the Agenda is quite as important as the wording of the Motions themselves.'<sup>327</sup> Thus, it appeared that the Freedom Group's grassroots political campaign was beginning to affect institutional Conservatism.

In February, *The New Daily* criticised the government's handling of the steel industry. The government had supported two nationalised steel companies, Richard Thomas and Baldwins, in their attempt to purchase the privately owned Whitehead Iron and Steel Company. *The New Daily* referred to Labour MP Michael Foot's *Tribune* article and agreed with him that the Conservative Party now had no argument should future Labour government nationalise the steel industry completely.<sup>328</sup> Conservative writers also contributed articles that criticised the Conservative Research Department's inability to counter the assumption that progress was synonymous with being left wing. Anthony Lejeune argued that, 'It is surely possible to present radical Right-wing policies which would seem more exciting to young people than the conventional fussiness of the Left'.<sup>329</sup> The same edition of *The New Daily* proposed another letter-writing campaign, this time to support the parliamentary Motion Conservative MP

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<sup>324</sup> 'Brutus', 'Right Thinking Grows In Tory Circles', *The New Daily*, 30 January 1963.

<sup>325</sup> 'Brutus', 'Right Thinking Grows In Tory Circles', *The New Daily*, 30 January 1963.

<sup>326</sup> 'Brutus', 'Right Thinking Grows In Tory Circles', *The New Daily*, 30 January 1963.

<sup>327</sup> 'Brutus', 'Right Thinking Grows In Tory Circles', *The New Daily*, 30 January 1963.

<sup>328</sup> 'Incredible Stupidity', *The New Daily*, 4 February 1963.

<sup>329</sup> 'Any Thinking Going On At The Tory Top?' *The New Daily*, 13 February 1963.

Harold Gurden had tabled that called for a Royal Commission to investigate the causes of strikes and disputes. *The New Daily* described Gurden's action as 'an attempt to make the Government face up to a matter which they have consistently avoided since they came to power eleven years ago', and thus tarred all post-war Conservative governments with the brush of industrial appeasement.<sup>330</sup> By also listing the names of Conservative MPs who supported Gurden's Motion, *The New Daily* reinforced the message that it represented the views of disgruntled backbenchers as well as ordinary party members. The following day, *The New Daily* colourfully combined an attack on governmental inertia over this issue with a warning about the damage government inaction caused. It stated that the 'maggot of inactivity has eaten its way into the organisation of the Tory Party until it has become one of the main reasons for a malaise which threatens the Party's very existence'.<sup>331</sup> Less than a week later, *The New Daily's* claimed that its letter-writing campaign was responsible for increased support for Gurden's Motion from Conservative MPs, and exhorted its readers to step up their campaign.<sup>332</sup> Considering the political context and that Martell was already the subject of one comprehensive report,<sup>333</sup> it is highly probable that these activities concerned Central Office increasingly.

March provided no respite. *The New Daily* reported a Freedom Group meeting in Canterbury in March and focused on Martell commenting about a Conservative leadership that imposed Socialism on the party and country.<sup>334</sup> More troubling was the inclusion in the same edition of a two-year programme of Freedom Group activity.<sup>335</sup> This indicated that organised criticism would not cease before parliament ended in 1964. However, Central Office did not have to wait until the next Freedom Group meeting for criticism of the government. The next day *The New Daily's* Editorial attacked Iain Macleod, whom the right viewed as the chief proponent of the government's socialist tendencies and blamed for its failure to counter trade union

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<sup>330</sup> 'Campaign To Promote a Royal Commission on Industrial Disputes', *The New Daily*, 13 February 1963.

<sup>331</sup> 'Hammer It Home!' *The New Daily*, 14 February 1963.

<sup>332</sup> '22 MPs Have Now Signed the Gurden Motion. HAS YOURS?' *The New Daily*, 20 February 1963.

<sup>333</sup> See 87.

<sup>334</sup> 'Tories Must Drop Socialistic Tendencies Says Martell at Canterbury', *The New Daily*, 11 March 1963.

<sup>335</sup> *The New Daily*, 11 March 1963, 14.

abuses.<sup>336</sup> The week following, *The New Daily* announced a new style of campaign by the Freedom Group, dubbed the 'Hastings Experiment'.<sup>337</sup> The 'Hastings Experiment' aimed to swamp a single constituency with the Freedom Group's political material, and included a series of four conferences.<sup>338</sup> Martell portrayed it exaggeratedly as a response to grassroots demands. In reality, the 'Hastings Experiment' was simply a product of Martell's organisational and publicity skills. Nor was it an experiment. It was a carefully prepared event to further the Freedom Group's role and his own ambitions. *The New Daily* published its lead article about the 'Hastings Experiment' before and not after its occurrence. Its favourable reporting of the second meeting, which described it as attracting twice the expected audience,<sup>339</sup> cannot hide the fact that this only amounted to sixty individuals and possibly included Freedom Group officials. These facts bear out the impression that the Freedom Group was Martell's personal vehicle more than the product of grassroots Conservative revolt, and should be borne in mind when considering *The New Daily's* reports of the Hastings Experiment. It noted that all audience members wished to keep the Labour Party from power and the consensus view that, 'there is not much hope of doing so if things are allowed to go on drifting as they are at present'.<sup>340</sup> Thereafter, *The New Daily* portrayed the audience's view that the Conservative Party was not the vehicle for such ambitions, and made it clear that, 'they feel there is no incentive to work for the Conservative cause because traditional Conservative policies have been abandoned, their complaints and suggestions are ignored and evaded, and pink Socialism pervades the Party more and more'.<sup>341</sup> The article concluded by stating that he believed Central Office was interested in the 'Hastings Experiment' and promised to forward its full results to the party chairman.

As the 'Hastings Experiment' was in the public domain, Central Office probably knew about it. Doubtless, Central Office viewed the 'Hastings Experiment' in its true light: a contrived event from an extreme-right individual who possibly aimed to attract Conservative discontent and use it to replace or takeover the Conservative

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<sup>336</sup> 'Mr. Macleod's Chimera', *The New Daily*, 12 March 1963.

<sup>337</sup> 'Growing Interest In The Hastings Experiment', *The New Daily*, 18 March 1963.

<sup>338</sup> 'Growing Interest In The Hastings Experiment', *The New Daily*, 18 March 1963.

<sup>339</sup> 'Growing Interest In The Hastings Experiment', *The New Daily*, 18 March 1963.

<sup>340</sup> 'Growing Interest In The Hastings Experiment', *The New Daily*, 18 March 1963.

<sup>341</sup> 'Growing Interest In The Hastings Experiment', *The New Daily*, 18 March 1963.

Party. Thus, Central Office could not afford to ignore the Freedom Group's potential impact on the Conservative Party regardless of the limited attendance at its events. The result of the Colne Valley by-election three days later on 21 March 1963 would not have eased Central Office fears about Martell's possible impact on the party. The Conservative candidate in a distant third place polled less than 50% than in the previous General Election. *The New Daily* judged that this was the 'writing on the wall for the coming General Election', and proclaimed that 'The Macmillan Revival Has Failed' and demanded that 'MacLeod Must Go Now.'<sup>342</sup> Martell's subsequent comments lent weight to fears that he was prepared to act in ways contrary to the leadership's views and not necessarily in conjunction with the Conservative Party. Martell argued that there was no evidence of a change for the better, and stated in italics for impact, '*unless somebody makes it happen*'.<sup>343</sup> He said that if Conservative leaders could not be made to understand that ordinary members had a right to play their part in preparing for the next General Election, and failed to improve their ways, 'they must not be surprised or resentful if we attempt to do it for them – and ourselves'.<sup>344</sup> Finally, if the Conservative leaders ignored the results of the 'Hastings Experiment', Martell hinted menacingly that, 'we must try some other way'.<sup>345</sup> These were not merely glib words. Central Office could not ignore an organisation of alienated and irritated Conservatives, especially one that claimed, despite the attendance at the Hastings Experiment, to have 160,000 members.<sup>346</sup>

In May, Anthony Lejeune provided a more coherent explanation for this alienation that identified the impact of a philosophical/ideological divide on the political system, and the organisation of the Conservative Party, as key factors.<sup>347</sup> Lejeune argued that new political paradigms had re-orientated British politics. The fulcrum of politics had been moving steadily leftwards, epitomised, according to Lejeune, by trade union collective bargaining where employers were merely allowed to lose at a slower rate rather than win. By participating in this process, the Conservative leadership appeared to right-wing voters to be collaborating in an inexorable leftwards drift. Lejeune

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<sup>342</sup> 'The Writing On The Wall', *The New Daily*, 23 March 1963.

<sup>343</sup> 'The Writing On The Wall', *The New Daily*, 23 March 1963.

<sup>344</sup> 'The Writing On The Wall', *The New Daily*, 23 March 1963.

<sup>345</sup> 'The Writing On The Wall', *The New Daily*, 23 March 1963.

<sup>346</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 149.

<sup>347</sup> 'Tory Party Organisation', *The New Daily*, 29 May 1963, 6. What follows is a précis.

argued that whereas this process usually ameliorated the left of the Labour Party as a step in the right direction, for right-wing Conservatives it was always a step away from their position. This meant that right-wing individuals who maintained their political stance became increasingly isolated from an ever-receding centre, thus turning such individuals into extremists. Exacerbating this, Lejeune continued, the mass of these right-wingers were in the constituencies and, as such, were physically isolated from the councils of the Party, which made it more difficult practically to effect the Party's actions in government. Additionally, the autonomy of local Conservative Associations, which Lejeune implied further isolated right-wing individuals, provided an organisational distance between party members and leaders. Thus, Lejeune argued that when Conservative governments acquiesced in policies opposed by right-wing Conservative Party members,<sup>348</sup> right-wing anger at the government's betrayal of what they saw as true Conservatism combined with feelings of impotence to result in alienation and anger. Consequently, some would abstain at the next General Election, whilst those that voted would not vote Liberal or Labour, but reluctantly vote Conservative only to stop Labour winning. Here, Lejeune had explained the Conservative Party's refractory alienating action, if not quite taking it to the conclusion that some newly dissident Conservatives would consider voting for extreme-right parties, such as the League of Empire Loyalists, or even like Hilton of the True Tories, forming them.

If Lejeune correctly claimed that the Conservative governments' failure to combat encroaching socialism created right-wing extremism, then subsequent events would have increased their number. Labour surged into an 18.5% opinion poll lead in the weekend after Lejeune's article. This prompted more criticism of Macmillan and his administration in *The New Daily*.<sup>349</sup> The following week, the Profumo Affair shook Macmillan's government to its core. Martell used his position as editor of *The New Daily* to produce front-page banner headlines that denounced 'Degeneracy And Indolence In High Places' and 'The Collapse of Leadership.'<sup>350</sup> Martell put the blame firmly at Macmillan's door. He asked readers to look back over the previous two

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<sup>348</sup> Here Lejeune cites the example of Conservative governments increasing spending on the welfare state and an imminent increase in NI contributions.

<sup>349</sup> 'Big Shock For The Prime Minister', *The New Daily*, 3 June 1963.

<sup>350</sup> 'Thus Fell Rome', *The New Daily*, 8 June 1963.

years to see what had gone wrong and identified declining moral standards, especially increasing gambling, drinking and vice, as a product of Macmillan's lack of leadership. Nor, Martell continued, did anybody seem to care, most notably the Prime Minister who had remained on holiday while his government was 'rocked by one of the greatest Parliamentary scandals there has ever been'.<sup>351</sup> The answer, Martell stated emphatically, was to stop the harm the current government and Prime Minister were doing: 'Somehow they must be stopped.'<sup>352</sup> However, who was going to affect this? Martell did not advocate a solution enforced from the top. Instead, Martell stated that, 'the people must give their leaders leadership, and teach them that no nation can live that does not maintain certain standards of behaviour that should not need defining'.<sup>353</sup> Thus, although Martell undoubtedly reflected extreme-right feelings that society was degenerate and decadent, and may even have shared such views, his use of the Profumo Affair was no different from other government failings that he identified in that the solution he suggested involved a pivotal role for ordinary Conservatives, like those in the Freedom Group that Martell led.

What, however, was this role to be? Whether Martell aimed to usurp the Conservative Party's role by creating a new party, or merely sought to alter its ideological position, is difficult to deduce. On the one hand, public events such as the 'Hastings Experiment' and thinly veiled hints that the Freedom Group would have to act if the Conservative Party failed to do so, suggested that the Freedom Group could become a political party. On the other, Martell wrote openly to all Conservative MPs and offered assistance in marginal seats, which suggested that he wanted Conservative Party success. Yet, in one sense, the question is immaterial. For, even if Martell's objective was the apparently less-sinister motive of ideological change, the fact is that if Martell succeeded it would, after many years of Conservative acceptance of post-war consensus, effectively result in a new political party. It would certainly not be the same party as that led by Macmillan. This, in turn, warrants a brief re-appraisal of the role of Central Office outlined earlier,<sup>354</sup> especially vis-à-vis right-wing organisations. Stuart Ball stated that Central Office did not exist 'for any mysterious or sinister

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<sup>351</sup> 'Thus Fell Rome', *The New Daily*, 8 June 1963.

<sup>352</sup> 'Thus Fell Rome', *The New Daily*, 8 June 1963.

<sup>353</sup> 'Thus Fell Rome', *The New Daily*, 8 June 1963.

<sup>354</sup> See xviii-xx.

purpose, but simply to provide a range of services to the leader and to the party as a whole', and maintain efficiently the contact between the two.<sup>355</sup> As such, Central Office was a reflection of the political philosophy and ideology of the leader and the views of the membership. This implied an equal relationship. However, when the members' views clashed with those of the leader, as was the case with those who supported the Freedom Group and indeed all other extreme-right groups, it was the leader's views that prevailed in Central Office. It was most emphatically not Macmillan's wish that Edward Martell should take advantage of his current troubles so that Martell could ditch him and his political views and replace them with those represented by the Freedom Group. More generally, Central Office's role included avoiding embarrassing connections with the extreme right. Its functions included the monitoring of, and carrying out of counter-measures against the extreme right. This had included monitoring Martell for some time by this stage, and it is unlikely that Central Office was not considering what Martell's intentions now were carefully. However, more germane to both the narrow issue of Martell's possible objectives and the wider one of the Conservative Party's attitude towards the extreme right, is what Martell soon explicitly stated and did. For, one month after the Profumo Affair, Martell explicitly outlined a coherent Freedom Group plan to combat the Labour Party at the next General Election and capture the Conservative Party from within.

On 5 July, *The New Daily* carried details of the Freedom Group's plan to thwart Labour. Under the headline 'The Plan To Keep The Socialists Out', it reported Martell's boast that the Freedom Group 'has now developed into the most powerful organisation of its kind in Great Britain'.<sup>356</sup> Martell stated three reasons why he believed the Freedom Group was capable of achieving its objective. Firstly, with over 100,000 members and growing, all noted on a 'Master-Index' that included details of the constituency and special interests, the Freedom Group had sizeable support which the leadership could mobilise at short notice.<sup>357</sup> Secondly, possessing a non-unionised printing works built into a public company with £1/2 million in capital meant that the Freedom Group enjoyed a propaganda machine immune to hostile trade unions, and

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<sup>355</sup> Ball, 'Structure', 192.

<sup>356</sup> 'The Plan To Keep The Socialists Out', *The New Daily*, 5 July 1963.

<sup>357</sup> 'The Plan To Keep The Socialists Out', *The New Daily*, 5 July 1963.

potential access to funds.<sup>358</sup> Thirdly, in *The New Daily* the Freedom Group had a means of communicating its objectives to its members six days a week.<sup>359</sup> These boasts may have been completely hollow. Central Office's attempt to elicit details of Conservative members of Martell's groups suggests that it took them seriously however. Nor is this surprising considering that Martell had announced that, 'The task of every Supporter of the Freedom Group is thus to become an active leader in the Conservative Party in his or her area' so as to push Freedom Group policies and root out 'Semi-Socialist MPs and prospective candidates ... as quickly as possible'.<sup>360</sup> This was much more than the adoption of street and platform cultures as seen in the British Housewives League and other extreme-right groups by an angry but hitherto compliant Tory-voting middle-class.<sup>361</sup> Instead, it was a plan for infiltration of the Conservative Party. It was possibly even more. Martell now hinted at greater things. He acknowledged that the Freedom Group had the potential to become a new party.<sup>362</sup> He added that, 'Nobody is going to deny that there is a need for such a party.'<sup>363</sup> These are not isolated words taken out of context. They were in the public domain like the 'Hastings Experiment', and so Central Office would probably have been aware of them. Thus, suspicion that Martell intended either infiltrating the Conservative Party or forming a new one to challenge it, must have increased. Martell's subsequent move into a political vacuum created by Conservative Party inaction would have seemed part of this 'plan'.

Martell's noble sentiments of accepting the democratically expressed wishes of the people may also have informed the Conservative Party's decision not to contest the Bristol South East by-election. The by-election was a consequence of Tony Benn's renouncement of his peerage. Martell's decision to stand as a 'National Fellowship-Conservative' candidate put him and his organisation in a position whereby they could portray themselves as a right-wing alternative to an absent Conservative Party. This was certainly the view of *The Times*, which reported that Martell campaigned in front of blue posters that bore the name 'Conservative' in large letters and 'National

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<sup>358</sup> 'The Plan To Keep The Socialists Out', *The New Daily*, 5 July 1963.

<sup>359</sup> 'The Plan To Keep The Socialists Out', *The New Daily*, 5 July 1963.

<sup>360</sup> 'The Plan To Keep The Socialists Out', *The New Daily*, 5 July 1963.

<sup>361</sup> See 18-23.

<sup>362</sup> 'The Plan To Keep The Socialists Out', *The New Daily*, 5 July 1963.

<sup>363</sup> 'The Plan To Keep The Socialists Out', *The New Daily*, 5 July 1963.

Fellowship' in smaller ones, and that he refuted accusations that he had no connection with the Conservative Party by brandishing his party membership card.<sup>364</sup> The probability that the public would make the connection between Martell and the Conservative Party was extremely high. Central Office opposed Martell very actively. Firstly, it monitored The National Fellowship's selection process, and was aware that three candidates were under consideration.<sup>365</sup> Secondly, Central Office asked Conservative supporters to abstain from the election, which would deny Martell support.<sup>366</sup> Finally, Central Office attempted to portray Martell's candidacy as obscure and irrelevant. The Chairman of the Bristol Conservative Association, Sir Kenneth Brown, declared that, 'I have only heard of the National Fellowship in name. I know nothing of them.'<sup>367</sup> The General Director at Central Office dictated to the Deputy Central Office Area Agent an official 'line' for officials to take that stated that those standing against Benn had 'no connection whatever with the Conservative Party and are receiving no support from me'.<sup>368</sup> Central Office instructed that all queries were to receive the response that the Conservative Party was 'in no way connected with the present by-election'.<sup>369</sup> Thus, Central Office sought to limit Martell's chances. Its claims were also less than credible. It is hard to believe, for example, that Central Office, which was so concerned about Martell that it had commissioned a 'Committee of Investigation' into his activities, did not know that in 1961 he had become a ward chairman of the Hastings Conservative Party. Moreover, Sir Kenneth Brown's knowledge of Martell's organisations may well have been zero, but that does not mean that he did not know that they, and Martell, were the object of Central Office's counter-measures. As Chairman of the local Conservative Association, Brown would have received and acted upon the Central Office directive of 8 January that sought the names of Conservative Party members and voters who had joined the Freedom Group.<sup>370</sup> Conservative officials were prepared to make dubious comments to hinder

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<sup>364</sup> 'Mr. Benn Has Ideas On Drying Up Peerages At Source', *The Times*, 16 August 1963.

<sup>365</sup> Miss S. A. Walker to the General Director, 'Bristol South East', 7 August 1963. CPA CCO 1/14/488, Bristol South East, Dec. 1961 – Jan. 1968.

<sup>366</sup> 'Tories Urged: Do Not Vote Anti-Labour', *Yorkshire Post*, 8 August 1963.

<sup>367</sup> *Bristol Evening Post*, 7 August 1963.

<sup>368</sup> This information is contained in a memo dated 26 August sent by the Deputy Central Office Area Agent, Miss B. A. Cribb, to the Secretary to the Chief Organisation Officer titled 'Bristol South East'. CPA CCO 1/14/488, Bristol South East, Dec. 1961 – Jan. 1968.

<sup>369</sup> Miss B. A. Cribb to the Secretary to the Chief Organisation Officer, 'Bristol South East', 26 August 1963. CPA CCO 1/14/488, Bristol South East, Dec. 1961 – Jan. 1968.

<sup>370</sup> See 148.

an extreme-right organisation. Given the severity of the political context, it is understandable that officials wished to limit the impact of this particular external extreme-right organisation. What made this more likely was the simultaneous emergence of an internal extreme-right organisation that threatened to combine alienation over the Conservative government's domestic policy with anger at its imperial policy.

### *Inside Right*

Lejeune's argument that Conservative governments forced right-wingers onto the extreme right can apply somewhat to the Monday Club. Formed in 1961,<sup>371</sup> and taking its name from the day Macmillan made his 'winds of change' speech, the Monday Club was a response by young Conservative Party members to rapid decolonisation.<sup>372</sup> By explicitly questioning this policy alone, the Monday Club placed itself on the extreme right vis-à-vis the Conservative Government. In the mockingly titled pamphlet *Wind of Change or Whirlwind?*, the Monday Club stated that the Macmillan government's desire to appear progressive had led it to decide upon 'a Hasty Abandonment of British responsibilities in Africa'.<sup>373</sup> It described the government's decolonisation policy as one of 'Abdication and appeasement'.<sup>374</sup> The Monday Club claimed that this had 'put Kenya on the verge of bankruptcy and resulted in a loss of confidence in the Rhodesias that undermined its Federation, and the driving of South Africa from the Commonwealth'.<sup>375</sup> The Monday Club's alternative was a return to 'Conservative principles',<sup>376</sup> and not the abandonment of Britain's civilising role. Only this, it concluded could stop the creation of weak states prone to 'exploitation by the forces opposing us in the cold war'.<sup>377</sup> These were the traditional calls of the alienated imperialist right wing in that they exhibited typical traits such as racial chauvinism, criticism of the Conservative government and fear of left wing ideology. However, the Monday Club was much more than simply the

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<sup>371</sup> R. Copping, *The Story of the Monday Club*, Monday Club, London (1972), 5.

<sup>372</sup> *Policy and Aims of the Monday Club*, Monday Club, London (1961), 1.

<sup>373</sup> *Wind of Change or Whirlwind?* Monday Club, London (1961), 2.

<sup>374</sup> *Wind of Change or Whirlwind?* Monday Club, London (1961), 2.

<sup>375</sup> *Wind of Change or Whirlwind?* Monday Club, London (1961), 1-2.

<sup>376</sup> *Wind of Change or Whirlwind?* Monday Club, London (1961), 2-3.

<sup>377</sup> *Wind of Change or Whirlwind?* Monday Club, London (1961), 3.

Conservative Party's version of the League of Empire Loyalists or True Tories. When it called for an independent nuclear deterrent, tougher measures on crime, action on wildcat strikes, a rationalised welfare state, reduced taxation, and expressed concerns over entry into the Common Market,<sup>378</sup> the Monday Club camped firmly in the political space of other extreme-right organisations like the Freedom Group too. As it explicitly came from within the Conservative Party, the comprehensive nature of this criticism made the Monday Club potentially a far more potent threat to Conservative governments than other right-wing organisations.

Initially, Central Office appeared relaxed about the Monday Club. An early Central Office report on the Club, perhaps reflecting the predominant influence of the middle-aged within the Conservative Party, focused insouciantly on the involvement of Young Conservatives.<sup>379</sup> This does not mean that Central Office neglected its role of investigator of right-wing organisations. On the contrary, the report showed that Central Office maintained its intelligence gathering role when it identified four Young Conservatives who had attended a Monday Club meeting at the Onslow Court Hotel on 25 September 1961.<sup>380</sup> Similarly, on 29 November the Chief Organisation Officer wrote on a letter from the Secretary and Agent of the Wirral Conservative Association that requested information on the Monday Club: 'Do we know anything about this outfit? If not can we get a line on it?'<sup>381</sup> This was typical of many previous requests from its intelligence network regarding other right-wing organisations. It also showed that Central Office's early actions towards the Monday Club accorded with its specifically ordained function to investigate other organisations. Outwardly, the Chief Organisation Officer maintained a carefree, even dismissive air. He responded to the Wirral Conservative Association's request for information on the Monday Club and denied any organisational link between it and the Conservative Party, and confidently

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<sup>378</sup> *Policy and Aims of the Monday Club*, Monday Club, London (1961), 1-2.

<sup>379</sup> A. S. Garner to the Chief Organisation Officer, 'Report on the Monday Club', 27 September 1961. CPA CCO 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

<sup>380</sup> A. S. Garner to the Chief Organisation Officer, 'Report on the Monday Club', 27 September 1961. CPA CCO 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

<sup>381</sup> Hand-written note dated 29/11 on letter from G. Stevenson to C. F. R. Bagnall Esq., CBE, 28 November 1961. CPA CCO 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

stated that Monday Club circulars to Divisional and Young Conservative chairmen would not win it any support.<sup>382</sup>

Nevertheless, Central Office continued to monitor the Monday Club. Central Office officials wrote two other, more comprehensive documents on the same day that the Chief Organisation Officer replied to the Wirral Conservative Association. The first document was a more detailed report on the Monday Club by E. S. Adamson. It was significant because it revealed what Central Office thought the Monday Club's objectives were and who backed it. Adamson highlighted the role of youth in the Monday Club's formation, particularly its first chairman, Paul Bristol, whose failure to become a Conservative prospective parliamentary candidate he noted.<sup>383</sup> He stated that requests for information about the Monday Club were now coming in 'from all over the country'.<sup>384</sup> Adamson thought that this reflected an attempt by these young party members to 'set up an organisation along the lines of the Bow Group'.<sup>385</sup> If so, then Adamson at least thought it possible that the Monday Club intended to create an intellectually coherent body of opinion to influence policy from within the Conservative Party like the Bow Group. Adamson stated that, 'It would be interesting to know who is behind the movement or who is putting up the money for the printing etc.'<sup>386</sup> He identified one candidate as 'John Dayton and his True Tories', and justified his suspicion by stating that Dayton 'seems to have plenty to spend and this sort of attack would fit with his ideas'.<sup>387</sup> Also noteworthy was Adamson's comment that the only mention of the Monday Club in the press was in *The New Daily*, and that the Free Press, 'which is Martell's', printed the Monday Club's literature.<sup>388</sup> However, Adamson believed that this connection was 'purely fortuitous for Martell

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<sup>382</sup> Mr. Bagnall to Mr. Stevenson, 30 November 1961. CPA CCO 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

<sup>383</sup> E. S. Adamson to the Chief Organisation Officer, 'Monday Club', 30 November 1961. CPA CCP 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

<sup>384</sup> E. S. Adamson to the Chief Organisation Officer, 'Monday Club', 30 November 1961. CPA CCP 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

<sup>385</sup> E. S. Adamson to the Chief Organisation Officer, 'Monday Club', 30 November 1961. CPA CCP 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

<sup>386</sup> E. S. Adamson to the Chief Organisation Officer, 'Monday Club', 30 November 1961. CPA CCP 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

<sup>387</sup> E. S. Adamson to the Chief Organisation Officer, 'Monday Club', 30 November 1961. CPA CCP 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

<sup>388</sup> E. S. Adamson to the Chief Organisation Officer, 'Monday Club', 30 November 1961. CPA CCP 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

has no money to spare nor is this his line of country',<sup>389</sup> which may have allayed the suspicions of some in Central Office that the Monday Club was another Martell organisation.

Others were not so sure, as seen by the second Central Office document of 30 November 1961. Central Office's Area Agent, A. S. Garner, wrote the document. It was a response to a request for information about the Monday Club from the Unionist MP S. Knox Cunningham, who had received the Club's literature. Cunningham was also Macmillan's Parliamentary Secretary. He telephoned Central Office to enquire about the Monday Club, and then wrote from 10 Downing Street and requested further information.<sup>390</sup> Garner referred to the Martell connection and thought that, 'It may be that they get their money from there.'<sup>391</sup> This showed that some thought it was possible that Martell was behind the Monday Club. However, Garner's letter also revealed how Central Office viewed the Monday Club. Garner advised that Central Office had sent an 'unofficial observer' to the Monday Club meeting of 25 September.<sup>392</sup> This 'observer' thought that the Monday Club was 'formed by former members of the Bow Group who held extreme-right views'.<sup>393</sup> When Garner dismissively described the Monday Club to Cunningham as a very small organisation of 'a few enthusiastic young members', he reiterated this belief that they held 'extreme right wing views'.<sup>394</sup> The Significance of this second document, therefore, is that it revealed that Central Office believed that the Monday Club was an extreme-right organisation from the beginning.

On 4 December 1961, Central Office commenced counter-measures against the Monday Club. It instructed its Area Agents to respond to all inquiries with the common line that there was no organisational link between the Conservative Party

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<sup>389</sup> E. S. Adamson to the Chief Organisation Officer, 'Monday Club', 30 November 1961. CPA CCP 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

<sup>390</sup> S. Knox Cunningham to Miss Yonge, 29 November 1961. CPA CCO 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

<sup>391</sup> A. S. Garner to S. Knox Cunningham Esq., QC, MP. 30 November 1961. CPA CCO 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65

<sup>392</sup> A. S. Garner to S. Knox Cunningham Esq., QC, MP, 30 November 1961. CPA CCO 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65. See 160

<sup>393</sup> A. S. Garner to S. Knox Cunningham Esq., QC, MP, 30 November 1961. CPA CCO 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

<sup>394</sup> A. S. Garner to S. Knox Cunningham Esq., QC, MP, 30 November 1961. CPA CCO 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

and the Monday Club.<sup>395</sup> The directive showed that Central Office had monitored the Monday Club's growth throughout the country and its awareness of the extent of interest in the Club. Area Agents, acutely aware of the need for loyalty as Macmillan attempted to implement contentious decolonization, acknowledged the directive swiftly.<sup>396</sup> Central Office, meanwhile, exuded nonchalance about the Monday Club. It based this attitude, as Ramsden noted, on a belief that the Monday Club was a product of temporary upper-middle class youthful exuberance.<sup>397</sup> Confirming such views was a report to the General Director in January 1962 that described the Monday Club as, 'a group of young people of extreme right wing views who operate in Chelsea/South Kensington and hold their meetings at the Onslow Court Hotel by way of roughing it'.<sup>398</sup> However, on 24 January, 'Peterborough' announced in *The Daily Telegraph* that ten Conservative MPs and Lord Salisbury would be attending that day's Monday Club meeting on Rhodesia.<sup>399</sup> Considering Salisbury's antecedents, and coming from a credible, Conservative source, this news would have punctured any nonchalance within Central Office. Two days later, *The Daily Telegraph* confirmed Salisbury's attendance. Worse, Salisbury had become the Monday Club's patron, and begun his tenure of this position with a salvo aimed directly at Macmillan's government when he said that, 'There never was a greater need for true Conservatism than there is today.'<sup>400</sup> This was a different matter. Salisbury would undoubtedly attract party critics to the Monday Club. On the same day, Patrick Wall, Conservative MP for Haltemprice, visited London Area Agent Garner and asked him what Central Office's view of the Monday Club was.<sup>401</sup> This probably reflected Wall's awareness that Central Office was a repository of intelligence on right-wing groups. Garner concluded that Wall had decided to support the Monday Club, which, he warned Central Office, would result in other MPs joining and the Monday Club increasing its strength.<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>395</sup> Internal memo to all Central Office Agents, 'Monday Club', 4 December 1961. CPA CCO 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

<sup>396</sup> CPA CCO 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65, contains a number of responses to the Chief Organisation Officer's directive, all clearly understanding their role.

<sup>397</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 148.

<sup>398</sup> CPA CCO 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

<sup>399</sup> 'Peterborough', 'Breath of Youth', *The Daily Telegraph*, 24 January 1962.

<sup>400</sup> 'By Our Political Staff', *The Daily Telegraph*, 26 January 1962.

<sup>401</sup> A. S. Garner to the Chief Organisation Officer, 'The Monday Club', 26 January 1962. CPA CCO 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

<sup>402</sup> A. S. Garner to the Chief Organisation Officer, 'The Monday Club', 26 January 1962. CPA CCO 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

Any residual indifference there may have been within Central Office now disappeared. Whereas Central Office had looked favourably on membership of the Bow Group, in February 1962 it ordered its own Young Conservatives' department to cease contacts with the Monday Club.<sup>403</sup> Area Agents continued sending intelligence reports to Central Office. Central Office monitored attempts to create new Monday Club branches, and was probably alarmed to note that any negative aspects did not hinder its success. For example, disappointment at the lack of clarity over aims in a Monday Club presentation in February did not, according to the Central Office Area Agent for the Western Area, dampen the interest of two vice-chairmen, two vice-presidents, the Divisional Chairman of the Young Conservatives and two other office holders of the St. Ives National Liberal and Conservative Association.<sup>404</sup> They felt that the Monday Club contained 'the essence of the considerable dissatisfaction with recent Party policy which has been evident throughout the country'.<sup>405</sup> Central Office's Area Agents and those working for them tried to hinder the Monday Club. In February, Central Office Agent Mr. Welch rejected the need for a Monday Club discussion group in Durham and claimed that the Conservative Political Centre met such needs.<sup>406</sup> Welch showed that he knew precisely the remit of the December directive when he passed all of his correspondence on this matter to the Area Agent Mr. Livingston, who in turn forwarded it to Central Office.<sup>407</sup> Area Agents did not limit their counter-measures to ordinary party members. In April, the Conservative MP for Yeovil asked the Chairman of his local Conservative Association for the names and addresses of Young Conservatives whom he thought would be amenable to an approach by the Monday Club.<sup>408</sup> The Area Agent, Mr. Slinn, told the Chairman that the Monday Club was not part of the Conservative Party and to withhold the

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<sup>403</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 148, mentions this, citing CCO 3/6/16 Monday Club, 1960-65.

<sup>404</sup> D. P. B. Tovey to Mr. B. T. Slinn, Esq., OBE., Central Office Agent for the Western Area, 'The Monday Club', 15 February 1962. CPA CCO 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

<sup>405</sup> D. P. B. Tovey to Mr. B. T. Slinn, Esq., OBE., Central Office Agent for the Western Area, 'The Monday Club', 15 February 1962. CPA CCO 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

<sup>406</sup> Copy of letter from Norman Welch to Paul Bristol, 21 February 1962. CPA CCO 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

<sup>407</sup> P. K. Livingston to the Chief Organisation Officer, 'Monday Club', 22 February 1962. CPA CCO 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65. Livingston identifies Welch as 'our Agent for the Durham Group.'

<sup>408</sup> B. T. Slinn to the Chief Organisation Officer, 'The Monday Club', 19 April 1962. CPA CCO 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

details requested.<sup>409</sup> Slinn forwarded the details of the enquiry to Central Office, including his instruction to deny information to a sitting member of parliament.<sup>410</sup> The Chief Organisation Officer thanked Slinn and made plain that in April 1962 Central Office thought that the Monday Club was an 'extremely right wing' organisation, 'and obviously are not to be trusted'.<sup>411</sup>

Thus, although Ramsden argued correctly that Martell's activities diverted 'dissatisfaction from channels that could have been more dangerous', which implicitly included the Monday Club,<sup>412</sup> it does not mean that Central Office ignored it. Indeed, it could hardly afford to do so, considering the Monday Club's actions and comments in the difficult year of 1963. Between 1 April and 15 July, when a large Labour poll lead and the Profumo Affair rocked the government, 24 new members brought the Monday Club's membership to 198.<sup>413</sup> Leading members hoped that affecting reorganisation and embarking on a number of operations would give the Monday Club 'a firm place in Conservative politics'.<sup>414</sup> An 'Annual Dinner' planned for October lent the Monday Club respectability. By August, Lord Home was among other distinguished guests of the Monday Club.<sup>415</sup> Meanwhile, the Monday Club had sought funds to cover production costs for a pamphlet that they intended to distribute at the October party conference, *Conservatism Lost? Conservatism Regained*.<sup>416</sup> Behind the scenes, Monday Club leaders criticised Macmillan's policies, particularly foreign and imperial, and revealed views similar to Hilton of the True Tories. In

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<sup>409</sup> B. T. Slinn to the Chief Organisation Officer, 'The Monday Club', 19 April 1962. CPA CCO 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

<sup>410</sup> B. T. Slinn to the Chief Organisation Officer, 'The Monday Club', 19 April 1962. CPA CCO 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

<sup>411</sup> Chief Organisation Officer to Mr. Slinn, 'The Monday Club', 25 April 1962. CPA CCO 3/6/16, Monday Club, 1960-65.

<sup>412</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 150.

<sup>413</sup> 'Membership Position and Recruiting Campaign', Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/1, November 1961 – February 1964. University of Hull. Wall lived at Cheyne Walk, as did, coincidentally, Oswald Mosley and Mary Parsons of *Drakes Drum*.

<sup>414</sup> John Howe to Major Patrick Wall, MP, 'The Monday Club', 27 August 1963. Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/1, November 1961 – February 1964. University of Hull.

<sup>415</sup> John Howe to Major Patrick Wall, MP, 'The Monday Club', 27 August 1963. Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/1, November 1961 – February 1964. University of Hull.

<sup>416</sup> John Howe to Major Patrick Wall, MP, 'The Monday Club', 27 August 1963. Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/1, November 1961 – February 1964. University of Hull.

September, Salisbury expressed to Patrick Wall his fear that the government's current policy of decolonisation would cause 'the old White Commonwealth countries' to abandon Britain's sphere of influence, leaving only 'the blacks, who have no sympathy with Britain and all that Britain stands for'.<sup>417</sup> This language was not simply reflective of contemporary discourse, but was the result of a personal credo of imperialism sunk deeply in the roots of the Cecil family, and in which 'race' justified British dominance. For Salisbury, if the government abandoned imperialism it would have dire consequences. Salisbury believed blacks to be 'our problem', and the likelihood of a 'future white versus black racial world conflict' to be 'very great' if the policy of swift decolonisation continued.<sup>418</sup> As these comments came from such a high profile individual, it was also likely that Central Office saw race as crucial to the Monday Club's existence from virtually the beginning. It is hard to believe that Central Office was ignorant of these views.

The publication of *Conservatism Lost? Conservatism Regained* just before the party conference in October 1963 would have removed any ignorance of the Monday Club's views in Central Office. Martell's Tileyard Press printed it and it touched on many areas. It saw decadence as rife in a Britain where material wealth uneasily coexisted with declining religious and moral standards.<sup>419</sup> A powerful, centralising state had eroded individual liberties.<sup>420</sup> The machinery of government, economy, business, taxation and nationalised industries all needed reforming.<sup>421</sup> Yet, Britain's colonies were the main-focus of the pamphlet. The government had allowed British colonies their independence, and bribed the electorate into acquiescence 'with promises of greater affluence and materialism'.<sup>422</sup> Further, 'Nothing can be more destructive of Britain's good name than certain aspects of the Government's African policy since 1960', where, the publication implied, the Government had been less than honest in its actions.<sup>423</sup> The Monday Club held Macmillan responsible. Criticism of 'Too much of the old school-tie, of nepotism' transparently referred to the over-

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<sup>417</sup> Lord Salisbury to Patrick Wall, 17 September 1963. Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/1, November 1961 – February 1964. University of Hull.

<sup>418</sup> Lord Salisbury to Patrick Wall, 17 September 1963. Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/1, November 1961 – February 1964. University of Hull.

<sup>419</sup> *Conservatism Lost? Conservatism Regained*, Monday Club, London (Oct. 1963), 3.

<sup>420</sup> *Conservatism Lost? Conservatism Regained*, Monday Club, London (Oct. 1963), 7-8.

<sup>421</sup> *Conservatism Lost? Conservatism Regained*, Monday Club, London (Oct. 1963), 8-10.

<sup>422</sup> *Conservatism Lost? Conservatism Regained*, Monday Club, London (Oct. 1963), 3.

<sup>423</sup> *Conservatism Lost? Conservatism Regained*, Monday Club, London (Oct. 1963), 11.

representation in the Cabinet of the major public schools, particular Macmillan's alma mater, Eton, and the preponderance of Macmillan's relatives in the whole government.<sup>424</sup> It quoted Lord Home saying that, 'I think the greatest danger in the world today is that the world might divide on racial lines',<sup>425</sup> and thus revealed the centrality of skin colour to early Monday Club thinking, as well as the desire to remove Macmillan. The pamphlet was a rallying-call to 'new leaders',<sup>426</sup> for distribution at what looked like being a very difficult party conference.

### *Right turn Homewards?*

Perhaps fortuitously for Macmillan, he did not attend the 1963 party conference at Blackpool. Ill health forced his sudden resignation and absence from party conference. Alec Douglas-Home, another Etonian, surprisingly succeeded Macmillan rather than the expected R. A. Butler or Lord Hailsham. In some respects, this reinforced existing political alignments. In replacing the 'Edwardian' Macmillan with Home, the Conservative Party merely substituted an ersatz anachronism for a real one. Home was the fourteenth earl of a family first ennobled in the fifteenth century. Maternal ancestry connected Home to the late Stuart and early Hanoverian aristocracy. Home was barely an early, let alone contemporary, renaissance figure, and therefore contrasted poorly with the dynamic, scholarship boy from Huddersfield leading the Labour Party since early 1963, Harold Wilson. The existence of a phenomenon that did not trouble Home's forbears exacerbated this contrast. On television Home's voice, personality and even physiognomy reinforced the idea that the Conservatives had turned in desperation to its aristocratic core. It did not help that television ownership was thirteen times greater than when the Conservatives regained office in 1951.<sup>427</sup> In others respects, however, the political context changed. Unlike his three predecessors as Conservative leader, Home had been a loyal lieutenant of Neville Chamberlain.<sup>428</sup> The hierarchy of the 1922 Committee of backbench Conservative MPs supported Home's candidacy. Gilmour described them as, 'good, solid citizens, hangers and floggers, who deplored what had been done in Africa and

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<sup>424</sup> Sandbrook, *Never*, 78.

<sup>425</sup> *Conservatism Lost? Conservatism Regained*, Monday Club, London (Oct. 1963), 12.

<sup>426</sup> *Conservatism Lost? Conservatism Regained*, Monday Club, London (Oct. 1963), 3.

<sup>427</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 217.

<sup>428</sup> Sandbrook, *Never*, 694.

thought the Government had moved far too far to the left at home'.<sup>429</sup> Home was unequivocally the candidate of the party's right wing. His succession therefore presented both Central Office and alienated right wing Conservatives with a new situation for the post-war era: a right-wing Conservative Party leader and Prime Minister. It changed the relationship between the extreme right and the Conservative Party.

Unlike Macmillan, Home did not have the luxury of over three years to make his appeal before he had to call a General Election. Only a bare twelve months were available to him. This may also have influenced the clear change in the attitude of some extreme-right organisations and their relationship with the Conservative Party. Definite changes in their attitude were detectable. This was most obvious in the Freedom Group. The events of the Bristol South East by-election would not have allayed fears within Central Office that Martell intended either to infiltrate the Conservative Party, or to launch a new party. He had appeared on national television twice and secured 19% of the vote, which allowed Martell to claim that 'millions' had now heard of his organisation.<sup>430</sup> Central Office quickly warned Home against contact with Martell. Ramsden stated that this was because Central Office believed that Martell would use any contact to portray himself as a confidant of the new Prime Minister.<sup>431</sup> Thus, Central Office continued to oppose Martell. However, the Freedom Group's attitude towards the government had altered. On 21 October 1963, *The New Daily* announced that Home's accession had restored its belief in a future Conservative election victory.<sup>432</sup> It also welcomed the removal of R. A. Butler from domestic policy and Iain Macleod's resignation from the Cabinet and Party Chairmanship, and claimed 'The Conservative Party's dangerous drift to the left has now been halted.'<sup>433</sup> *The New Daily* declared that Home's promotion of right-wingers demonstrated 'that progress and development need not be leftwards'.<sup>434</sup> Perhaps significantly, the Area Agent for the South East reported to the Chief Organisation

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<sup>429</sup> Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever*, 187.

<sup>430</sup> 'Success at Bristol', *The New Daily*, 22 August 1963.

<sup>431</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 149. Cites CCO 3/6/101, Freedom Group, 1960-5.

<sup>432</sup> 'Now The General Election Can Be Won', *The New Daily*, 21 October 1963.

<sup>433</sup> 'Dangerous Drift To The Left Comes To An End', *The New Daily*, 21 October 1963.

<sup>434</sup> 'Dangerous Drift To The Left Comes To An End', *The New Daily*, 21 October 1963.

Officer the positive reception given to Home's accession at a public meeting in Martell's constituency.<sup>435</sup>

Central Office's stance towards Martell and his organisations now changed. Somewhat disingenuously, it claimed to Home's Constituency Secretary in November 1963 that it had never 'set out to dissuade any of our supporters from joining Mr. Martell's movements', and stated its pleasure at Martell's support.<sup>436</sup> Central Office now argued that Martell's current position could 'do nothing but good',<sup>437</sup> and denied ever taking any inimical action towards him. A reformulation of Central Office's position towards Martell was underway. As Martell embarked on yet another referendum to influence government policies in January 1964,<sup>438</sup> the General Director at Central Office ordered another dossier on him and his organisations. The result was much different to earlier ones in one vital respect. Gone were the innuendoes of fascism.<sup>439</sup> Now, *The New Daily* was 'anti-fascist'.<sup>440</sup> However, this does not mean that Central Office ceased to monitor Martell's activities. A subsequent report summarised the extent of contact with Martell's organisations within Areas and local Conservative Associations.<sup>441</sup>

Central Office had not necessarily had a collective change of heart regarding Martell. There was too much grudging language and qualifying comments in its correspondence. Central Office described the Freedom Group's views as 'fair enough ... as it stands at the minute,' which suggested that Central Office thought this new situation was only temporary.<sup>442</sup> Additionally, Central Office's new stance does not mean that it had suspended its suspicions of Martell's ultimate intentions. For

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<sup>435</sup> A. N. Banks to the Chief Organisation Officer, 'Public Meeting – Hastings. Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> October', CPA CCO 1/12/437, Hastings, Dec. 1961 – Jan. 1968.

<sup>436</sup> Letter to Miss Angela Bowlby, 27 November 1963. CPA CCO 3/6/128, National Fellowship, 1960-5.

<sup>437</sup> Letter to Miss Angela Bowlby, 27 November 1963. CPA CCO 3/6/128, National Fellowship, 1960-5.

<sup>438</sup> 'General Election Policy Referendum', January 1964. CPA CCO 3/6/101, Freedom Group 1960-65.

<sup>439</sup> See 122.

<sup>440</sup> Internal Dossier, 'Edward Martell', 9 January 1964. CPA CCO 3/6/101, Freedom Group, 1960-65.

<sup>441</sup> S. A. Walker to the General Director, 'Mr. Edward Martell', 12 May 1964. CPA CCO 3//6/101, Freedom Group, 1960-65.

<sup>442</sup> Letter to Miss Angela Bowlby, 27 November 1963. CPA CCO 3/6/128, National Fellowship, 1960-5.

example, a Central Office Area Agent reported Martell's attempt to stop the removal of his own Association Chairman in March 1964.<sup>443</sup> The Agent forwarded his report to the General Director, and the Chief Organisation Officer wrote on it, 'You see how right we were. This is the "encounter battle." I suspect we shall now have "a struggle for full control" and no Queensbury rules!'<sup>444</sup> This was firm evidence that Central Office took seriously Martell's intention to infiltrate and take over the Conservative Party, which he had expressed in July 1963.<sup>445</sup> Nevertheless, Central Office stance towards Martell during Home's premiership was different to that exhibited whilst Macmillan was Prime Minister. Moreover, it was a change that removed one of the most substantial barriers to an organisation's chances of having a relationship with the Conservative Party: a perception of fascist connections. Unlike previous Martell organisations, the Freedom Group formed a relationship with the Conservative Party.

At the end of April, the *Yorkshire Post* announced that the Freedom Group intended to become involved in the Huyton constituency of Labour leader Harold Wilson.<sup>446</sup> Martell announced that thirty-eight Conservative MPs supported the Freedom Group and announced the beginning of a 'decapitation strategy' defeat Wilson in case Labour won the expected autumn General Election.<sup>447</sup> On 2 May, Martell extended the Freedom Group's offer of assistance to all Conservative Associations, and claimed that he had informed Party Chairman Lord Blakenham of his actions. Two days later, as Freedom Group adverts announced in *The Times* its involvement in the Huyton constituency and requested donations,<sup>448</sup> Martell wrote to Blakenham and offered the Freedom Group's co-operation to the Conservative Party, which included use of *The New Daily*.<sup>449</sup> Martell received a polite, but non-committal response.<sup>450</sup> He wrote to Blakenham once more, and this time included a copy of a letter to the Chairman of the

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<sup>443</sup> A. N. Banks, 'Hastings', 12 March 1964. CPA CCO 1/12/437, Hastings, Dec. 1961 – Jan. 1968.

<sup>444</sup> Chief Organisation Officer to the General Director, 13 March 1963. This is a handwritten note on letter from Banks of 12 March. CPA CCO 1/12/437, Hastings, Dec. 1961 – Jan. 1968.

<sup>445</sup> See 154-157.

<sup>446</sup> 'Freedom Group Plans To Oust Mr. Wilson: 'Conservatives Need Gingering Up'', *Yorkshire Post*, 30 April 1964.

<sup>447</sup> 'Freedom Group Plans To Oust Mr. Wilson: 'Conservatives Need Gingering Up'', *Yorkshire Post*, 30 April 1964.

<sup>448</sup> 'This Man Can Be Unseated', *The Times*, 4 May 1964.

<sup>449</sup> Edward Martell to Lord Blakenham, 4 May 1964. CPA CCO 3/6/101, Freedom Group, 1960-65.

<sup>450</sup> Lord Blakenham to Edward Martell, 6 May 1964. CPA CCO 3/6/101, Freedom Group, 1960-65.

Huyton Conservative Association, Mr. R. Bradley, which made it clear that the two men had recently met.<sup>451</sup> If Central Office wanted to stop Martell in his tracks, this was the time, since no working relationship had yet developed. Central Office had previously issued prohibitive directives concerning Martell,<sup>452</sup> and so was perfectly capable of such an action. However, at the end of May *the Observer's* report on events in Huyton made it clear that Central Office had not issued any such directive. Instead, it quoted Martell as saying, 'We are very ready to conform to the conditions proposed by the Huyton Conservative Association.'<sup>453</sup> Central Office had not stopped the contact. What followed proved this was not simply a case of a local association exercising its autonomy. The following day, *The Daily Telegraph* covered the story. Perhaps reflecting Central Office's wishes, the paper downplayed Martell's likely impact, but did not deny his involvement.<sup>454</sup> In mid-June, Blakenham admitted privately to Conservative MP Joan Vickers that Martell was indeed assisting the party in Huyton. He justified Martell's co-operation in Huyton, and elsewhere, by when he stated that it was acceptable 'providing it is on our terms and not on his and if it is made quite plain that any of his members working for us agree to do so under the control of the Constituency Officers and Agent in support of our policy'.<sup>455</sup> Thus, Blakenham confidentially revealed the existence its working relationship with an individual whom Central Office had previously been prepared to smear with accusations of fascism. In September, Martell wrote to Blakenham and enclosed the instructions given to Freedom Group workers assisting in Huyton, which were completely in accord with the remit Blakenham outlined privately to Joan Vickers.<sup>456</sup> This further proved the existence of a relationship. Additionally, even if this, or the newspaper reports, had not raised awareness of this relationship, there was the issue of the campaign poster. For, although Blakenham forced Martell to remove the Freedom Group's name from the poster, the printing press acknowledged on it,

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<sup>451</sup> Edward Martell to Lord Blakenham, 7 May 1964. CPA CCO 3/6/101, Freedom Group, 1960-65.

<sup>452</sup> See 92.

<sup>453</sup> 'Tories Take Help From Martell', *The Observer*, 31 May 1964.

<sup>454</sup> "Get Wilson Out' campaign by Tory constituents', *The Daily Telegraph*, 1 June 1964.

<sup>455</sup> Lord Blakenham to Miss Joan Vickers, MBE, MP, 15 June 1964. CPA CCO 3/6/101, Freedom Group, 1960-65.

<sup>456</sup> Edward Martell to Lord Blakenham, 20 September 1964. CPA CCO 3/6/101, Freedom Group, 1960-65.

Tileyard Press, belonged to Martell.<sup>457</sup> Central Office knew this from its earlier investigation of Monday Club literature.<sup>458</sup> Just in case it had forgotten about it, one call to the phone number given for Tileyard Press would reveal that it had the same telephone number as the Freedom Group.<sup>459</sup>

How, then, are we to explain this changed attitude? Opportunism is a possible answer. The Conservatives had been in power for thirteen years and looked staid compared to Labour. Did Central Office believe that the Freedom Group had changed? The 'Freedom Group's General Election Policy', printed in the May editions of respectable publications such as *The Times* and *Spectator*, called for immigration restrictions not to be based on skin colour.<sup>460</sup> This removed one of Central Office's most consistent post-1945 dividing lines in determining relations with extreme-right groups, and thus made any association with the Freedom Group less risky. A desire to lessen Martell's potential to harm the Conservative Party may also explain why Central Office used him. Martell's criticism of the Government's continued apathy in summer 1964 may have been viewed by Central Office as evidence that Martell retained personal ambitions, whether inside the Conservative party or not. This would explain why, in the letter to Vickers that justified using Martell, Blakenham stressed that he would not be happy to see 'his group take over even the smallest section of our organisation'.<sup>461</sup> However, this does not rule out the possibility that Central Office used Martell to keep him within the Conservative fold whilst keeping him at arms length. If so, this was also a conscious counter-measure against Martell. Just as likely, Martell had become the victim of the paradoxical problem that faced all leaders and supporters of extreme-right organisations. The Conservative Party attracted as well as alienated the extreme right. It seemed to have changed its orientation under Home, and thus appeared more attractive to Freedom Group members. If so, Central Office played a less conscious role in blocking Martell.

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<sup>457</sup> Edward Martell to Lord Blakenham, 23 September 1964. CPA CCO 3/6/101, Freedom Group, 1960-65.

<sup>458</sup> See 161.

<sup>459</sup> Edward Martell to Lord Blakenham, 23 September 1964. CPA CCO 3/6/101, Freedom Group, 1960-65.

<sup>460</sup> 'The City Had Better Make Up Its Mind If It Wants A Socialist Government', *The New Daily*, 12 May 1964.

<sup>461</sup> Lord Blakenham to Miss Joan Vickers, MBE, MP, 15 June 1964. CPA CCO 3/6/101, Freedom Group, 1960-65.

In one sense, the Conservative Party's dual role is difficult to detect under Home. With such a short space of time, Home effectively played Macmillan's hand, as Ramsden noted.<sup>462</sup> Extensive changes were injudicious in election year. They would leave the Government open to obvious questions as to why policies followed for thirteen years were no longer suitable. Nevertheless, Home's government did proffer olive branches to the right. A promised inquiry into trade-union practices and legislation, for example, directly answered the Freedom Group's demands for a Royal Commission.<sup>463</sup> The forcing through of the abolition of Resale Price Maintenance, whilst it irritated many traditional Conservatives, appealed to right-wing advocates of economic liberalism.<sup>464</sup> Thus, just as in the Commonwealth Immigration Bill, the Conservative Party extended its reach rightwards to deny political space to those seeking to exploit it, in this instance Edward Martell and his Freedom Group, and attracted his supporters. If so, then the change of stance by Central Office towards Martell and his organisations becomes even more understandable. By allowing the Freedom Group's participation in the General Election, specifically in Huyton and generally elsewhere, Central Office increased the probability that these formerly alienated supporters would vote Conservative in the General Election. Additionally, by doing so Central Office drove a wedge between Martell and his supporters. It offered just enough to the latter to win them over and thus limited Martell's ability to use them as a vehicle for his personal ambition. By acting thus, Central Office maintained its function as a barrier to the extreme right. Blakenham's justification for using the Freedom Group revealed this. Blakenham confidentially reassured the Conservative MP that Central Office only accepted Martell's assistance on him giving 'very specific undertakings that he will not make his co-operation prior to the Election an occasion for pursuing policies in which he and his Group believe but which are not accepted by us'.<sup>465</sup> In doing so, Blakenham showed how, in this instance, Central Office had limited the potential impact of extreme right wing policies. Proof that this strategy worked came during the General Election campaign, when Martell acknowledged that Freedom Group members now felt that 'no extraordinary measures

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<sup>462</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 217.

<sup>463</sup> See 150.

<sup>464</sup> R. Findley, 'The Conservative Party and Defeat: the Significance of Resale Price Maintenance for the General Election of 1964', *Twentieth Century British History*, 12, 3 (2001), 327-353.

<sup>465</sup> Lord Blakenham to Miss Joan Vickers, MBE, MP, 15 June 1964. CPA CCO 3/6/101, Freedom Group, 1960-65.

are needed',<sup>466</sup> and thus abandoned a secret plan to field fifty candidates. The reason was obvious. The plan had been conceived when a 'sweeping Labour victory in the General Election was a certainty'.<sup>467</sup> Now, simply, it was not. The reason why Martell no longer believed it to be a certainty was that the Conservative Party under Home was again an attractive proposition to formerly alienated right-wing Conservative supporters. The reason why Martell abandoned his plan, however, had much to do with Central Office's actions.

There was a definite change in the attitude of the Monday Club too. A leading member noted that the press considered that *Conservatism Lost? Conservatism Regained?* was 'an attack against the leadership'.<sup>468</sup> This was far more serious than an attack from outside the party. Moreover, the fact that it had quoted Lord Home's intemperate words on race made before he became Prime Minister made this publication even more impolitic.<sup>469</sup> It caused recriminations within the Monday Club and a re-assessment of what it stood for. Corresponding with Lord Salisbury, Sir Patrick Wall MP thought that the Monday Club's young Chairman, and his friends' use of it as their personal vehicle caused the problems.<sup>470</sup> Furthermore, Wall thought that whereas consensus existed within the Monday Club regarding Africa, diverse views existed on other subjects, and concluded that the Club needed an effective machinery of consultation.<sup>471</sup> These events show that the Monday Club was still rudimentary in its policy formulation, dissemination and position. Senior figures like Wall also saw its comments as irresponsible now that Home had replaced Macmillan, the catalyst for its formation. The ensuing furore within the wider Conservative Party soon caused the resignation of the Monday Club's Co-Chairman and Vice-Chairman.<sup>472</sup> The Monday Club sought to repair any damage and issued a swift explanation and a reassuring statement. It claimed that the offending publication was

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<sup>466</sup> Edward Martell to Lord Blakenham, 5 October 1964. CPA CCO 3/6/101 Freedom Group, 1960-65.

<sup>467</sup> 'The Secret's Out So Here Are The Full Details', *The New Daily*, 5 October 1964.

<sup>468</sup> Sir Patrick Wall to The Rt. Hon. The Marquess of Salisbury, 29 October. Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/1, Nov. 1961 – Feb. 1964. University of Hull.

<sup>469</sup> See 166.

<sup>470</sup> Sir Patrick Wall to The Rt. Hon. The Marquess of Salisbury, 29 October. Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/1, Nov. 1961 – Feb. 1964. University of Hull.

<sup>471</sup> Sir Patrick Wall to The Rt. Hon. The Marquess of Salisbury, 29 October. Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/1, Nov. 1961 – Feb. 1964. University of Hull.

<sup>472</sup> Sir Patrick Wall to The Rt. Hon. The Marquess of Salisbury, 29 October. Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/1, Nov. 1961 – Feb. 1964. University of Hull.

an expression of 'what we felt to be lacking in the Conservative system of government'.<sup>473</sup> Now, the apology noted, there was 'already a welcome new atmosphere in the conduct of our affairs, nor is the present Prime Minister unaware of the truth about Africa'.<sup>474</sup> Therefore, it stated, the Monday Club henceforth 'must and will offer constructive suggestions to the Government as to how it can develop Conservative principles into practical policies'.<sup>475</sup>

This damage limitation by a right-wing organisation that was still in its infancy had immediate consequences. Despite noting that one hundred new members had joined in the previous year, the minutes of a General Meeting of 14 November 1963 recorded the Chairman's disappointment at the poor attendance.<sup>476</sup> Patrick Wall ensured that the Monday Club discussed its orientation and function at the next meeting on Monday, 9 December 1963.<sup>477</sup> However, the circular that proposed the discussion showed that one embarrassing publication had not cowed the Monday Club, or that it was prepared to settle for obscurity. This ambitious organisation was avowedly right-wing and remained intent on pursuing its policies. The circular pointed to the Club's focus on African and Commonwealth affairs, and admitted that the Monday Club 'attracted an ultra-right label',<sup>478</sup> which it justified as an inevitable consequence of focusing on areas that attracted most criticism of the government. A proposal at the recent Annual General Meeting that the Monday Club 'cease to be the exclusive preserve of the Right and should attract and embrace every colour of opinion in the Conservative Party',<sup>479</sup> had received short-shrift. Stating that there was 'no virtue in this', the circular's author argued that the consequence of such a move would be the Monday Club withering away 'into complete ineffectiveness'.<sup>480</sup> Instead, the Monday

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<sup>473</sup> *Monthly Newsletter*, Monday Club, November 1963.

<sup>474</sup> *Monthly Newsletter*, Monday Club, November 1963.

<sup>475</sup> *Monthly Newsletter*, Monday Club, November 1963.

<sup>476</sup> 'The Minutes of the General Meeting of the 'Monday Club' held on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November at 7 p.m. at the Onslow Court. Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/1, Nov. 1961 – Feb. 1964. University of Hull.

<sup>477</sup> Set out in a circular, Wall asked, 'Please bring it to the Meeting on Monday.'

<sup>478</sup> Circular titled 'The Monday Club', 1. Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/1, Nov. 1961 – Feb. 1964. University of Hull.

<sup>479</sup> Circular titled 'The Monday Club', 1. Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/1, Nov. 1961 – Feb. 1964. University of Hull.

<sup>480</sup> Circular titled 'The Monday Club', 1. Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/1, Nov. 1961 – Feb. 1964. University of Hull.

Club should be a 'vocal conscience of Tory Principles',<sup>481</sup> which counterbalanced left-wing clubs like the Bow Group. When the circular stated that the Monday Club should function as the 'nagging conscience and a spur to the Party or Government to act on true Tory principles',<sup>482</sup> it identified the Club with other post-1945 extreme-right champions of Conservative ideals. However, as it organised itself into specific departments,<sup>483</sup> the Monday Club presented a far more realistic and coherent prospect of dealing with 'specific aspects of policy where these Tory principles have either been abrogated or not yet realised',<sup>484</sup> than these external extremist groups. When it called for an enlarged parliamentary group that liaised with a small 'action group' and was backed by a team of letter writers, the circular proposed an effective mechanism for disseminating Monday Club views that was similar to Edward Martell's organisations. However, the method outlined held greater promise of success. The circular advocated switching the Monday Club's vigorous attacks away from the Conservative Government to the Labour Opposition. It argued that this would legitimise the Club's policies and thus increase their chances of acceptance, 'however much they were disapproved of by the pinker and less resolute Conservatives'.<sup>485</sup> This showed that although the Monday Club may have changed the focus of attack, it did not intend to change its orientation as an organisation that operated on the extreme right of the Conservative Party. Its members intended its function to be a 'rallying point of the Right rather than the somewhat inert refuge of the Right'.<sup>486</sup>

This picture of a refocused, policy-developing organisation that was eager not to alienate the party leadership continued throughout election year 1964. The relationship between Central Office and the Monday Club, despite the Monday Club being determinedly right wing, was therefore predominantly positive. In February, the Annual General Meeting of the Monday Club rejected another call for greater

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<sup>481</sup> Circular titled 'The Monday Club', 1. Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/1, Nov. 1961 – Feb. 1964. University of Hull.

<sup>482</sup> Circular titled 'The Monday Club', 1. Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/1, Nov. 1961 – Feb. 1964. University of Hull.

<sup>483</sup> i.e. health, education, defence, local government and any others when deemed necessary.

<sup>484</sup> Circular titled 'The Monday Club', 2. Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/1, Nov. 1961 – Feb. 1964. University of Hull.

<sup>485</sup> Circular titled 'The Monday Club', 3. Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/1, Nov. 1961 – Feb. 1964. University of Hull.

<sup>486</sup> Circular titled 'The Monday Club', 2. Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/1, Nov. 1961 – Feb. 1964. University of Hull.

representation from across the Conservative Party and welcomed the removal of those who were ideologically unsound.<sup>487</sup> However, minutes of the same meeting recorded the co-operation of the Conservative Political Centre at Central Office in publishing the Monday Club pamphlet *Strike Out or Strike Bound*.<sup>488</sup> In April, the Monday Club's Council attacked the more left-wing Bow Group and determined on a clearer definition of Monday Club domestic policy to increase chances of their inclusion in the forthcoming manifesto.<sup>489</sup> In July, the Conservative Political Centre decided not to publish the Monday Club pamphlet, *Automation*.<sup>490</sup> This may have resulted from a desire to avoid contentious issues near the General Election rather than any desire to limit contact with a group that attacked progressives within the party. Alternatively, Central Office may have simply used the Monday Club's publications to attract alienated supporters, cherry picking its acceptable literature whilst ignoring those deemed too contentious or extreme. If so, the Monday Club at this time was an attracting agent in the Conservative Party's alienation/attraction role vis-à-vis the extreme right. There does not appear to have been any antagonism towards Central Office from the Monday Club at this stage. On the contrary, members of the Monday Club determined to, 'Improve our standing with the Party Organisation' and resolved that, 'all our efforts should be towards helping the Party over the next few months'.<sup>491</sup> Therefore, the Monday Club during Home's leadership, unlike that under Macmillan's, was clearly not prepared to 'rock the boat'. Its publication of *The Handmaidens of Diplomacy* in summer 1964 supported this picture.<sup>492</sup> It comprehensively outlined deficiencies in Britain's strategic political warfare aims and focused on areas where criticism of previous Conservative Governments was possible. There was none. The pamphlet instead reserved its negative comments for

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<sup>487</sup> Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Monday Club, 24 February 1964. Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, University of Hull. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/2, Nov. 1963 – Dec. 1964.

<sup>488</sup> Eventually published in July, 1963.

<sup>489</sup> Minutes of the Monday Club Council Meeting, 23 April 1964. Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, University of Hull. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/2, Nov. 1963 – Dec. 1964. Typical of many extremists, the Council saw itself as being 'Centre-Right', arguing that charges of being too reactionary were press misrepresentations. Tellingly, truly centre-right organisations like the Bow Group were denounced as 'far too left wing.' See also Sir Patrick Wall's letter to Michael Gomm Esq., 17 September 1964, in same collection.

<sup>490</sup> Minutes of a Monday Club Committee Meeting, 13 July 1964, Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, University of Hull. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/2, Nov. 1963 – Dec. 1964. *Automation* was eventually published in January 1965.

<sup>491</sup> Minutes of a Monday Club Committee Meeting, 13 July 1964, Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, University of Hull. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/2, Nov. 1963 – Dec. 1964.

<sup>492</sup> D. G. Stewart-Smith, *The Handmaidens of Diplomacy*, Monday Club, London (1964).

the traditional targets of Conservative ire such as the civil service and the BBC,<sup>493</sup> and thus avoided alienating the new administration. It received favourable comments in *The Times*,<sup>494</sup> and ‘an almost unprecedented number of inquiries and requests for copies’.<sup>495</sup> This publication arguably attracted dissident Conservatives back into the fold. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the Monday Club offered to provide Central Office with a canvassing squad at the General Election,<sup>496</sup> nor that Lord Blakenham specifically asked for Monday Club assistance as the General Election loomed.<sup>497</sup>

A more positive attitude towards the Monday Club does not mean that Central Office ceased to be hostile towards right-wingers. Donald Johnson MP admitted holding views that Central Office considered extremely right wing.<sup>498</sup> As well as being on The National Fellowship’s National Executive, Johnson was a Monday Club member. He believed that his criticism of the government’s health policy had resulted in counter-measures by the Party organisation: ‘Platforms throughout the country were fenced in by the Party machine.’<sup>499</sup> He was in little doubt that Central Office received reports from within his local Conservative Association of the criticisms he made of the government.<sup>500</sup> Johnson also questioned whether Central Office was neutral in disputes within a constituency. He surmised that Central Office made its views known by a ‘discreet phone call from Chairman at Headquarters to Chairman of Constituency Association’, and argued that the supposed autonomy of the local Conservative Associations was a subterfuge.<sup>501</sup> Association chairmen were, Johnson believed at the time, deservedly known as the ‘hatchet-men’ of the Party.<sup>502</sup> In this instance, Johnson spoke from bitter experience.

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<sup>493</sup> D. G. Stewart-Smith, *The Handmaidens of Diplomacy*, Monday Club, London (1964), 5-11.

<sup>494</sup> Minutes of a Monday Club Committee Meeting, 24 August 1964. Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, University of Hull. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/2, Nov. 1963 – Dec. 1964.

<sup>495</sup> Minutes of a Monday Club Committee Meeting, 24 August 1964. Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, University of Hull. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/2, Nov. 1963 – Dec. 1964.

<sup>496</sup> Minutes of a Monday Club Committee Meeting, 24 August 1964. Private Papers of Sir Patrick Wall, University of Hull. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/2, Nov. 1963 – Dec. 1964.

<sup>497</sup> *Monthly Newsletter*, Monday Club, September 1964.

<sup>498</sup> See 146.

<sup>499</sup> Johnson, *Cassandra*, 102. Johnson also mentions the Speaker’s repeated failure to allow him to speak in debates in which he had a personal interest. Also mentioned are the preponderance of Etonians and the necessity of possessing the right social cachet as prerequisites for success. The Speaker was an old Etonian. 33-55.

<sup>500</sup> Johnson, *Cassandra*, 109.

<sup>501</sup> Johnson, *Cassandra*, 185.

<sup>502</sup> Johnson, *On Becoming an Independent MP*, Johnson, London (1964), 18.

On 14 October 1963, Johnson's Association deselected him as Conservative candidate for Carlisle.<sup>503</sup> His account, obviously being partial, warrants cautious handling. Additionally to be borne in mind is the trouble that Johnson caused his government, and his constituency.<sup>504</sup> Johnson's case is also opaque. It does not definitely prove that Central Office was involved. Nevertheless, some incidents suggested Johnson had a point when he suspected central orchestration in his removal. It is probable that the Carlisle Conservative Association decided to deselect Johnson before Macmillan resigned. Constituency files revealed that Central Office knew that the Carlisle Association considered deselecting Johnson at least one year before it happened.<sup>505</sup> Moreover, there is evidence of suspicious contact between Central Office and the Carlisle Conservative Association before Johnson's de-selection. Johnson pointed to some events during the party's 1963 Blackpool conference, during which Macmillan resigned. He cited the contact between the Treasurer of the Carlisle Conservative Association and Sir Toby Low, Vice Chairman at Central Office, especially the strange occurrence of the Treasurer personally driving Low to his hotel.<sup>506</sup> The Treasurer was not a senior party official in the Blackpool area, so it is hard to explain why he undertook this task. Johnson's inference is that Low helped the Carlisle Association to engineer his removal. The idea that the Treasurer and Low did not discuss the problem presented by Johnson, particularly at this difficult time for the government, is hard to sustain. The events of the extraordinary meeting that Johnson forced on the Carlisle Conservative Association in June 1964 to air his grievances after his de-selection were also highly suspicious. The local press reported doubts over the right of some of the attendees to vote on the issue or even be present.<sup>507</sup> It probably did not help Johnson that Edward Martell was amongst those that most vocally pointed out suspicions of sharp-practice.<sup>508</sup> Therefore, it was possible that Central Office guided or advised the Carlisle Conservative Association in removing

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<sup>503</sup> Johnson, *Cassandra*, 186.

<sup>504</sup> CPA files for Carlisle constituency CCO 1/11/43, 1/12/43 and 1/14/43 reveal Johnson engaging in personality clashes as well as policy differences. Balancing this is the fulsome, if obligatory, praise of a sitting MP.

<sup>505</sup> See, for example, Lord Aldington to the Chairman, General Director and Chief Whip, 'Carlisle', 12 April 1963. CPA CCO 1/11/43, Carlisle, Mar. 1955 – Sept. 1957.

<sup>506</sup> Johnson, *Cassandra*, 185.

<sup>507</sup> 'Now MP Challenges City Tories' Chairman On Votes', *Cumberland Evening News*, 22 June 1964.

<sup>508</sup> 'Now MP Challenges City Tories' Chairman On Votes', *Cumberland Evening News*, 22 June 1964.

Johnson, and maybe even in countering him afterwards. However, in one sense the question of Central Office's agency in these events is irrelevant. Regardless of who was culpable, the Conservative Party had ensured the de-selection of an extreme-right MP. It was unlikely that Home, as a new Prime Minister, wished to worsen party divisions by reversing a decision that had occurred amidst the turmoil of his succession. Having a more right-wing leader in this instance was, thus, irrelevant.

Nevertheless, Home's accession clearly did have an impact on the extreme right. Some policies of the Freedom Group and Monday Club were now either in accord with those of the Conservative Government, or nearly so. The Freedom Group and the Monday Club still operated in the Conservative Party's nebulous right-wing border, but were now more firmly within it. This tempered the nature and extent of their extremism when judged by the political position of the Conservative Party. It also presented a problem for right-wing extremists who criticised Conservative Governments prior to the Home administration. Should they remain loyal to the Conservative Party? Did Central Office's co-operation with the Freedom Group betray the Conservative Party's true opinions or not? Had the Conservative party at last returned to 'true Conservatism'? The emergence of the Monday Club within the Party would have strengthened the views of any extreme-right voter who thought it had. Some probably still abstained. Others probably remained loyal. Loyalty was now the position of Commander Hyde C. Burton. Burton had been a vocal and persistent critic. Johnson Publications, the family firm of Donald Johnson MP, published his criticisms. Burton nonetheless stated that there was little alternative to voting Conservative.<sup>509</sup>

Other voters probably remained immune to Burton's argument and voted for extreme-right parties. Major-General Richard Hilton, for example, formed the True Tories into the Patriotic Party in 1964 and contested two seats at the General Election. The League of Empire Loyalists contested three. All five candidates polled less than 2% of the votes and lost their deposits, but they provided an outlet for extremist views and people voted for them. Former LEL member John Bean was another outlet for these views when he contested Southall and attracted just over 9%. Bean's performance

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<sup>509</sup> Burton, *Betrayal*, 3-4.

aside, these were miniscule rewards. Yet, they are also informative. For, although far too limited to be definitive, they nevertheless supported the idea that the Conservative Party attracted the extreme-right vote. A Conservative candidate openly fought his campaign on the extreme-right's political space and proved that the Conservative Party attracted extreme-right voters. Notoriously using the slogan 'If You Want A Nigger For A Neighbour Vote Labour', Peter Griffiths at Smethwick bucked the national swing to Labour, and turned a Labour majority of 3544 into a Conservative one of 1774. These may have been Labour voters. However, at this General Election Labour's vote remained virtually static, only 0.3% higher than at the 1959 General Election, and provided it with a 4-seat majority. Therefore, it is feasible that Home's accession, and the actions of Conservative Party organisation thereafter, had attracted some formerly alienated supporters away from extreme-right parties to an extent unlikely under a continued Macmillan leadership. If so, then Home's Conservative Party had proved as refractory to the extreme right as Macmillan's and his predecessor's, although in this instance by attraction rather than alienation.

## Chapter 4. Edward Heath: a rightwards turn and the coalescence of the extreme right, 1964-70.

In some respects, Britain in 1964 was much different from when the Conservative Party was last in Opposition. Earnings had increased, prices appeared stable, unemployment remained low and consumer goods were plentiful.<sup>1</sup> Affluence had replaced austerity as the country's leitmotif: according to one Nye Bevan obituary, the hum of the spin-dryer drowned the sounds of class warfare.<sup>2</sup> Computers were beginning to impact on British business too, which led to fears about jobs.<sup>3</sup> Art was finding new expression in Pop and Op Art. The Public Libraries and Museum Act (1964) had precipitated an explosion in reading that continued throughout the decade. The opening of Terence Conran's first Habitat store in 1964 began an emphasis on stylish living that reflected this affluent society. Increased affluence had also resulted in a greater emphasis on youth culture, shaped largely by American influences such as the new musical phenomena of rock and roll and a growth in nightclub culture.<sup>4</sup> The advent of The Beatles proved a watershed in British popular music, widening generational differences and presaging change for decades to come. Films, books and television reflected the passage of another watershed to a less deferential society. By 1964, kitchen sink dramas, social realism and satire had entered the mainstream of literary and visual representation. Religion and morality likewise appeared different. Church attendances continued falling. The Wolfenden Report (1957), which had called for legalisation of homosexuality, had tentatively commenced moves towards a more tolerant society when it came to sexual mores. Most famously, jurors had acquitted Penguin Books of obscene publication in the *Lady Chatterley* trial of 1960. This all reflected a more questioning and liberal attitude towards morality, which Philip Larkin had best summed up in his claim that sex began in 1963, between the Chatterley ban and The Beatles first L.P.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sandbrook, *White*, 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Evening News*, 7 July 1960.

<sup>3</sup> A. Sampson, *Anatomy of Britain*, Hodder and Stoughton, London (1962), 45.

<sup>4</sup> Weight, *Patriots*, 302-3.

<sup>5</sup> Philip Larkin, *Annus Mirabilis* (1967).

The long-standing superstructure of British society had also changed. The Empire, apparently robust in 1951, was virtually over. Increased coloured immigration visually reminded people Britain's imperial decline as former colonial subjects laid claim to little-tested rights of citizenship. This was a far more important phenomenon of British life by 1964 than in 1951. Cultural representations increasingly reflected it. Some earlier films had presented a positive image of black immigrants. *The Proud Valley* (1940), told the story of Welsh villagers who accepted a musical black miner from West Virginia.<sup>6</sup> However, this was the exception. By 1964, there existed a marked focus on the negative impact of black immigration. Films such as *Flames in the Streets* (1961) had highlighted white anxieties over black immigration. Similarly, Colin MacInnes had portrayed areas of high black immigration and the race riots of 1958 as un-English in his book *Absolute Beginners* (1959). This negative attitude towards black immigration continued after 1964. In 1965, the vice-president of the Empire Day Movement described such immigration as 'the gravest social crisis since the industrial revolution'.<sup>7</sup> The State funeral of Winston Churchill occurred in the same year. The passing of this imperial soldier and war leader symbolised the passage of an imperial age just as increased black immigration presaged the dawn of a multicultural one.

Yet, continuities existed. The Nassau Agreement ensured Britain remained dependent on America for nuclear technology and weaponry.<sup>8</sup> The building of New Towns continued. The New Towns Act (1946), which Attlee's Government intended to relieve over-crowding in industrial areas, had resulted in fourteen new developments in the 1940s and 1950s. Conservative and Labour governments continued this policy throughout the 1960s, which was reflected in television programmes set in New Towns such as the police series *Z Cars* (1962-78) and the soap opera *The Newcomers* (1965-69).<sup>9</sup> Changes in fashion and social mores were often slow to reach parts of Great Britain. Many changes were limited to an unrepresentative London-based coterie of the educated and wealthy. However, even changes that occurred usually possessed strong antecedents. For example, violence in Easter 1964 between Mods

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<sup>6</sup> Weight, *Patriots*, 294.

<sup>7</sup> Lord Elton, *The Unarmed Invasion: A Survey of Afro-Asian Immigration*, Bles, London (1965), 7.

<sup>8</sup> Sandbrook, *White*, 114-115.

<sup>9</sup> The following synopsis derives from Sandbrook, *White*, 175-182, unless stated.

and Rockers prompted shocked and condemnatory headlines. Yet, this was simply a more virulent form of endemic youthful violence that stretched back via Teddy Boys in the Fifties, Spivs in the Forties, Biff Boys in the Thirties, to the late Victorians who coined the word 'hooligan' for working class boys engaged in violence during the August holiday. Nor was the 'Permissive Society' an established fact. Capital punishment continued in 1964, whilst abortion, homosexuality and suicide remained criminal acts. Divorce remained a painful and unjust process. Moreover, the Empire may have been dying, but many in the colonies and in Britain had not accepted this. Nor had any new organisations challenged effectively the dominance of the three main political parties.

However, this image of continuity was not how some in Britain perceived the situation. When Christopher Booker began working in autumn 1965 on *The Neophiliacs: The Revolution in English Life in the fifties and sixties* (1969), he intended to provide a clearer perspective on 'that bewildering tidal wave of change which had been sweeping through Britain and the Western World' from the early fifties.<sup>10</sup> Booker was not alone in seeing Britain in 1964 as very different from the 1940s and early 1950s, or in criticising it. Paul Johnson in the *New Statesman* deplored the obsession with modernity.<sup>11</sup> Even satirists took a break from lampooning politicians and poked fun at popular music instead.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps Bennett was correct in *Forty Years On* (1969), in which he acknowledged the inevitability of change whilst paying due cognisance to the past. Yet, the 1964 General Election was both similar and different to an earlier contest in some important respects. Just as in 1945, when Attlee had caught the mood of an electorate that demanded radical change, Harold Wilson in 1964 sensed a desire to break free from the image of post-imperial decline. Wilson consequently sought a modern, classless society, a 'New Britain', and landed on the slogan 'White Heat of Technology' as the means to capture the zeitgeist. Unlike Attlee, however, Wilson only had a four-seat majority. This meant that Britain's first Labour Prime Minister in thirteen years would almost certainly have to seek a greater majority soon.

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<sup>10</sup> C. Booker, *The Neophiliacs: The Revolution in English Life in the fifties and sixties* Pimlico, London (1969), 7.

<sup>11</sup> *New Statesman*, 28 February 1964.

<sup>12</sup> 'Introducing the Turds', in R. Ingrams, *The Life and Times of Private Eye 1961-1971*, Harmondsworth, London (1971), 111.

In government, Wilson continued to condemn 'thirteen years of wasted government' under the Conservatives. Consequently, the Labour Government enjoyed the goodwill that had resulted from the simple but effective demand of 'time for a change'. Unfortunately, for Wilson, the picture of economic stability that the Conservatives presented during the election campaign proved to be a chimera, which meant that the new government faced severe economic problems. Yet, despite this, and the problem of contending with a reduced majority due to the loss of Leyton plus the opposition of two right-wing Labour MPs, Wilson managed to turn an 8% Conservative lead in the polls in August 1965 into a Labour lead of 7% in September. Thereafter, Labour maintained a 7% lead throughout winter 1965/66. Thus, when at the end of March 1966 Wilson sought a mandate that ensured sufficient time to deal with problems, the electorate accepted his claim that the Conservative governments were responsible for them and gave him a 97-seat majority. However, a working majority did not solve Britain's deep-seated economic problems. On 18 November 1967, the Labour Government devalued the pound, and swiftly fell eighteen points behind the Conservatives. The position improved under new Chancellor Roy Jenkins. Labour regained a poll lead one week after Jenkins's April 1970 Budget. This was illusory. Wilson's government had lost economic credibility irretrievably when it devalued the pound.

Concerns over the economy were a large stick with which to beat the Labour Government. However, the Conservatives attacked the Government in many other areas too. Industrial relations were most obvious. Unofficial 'wildcat' strikes proliferated from 1966. Industrial action coincided with severe economic problems, whilst the emergence of radical union leaders Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon revived fears of Communist subversion. In June 1966, for example, Wilson denounced the strike by the National Union of Seamen as inspired by Communists. The Dockers struck in autumn 1967 just as irresistible pressure for devaluation mounted. Working days lost continued to soar after devaluation, which led *The Times* to dub 1968 'The Year of the Strike'.<sup>13</sup> On 16 January 1969, Wilson's Government published arguably

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<sup>13</sup> *The Times*, 10 October 1968.

the most famous government White Paper, *In Place of Strife*. It proposed statutory obligations on trades unions and measures to limit industrial unrest. However, *In Place of Strife* failed, caught between economic necessity and the political expediency of not alienating the Labour party's main source of funding. A divided Cabinet faced opposition from the unions and a bitter dispute at the Ford motor plant in Dagenham and a backbench revolt.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, it ditched the penalties in its White Paper and accepted a vague promise that the unions would seek the advice of the TUC on wildcat strikes. The promise proved baseless almost immediately. Wildcat strikes erupted in the docks, the Post Office, British Leyland and in the National Health Service. The 7 million working days lost in 1969 easily outstripped the previous year's record high of 4.7 million. Meanwhile, the Conservative Party's policy statement *Fair Deal at Work* (1968) balanced obligations and rights, and thus contrasted favourably with *In Place of Strife* to provide a viable prospect to halt apparently endemic industrial unrest.<sup>15</sup> Newspapers supported it across the political spectrum.<sup>16</sup> By-election victories after its publication in June 1968 at Oldham West and Nelson and Colne, and the following March at Walthamstow East, indicated that voters thought that the Conservatives possessed answers to this seemingly intractable problem.

Nor did Wilson's Government appear to make much progress solving the country's social ills, unlike Attlee's administration. Wilson was unlucky. Conservative governments sporadically faced popular representation of social issues in series such as *Armchair Theatre*. However, *The Wednesday Play*, an anthology series that devastatingly highlighted social problems, ran contemporaneously with the Labour Governments from 1964-70. A larger television audience than when the Conservatives were in government watched this series of plays that revealed shocking conditions. For example, *Up the Junction* (1965) portrayed lives dominated by petty-thieving, illicit sex and back street abortions. *Cathy Come Home* (1966) depicted unemployment, homelessness and concluded harrowingly with scenes of the state

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<sup>14</sup> David Wood, 'Loyalists prepared to vote against unions Bill, *The Times*, 20 May 1969.

<sup>15</sup> Heath, *Life*, 287-288. Ramsden, *Winds*, 285-286. J. Ramsden, *The Making of Conservative Party Policy: The Conservative Research Department since 1929*, Longman, London (1980), 243 & 267.

<sup>16</sup> Heath, *Life*, 288.

removing children from their hapless mother's care. It acquired iconic status swiftly. Dennis Potter linked issues of social mobility and class. In *Stand Up, Nigel Barton* (1965) and *Vote, Vote, Vote for Nigel Barton* (1965), Potter recounted one man's journey from respectable, working-class grammar-school boy into the cynical world of party politics. However, Potter's Nigel Barton plays were more than a portrayal of social mobility and class betrayal. He depicted Barton's Labour Party Agent advising him to put party before principles, and thus suggested the moral turpitude of the contemporary political scene. Wilson thought the BBC biased and determined to undermine the government.<sup>17</sup> Implicit criticism of the government was not limited to BBC plays. In 1968, Ted Lewis published *Jack's Return Home*, a tale of corruption, pornography, provincial crime, gambling and revenge. When work on the film version, *Get Carter*, commenced in the last months of Wilson's government, the producers set it in Newcastle. The leader of Newcastle Council, Labour councillor T. Dan Smith, epitomised local corruption. Illegal building contracts led to his subsequent imprisonment. Smith made a factual mockery of Wilson's ambitions for a 'New Britain' forged in the 'White Heat' of technology as much as Potter's play mocked it fictionally. However, a much more frightening symbol of Labour's failure was Ronan Point. Ronan Point was a high-rise tower block commenced in 1966 and finished on 11 March 1968, which the government intended to provide affordable housing for the working-class. It collapsed on 16 May killing four and injuring seventeen. The investigation that resulted found serious shortcomings and irregularities behind the façade. This seemed a fitting allegory for Wilson's 'New Britain'.

However, the Labour Government's problems were not necessarily comfortable issues for the Conservative Opposition either. Society's ills presented problems for a broad-church party that included progressives and reactionaries because morality was often at the heart of debate. Films, books and newspapers made it difficult to ignore the fact that society's trends had changed and continued to do so. In the Oscar-winning *Darling* (1965), Julie Christie portrayed an amoral single woman who used sex to achieve success. Murder and, for the first time in British cinema, full-frontal female

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<sup>17</sup> Sandbrook, *White*, 607ff.

nudity, were the main features of *Blowup* (1966). Teenage marriage, domestic abuse and a life degenerating into prostitution formed the plot of *Poor Cow* (1967). Lindsay Anderson's *If ...* (1968), surreally reflected subversion in the ultra-Establishment surroundings of a Public School and questioned the existing social structure. At the other end of the social spectrum Ken Loach's *Kes* (1969) which depicted a dysfunctional family and a boy's futile attempt to break free from the confines of an inadequate education system and avoid becoming a miner, highlighted the potential for challenging the status quo. For many traditional Conservatives, these films reflected a troubled decade, one in which a Church of England Bishop published a book that questioned God's existence,<sup>18</sup> youths fought openly on British beaches, church attendances continued to decline, and drugs, sexual immorality and other social problems appeared far more prevalent. Yet, the Conservative Party had to appeal to this electorate too. Reaction to the 1968 Wootton Report indicated this dilemma. The Conservatives opposed the report's conclusion, which stated that the danger of cannabis smoking was overstated. This no doubt pleased some party members, but it also risked alienating both the young and libertarians. Meanwhile, other events called the 'Permissive Society' into question. Newspapers and television covered the trials of the Richardson Brothers and Kray Twins, bringing tales of organised crime, protection rackets, torture and cold-blooded murder to the public's attention. Unarguably most shocking was the Moors Murderers. These were not new phenomena. However, the abolition of the death penalty, easing of divorce laws and the decriminalisation of abortion, homosexuality and suicide, were new.

Great Britain's role was even more problematic for the Conservative Party. This was predominantly because of Britain's international position, which involved unresolved questions about its relationships with the USA, Europe and the Commonwealth. Each relationship highlighted Conservative Party fault-lines. Support for America had damaged Macmillan's attempt to join the Common Market. That in turn highlighted divisions between pro-EEC and imperialist Conservatives. For two reasons, any focus on the remaining imperial possessions was problematic for the Conservative Party. First, divisions existed amongst Conservative MPs over whether to support the

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<sup>18</sup> John A. T. Robinson, *Honest to God*, SCM Press, London (1963).

remaining white-minority governments that resisted moves to majority, black rule. This resulted in the parliamentary party dividing three ways in 1965, when the Labour government imposed oil sanctions on Rhodesia after its white-minority government declared unilateral independence rather than grant concessions to the black majority. Secondly, Conservative support for white-minority governments risked exacerbating the tensions that surrounded black immigration. This would allow opponents to portray the Conservative and Unionist Party as the party of division within the United Kingdom. Such views could limit Conservative Party fortunes if, as seemed likely, Great Britain became increasingly multi-racial. Yet if the Conservative Party failed to address concerns over immigration, they risked dividing the party and presenting the extreme right with political space in which to thrive. Thus, the Conservative Party leadership faced the quandary of dealing with immigration whilst maintaining party unity. In April 1968, Shadow Cabinet member Enoch Powell brought this to the fore spectacularly when he warned of 'rivers of blood' if coloured immigration continued.

Moreover, questions of unity were not simply issues of skin colour. On 14 July 1966, Plaid Cymru gained its first parliamentary seat when Gwynfor Evans overturned a large Labour majority in Camarthen. On 2 November 1967, Winnie Ewing performed the same feat for the Scottish National Party in the hitherto safe Labour seat of Hamilton. These events may have reflected deep-seated economic concerns. They were also evidence of a strengthening separatist nationalism, and they proved not to be ephemeral blips in the United Kingdom's history. An increasingly polarised Northern Ireland similarly questioned the Union, if from a different perspective. The Republican-Catholic ambition remained the reunion of Ireland, stoked by grievances over blatant discrimination by gerrymandered protestant authority. Unionists, on the other hand, felt isolated. Ulster's unionists, suspicious of acts of conciliation towards the Republic by Westminster, opposed Civil Rights Movements and divided into conservative and die-hard loyalists. Hardliners even spoke of declaring unilateral independence similar to Rhodesia. This too presented problems for the leaders of a party that supposedly stood for British union.

A reaction to these changes set in. This was most notable amongst hitherto left-wing literary figures. In 1967, Kingsley Amis explained his right-wing conversion in 'Why Lucky Jim Turned Right' in the *Sunday Telegraph*. John Braine joined the Monday Club, which published *A Personal Record* (1968), Braine's explanation of his political journey from left to right. One Labour MP formed his own political party and espoused views that found favour with the Conservative Monday Club. These high profile conversions were not necessarily welcome as the issues that prompted conversions were often difficult for the Conservative Opposition also. The Conservative Party leadership also alienated many of its supporters when it failed in varying degrees to oppose 'progressive' measures. This failure once again left political space on the Conservative Party's right flank for others to exploit. Consequently, conservative groups emerged to fight in areas that the Conservative Party appeared unwilling to, just as in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The National Viewers and Listeners Association (NVLA) led by Mary Whitehouse was the most famous of these groups. Whitehouse was a long-standing member of Moral Rearmament and had previously fought the consequences of modern consumerism and mass culture when she attacked the BBC in a 'Clean-Up TV Campaign' in 1963. However, when Whitehouse launched the NVLA in spring 1965, she no longer simply targeted the BBC. Instead, Whitehouse now focused on the areas of change that the Conservative Party either ignored or accepted, and inveighed against the welfare state, consumerism, working-class affluence and the power of the unions.

In contrast, extreme-right groups appeared to be in decline. The membership of the League of Empire Loyalists and True Tories fell markedly. Financial irregularities discredited Edward Martell and made the Freedom Group defunct. However, this was an illusory picture. Black immigration remained a potent issue in British politics, and was especially difficult for the Conservative Party. 'Residents' Associations' emerged demanding an end to black immigration. Edward Martell joined the bandwagon and supported an anti-immigration candidate in a 1966 by-election. In early 1967, a large section of the extreme right used its racist anti-immigration views to coalesce into the National Front. This was Britain's first credible extreme-right party since the Second World War. More troubling for the Conservative leadership was the existence of such

views within the party, particularly in the Monday Club. The Monday Club was far more than a single-issue movement. It contained traditionalists and neo-liberals who engaged in a wide variety of topics. However, the Monday Club also contained members whose views on immigration resembled those of the external extreme right very closely. In this period, the immigration issue increasingly dominated Monday Club activity. Once again, the risk of association with the extreme right loomed for the Conservative leadership. This was also a far more dangerous time for the Conservative Party than at any period since 1945. Racism had provided the extreme right with a unifying ideology and presented extreme-right voters with a home for their votes away from the Conservative Party. Moreover, Powell's entry into the immigration debate in 1968 placed racism centre-stage in British politics and risked splitting the Conservative Party between liberals and racial-nationalists. There was even the possibility that Powell would take over the Conservative Party if the leadership failed to win the next election.

However, the party leadership stuck to its policy of countering the extreme right. In 1965, Edward Heath replaced Home as party leader. As Heath came from a lower-middle class grammar school background like Harold Wilson, he seemed the appropriate person to oppose the Labour prime minister. He was the first leader that Conservative MPs elected by secret ballot. Heath was difficult to categorise, as Blake recognised.<sup>19</sup> Some viewed Heath as the right-wing candidate in the contest to succeed Home.<sup>20</sup> This was possibly because Heath had forged a reputation as a tough parliamentary operator as Macmillan's Chief Whip. Alternatively, it was because Heath had forced the Resale Price Maintenance Bill onto the statute book against the wishes of many Conservatives, as Gilmour stated.<sup>21</sup> However, Heath was no right-winger. He had entered parliament at the 1950 General Election and quickly became a member of the One Nation Group. Despite the presence of two right-wing advocates, the One Nation Group had supported the post-war consensual approach and Macmillan's leftist policies.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, Heath identified himself with Conservative

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<sup>19</sup> Blake, *Conservative Party*, 300.

<sup>20</sup> Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever*, 219.

<sup>21</sup> Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever*, 219.

<sup>22</sup> V. McKee, 'Conservative Factions', *Contemporary Record*, 3, 1 (Autumn, 1989), 30-32.

Party progressivism from the beginning. He saw trade unions as an 'estate of the realm with whom co-operation was both desirable and necessary', an opinion he adhered to even when industrial action increased.<sup>23</sup> He also rejected racism.<sup>24</sup>

Heath ensured that the party bureaucracy reflected his own stance by replacing the Chairman Home had appointed. This resulted in Central Office's attitude towards the Monday Club becoming unambiguous. Central Office was complicit in the Monday Club's consistent failure to gain representation in party organisations, whilst at the same time it continued to assist the Conservative Party's progressive groups. Heath combined these internal manoeuvrings against the extreme right with a rightwards shift in the Conservative Party's political orientation. He incorporated some of the extreme-right's views without ever acceding to them totally. He continued to reject the extreme-right's racism, but adopted a tougher stance towards immigration. Heath also moved towards the views previously espoused by the 'freedom right' on the economy and industrial relations, which culminated in the Selsdon Declaration of January 1970. Right-wing Conservatives such as Norman Tebbit believed that the Selsdon Declaration was the Conservative Party's 'first repudiation of the post-war Butskellite consensus', and that 'Heath was committed to the end of that corporate consensus and to the new liberal economics'.<sup>25</sup> It is doubtful that Heath was sincere in this rightwards shift.<sup>26</sup> Heath's actions were probably little more than political expediency, a reflection of the difficult political context in which he led the Conservative Party. However, Heath had presented the extreme-right wing with a problem as he had placed the Conservative Party firmly in its territory. His actions, and those of the bureaucracy that served him, continued to present the extreme right with the dilemmas that the post-1945 Conservative Party had consistently posed.

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<sup>23</sup> Heath, *Life*, 193 and passim.

<sup>24</sup> Heath, *Life*, 455.

<sup>25</sup> N. Tebbit, *Upwardly Mobile: An Autobiography*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London (1998), 94.

<sup>26</sup> J. Campbell, *Edward Heath*, Jonathan Cape (1993), 264-6. See also A. Roth, *Heath and the Heathmen*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London (1972), 16 & 206-7.

## *Right, Left, Right.*

Views expressed by extreme-right groups reflected this period's difficult context. In 1965, the leader of the League of Empire Loyalists complained about the destruction of the White Commonwealth, and stated that that Britain had lost its independent nuclear capability due to the Nassau Agreement.<sup>27</sup> Chesterton particularly criticised coloured immigration: 'The supreme treason in the British Isles, however, is the creation of a colour problem in a White nation where no such problem has existed throughout hundreds of years of its existence.'<sup>28</sup> Chesterton reiterated these views at the LEL's twelfth annual conference in October 1965, at which he also scorned American materialism, the Churches' betrayal of Christendom, the horrors of decolonization and Britain's reliance on foreign debt.<sup>29</sup> However, Chesterton's problem by 1965 was that the League of Empire Loyalists was a fractured rump damaged by splits, departures and adverse publicity. In 1956, Colin Jordan had left and formed the more overtly Nazi White Defence League. John Tyndall and John Bean left in 1957 and created the National Labour Party to counter coloured immigration. Consequently, the League of Empire Loyalists appeared little more than a training ground for neo-Nazis and neo-fascists. This added credibility to Central Office claims that the League of Empire Loyalists was a fascist organisation. Chesterton continued to bruit his views of a Jewish conspiracy to control the world, which alienated many people, and gave the impression of fanaticism, which in turn added further weight to Central Office claims. Chesterton's world-view was especially obvious when he chose the Britons Publishing Company to distribute the book that outlined it, *The New Unhappy Lords* (1965).<sup>30</sup> LEL membership had declined from 3000 at the height of the race riots in 1958 to around 300 by 1961. Nothing indicated that this fall had reversed by 1965. Also in 1961, Chesterton had lost the main source of LEL funding when expatriate Chilean R. K. Jeffery died.<sup>31</sup> All three LEL candidates in the 1964 General Election had lost their deposits. Thus, Chesterton vented his spleen to a dwindling audience. The Conservative Party, and

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<sup>27</sup> A. K. Chesterton, *The New Unhappy Lords: An exposure of power politics*, Candour, London (1965), 135 & 151.

<sup>28</sup> Chesterton, *Lords*, 155.

<sup>29</sup> A. K. Chesterton, *Empire or Eclipse: Grim Realities of the Mid-Twentieth Century*, Candour, London (1965), *passim*.

<sup>30</sup> As seen in a Britons Publishing Co. leaflet, LSE Pamphlet Collection, Misc Coll 1124.

<sup>31</sup> Bean, *Shades*, 211.

those newspapers that supported, simply ignored the LEL, probably because they considered it irrevocably damaged.

Edward Martell, however, elicited a different response from the Conservative Party. Martell's companies had experienced financial difficulties by 1965. Martell had failed to repay the loans he had requested in *The New Daily*. Disgruntled creditors wrote to MPs. On 18 June 1965, Labour MPs demanded an inquiry and public protection 'from this kind of racketeer whose personal guarantees are worthless'.<sup>32</sup> Martell responded the following day with hand-delivered letters that challenged Labour MPs to repeat their accusations without parliamentary privilege.<sup>33</sup> Four months later, Martell won an apology and retraction.<sup>34</sup> This did not mean that Martell's financial troubles had ended. In January and February 1966, Martell faced bankruptcy petitions.<sup>35</sup> In September 1967, the *London Gazette* secured a receiving order against Martell.<sup>36</sup> The following month, the Official Receiver estimated Martell's debts at over £100,000.<sup>37</sup> By March 1968, the London Bankruptcy Court estimated Martell's debt had increased to £179,600 and ordered him to submit a full statement of affairs within twenty-one days or face serious consequences.<sup>38</sup> This process was an unedifying spectacle for Martell.

For Conservative Central Office, however, Martell's problems presented an opportunity. Central Office now developed selective amnesia. It claimed to have 'always refused to have any working arrangement with any of his organisations', and recalled 'that in 1957 Mr. Martell contested East Ham as a People's League Candidate' rather than his National Fellowship Conservative candidacy at Bristol in 1963.<sup>39</sup> Internal Central Office files correctly claimed in August 1966 that Martell's failure to honour loans was 'nothing to do with us'.<sup>40</sup> This was typical Central Office

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<sup>32</sup> 'Freedom Group: M.P.s demand inquiry', *The Times*, 18 June 1965.

<sup>33</sup> 'Mr. Martell Replies To Challengers', *The Times*, 19 June 1965.

<sup>34</sup> 'Mr. Martell's Libel Action', *The Times*, 6 October 1965.

<sup>35</sup> 'Mr. Martell: Petitions Dismissed', *The Times*, 21 January 1966. 'Petitions Against Mr. E. Martell Adjourned', *The Times*, 11 February 1966.

<sup>36</sup> 'Martell faces new crisis', *The Times*, 20 September 1967.

<sup>37</sup> 'Mr. Martell's debt hopes', *The Times*, 6 October 1967.

<sup>38</sup> '£179,000 debts of Mr. Martell', *The Times*, 16 March 1966.

<sup>39</sup> Anon, 'Mr. Edward Martell', 18 June 1965. CPA CCO 20/52/1, Edward Martell, June 1965-70.

<sup>40</sup> C. Craig to Mr. Webster, 'Martell's Freedom Group', 15 August 1968. CPA CCO 3/7/21, Freedom Group, 1966-67.

denial of association with outside organisations. By November 1966, Central Office's position had hardened. Central Office responded to a Conservative MP's request for assistance in recovering money lent to Martell with the claim: 'The Party has always made it clear that we would have nothing to do with the Freedom Group and all offers from the Group as such have been refused.'<sup>41</sup> This was patently untrue. Reaction within Central Office to the MP's request revealed one reason why its position had hardened. Mr. Craig thought Martell's problems 'might be a good opportunity' to finally deal with Martell.<sup>42</sup> Craig's subsequent comments are also consistent with the view that Central Office acted as the Conservative Party's agency for monitoring and acting against the extreme-right. For example, when Craig informed his colleague Mr. Webster that 'Martell seems to be getting under way with the New Daily',<sup>43</sup> he revealed that Central Office had continued to gather intelligence on Martell. When Craig suggested that 'Perhaps it would be a good opportunity of nipping him in the bud by drawing attention to his unpaid debts, perhaps by a letter to the Telegraph or the Express',<sup>44</sup> he illuminated one of the methods in which Central Office acted to block the extreme right.

Central Office officials maintained their stance towards Martell, even when corresponding with their own Party Chairman, Edward du Cann. When Mr. Webster received a complaint from du Cann about money lent to Martell, he suggested to Mr. Craig in December 1966 that, 'I think we should reply that the Freedom Group has no connection with our Party at all, nor are we in any way responsible.'<sup>45</sup> Webster's conclusion is debatable. His use of the present tense may be significant. Perhaps equally significant, du Cann was a Home appointee. Edward Heath disliked du Cann. Both men had discussed an appropriate time for du Cann to leave Central Office.<sup>46</sup> This discussion occurred before the March 1966 General Election. It had also become common knowledge that Heath planned to remove du Cann by the time of du Cann's

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<sup>41</sup> Letter from Mr. Robert Mathew MP, attached to internal memo from C. Craig to Mr. Webster, 4 November 1966. Untitled letter to Robert Mathew, Esq., T.D., M.P., 9 November 1966. CPA CCO 3/7/21, Freedom Group, 1966-67.

<sup>42</sup> C. Craig to Mr. Webster, 4 November 1966. CPA CCO 3/7/21, Freedom Group, 1966-67.

<sup>43</sup> C. Craig to Mr. Webster, 4 November 1966. CPA CCO 3/7/21, Freedom Group, 1966-67.

<sup>44</sup> C. Craig to Mr. Webster, 4 November 1966. CPA CCO 3/7/21, Freedom Group, 1966-67.

<sup>45</sup> R. J. Webster to Mr. Craig, 'The Freedom Group', 6 December 1966. CPA CCO 3/7/21, Freedom Group, 1966-67.

<sup>46</sup> Heath, *Life*, 290.

December 1966 complaint.<sup>47</sup> Press rumours to this effect circulated at the October party conference.<sup>48</sup> It is highly unlikely that officials within Central Office were ignorant of du Cann's probable removal. Therefore, this particular Central Office correspondence does not detract from the argument that Central Office blocked the extreme right. Instead, it reflected internal party machinations and Central Office's remit to act in accordance with the Party leader's wishes. As the new party leader was a member of the One Nation Group and detested right-wing extremism,<sup>49</sup> this correspondence supported the view that Central Office was the Conservative Party's agent for limiting the extreme-right's chances. These party developments also provided another reason for Central Office's tougher attitude towards Martell.

There was another reason too. Publicly, Central Office continued to deny a corporate relationship with Martell. On one occasion, it did admit privately that it had played a role in Martell's association with the wider Conservative Party. It revealed confidentially to a Conservative MP that it had previously insisted that any Freedom Group assistance 'must be done on an individual basis by joining the local Association'.<sup>50</sup> However, the nature of this admission, one that showed that Central Office attempted to limit Martell's opportunities within the party, does not detract from its continued denial of association with Martell. It is possible to argue that Central Office based its tougher stance on a desire not to be associated with Martell's financial irregularities alone. However, its willingness to publicise Martell's difficulties argued against this. What else, then, had precipitated this change? Central Office had possibly reverted to a more negative stance towards the extreme right after the brief hiatus of Home's leadership. It is also possible that Central Office based its tougher stance on a suspicion that Martell ultimately intended either infiltrating the Conservative Party or forming a new party.<sup>51</sup> If so, the Nuneaton by-election of March 1967 may have influenced Central Office. The National Party's candidate at Nuneaton was decorated war veteran, Air Vice-Marshal 'Pathfinder' Bennett. Bennett was briefly a Liberal MP in 1945, but like Martell had long-since travelled

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<sup>47</sup> Heath, *Life*, 290.

<sup>48</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 269. See also CPA CCO 20/63/1, Resignation of Edward du Cann, 1967.

<sup>49</sup> Heath, *Life*, passim.

<sup>50</sup> Anonymous confidential letter to Cranley Onslow, 28 April 1967. CPA CCO 20/52/1, Edward Martell (Freedom Group), 1965-70.

<sup>51</sup> See 154-157.

rightwards. His candidature included demands that reflected the contemporary context. There was a call for 'True British Honour, Integrity and Loyalty', especially towards Rhodesia's White, minority government.<sup>52</sup> Bennett blamed the Conservatives as much as the Labour Government for events in Rhodesia.<sup>53</sup> He rejected the Treaty of Rome and suggested that Britain remained outside the Common Market.<sup>54</sup> Bennett advocated trade union reform, reduced taxation, abolition of the rating system and cutting welfare spending.<sup>55</sup> He emphasised that his demand for a five-year suspension of immigration applied to all races.<sup>56</sup> However, when he justified this on the grounds of increased housing problems and unemployment,<sup>57</sup> Bennett implicitly identified that section of immigrants most likely to experience such conditions, which meant blacks. Bennett's election literature was thus typical of contemporary extreme-right material. The Conservative party did not want to be associated with such views. In small print at the foot of the last page of the literature was the attribution, 'Printed and Published by E. Martell, Election Agent to Air Vice-Marshal Donald Bennett.'<sup>58</sup> This also explains Central Office's tougher stance towards Martell.

Exactly when Central Office knew of this connection is unclear. Central Office files do not clarify this issue. Yet, Central Office monitored events in Nuneaton and Martell's actions, and these indicated awareness of the connection with Bennett. The committee overseeing the Nuneaton by-election convened on 15 September 1966. The secret minutes of the meeting for the section titled 'Running of the Campaign' recorded that, 'It must be made quite clear in future that the Central Office Agent was in charge of the running of the campaign.'<sup>59</sup> This may have reflected a difficulty peculiar to the Nuneaton Conservative Association, but seems unlikely due to the absence of any evidence to this effect, plus the supposed autonomy of Conservative Associations. It is possible to suggest, however, that Central Office intended to maintain effective reporting channels at Nuneaton because of Martell. For, although there is nothing in Central Office files that suggested problems in Nuneaton, there is

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<sup>52</sup> 'Don Bennett's Election Address', 1967.

<sup>53</sup> 'Don Bennett's Election Address', 1967.

<sup>54</sup> 'Don Bennett's Election Address', 1967.

<sup>55</sup> 'Don Bennett's Election Address', 1967.

<sup>56</sup> 'Don Bennett's Election Address', 1967.

<sup>57</sup> 'Don Bennett's Election Address', 1967.

<sup>58</sup> 'Don Bennett's Election Address', 1967.

<sup>59</sup> 'Notes of Meeting of By-Election Committee', 15 September. CPA CCO 20/55/8, Nuneaton, 1966 – 1967.

material that related to Martell. On 9 February 1967, Bryan Edgell, an Agent in the Reading Conservative Association, wrote to du Cann and revealed confidential information imparted by Martell. Edgell acknowledged many years acquaintance with Martell, and reported Martell's claim of an approach by a number of 'big boys' from the Freedom Group who were willing to fund a new party.<sup>60</sup> Martell had acquiesced and formed the National Party to fight the next five elections until Heath and du Cann left the leadership of the Party and Central Office.<sup>61</sup> The National Party operated from the address of 'Modern Organisers', one of Martell's other groups,<sup>62</sup> and appeared a more extreme reprise of the Freedom Group. Martell's financial difficulties made this venture less feasible. In May 1968, however, Martell revealed in court that nearly ninety percent of his 748 creditors were not making a claim against him.<sup>63</sup> The bulk of these creditors were probably disgruntled Conservatives who had responded to Martell's appeals in *The New Daily*. Their refusal to pursue Martell freed him to pursue his political objectives and, arguably, confirmed continuance of grassroots irritation towards the Conservative Party. Consequently, Central Office maintained their tougher attitude towards Martell and continued monitoring him.

Major General Richard Hilton's activities should have concerned Central Office more than those of the financially embarrassed Martell. Hilton was now Vice-President of the British National Party, and Chairman of the Patriotic Party that had contested two seats at the 1964 General Election, as well as leader of the True Tories. Hilton was also Honorary President of the National Youth League, a group that claimed to be Britain's only 'one hundred percent' patriotic youth movement confined to those of British ancestry.<sup>64</sup> From these positions, Hilton occupied political space to the right of the Conservative Party, and believed that the 'wide divergences between the Conservative front bench and the Conservative electorate' provided him with opportunities.<sup>65</sup> Hilton attempted to exploit divisions within the party over issues such as immigration and Rhodesia, and argued that the Conservative Party was 'seething

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<sup>60</sup> Bryan Edgell to Edward du Cann, 'Report on National Party', 9 February 1967. CPA CCO 20/52/1, Edward Martell (Freedom Group), June 1965-70.

<sup>61</sup> Bryan Edgell to Edward du Cann, 'Report on National Party', 9 February 1967. CPA CCO 20/52/1, Edward Martell (Freedom Group), June 1965-70.

<sup>62</sup> Bryan Edgell to Edward du Cann, 'Report on National Party', 9 February 1967. CPA CCO 20/52/1, Edward Martell (Freedom Group), June 1965-70.

<sup>63</sup> 'Guarantee error, Mr. Martell says', *The Times*, 4 May 1968.

<sup>64</sup> D. Shipper, 'Trouble For The Tories', *Tribune*, 12 August 1966, 8.

<sup>65</sup> D. Shipper, 'Trouble For The Tories', *Tribune*, 12 August 1966, 8.

with discontent against its present leadership'.<sup>66</sup> Hilton also appeared to have a plan taking advantage of these divisions. He claimed to have abandoned fighting elections and now openly advocated infiltrating the Conservative Party, particularly via the Young Conservatives. The aim was the familiar refrain of the alienated extreme right: 're-converting the Conservative Party to patriotism'.<sup>67</sup> Hilton outlined a two-stage 'Ten Year Plan' to accomplish his objective, which he based on a belief that the Conservative leadership had so severely discontended their supporters that it would remain in opposition for at least ten years. Hilton wanted True Tories to infiltrate Conservative Associations via activism in local issues and then, having secured sufficient influence, dominate the voting. Hilton even set up a central Headquarters in London to co-ordinate the True Tories' campaign.

However, Hilton and the True Tories did not worry the Conservative leadership and Central Office. The True Tories were an old movement, notwithstanding Hilton's connection with the National Youth League. This constrained a movement that sought to infiltrate the Conservative Party via the Young Conservatives. The seventy-two year old Hilton realised this when he attempted to form a working committee of young patriots aged between twenty and thirty-five to take over the leadership of the True Tories.<sup>68</sup> There was little evidence that it ever existed. Nor had Hilton enjoyed any obvious success in his aims to bring the Conservative Party back to 'True Toryism'. This was because whilst the leadership's position on many issues undoubtedly irritated some Conservatives, at least as many were probably reluctant to oppose it actively, and others agreed with it. Hilton unwittingly acknowledged this when he blamed divergence between the Conservative leadership and members on the rank-and-file who had 'blindly allowed themselves to be led by a gang of doctrinaire Left-wing intellectuals'.<sup>69</sup> These comments helped to explain why Hilton's True Tories had run out of steam by 1966. Membership, once possibly over 3000, was by then less than half that number,<sup>70</sup> which explained Central Office's minimal interest in the True Tories, despite Hilton's advocacy of infiltration of the Conservative Party.

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<sup>66</sup> D. Shipper, 'Trouble For The Tories', *Tribune*, 12 August 1966, 8.

<sup>67</sup> D. Shipper, 'Trouble For The Tories', *Tribune*, 12 August 1966, 8.

<sup>68</sup> D. Shipper, 'Trouble For The Tories', *Tribune*, 12 August 1966, 8.

<sup>69</sup> D. Shipper, 'Trouble For The Tories', *Tribune*, 12 August 1966, 8.

<sup>70</sup> D. Shipper, 'Trouble For The Tories', *Tribune*, 12 August 1966, 8.

Therefore, at this stage there seemed many reasons why the Conservative Party should be unconcerned about the extreme right outside the party. Since the 1964 General Election, the external extreme right had proved its limitations. This does not mean that the Conservative Party ignored it. Intelligence gathering continued. The Conservative Party also monitored opportunities afforded to the extreme right, especially the impact of black immigration on local communities. A result of black immigration was the emergence of protesting 'residents associations'. These associations sprung up in the early 1960s in areas where black immigrants settled. Membership came from the three major political parties, but especially the Conservative Party. They were often schismatic. This was because local Conservatives determined that within the residents' associations no single body emerged that was strong enough to jeopardise the Conservative Party's chances of attracting the anti-immigrant vote.<sup>71</sup> In Birmingham, for example, Conservatives were involved in an argument within the Birmingham Immigration Control Association that resulted in the formation of an additional two residents' associations.<sup>72</sup> Local factors and the presence of members of other political parties no doubt played a role in these schisms. However, if this view of the local Conservatives' action is correct, then their determination to stop residents' associations from uniting into a single body also hindered the development of the extreme right. It was an opportunistic attitude best seen when Peter Griffiths took advantage of residents' fears of black immigration in Smethwick and delivered a victory for the Conservative party in the 1964 General Election.<sup>73</sup> John Bean later claimed that the Birmingham Branch Organiser of Mosley's Union Movement invented Griffiths' election slogan.<sup>74</sup> Griffiths put racism at the forefront of his campaign and accepted the assistance of BNP members in his campaign.<sup>75</sup> His actions once again raised the fear that the electorate would remember the Conservative's pre-war associations with fascism. This view is supported by Bean claims that, 'In some respects Griffiths' victory was a victory for us.'<sup>76</sup> However, the Smethwick result was also a victory for a Conservative candidate who took advantage of the tensions caused by, and the divisions of, anti-immigrant residents' associations.

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<sup>71</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 54.

<sup>72</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 54.

<sup>73</sup> See 180.

<sup>74</sup> Bean, *Shades*, 172.

<sup>75</sup> Bean, *Shades*, 172.

<sup>76</sup> Bean, *Shades*, 172.

In reality, Griffiths had reduced the extreme-right's chances by operating in their space, evidenced by the BNP's failure to field a candidate.

Nor was it only Griffiths, or a few local Conservatives, that crowded the political space of residents' associations and extreme-right parties. From the 1950s, Conservative Party MPs had expressed concerns about coloured immigration.<sup>77</sup> The manner in which they did so had ensured that the public knew that a repository for their fears existed within the Conservative Party. Nor was Conservative MPs' concern limited to public pronouncements. Just after the 1964 General Election, a Mr. R. F. Beauclair wrote to Conservative MP Sir Patrick Wall. Beauclair stated that his family were 'certainly not racists in any way', then likened coloured immigration to the invasion planned by Hitler against which he had fought, and described coloured immigrants as unsuitable to Britain's climate and modern political system as they were 'by nature simple indolent people, who thrive in a simple country environment'.<sup>78</sup> Beauclair did not have in mind the green pastures of Wall's Yorkshire constituency. In his reply, Wall stated that although he was not personally opposed to the immigrants, he too was 'extremely concerned' about it.<sup>79</sup> He also believed that the present problems caused by these immigrants would be 'nothing compared to the problems we shall face in a generation's time' when their children would be competing 'directly with our own British people'.<sup>80</sup> These comments, especially the last, made it clear that Wall, like Hilton of the True Tories and many others of the extreme right, did not see coloured immigrants as British, or ever likely to become so. Beauclair agreed with Wall's comments and claimed that there was no need for immigrant labour, that the true number of immigrants was higher, and warned that when these immigrants were on the electoral roll and voting Labour, the Conservative Party could soon cease to exist.<sup>81</sup> However, the Conservative Party had not acquiesced in its own demise, but had provided a more viable alternative for those

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<sup>77</sup> See 100-101.

<sup>78</sup> R. F. Beauclair to Major P. H. B. Wall, MC, MP, (nd) 1964. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall, University of Hull.

<sup>79</sup> Patrick Wall, MC, VRD, MP to R. F. Beauclair Esq., 23 November 1964. Private papers of Patrick Wall, University of Hull.

<sup>80</sup> Patrick Wall, MC, VRD, MP to R. F. Beauclair Esq., 23 November 1964. Private papers of Patrick Wall, University of Hull.

<sup>81</sup> R. F. Beauclair to Major P. H. B. Wall, MC, MP, 24 November 1964. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall, University of Hull.

voters sympathetic to the residents' associations who were tempted to vote for extreme-right parties.

However, the belief that the Conservative Party leadership was unaware of the dangers immigration posed to its continued existence, as expressed by Beauclair, resulted in the formation of the Racial Preservation Society (RPS). The RPS commenced in 1965 with Beauclair amongst its members and sought to galvanise residents' groups into a coherent movement to play a wider political role.<sup>82</sup> It focused its attention on a wider stage rather than limit itself to local issues. The RPS demanded, for example, a referendum on immigration. More pertinent perhaps to an electorate that increasingly watched television was the RPS's attack on what it perceived as a cultural acceptance of 'mongrelisation'. When the soap opera *Coronation Street* began in 1960 Granada Television intended it to run for only thirteen episodes. Its popularity caused a reassessment. By 1964, *Coronation Street* regularly attracted an audience of over 20 million people. In 1965, the RPS attacked a storyline that involved the adoption of a mixed-race child as a cynical attempt to soften up the viewers into accepting race mixing.<sup>83</sup> The RPS accused other television programmes of brainwashing their audience too. It also published lists of Conservative MPs it thought 'sound' on immigration.<sup>84</sup> As leading figures in the RPS included former members of Mosley's British Union of Fascists,<sup>85</sup> this list was potentially very embarrassing for the Conservative Party. By doing so, however, the RPS was also acting inimically to its own interests. By publishing the names of sympathetic Conservative MPs the RPS simply increased the possibility that potential supporters of extreme-right parties would vote for these 'sound' Conservative candidates rather than waste their vote on miniscule parties.

More problematic for the RPS was that on immigration the Conservative Party actually faced both ways. For, although some Conservative MPs, and probably many party members, were hostile to immigration, they could do little about this in the House of Commons. Apart from the obvious problem of being in opposition, anti-

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<sup>82</sup> A. Sykes, *Radical Right*, 102.

<sup>83</sup> 'Newsletter', December 1967, 5. The Racial Preservation Society, CPA CCO 3/7/46, Racial Preservation Society, 1966-70.

<sup>84</sup> CPA CCO 3/7/46, Racial Preservation Society, 1966-70.

<sup>85</sup> Ted Budden, Alan Hancock and Jimmy Doyle.

immigration Conservative MPs were at odds with their own parliamentary leadership and much of the wider party. In 1965, for example, the Conservative frontbench acquiesced in the Labour Government's Race Relations Act. At the 1965 Conservative Party Conference, platform speakers did not advocate anti-immigration measures. There was some dissent from the conference floor. However, when Reg Simmerson, who represented the London University Graduates Association, argued that 'To allow in immigrants is madness; to allow in coloured immigrants is double madness', he received jeers as well as cheers.<sup>86</sup> The case of Peter Griffiths, the new Conservative MP for Smethwick, typified the Conservative party's split over immigration. Some sections of the Conservative Party warmed to Griffiths, as invitations to speak at local associations and Young Conservative meetings evidenced.<sup>87</sup> The attitude of the leadership was very different. Edward Heath may have dismissed anti-immigration Conservative MPs with the nonchalant comment that, 'Every party has its extremists'.<sup>88</sup> He also recorded that many treated Griffiths with particular opprobrium: 'Griffiths was a severe embarrassment to us and he was rightly shunned in Parliament when he arrived.'<sup>89</sup> In this instance, 'us' probably meant the party leadership and those progressive Conservatives who baulked at the anti-immigration stance of some of their fellow Conservative MPs. In a party where the leadership determined policy, this was sufficient to stymie those who wished for harsh anti-immigrant measures. It also indicated the leadership's willingness to act against the extreme right even if it was within the parliamentary party.

The wider Conservative Party's ambiguous stance on immigration went right to the heart of the dilemma faced by the RPS and all extreme-right movements. The Conservative Party contained members who were sympathetic to these groups' aims and thus attracted their potential voters, yet alienated their activists by offering little probability of actually delivering their objectives. The Conservative Party caught the RPS in its jaws of attraction and repulsion, as it did to all other extreme-right groups. As ever in this process, Central Office acted as the agent of repulsion since it reflected the leadership's wishes. Central Office was, for example, at best evasive when it

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<sup>86</sup> 'Delegates Split On Immigrants', *Daily Telegraph*, 15 October 1965.

<sup>87</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 53.

<sup>88</sup> Heath, *Life*, 455.

<sup>89</sup> Heath, *Life*, 455.

replied to the RPS's questions. On at least one occasion, all participants in an RPS letter-writing campaign received from Central Office the same stereotyped reply.<sup>90</sup> If Central Office's evasion stemmed from its desire to avoid embarrassing connections, then a subsequent comment from an RPS member suggested this was a wise position. A 'Mrs L' wrote: 'I have been a member of Sir Oswald Mosley [sic] and his party for years, but in this great democracy of ours, only Communists get the voice.'<sup>91</sup> Mrs L was irritated that the Conservative Party had sponsored two immigrant councillors.<sup>92</sup> This was an overt example of how the Conservative Party acted against the extreme right. In December 1967, the RPS tacitly acknowledged that the Conservative Party had the ability to thwart its aims when it argued that someone should hang above Central Office the legend 'Abandon Hope All Ye Who Enter Here.'<sup>93</sup>

From 1967, the RPS declined and the majority of its members joined the National Front, leaving only a rump. One of these, Dr. David Brown, attempted to arrest the RPS's decline. In 1966, Brown had formed his own party, the National Democratic Party (NDP). Now, Brown tried to maintain the RPS's message by merging his NDP with other small extreme-right groups. By 1969, these included The British Defence League (BDL). John O'Brien led the BDL. He was a member of the Shrewsbury Conservative Association. In April 1969, the RPS and BDL produced a combined bulletin.<sup>94</sup> A combined bulletin suggested that the RPS rump was struggling to survive. Its demands reflected contemporary social issues. The bulletin criticised the Wootton Report (1968) for its liberal attitude towards drugs and argued for measures that were more repressive.<sup>95</sup> However, the RPS's position was indistinct from that of the Conservative Party, which showed that the Conservative Party, having created political space for the extreme right to exist in, also occupied it and thus denied it space in which to operate. The bulletin had racism at its core and unsurprisingly

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<sup>90</sup> 'Newsletter', December 1967, The Racial Preservation Society, CPA CCO 3/7/46, Racial Preservation Society, 1966-70.

<sup>91</sup> 'Newsletter', December 1967, 9. The Racial Preservation Society, CPA CCO 3/7/46, Racial Preservation Society, 1966-70.

<sup>92</sup> 'Newsletter', December 1967, 9 The Racial Preservation Society, CPA CCO 3/7/46, Racial Preservation Society, 1966-70.

<sup>93</sup> 'Newsletter', December 1967, The Racial Preservation Society, CPA CCO 3/7/46, Racial Preservation Society, 1966-70.

<sup>94</sup> J. O'Brien and E. C. Shelley, 'Combined Bulletin of The British Defence League and The Racial Preservation Society', April 1969. CPA CCO 3/7/46, Racial Preservation Society, 1966-70.

<sup>95</sup> See 189.

blamed non-white immigrants for society's ills. It highlighted, for example, the imprisonment of three drug smuggling Pakistani men at Sowerby Bridge in 1968. However, the bulletin also supported Conservative MPs who opposed the parliamentary leadership on issues such as immigration and the Common Market and named them. It attacked progressive Conservative MPs in the familiar tones of the extreme right. The bulletin particularly criticised Sir Edward Boyle MP and pledged to 'support any opposition to this man, from whatever source it comes. Let us purify and purge the Tory party, and relieve the parliamentary scene of this strange person.'<sup>96</sup> There was even a comment that suggested that Conservatives withheld party subscriptions due to their irritation at the leadership.

The bulletin also threatened violence. Initially, this threat seemed implicit, and directed at the Left. The bulletin stated that failure to redress the electorate's concerns would lead it to turn further rightwards and warned of 'dire consequences ... for all the motley crew of unpatriotic citizens whose allegiance is to a foreign creed, not their own country'.<sup>97</sup> It believed that progressives dominated the Conservative Party, and, as the party was likely to gain power at the next General Election, argued that Edward Heath would be 'putty in the hands of the centre faction of the Tory party'.<sup>98</sup> This belief in progressives' domination of the Conservative Party was a constant refrain of the post-1945 extreme right. The bulletin argued that the result would be the electorate's disillusion with all mainstream parties. This was reminiscent of the claims of interwar fascists, who sought the sweeping away of the political 'old gangs.' The consequences that the bulletin identified suggested that violence was not simply implicit in the RPS's character, and revealed the possibility of worrying beliefs. The bulletin argued that since both mainstream parties had failed the nation, 'the stage will be set for a resurgence of the forces that produced extremist governments in Italy and Germany in the twenties and thirties. The left and centre will have brought it on

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<sup>96</sup> J. O'Brien and E. C. Shelley, 'Combined Bulletin of The British Defence League and The Racial Preservation Society', April 1969, 3. CPA CCO 3/7/46, Racial Preservation Society, 1966-70.

<sup>97</sup> J. O'Brien and E. C. Shelley, 'Combined Bulletin of The British Defence League and The Racial Preservation Society', April 1969, 4. CPA CCO 3/7/46, Racial Preservation Society 1966-70.

<sup>98</sup> J. O'Brien and E. C. Shelley, 'Combined Bulletin of The British Defence League and The Racial Preservation Society', April 1969, 4. CPA CCO 3/7/46, Racial Preservation Society 1966-70.

themselves AND IT WILL SERVE THEM DAMN WELL RIGHT.’<sup>99</sup> Admittedly, this may have reflected concern within the rump of the RPS that Britain faced the possibility of a rise in neo-Nazism. Their belief that those who had left the RPS in 1967 had joined a party tainted by neo-Nazism and fascism supported this possibility. However, the presence of former fascists in the RPS before 1967 argued against this, as does an obvious racist ideology and the use of violent terminology. This casts serious doubts on whether the RPS’s conclusion was a warning or a wish. What is certain is that the RPS existed in the nebulous border between the right-wing edge of the Conservative Party and the extreme-right, and carried the potential to embarrass the Conservative Party. This explains why Central Office evaded the RPS. The later bulletin, with its more obvious extremism, proved the wisdom of this stance. Central Office stance denied the RPS any credibility from Britain’s sole right-wing mainstream party and contributed to its fracture and decline.

These examples do not mean that Central Office focused solely on groups and individuals that always operated on the extreme right. At a time in which literary figures like Amis, Larkin and Braine renounced their socialism in favour of the right, Central Office was alert to the possibility of political parallels. One such example in this period was Desmond Donnelly, Labour MP for Pembroke West since 1950. Although originally aligned with Aneurin Bevan, as a consultant to engineering firms and merchant banks and passionately anti-Soviet Donnelly was an incongruous member of the left wing of the Labour Party. Like Edward Martell, Donnelly embarked on a rightward journey, albeit one that started further left on the political spectrum. Donnelly supported the moderate Hugh Gaitskell for the Labour leadership and opposed his more left-wing successor Harold Wilson. By the mid-1960s, Donnelly was a thorn in the side of the Labour Government. Donnelly was one of the two Labour MPs who opposed nationalisation of the steel industry during the Labour Government of 1964-66.<sup>100</sup> This was particularly difficult for Prime Minister Wilson because the Conservatives’ unexpected victory at the Leyton by-election on 21 January 1965 left the government with a parliamentary majority of three.

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<sup>99</sup> J. O’Brien and E. C. Shelley, ‘Combined Bulletin of The British Defence League and The Racial Preservation Society’, April 1969, 4. CPA CCO 3/7/46, Racial Preservation Society 1966-70.

<sup>100</sup> See 185.

However, at this stage Central Office appeared to have had little interest in Donnelly. He was, after all, simply a rebellious Labour MP. Yet coincidentally, the events Donnelly was peripherally involved in, particularly the Leyton by-election, adds to our understanding of the relationship between the Conservative Party and the extreme right. Central Office was deeply anxious during the by-election campaign. In November 1964, C. A. J. Norton, the Central Office Agent responsible for the Greater London Area, provided a preliminary report on the constituency. Norton noted the likelihood of a BNP candidacy and a proliferation of 'Keep Britain White' slogans, and that one third of people canvassed raised the 'colour question'.<sup>101</sup> One reason why this might have worried Central Office is obvious. Harold Wilson carried out his intention of appointing Patrick Gordon Walker as his first foreign secretary. However, Walker's defeat in the 1964 General Election meant that an unelected individual held one of the highest offices of state. The Labour leadership imposed Gordon Walker as their candidate in Leyton to secure his swift return to the Commons. Gordon Walker was the candidate Griffiths defeated at Smethwick in the 1964 General Election. The Conservative Party risked becoming embroiled once again in the divisive issue of race and possible identification with the extreme right. Central Office monitored extreme-right activity in the by-election, and thus reinforced the view that it was fear of association with the extreme right that determined its actions.

On 4 January 1965, the Chief Organisation Officer informed the General Director at Central Office of the extreme right disrupting a Labour press conference, and noted the role played by a Mr. Colin Jordan.<sup>102</sup> Four days later, after visiting Leyton with Area Agent Norton, the Chief Organisation Officer expressed his concerns about Jordan's activities. He reported that there was 'a great deal of rowdiness owing to Mr. Colin Jordan and I hope we shall not get the backwash of some of this',<sup>103</sup> thereby revealing fears that extreme-right activity could harm the Conservative Party. There were two reasons to be worried. Jordan was a former member of the British People's

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<sup>101</sup> C. A. J. Norton, 'Leyton By-Election', 18 November 1964. CPA CCO 500/18/83, Leyton, Jan. 1965.

<sup>102</sup> Chief Organisation Officer to the General Director, 'Leyton', 4 January 1965. CPA CCO 500/18/83, Leyton, Jan. 1965.

<sup>103</sup> Chief Organisation Officer to the General Director, 'Leyton', 8 January 1965. CPA CCO 500/18/83, Leyton, Jan. 1965.

Party and the Midlands Organiser of the League of Empire Loyalists before the latter expelled him for his blatant neo-Nazism in 1958. Thereafter he launched a number of openly Nazi movements and amalgamated with others extremists to form new parties such as the BNP. Jordan was thus a link between the Conservative Party and neo-Nazism thanks to his membership of the League of Empire Loyalists. Secondly, if the Conservative candidate at Leyton ran a racist campaign that was similar to Griffith's at Smethwick, which included assistance from the BNP and blatant racism, there was a real risk that this would further taint the Conservative Party. Indeed, there is some evidence that the Conservative Party candidate at Leyton, Ronald Buxton, colluded with the BNP. John Bean, a founder member of the BNP, claimed that Buxton promised that he would 'call for a moratorium on all further immigration for two years' if Bean withdrew from the contest.<sup>104</sup> Bean withdrew, and later claimed that Buxton willingly accepted BNP assistance, which included distribution of 8000 of its 'Stop Immigration' leaflets'.<sup>105</sup> Buxton's small victory margin, a mere 205 votes, led Bean to claim the Leyton result a victory for the BNP.<sup>106</sup> However, he was shocked to see that Buxton abused the BNP after the result.<sup>107</sup> Buxton's behaviour may have been little more than opportunism. It also showed that the Conservative Party could overpower a much smaller extreme-right movement, use it, attract its supporters and then dismiss it disdainfully. If Bean's claims are correct, Buxton had acted in a very risky manner. This explains the Chief Organisation Officer's comments. Knowledge of Burton's behaviour and the involvement of the BNP would magnify its anxiety. The role, if any, that Central Office played in Buxton's behaviour is unclear, but the reasons for the Chief Organisation Officer's concerns are not.

What is also clear is that Central Office was more concerned with the Leyton by-election than with Desmond Donnelly. However, this changed as Donnelly became more alienated from the Labour Government. In February 1965, Donnelly expressed views on Britain's industrial relations that later found resonance in the Conservative Party's *Fair Deal at Work*. Donnelly argued that Britain could not 'survive as a

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<sup>104</sup> Bean, *Shades*, 173. Bean also claims that this was touched on in the local press, but surprisingly never taken up by the national media or by any subsequent authors of books on the history of the radical right.

<sup>105</sup> Bean, *Shades*, 173.

<sup>106</sup> Bean, *Shades*, 174.

<sup>107</sup> Bean, *Shades*, 173. Griffiths also moderated his tone when elected.

leading industrial nation if it accepted that three men should do two men's jobs or that out-of-date practices are sustained'.<sup>108</sup> On the Welfare State, Donnelly called for an elimination of waste and a refocusing of priorities and expenditure limits. The following month, Donnelly rebuked the government for failing to support the USA wholeheartedly in its conflict with Vietnam and denounced the 'present cacophony of Anti-Americanism'.<sup>109</sup> Three months after the 1966 General Election, and with the government facing the prospect of devaluation, Donnelly questioned whether Britain had a government with sufficient courage and competence to deal with the crisis.<sup>110</sup> In 1967 Donnelly became the *News of the World's* chief political correspondent, from where he continued to criticise the Labour Government. The power of the trade unions was a particular target of Donnelly's, similar to Martell in *The New Daily* beforehand.<sup>111</sup> The final breach with the Labour Party came when devaluation in 1967 resulted in reduced defence spending and the government withdrew from its commitments 'east of Suez'. On 18 January 1968, Donnelly resigned the Labour Whip. Two months later the Labour Party expelled him. Donnelly responded by writing *Gadarene '68* (1968), a biblical reference to the Labour Government's headlong flight towards suicide. At some stage in the same year, the Monday Club gave Donnelly a two-minute standing ovation after he had addressed them. He also formed his own political party, the United Democratic Party.

Given the terms of reference presented to it regarding outside organisations,<sup>112</sup> it is no coincidence to find that Central Office's interest in Desmond Donnelly also commenced in 1968. On 29 November 1968, Donnelly wrote to a Mr. Eastwood and enclosed a leaflet that claimed that the crisis facing Britain was 'essentially political as well as economic'.<sup>113</sup> The leaflet, *Through the Barriers*, revealed Donnelly's belief that society was decadent, government overspent, especially on the welfare state, individual and business taxes were excessive, the need for private provision, the need for government to cease interfering in the economy and industry, and a nationalistic

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<sup>108</sup> 'The Political Priorities: What Is At Stake For Britain', *The Times*, 18 February 1965, 13.

<sup>109</sup> 'Positions "East of Suez"', *The Times*, 25 March 1965, 13.

<sup>110</sup> 'Four Steps', *The Times*, 19 July 1966, 11.

<sup>111</sup> *The New Daily* ceased publication in 1966.

<sup>112</sup> See 13.

<sup>113</sup> D. Donnelly, 29 November 1968. CPA CCO 500/54/1, United Democratic Party (Desmond Donnelly), 1968-69.

foreign affairs stance.<sup>114</sup> Conservatives sympathised with many of these demands, but the leadership by no means accepted them all. Some of the demands mirrored those found in the literature of groups to the right of the Conservative Party. Eastwood forwarded this material to the Conservative Party, presumably his local Conservative Association, from where it found its way to the Central Office Area Agent. On 16 December 1968, the agent forwarded these documents to Mr. Webster at Central Office, and stated that he ‘thought you would like to have this in case you had not already seen this’.<sup>115</sup> These are the earliest extant documents in Central Office’s file on the United Democratic Party, although it is probable that Central Office already knew about Donnelly’s activities, including his appearance before the Monday Club.

In this instance, it is how the documents arrived at Central Office that is interesting, not just their content. These documents showed that Central Office’s intelligence network was not limited to its own agents as they originated from a businessman. This leads to two important conclusions as to how the Conservative Party thwarted the extreme right. First, the demands of the party leadership took precedence when necessary, despite the supposed autonomy of the local associations. This is unsurprising, but sheds light on the importance of Central Office. In the case of extreme-right groups and individuals, the leadership’s demand was simply to avoid embarrassing connections. The actions of Central Office thus have far proved this was a constant requirement. The leadership also demanded that Central Office handle carefully issues that could divide the party. As many of these potential divisions during Heath’s leadership centred on the Monday Club, Donnelly’s presence at one of its meetings meant that monitoring of the United Democratic Party also became a requirement. The second conclusion is that Central Office had an extensive reach. If Eastwood was a party official, or member of a local Conservative Association, Central Office had a great reach within the Conservative Party. However, if Eastwood was not a member of a local Conservative Association, Central Office’s reach extended deeper into society. Considering that Central Office had positive connections with some right-wing groups, such as Aims of Industry, this scenario is

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<sup>114</sup> ‘Through the Barriers’, (nd). CPA CCO 500/54/1, United Democratic Party (Desmond Donnelly), 1968-69.

<sup>115</sup> A. S. Garner to Mr. Webster, ‘Mr. Desmond Donnelly’, 16 December 1968. CPA CCO 500/54/1, United Democratic Party (Desmond Donnelly), 1968-69.

likely. It seems that Central Office's intelligence gathering went far beyond its own bureaucracy.

Central Office continued to gather intelligence on Donnelly and the United Democratic Party. In May 1969, this included the first issue of *Opportunity*, the United Democratic Party's newspaper.<sup>116</sup> The following month J. Galloway, the Central Office Area Agent for the West Midlands, placed observers at a Keele University meeting where Donnelly was to speak in support of the United Democratic Party's candidate in the Newcastle-under-Lyme by-election. This again showed the active measures that Central Office employed to monitor outside organisations. Galloway's report mentioned the alarm of some Conservatives at the similarity of Donnelly's views to those of the Conservative Party.<sup>117</sup> The result of the by-election on 3 October suggested that these Conservatives were justifiably concerned. The Conservative candidate, Nicholas Winterton, came second to the Labour candidate by 1042 votes. The United Democratic Party candidate secured 1699 votes. Therefore, the Conservative Party had arguably lost a by-election because a former Labour MP had journeyed into the political space just to its right. In June 1969, the Central Office Area Agent for Wales and Monmouthshire forwarded a cutting from the *West Wales Guardian* in which Donnelly criticised the Conservative Party Leadership's poor performance.<sup>118</sup> In his attached report, the agent stated that, 'There are members of our Party who view Donnelly as all but Conservative.'<sup>119</sup> No political party could afford to ignore these events. Yet, there seemed to be little consternation within Central Office. There were no comments written on these documents, and there are no revealing internal memos within the file. Donnelly's views were not too far to the right, which probably explained Central Office's attitude. Nor did the United Democratic Party contain any connections with pre-war fascism or any evidence of racism, unlike some other organisations. Although Central Office was probably irritated at the by-election loss and interested by the ovation given by the Monday Club, it was not as disconcerted by Donnelly as it was by extreme-right groups.

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<sup>116</sup> CPA CCO 500/54/1, United Democratic Party (Desmond Donnelly), 1968-69.

<sup>117</sup> J. Galloway to Mr. Webster, 'Mr. Desmond Donnelly M.P.', 11 June 1969. CPA CCO 500/54/1, United Democratic Party (Desmond Donnelly), 1968-69.

<sup>118</sup> 'Slipping Tories', *The West Wales Guardian*, 20 June 1969.

<sup>119</sup> L. Wolstenholme to Mr. R. J. Webster, 26 June 1969. CPA CCO 500/54/1, United Democratic Party (Desmond Donnelly), 1968-69.

Another reason Central Office was not as concerned about Donnelly was that whereas nearly all extreme-right movements saved their most vitriolic comments for the Conservative Party, Donnelly's attacked the Labour Government. The Conservative leadership probably welcomed this. This notion is supported by a cartoon in the Conservative Party's 'house paper', the *Daily Telegraph*, which depicted Donnelly as a shop proprietor standing in front of his window display offering 'Taxes Slashed', 'All Goods Guaranteed Denationalised' and 'Fantastic Cuts in Welfare'. Behind Donnelly stood Prime Minister Harold Wilson outside 'Harold's Super Duper Market', obviously irritated by Donnelly's claim that 'Our customers are always right.' Donnelly reproduced this cartoon in the first edition of *Opportunity*.<sup>120</sup> The *Daily Telegraph's* positive portrayal of Donnelly also pointed to another reason for Central Office's attitude. Donnelly's policies were very close to those of a Conservative Party that had also moved rightwards since 1967. Finally, whilst Donnelly's political position obliged Central Office to monitor him and his party, other groups posed far more problems for the Conservative Party and required its attention, both outside and within the party.

In 1967, the extreme right moved to overcome weakness it had displayed since the 1964 General Election. The catalyst was the 1966 General Election.<sup>121</sup> Chesterton had already created 'Candour Leagues' to run sanction-busting petrol convoys to Rhodesia. These sanctions would remain because Labour now possessed a large majority. Chesterton believed that the result of the General Election made it propitious for the extreme right to unite. The Conservative Party leadership had provided it with the political space to do so, as seen in its acceptance of the Labour government's immigration legislation and the emergence of residents' associations.<sup>122</sup> However, just outside the right wing of the Conservative Party was a very small space in which to operate. Mosley had proved how difficult this was either side of the Second World War, when he failed first with the British Union of Fascists and then with Union Movement. Chesterton's League of Empire Loyalists and the myriad neo-

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<sup>120</sup> *Opportunity*, 31 May 1969, p. 1. CPA CCO 500/54/1, United Democratic Party (Desmond Donnelly), 1968-69.

<sup>121</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 58.

<sup>122</sup> See 202.

Nazi and neo-fascist groups it spawned had failed. Nevertheless, Chesterton began negotiations after the General Election with the BNP, RPS and a number of smaller extreme-right groups.

Negotiations resulted in the formation of the National Front on 7 February 1967. This was Britain's first coherent extreme-right political party since the Second World War, and it possessed the potential to make an electoral impact. It included members of the League of Empire Loyalists, the Racial Preservation Society and the British National Party. Alongside Chesterton, the party leader, the National Front included figures such as Major-General Hilton, Air Vice-Marshal Bennett, Andrew Fountaine and R. F. Beauclair. Initially excluded were individuals whose comments or actions more easily categorised them as Nazis or fascists, such as Bean, Tyndall and Jordan. However, this proved to be temporary. Bean and Tyndall soon became members, which left only Jordan of the prominent extremists outside the National Front. In time, the National Front attracted others, including John O'Brien of the British Defence League. Although inchoate, the National Front quickly provided the previously fractured extreme right with a common focus. It emerged in a context that included fears about immigration and Europe. The National Front became Britain's largest extreme-right party. It presented the Conservative Party with its biggest challenge from the right since Mosley in the 1930s.

On 2 October 1967 Anthony Royle, the Conservative MP for Richmond, forwarded National Front literature to Anthony Barber, Edward du Cann's successor as Chairman at Central Office, and told him of its distribution in Beckenham.<sup>123</sup> Royle's action indicated that some Conservative MPs thought it was their duty to forward this type of information and material to Central Office. Royle was a progressive Conservative.<sup>124</sup> He stated to Barber that, 'I thought that the appropriate department of Central Office might be interested.'<sup>125</sup> What Central Office read would have confirmed that the National Front was an extreme-right party. The National Front's

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<sup>123</sup> Anthony Royle MP to The Rt. Hon. Anthony Barber MP, 2 October 1967. CPA CCO 3/7/37, National Front, 1967-77

<sup>124</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 198.

<sup>125</sup> Anthony Royle MP to The Rt. Hon. Anthony Barber MP, 2 October 1967. CPA CCO 3/7/37, National Front, 1967-77.

literature called for repatriation of coloured immigrants.<sup>126</sup> It announced the formation of a 'Free Speech Defence Committee', which included former Conservatives Andrew Fountaine and Henry Newnham, to champion the cause of those charged under the Race Relations Act (1965).<sup>127</sup> It opposed Britain's membership of the Common Market.<sup>128</sup> The National Front also demanded an end to overseas aid unless it clearly benefitted Britain's interests, the establishment of a strong national government that restored the nation's pride, honour and greatness, and the replacement of the coloured Commonwealth with a new political unit based on the economic and strategic union of Britain and the White Dominions.<sup>129</sup> Unsurprisingly, given these objectives, the Britons Publishing Society published at least one of the National Front's leaflets and shared the address of the National Front's Free Speech Defence Committee. Perhaps more troubling was the realisation that included in the attached literature list of 'Kinsmen Books', the National Front's publishing section, was work by individuals connected with the Conservative Party.<sup>130</sup> This included *The Puppetters*, written by erstwhile Conservative parliamentary candidate Harold Soref and his fellow Monday Club member Ian Greig, and *The Defeat of Communism and No Vision Here*, written by another Monday Club member, D. G. Stewart-Smith. Alongside these works was the notorious *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*.

The official who received Royle's correspondence immediately asked his colleague, Miss Varley, whether Central Office had any 'knowledge or contact with the National Front'.<sup>131</sup> Varley responded that Central Office did indeed have such knowledge.<sup>132</sup> This suggested that Central Office had monitored the National Front before Royle's letter arrived. Varley's response revealed Central Office's opinion of the National Front and the steps it had taken to counter its growth. Varley showed her disdain for the National Front when she described it as 'an amalgamation (or should I say unholy

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<sup>126</sup> 'Racial Hatred', NF Publications. CPA CCO 3/7/37, National Front, 1967-77.

<sup>127</sup> 'Free Speech Defence Committee', NF Publications, CPA CCO 3/7/37, National Front, 1967-77.

<sup>128</sup> 'The Common Market', NF Publications, CPA CCO 3/7/37, National Front, 1967-77.

<sup>129</sup> 'Save Britain From Final Disaster', NF Publications, CPA CCO 3/7/37, National Front, 1967-77.

<sup>130</sup> CPA CCO 3/7/37, National Front, 1967-77.

<sup>131</sup> Colin Craig to Miss Varley, 'Mr Anthony Royle MP', 4 October 1967. CPA CCO 3/7/37, National Front, 1967-77.

<sup>132</sup> J. F. Varley to Colin Craig, 'Mr. Anthony Royle, MP', 9 October 1967. CPA CCO 3/7/37, National Front, 1967-77.

alliance?) between John Bean's British National Party and the League of Empire Loyalists'.<sup>133</sup> She identified Bean as Colin Jordan's 'first lieutenant' in his 'fascist organisation' before 'striking out on his own', which demonstrated a belief that the National Front was associated with fascism.<sup>134</sup> Varley also stated that the component parts of the National Front were 'too discredited to prove a real threat to us',<sup>135</sup> which indicated that Central Office thought it unlikely that these associations could damage the Conservative Party quite as much as before. The extreme-right's failure to make any political headway, partly thanks to Central Office's efforts, justified Varley's comment. Her attitude did not result in any deviation from Central Office's usual negative action towards the extreme right, and she implemented well-tried policies against the National Front. She admitted that the National Front could attract the support of 'some of our extreme right-wing members', and stated that Central Office would 'certainly advise any of our people approached to have nothing whatsoever to do with them'.<sup>136</sup> Additionally, Varley's comments encapsulated two ways in which the Conservative Party blocked the extreme right. First, as it already contained 'extreme right-wing members', the Conservative Party captured those whom any new extreme-right party needed to succeed. Secondly, in Central Office the Conservative Party had an established mechanism via which it warned members against joining parties like the National Front, not least if they contained individuals renowned for publicity stunts and engagement in street politics.

Barber summed up Central Office's attitude to the National Front when he stated in his response to Royle that, 'They all seem to be a pretty dangerous crowd!'<sup>137</sup> Central Office continued to monitor the National Front for the remainder of the 1966-70 Parliament. A. S. Garner, the Area Agent for the North West, requested information about the National Front from Central Office in 1968.<sup>138</sup> His request suggested that

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<sup>133</sup> J. F. Varley to Colin Craig, 'Mr. Anthony Royle, MP', 9 October 1967. CPA CCO 3/7/37, National Front, 1967-77.

<sup>134</sup> J. F. Varley to Colin Craig, 'Mr. Anthony Royle, MP', 9 October 1967. CPA CCO 3/7/37, National Front, 1967-77.

<sup>135</sup> J. F. Varley to Colin Craig, 'Mr. Anthony Royle, MP', 9 October 1967. CPA CCO 3/7/37, National Front, 1967-77.

<sup>136</sup> J. F. Varley to Colin Craig, 'Mr. Anthony Royle, MP', 9 October 1967. CPA CCO 3/7/37, National Front, 1967-77.

<sup>137</sup> A. Barber to Anthony Royle, MP, 12 October 1967. CPA CCO 3/7/37, National Front, 1967-77.

<sup>138</sup> A. S. Garner, 'The National Front', 12 August 1968. CPA CCO 3/7/37, National Front, 1967-77.

either Central Office's intelligence gathering had not performed effectively in the North West, or the National Front's impact there was limited. An inquiry from an associate in the insurance industry had precipitated Garner's request.<sup>139</sup> The inquiry provided further evidence of the social reach of the Central Office intelligence gathering system. However dismissive Central Office was about the National Front's prospects, it warned Garner that as it was attempting to project an image of respectability, the National Front 'could be a bigger nuisance' than its constituent parts had proved.<sup>140</sup> Central Office had a point. In 1969, the Conservative Party's opponents noted that the National Front included Admiral Sir Barry Domville on its National Council.<sup>141</sup> Domville was a former BUF member interned during the Second World War. Therefore, his presence posed a potential problem should the Conservative Party ever become associated with the National Front. This also explained the Conservative Party's vigilance towards the National Front as the 1970 General Election approached. An example of this came on 4 May 1970 in the response of Mr. Carrick at Central Office to material forwarded by the Conservative MP for Petersfield, Miss J. M. Quennell. Carrick thanked Quennell for the 'opportunity of discussing this organisation with you in view of the immense amount of work you have done'.<sup>142</sup> Admittedly, this was a cryptic comment, made more so by the absence of Quennell's material from the file. However, Quennell's correspondence reinforced the notion gained from Anthony Royle that some Conservative MPs actively opposed the National Front.

Central Office's attitude towards the National Front was consistent with its policy since 1945. In all cases, Central Office had aimed to avoid any negative impact on the Conservative Party. Yet, although Central Office was aware of the potential harm the National Front posed, there was not yet any acute anxiety. By 1967, Central Office had investigated extreme-right organisations under the remit provided in 1948 for nearly twenty years. With a few exceptions, all extreme-right organisations had collapsed. Some had produced parliamentary candidates, but as the electorate easily

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<sup>139</sup> A. S. Garner, 'The National Front', 12 August 1968. CPA CCO 3/7/37, National Front, 1967-77.

<sup>140</sup> R. K. Garrick to A. S. Garner, 'The National Front', 13 August 1968. CPA CCO 3/7/37, National Front, 1967-77.

<sup>141</sup> D. Shipper, 'The extreme Right regroupes', *Tribune*, 21 March 1969.

<sup>142</sup> R. K. Carrick to Miss J. M. Quennell, MBE, MP, 4 May 1970. CPA CCO 3/7/37, National Front, 1967-77.

identified them with Nazism or fascism, they all fared badly. Arguably, only the League of Empire Loyalists candidature at Lewisham North in 1957 had harmed the Conservative Party. Yet, the Conservative Party had effectively rebuffed the LEL at the 1958 party conference at Blackpool, and thereafter watched it fracture. Therefore, Central Office's apparently relaxed attitude in 1967 was understandable. The National Front's poor performance since its inception warranted Central Office's attitude. During the 1970 General Election campaign, Central Office received a report on the National Front's performance in recent municipal elections from the Board of Deputies of British Jews.<sup>143</sup> Central Office informed the sender that it had forwarded the report to the other political parties, which was perhaps an effort to minimise a Conservative Party link with the National Front.<sup>144</sup> The report showed that the National Front possessed the potential to deprive the Conservative Party of council seats. In 1969, for example, the National Front polled over 10% in Cardiff Cathays, and the next year at Huddersfield South Central its vote far exceeded Labour's margin of victory over the Conservatives.<sup>145</sup> In reality, however, these results were of little cause for concern. Seats where the National Front may have deprived the Conservatives of victory were few, whilst the unknown previous loyalties of its voters made firm conclusions difficult. Nowhere did the National Front win a council seat. Nor would the National Front's dismal by-election performance have unduly worried Central Office. On 28 March 1968, former Conservative parliamentary candidate Andrew Fountaine stood at Acton, the only seat the National Front contested in the period 1966-70, and gained a mere 5.6% of the vote. At Acton, a Labour majority of 4941 turned into a Conservative one of 3720, so Fountaine's candidacy did not cause much concern. Yet, there was another reason that explained Central Office's apparent lack of concern about the National Front. Within the Conservative Party, an extreme-right group had posed far more problems than the National Front.

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<sup>143</sup> Abraham J. Marks to Mr. Webster, 21 May 1970. CPA CCO 3/7/37, National Front, 1967-77.

<sup>144</sup> Mr. Webster to Abraham J. Marks, 22 May 1970. CPA CCO 3/7/37, National Front, 1967-77.

<sup>145</sup> Abraham J. Marks to Mr. Webster, 21 May 1970, pp. 3-4. CPA CCO 3/7/37, National Front, 1967-77.

### *The Internal Extreme Right*

The official history of the Monday Club described its first five years as ‘The Years of Struggle’.<sup>146</sup> Membership was small, possibly caused by a confusing attitude towards the Monday Club that emanated from the Conservative Party leadership and bureaucracy. Central Office had attempted to block the Monday Club when Macmillan was party leader, and then appeared to adopt a more positive stance under Home. That changed again after the 1964 General Election. Pressure mounted quickly for Home’s resignation, and Edward Heath, a member of the One Nation Group, replaced him on 27 July 1965. Once again, a person unsympathetic to the right led the Conservative Party. Moreover, there was little prospect of Heath’s early removal, as he was the first Conservative leader elected by the party’s MPs, and another General Election was expected soon. The Monday Club responded by transforming itself into a mass organisation. In 1965, the Monday Club removed restrictions that limited membership to Conservative Party members under 35.<sup>147</sup> Thereafter, membership increased considerably, more than fivefold between 1964 and 1969 according to the most cautious estimates.<sup>148</sup> After the 1966 General Election, sixteen Conservative MPs including Harold Gurden and Patrick Wall were Monday Club members.<sup>149</sup> From the General Election of 1964 onwards, the Monday Club looked increasingly like a party within a party. It adopted a political platform that attacked the ‘liberal establishment’ for its involvement in the decline of British society and the abandonment of loyalists abroad, a stance similar to many post-war external extreme-right groups. The Monday Club included the Conservative Party leadership in this ‘liberal establishment’. Its development was more dangerous than that of other groups for two reasons. First, the Monday Club had a higher calibre of member than other extreme-right groups. Therefore, their concentration on society’s divisions, most

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<sup>146</sup> Copping, *Story*, 8.

<sup>147</sup> P. Seyd, ‘Factionalism’, 470.

<sup>148</sup> Copping claims a membership of 200-300 at the end of 1963. Copping, *Story*, 7. Seyd puts the figure at between 1600 and 2500 by 1970, based on subscriptions received. He dismisses a 1971 claim by the chairman of approximately 10000 members as “a very rough one.” Nevertheless, Seyd admits that the increase “had been considerable”. Seyd, ‘Factionalism’, 471.

<sup>149</sup> The others were Geoffrey Rippon, Julian Amery, Ronald Bell, Edward Taylor, John Peyton, Joseph Hiley, John Biggs-Davison, Stephen Hastings, Victor Goodhew, W. H. K. Baker, Jasper More, Jill Knight, Mark Woodnutt and A. W. Wiggin. Copping, *Story*, 21.

obviously immigration, threatened to exacerbate existing tensions to a degree that other groups could not achieve. Secondly, the Monday Club was unarguably of the Conservative Party and operated within it, unlike virtually all of the other extreme-right organisations Central Office had faced since 1945. Therefore, it threatened to identify society's divisions explicitly with those of the Conservative Party, which was potentially electorally disastrous.

An early sign of the Monday Club's changed intent after the 1964 General Election came in November 1964 when Paul Williams replaced Paul Bristol as chairman.<sup>150</sup> Williams had been a Conservative MP for Sunderland South from 1953 until 1964. However, he sat as an Independent MP from 1957-58, after he resigned the Conservative whip in protest over the decision to withdraw from Suez. His appointment as Chairman of the Monday Club was probably a result of the fallout after the publication of *Conservatism Lost? Conservatism Regained*.<sup>151</sup> However, under Williams, the *Monday Club's* more concerted and outspoken opposition to the Labour Government frequently put it at odds with the Conservative leadership. We can see evidence of the Monday Club's opposition to the Conservative frontbench in an internal memorandum on immigration by Tim Hardacre of December 1964. Hardacre cited Griffiths' success at Smethwick and that of other similarly minded Birmingham MPs, and argued that this was a consequence of 'the grave problems caused by the post-war influx of coloured workers from the Commonwealth'.<sup>152</sup> This was a clear criticism of Conservative Governments that held power for thirteen of these nineteen years. Hardacre continued in same vein. He identified the continual 'failure to appreciate the present and future difficulties caused by the 500,000 new immigrants in our country', and identified immigrants' deficiencies in hygiene, social behaviour, customs, language and consequent impact on housing, education and jobs, which, he concluded, made racial discrimination 'understandable in the present state of affairs'.<sup>153</sup> Hardacre suggested that the Monday Club note how MPs like Griffiths had made use of coloured immigration. Many of these MPs were now in the Monday

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<sup>150</sup> 'Minutes of a Meeting of the Monday Club Executive', 5 November 1965. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/2, November 1963 – December 1964.

<sup>151</sup> See 173-174.

<sup>152</sup> Tim Hardacre, 'The Monday Club', December 1964, 1. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/2, November 1963 – December 1964.

<sup>153</sup> Tim Hardacre, 'The Monday Club', December 1964, 1-16. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/2, November 1963 – December 1964.

Club. Hardacre's was a harder line than hitherto and the language he employed redolent of the extreme right. Whether the party leadership or Central Office knew about this memorandum is unclear, but a copy of a similar memorandum in the Conservative Party Archive date-stamped 15 February 1965 by the Conservative Research Department suggests that they did.<sup>154</sup> In February 1965, the Monday Club's pamphlet, *Immigration Into the U.K.*, tempered this language, and included some progressive measures. Moreover, its stated objective, assimilation of all immigrants, seemed laudable. However, the method it proposed to achieve its objective showed that the substance of Hardacre's memorandum remained. The pamphlet proposed tighter administration of the colour bar inherent in the 1962 Immigrant Act to keep numbers to a minimum.<sup>155</sup> Other recommendations included the establishment of hostels for single coloured immigrants, clearer information on immigrant unemployment levels and regular checks for incidence of venereal disease and tuberculosis. These measures directly addressed the fears raised by extreme-right parties such as the BNP. In doing so, the Monday Club reduced the space available to the BNP. However, such comments also brought the Monday Club's motives into serious question. The Monday Club had based its immigration policy solely on skin colour. Nowhere was there criticism of white immigration. The Monday Club memorandum received by the Conservative Research Department proved this when it claimed that, 'Colour exaggerates differences. Competition for housing, education and health services cause resentment.'<sup>156</sup> This would have left the party leadership and Central Office with little doubt about the Monday Club's views and objectives regarding immigration.

Also issued early in 1965 was *The Role of Subversion in Foreign Affairs*. This Monday Club pamphlet criticised previous Conservative Governments more explicitly. It focused on the threat posed by Communism and stated that, 'When last in office Conservative leaders appeared to many of their supporters to be providing an

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<sup>154</sup> 'A Monday Club Memorandum on Immigration Into The U.K.', 1965. CPA PUB 117/10.

<sup>155</sup> 'Immigration Into the U.K.', 8. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/3, December 1964 – August 1965.

<sup>156</sup> 'A Monday Club Memorandum on Immigration Into The U.K.', 1965, p. 2. CPA PUB 117/10.

inadequate defence to this threat.’<sup>157</sup> However, this pamphlet also targeted the current Conservative Party leadership as much as previous ones. It warned that, ‘the party leaders would be well advised to assure their supporters that they appreciate the contemporary threat to the British Commonwealth and state unequivocally that they intend to do something effective about it’.<sup>158</sup> Here, the Monday Club implied that the Conservative Party leadership remained insufficiently anti-communist. More ominously, the pamphlet threatened that, ‘unless steps are taken and are seen to be taken, many otherwise loyal Conservative supporters will become increasingly disillusioned: may refuse to vote for the party and may even become more swayed by extremist groups because their fears have not been allayed’.<sup>159</sup> Although this pamphlet did not represent the collective view of the Monday Club, we cannot dismiss it simply as one individual’s view. For, although its author, Geoffrey Stewart-Smith, was active in anti-Communist circles,<sup>160</sup> all Monday Club pamphlets required the approval of the chairman, and the National Executive where possible, before publication.<sup>161</sup> Moreover, the Monday Club applied this caveat to all its publications. The Monday Club was aware of the Conservative Party’s opposition to the extreme right, a role that had forced individuals since 1945 into a number of extreme-right groups such as Clan Briton and the True Tories.

The Conservative Party leadership could neither ignore this criticism from its right wing, nor exaggerate divisions within the party given the proximity of a General Election. However, Central Office still made its view of the Monday Club known. Lord Salisbury requested Central Office help to acquire office space and £1000 funds for the Monday Club in November 1964. The General Director responded: ‘Not bloody likely.’<sup>162</sup> When Sir Robert Renwick donated £250, a Miss Yonge made it clear that Central Office would not provide the rest, and informed the Chairman that, ‘As a matter of interest I gather that this is about 6% of what the Bow Group gets.’<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> D. G. Stewart-Smith (ed.), *The Role of Subversion in Foreign Affairs*, Monday Club Foreign Affairs Study Group, London (1965), 4.

<sup>158</sup> Stewart-Smith, *Subversion*, 17.

<sup>159</sup> Stewart-Smith, *Subversion*, 4.

<sup>160</sup> ‘Obituary’, *Daily Telegraph*, 20 March 2004.

<sup>161</sup> Seyd, ‘Factionalism’, 479.

<sup>162</sup> Note to Lord Blakenham recording a request from Lord Salisbury, 25 November 1964. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

<sup>163</sup> F. M. Yonge MBE to the Chairman, 30 November 1964. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

These examples contrast markedly with previous assistance to the Bow Group. They also revealed that Central Office remained hostile to the Monday Club, and suggested that the positive attitude it adopted whilst Home was party leader was more apparent than real. Nevertheless, at this time only low level blocking of the Monday Club by obstruction of its literature occurred. This was possibly a consequence of electoral considerations. On 6 April 1965, for example, a meeting of the Monday Club's Executive Committee agreed that chairman Williams should seek to meet the Party Chairman 'with a view to correcting the discrimination in the Research Department and Conservative Political Centre against Monday Club publications'.<sup>164</sup> Both departments were within Central Office. Williams duly requested 'fair recognition for the work of the Monday Club in the Research Department and the C.P.C.' and suggested a meeting to Chairman du Cann.<sup>165</sup> Mr. Craig at Central Office thought that Williams' request was a complaint about the allegedly preferential treatment Central Office afforded to the Bow Group.<sup>166</sup> By July 1965, the Monday Club's Council discussed Central Office's alleged preferential treatment of the Bow Group. The minutes referred to 'instances of discrimination against Monday Club publications by the C.P.C., in particular in a recent advertisement in the Sunday Times'.<sup>167</sup> In the same month, Williams reported that party Chairman Edward du Cann had provided assurances that there was no question of any bias against the Monday Club within the party organisation.<sup>168</sup> The Monday Club may have accepted the good faith of the Chairman's assurances. Du Cann was loyal to the still incumbent party leader and fellow right-winger Alec Douglas Home.<sup>169</sup> However, du Cann's assurance did not allay the Monday Club's suspicions. The Council members to whom Williams reported agreed that, 'in view of certain specific instances, such as the fact that no Monday Club Literature was ever on display at Swinton, a file should be compiled

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<sup>164</sup> Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting of the Monday Club, 6 April 1965, 1. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/3, December 1964 – August 1965.

<sup>165</sup> Paul Williams to Edward du Cann, 30 April 1965. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

<sup>166</sup> Mr. Craig, internal memo, 5 May 1965. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

<sup>167</sup> Minutes of the Council Meeting, 5 July 1965, 'Bias Against the Monday Club', 1. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/3, December 1964 – August 1965.

<sup>168</sup> Minutes of the Council Meeting, 14 July 1965, 'Bias Against the Monday Club within the Party Organization', 1. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/3, December 1964 – August 1965.

<sup>169</sup> Ramsden implies this in noting that Home only singled out du Cann for special praise when resigning. Ramsden, *Winds*, 236.

giving examples of bias which should then be shown to Mr. du Cann'.<sup>170</sup> This decision reflected the Monday Club's suspicion that even with Home as party leader, 'the pink miasma of the Bow Group continued to overshadow conservative policy. The leftists were deeply entrenched.'<sup>171</sup> The 'Swinton' referred to is Swinton College, the North Yorkshire establishment where the party leadership provided political education for its members. Prominent amongst those attending Swinton College were members of the Bow Group, who were engaged in a deliberate strategy of forming political relationships with other members and the party leadership.<sup>172</sup>

Du Cann's assurances bore fruit when Central Office printed a small review of a Monday Club pamphlet and the CPC agreed to publish a toned-down *Immigration Into the U.K.*<sup>173</sup> The Monday Club Council considered 'Bias at Central Office' again in September 1965, but decided that, 'no complaint should be made at present as the attitude was becoming more favourable'.<sup>174</sup> CPC's agreement to publish the Monday Club's pamphlet on Europe and display the club's literature in its bookstall at the forthcoming Conservative Party conference at Brighton influenced this decision.<sup>175</sup> This was a definite alteration in activity, but did not prove that the party approved of the Monday Club. The Conservative Party faced the prospect of Prime Minister Wilson calling a General Election at any time. Therefore it is unsurprising that Central Office tempered its obstruction of Monday Club literature. This is not quite the whole picture. Its decision to publish *A Europe of Nations: a practical policy for Britain* was not difficult as this Monday Club pamphlet reflected the more pro-European stance of Edward Heath; Central Office simply abided by the wishes of the party leader. Nor did the apparent change in Central Office's activity mean that it, or the wider party organisation, truly welcomed the Monday Club's interventions. For example, when the Monday Club's Council again considered Central Office's bias, Harold Soref

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<sup>170</sup> Minutes of the Council Meeting, 14 July 1965, 'Bias Against the Monday Club within the Party Organization', 2. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/3, December 1964 – August 1965.

<sup>171</sup> Copping, *Story*, 11.

<sup>172</sup> Barr, *Bow*, 19.

<sup>173</sup> Minutes of the Council Meeting, 2 August 1965. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/3, December 1964 – August 1965.

<sup>174</sup> Minutes of the Council Meeting, 7 September 1965. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/3, December 1964 – August 1965.

<sup>175</sup> Minutes of the Council Meeting, 7 September 1965. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/3, December 1964 – August 1965.

complained that no member was 'ever selected in a winnable seat'.<sup>176</sup> It is possible to dismiss this as sour grapes as the agreement to stock Monday Club literature did not include *The Puppeteers*, which Soref had co-authored.<sup>177</sup> The subsequent appearance of this pamphlet on the National Front's approved literature list suggested that any Central Office concern about it was well founded.<sup>178</sup> Nevertheless, Soref's claims pointed to a wider obstruction of the Monday Club. Central Office compiled lists of acceptable candidates and one of its officials attended candidate selection meetings. Moreover, the actions of Edward Heath confirmed Central Office obstruction of the Monday Club. Immediately after 1964 General Election defeat, Home appointed Heath to mastermind the biggest policy review since the *Industrial Charter*.<sup>179</sup> Heath managed over thirty working groups that investigated a broad spectrum of policy. Ramsden argued that Heath's election as leader strengthened his control over these groups.<sup>180</sup> The result was the policy statement *Putting Britain Right Ahead*, published in time for the 1965 Party conference. Heath maintained these policy groups and control over them after he was heavily defeated at the 1966 General Election. Seyd stated that Heath never appointed any of the Monday Club's nominees to these policy groups, even though they submitted names for consideration.<sup>181</sup> Heath's actions are consonant with Central Office's consistent post-1945 hostility towards any group to the right of the Conservative Party, especially when compared to the support given to progressive groups within the Conservative Party.<sup>182</sup>

Rhodesia was the issue that most obviously highlighted the Monday Club's difference from progressives and its position on the right of the Conservative Party. After the disintegration of the Central African Federation, two of its three constituent parts, Zambia and Malawi, had adopted black majority rule. The white minority rulers of the other member state, Rhodesia, refused to accept such an outcome, and elected a hard-

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<sup>176</sup> Minutes of the Council Meeting, 20 September 1965. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/4, 1965.

<sup>177</sup> Minutes of the Council Meeting, 20 September 1965. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/4, 1965.

<sup>178</sup> See 217.

<sup>179</sup> Heath, *Life*, 267.

<sup>180</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 256.

<sup>181</sup> Seyd, 'Factionalism', 485.

<sup>182</sup> Seyd refers to Central Office support for the *Tory Reform Committee*, citing H. Kopsch, *The Conservative Party and the Development of Social Policy in the Coalition of 1940-1945*, unpublished PhD thesis, LSE (1970), 46. Seyd, 'Factionalism', 485.

line government led by Ian Smith. British pressure to compromise failed. On the eve of the 1964 General Election, Smith threatened to unilaterally declare independence rather than accept subordination to majority rule.<sup>183</sup> This situation caused acute problems for the Conservative leadership. It could not condone an illegal act. Yet, the party's right wing would not accept any abandonment of its 'kith and kin'.<sup>184</sup> Initially, right-wingers formed the Friends of Rhodesia, a group that initially caused little concern at Central Office because its perceived extremism deprived it of funds.<sup>185</sup> Money from Rhodesia changed this situation, and resulted in the launch of the Anglo-Rhodesian Society on 9 September 1965.<sup>186</sup> This development promised concerted pressure on the Conservative leadership as the Monday Club's patron Lord Salisbury led the Anglo-Rhodesian Society. Moreover, as the issue at stake concerned skin colour, Rhodesia threatened to inflame racial tensions in Britain. It also threatened to identify the Conservative Party in public perception with divisive issues both at home and abroad. The Monday Club involved itself prominently in the question of Rhodesia. Mark Stuart showed that whilst right-wing Conservative MPs did not agree on all topics, the Monday Club used the Rhodesia issue to give the right wing coherent organisational force with which to assail Heath.<sup>187</sup> Therefore, the Monday Club provided a direct challenge to the Conservative leadership. The impact Rhodesia had on the Conservative Party in parliament, when its MPs amazingly divided three ways over the imposition of sanctions against Rhodesia, embarrassed the party leadership. The new party leader appeared weak and the party divided. However, the actions taken by the Conservative leadership shows that it was quite prepared to meet the Monday Club's challenge.

With a declaration of independence increasingly likely, Heath's shadow cabinet released a statement on 6 October 1965 that announced the parliamentary Conservative Party's opposition to it and its desire to see Rhodesian independence based on majority rule, a statement it intended 'to be helpful to the Government in a

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<sup>183</sup> Smith said he was prepared to consult tribal chiefs on the possibility of granting a limited franchise based on the 1961 Constitution. B. Pimlott, *Harold Wilson*, Harper Collins, London (1992), 367.

<sup>184</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 288.

<sup>185</sup> Mark Stuart, 'A Party in Three Pieces: The Conservative Split over Rhodesian Oil Sanctions, 1965', *Contemporary British History*, 16, 1 (Spring 2002), 70, n. 138.

<sup>186</sup> Stuart, 'Sanctions', 70.

<sup>187</sup> The other issues being immigration, Europe, capital punishment and the permissiveness of the 1960s. Stuart, 'Sanctions', 54.

very difficult situation'.<sup>188</sup> The *Daily Telegraph's* editorial of the same day mirrored the shadow cabinet's statement, and indicated that the Conservative leadership would go further if necessary. It stated that there was little difference between the positions of the government and opposition, and implied that there would be little dissent from the Conservative leadership if the government imposed sanctions on Rhodesia.<sup>189</sup> These sanctions included an oil embargo, which Chesterton's Candour Leagues subsequently tried to break.<sup>190</sup> The Conservative leadership, or Central Office, had used the *Daily Telegraph* to warn the Monday Club how far they were prepared to go to oppose it. That day's letters to the editor showed how far the Conservative leadership's position was from Monday Club members' views. Patrick Wall suggested modification of the Rhodesian constitution 'to ensure that power does not yet pass to the majority race'.<sup>191</sup> Wall's qualified statement was in line with the Monday Club's professed agreement with the idea of eventual black majority rule and a solution that was 'just to all races'.<sup>192</sup> However, Monday Club pronouncements never said when black majority rule would be viable, but always placed it some time in the indefinite future. Some Monday Club members made comments that suggested 'eventual' was synonymous with 'never'. Patrick Wall's comments to Beauclair in 1964 revealed a chauvinistic belief that some individuals were unfit to govern themselves by dint of skin colour.<sup>193</sup> His view was more in line with the leader of the League of Empire Loyalists than with the Conservative Party leadership. It is unlikely that Wall was a lone voice in the Monday Club. At no stage had the post-1945 Conservative leadership shown any desire to be associated with such views. It is possible that the Monday Club opposed a unilateral declaration of independence on purely legal grounds, not skin colour, and that it based its opposition to any sanctions on a belief in their ineffectiveness. This was certainly the Monday Club's position. However, it was inconsistent to oppose independence because it was illegal and then oppose legally imposed sanctions. This made support for the white minority in Rhodesia within the Monday Club look similar to that of the League of Empire Loyalists.

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<sup>188</sup> 'Tories Warn Rhodesia On Independence', *Daily Telegraph*, 6 October 1965, 1.

<sup>189</sup> 'Dealings With Rhodesia', *Daily Telegraph*, 6 October 1965, 16.

<sup>190</sup> See 215.

<sup>191</sup> 'Chance For Rhodesia', *Daily Telegraph*, 6 October 1965, 16.

<sup>192</sup> 'Resolution', 22 November 1965. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/4, 1965.

<sup>193</sup> See 203-204.

Unlike the League of Empire Loyalists, the Monday Club in 1965 was not a declining rump. By 1965, it contained a number of MPs and party grandees and was thus difficult for the party leadership and Central Office to deal with. If the leadership appeased the Monday Club, it risked associating the whole party with the wider extreme right. On the other hand, if either the leadership or Central Office antagonised the Monday Club they risked dividing the party just before another General Election. Nevertheless, as the leadership mobilised the party machinery to oppose the Monday Club, it showed just how determined it was to act against the extreme right within its own ranks. The leadership used its control of party conference to block Lord Salisbury's motion opposing sanctions in the event of UDI.<sup>194</sup> The *Daily Telegraph* reported conference's overwhelming cry of 'No!' when asked if they should even debate Salisbury's motion.<sup>195</sup> In a television broadcast on 30 October 1965, Prime Minister Wilson ruled out the use of force if Rhodesia declared independence, but threatened sanctions, particularly on oil. The following day, the Monday Club began preparations for 'a public campaign for support for Rhodesia'.<sup>196</sup> On 11 November, Ian Smith declared Rhodesia's independence. In parliament, the Conservative Party leadership reacted once more to contain the Monday Club and limit any split within the parliamentary party. On 13 November, Heath appeared before a meeting of the 1922 Committee of Conservative backbenchers. Although some backbenchers were unhappy, Heath gained their assurance that they would not oppose the Government's enabling the application of sanctions.<sup>197</sup> The parliamentary debate on the enabling bill was notable for two incidents: the ejection of Colin Jordan for shouting slogans supporting National Socialism and Rhodesian independence;<sup>198</sup> and the failed attempt to force a division on the bill's second reading by the Monday Club's Edward Taylor, despite the 'black looks from his Front Bench'.<sup>199</sup> Jordan's intervention graphically illustrated the danger of any Monday Club opposition to the agreed Conservative Party position. Support for the Rhodesian regime placed

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<sup>194</sup> 'Tories Bar Motion By Salisbury', *Daily Telegraph* 13 October 1965, 1.

<sup>195</sup> 'Salisbury Fails To Sway Tories', *Daily Telegraph*, 16 October 1965, 1.

<sup>196</sup> Minutes of the Council Meeting, 1 November 1965, 1. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/4, 1965.

<sup>197</sup> 'Backbenchers Toe Tory 'Shadow' Line', *Daily Telegraph*, 13 November 1965, 28.

<sup>198</sup> 'Colin Jordan in Commons Scene', *Daily Telegraph*, 16 November 1965, 1.

<sup>199</sup> 'Sanctions Bill Is Passed At 2 a.m. Lone Rebel M.P.: Lords Battle Collapses', *Daily Telegraph*, 16 November 1965, 1.

Conservatives in the same camp as neo-Nazis like Jordan. The events that led up to the passage of the Southern Rhodesia Bill on 15 November 1965 are an example of negative parliamentary activity by the Conservative Party towards the extreme right.

However, the Monday Club quickly proved its resilience, unlike the vast majority of other extreme-right groups the Conservative Party had blocked. It convened a 'Rhodesia Emergency Committee' in the House of Commons on 17 November and planned a large-scale emergency public meeting.<sup>200</sup> This ability to react quickly and utilise the offices at Westminster puts the Monday Club on a higher plane of credibility than all other extreme-right groups. In contrast to the dismissive attitude displayed towards most extreme-right wing groups, Conservatives viewed the Monday Club as a potential force in British politics. 'Peterborough' in the *Daily Telegraph* attributed this to chairman Paul Williams: 'He has used his undoubted political acumen and experience of Westminster to shape a mixed assortment of Right-wingers into a more coherent force.'<sup>201</sup> This was dangerous for the Conservative leadership because the *Daily Telegraph's* comments added to the Monday Club's growing credibility, and threatened to divide the Conservative Party. The *Daily Telegraph* recognised this possibility when it identified a Monday Club member as representative of the polarisation that beset the Conservative Party.<sup>202</sup> The Monday Club's emergency public meeting reinforced this image of it as a potentially divisive, yet credible, extreme-right group.

The *Daily Telegraph* reckoned that 500-600 people attended the Caxton Hall meeting on 22 November 1965.<sup>203</sup> This was an impressive figure for a swiftly arranged meeting. The Monday Club distributed its pamphlet, '*Rhodesia And You*'. On its first page, the *Daily Telegraph* reported that the platform criticised the new Conservative leader.<sup>204</sup> The attendees passed a resolution deploring oil sanctions.<sup>205</sup> 'Three rousing

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<sup>200</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of the Monday Club Rhodesia Emergency Committee, 17 November 1965. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/4, 1965.

<sup>201</sup> 'Coherent Force', Peterborough (pseudo), *Daily Telegraph*, 22 November 1965, 14.

<sup>202</sup> 'Gowns and Swords', Peterborough (pseudo), *Daily Telegraph*, 22 November 1965, 14.

<sup>203</sup> 'Tory Cheers For Ian Smith', *Daily Telegraph*, 23 November 1965, 1.

<sup>204</sup> 'Tory Cheers For Ian Smith', *Daily Telegraph*, 23 November 1965, 1.

<sup>205</sup> 'Resolution', 22 November 1965. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/4, 1965.

cheers for Mr. Ian Smith' ended the meeting.<sup>206</sup> This was potentially explosive. In the same *Daily Telegraph* edition, 'Peterborough' recognised the danger that the Monday Club's meeting posed and stated that it 'symbolised an incandescent element in the Conservative Party just now'.<sup>207</sup> 'Peterborough' tacitly acknowledged that the Conservative Party had forced the Monday Club to operate in extreme-right political space. The Monday Club appeared to recognise the difficulty of operating in this space, and the difficulty of its position, when it released a press statement that denied leading the approval of Smith.<sup>208</sup> Awareness that association with the extreme right outside the party posed a serious risk came when Patrick Wall forwarded the resolution to party leader Edward Heath on 24 November and stated that, 'we managed, I am glad to say, to eliminate Fascists or members of the League of Empire Loyalists, etc.'.<sup>209</sup> It is doubtful that this statement allayed Heath's suspicions and fears. Moreover, the press statement failed to condemn the ovation or say whether the platform joined in the audience's chorus of approval, and therefore walked a very fine, obfuscating line. Wall also denied that the Monday Club platform had supported Smith when he wrote to a prominent Conservative. However, Wall showed his own partiality when he warned that the Conservative Party had under-estimated the extent of sympathy for Ian Smith and stated this was dangerous.<sup>210</sup> Moreover, Wall also claimed that the Rhodesian Government's action was only 'technical treason' committed 'by some of Her Majesty's loyalist subjects'.<sup>211</sup> Events at the Caxton Hall and Wall's comments indicated that the Monday Club engaged in double-speak. The Conservative leadership did not accept the Monday Club's assurances. Evidence for this came in barely-attributed comments on the *Daily Telegraph's* front page on 30 November. It quoted former ministers who stated that they were 'quite happy for those MPs who were prepared to support an illegal regime to be smoked out', and then opined that, 'The activities of the Right-wing Monday Club have incurred

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<sup>206</sup> 'Tory Cheers For Ian Smith', *Daily Telegraph*, 23 November 1965, 1.

<sup>207</sup> 'Monday Club Speak Out', Peterborough (pseudo), *Daily Telegraph*, 23 November 1965, 16.

<sup>208</sup> 'Press Statement', 22 November 1965. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/4, 1965.

<sup>209</sup> Sir Patrick Wall, MC, VRD, MP to the Rt. Hon. Edward Heath, MBE, MP, 24 November 1965. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/4, 1965.

<sup>210</sup> Sir Patrick Wall, MC, VRD, MP to the Rt. Hon. Selwyn Lloyd, MP, 24 November 1965. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/4, 1965.

<sup>211</sup> Copy Speech, 22 November 1965. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall. Monday Club: 1961-1989. 40/4, 1965.

growing disfavour among members of the Shadow Cabinet.<sup>212</sup> It implicitly warned the Monday Club that the Conservative leadership was quite prepared to act against it.

On 21 December 1965, the Government placed an Order in Council before parliament to implement the embargo of all petroleum products to Rhodesia. The Opposition accepted sanctions provided they were not punitive.<sup>213</sup> Oil sanctions were punitive as they affected all sections of Rhodesian society. However, if the Opposition voted against the measure it would leave them open to charges of racism for appearing to endorse a white regime's actions against its majority black citizens. If they supported the Order, it would open the Conservative leadership to charges that they were weak and had deserted Britain's 'kith and kin'. Heath used his predecessor, Home, to try to placate opponents of oil sanctions. Home was more amenable to the Monday Club, for under his leadership Central Office had been more positive towards the Monday Club.<sup>214</sup> Home had attended the Monday Club's foundation dinner in 1964, and would later attend other prominent functions.<sup>215</sup> He called for a compromise that mirrored the Monday Club's position of accepting eventual majority rule in Rhodesia.<sup>216</sup> The Monday Club's response reinforced the idea that it was engaged in double-speak. It did not accept the leadership's olive branch but saw it as a chance to end the Conservative leadership's bipartisan approach. On 16 December, ninety Conservative MPs, including many Monday Club members, signed a censure motion against the leadership.<sup>217</sup> The Conservative leadership responded by deciding that abstention was better than going back on its word. Admittedly, this expedient backfired when 31 Conservative MPs voted with the Government and 50 voted against. Nevertheless, the leadership's stance indicated that it was prepared to accept party disunity rather than the Monday Club's position, which would have explicitly identified the whole Conservative Party with an extreme-right, racist position.

Others opposed the Monday Club as well as the Conservative leadership. Conservative MPs were also prepared to voice their opposition. They believed

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<sup>212</sup> 'Tory Row Over Zambia Troops', *Daily Telegraph*, 30 November 1965, 1.

<sup>213</sup> Heath, *Life*, 277.

<sup>214</sup> See 173-178.

<sup>215</sup> *Monday Club Newsletter*, 59 (December 1969), 4-6.

<sup>216</sup> Sir Alec Douglas-Home, 'The Need for a Fresh Start over Rhodesia', *Sunday Express*, 19 December 1965.

<sup>217</sup> Stuart, 'Sanctions', 59.

themselves to be a 'counter-balance' to the Monday Club and organised to 'meet the challenge posed by the right wing'.<sup>218</sup> These Conservative MPs originally intended to abstain in the vote on sanctions, but eventually supported the Labour Government on 21 December after they became aware that Monday Club MPs were going to deny the leadership's instructions to abstain.<sup>219</sup> A belief that it was important to make the public aware of their more moderate views motivated them.<sup>220</sup> However, these 'pro-sanctions' Conservatives suffered consequences. Local associations and officials exerted pressure on them to explain their actions, and one MP had to contend with the imposition of a hostile, sizeable and clearly organised meeting in his Worthing constituency. Stuart argued that it is difficult to prove the Monday Club's role in these events.<sup>221</sup> A failure to adhere to the party line was a sufficient reason for anger within local associations. Nevertheless, he believed the Monday Club was responsible for these events and cited as evidence the activity of the Anglo-Rhodesian Society in these Conservative MP's constituencies.<sup>222</sup> One MP responded effectively to these events. Faced with an 800 strong audience, the Conservative MP for Worthing, Terence Higgins, blocked an attempt to pass a resolution in favour of Ian Smith by grabbing the microphone.<sup>223</sup> A Council member of the Anglo-Rhodesian Society complained that Higgins' views were 'indistinguishable from those of a Socialist', and compared them to the true Conservatism of Monday Club member Sir Patrick Wall.<sup>224</sup>

Meanwhile, on 14 January 1966, Monday Club's Chairman Paul Williams responded to the events following the Order in Council. He issued a statement that described the Conservative Opposition as a 'meaningless irrelevance', and stated that, 'To some of us outside Parliament it appears to be neither Conservative nor an Opposition.'<sup>225</sup> These comments, expressed in language similar to that of the extreme right, showed

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<sup>218</sup> Stuart, 'Sanctions', 62.

<sup>219</sup> Stuart, 'Sanctions', 62.

<sup>220</sup> Stuart, 'Sanctions', 62.

<sup>221</sup> Stuart, 'Sanctions', 63.

<sup>222</sup> Stuart, 'Sanctions', 63.

<sup>223</sup> 'Some Nerve!' *Sunday Express*, 20 November 1966.

<sup>224</sup> Mrs. Elizabeth E. Ryall, 15 November 1966. CPA CCO 20/5/3, Anglo-Rhodesian Society, 1966-67.

<sup>225</sup> Statement Issued by Mr. Paul Williams, Chairman of the Monday Club, on Behalf of the Monday Club on 14<sup>th</sup> January 1966 at 11.00 a.m. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall. Monday Club 40/5, February 1965 – December 1966.

the extent of the Monday Club's alienation from the Conservative Party leadership. Williams' statement provided another reason for the Monday Club's alienation other than disagreement over Rhodesia. Williams argued that the Conservative Party was not in a position to attack the Labour Government thanks to Heath's reliance on 'a host of committees studying largely irrelevant details of policy'.<sup>226</sup> This view reflected the leadership's exclusion of Monday Club members from the policy review groups, and probably explains frequent discussion of bias against the Monday Club in the club's minutes. A perception that the Monday Club was a potentially dangerous group that operated within and attracted external extreme-right malcontents would explain the Conservative leadership's decision to exclude it from policy review groups. Wall's letter to Heath after the Caxton Hall meeting showed that he understood the leadership's fear that the Monday Club attracted external extremists.<sup>227</sup> Otherwise, why mention them? Other commentators linked the Monday Club with fascism. When Lord Salisbury claimed that the Monday Club stood for the 'traditional principles of Conservatism on which I was brought up long before fascism was thought of', the journalist Robert Kee asked him if these were the same principles of his grandfather, who thought home rule should be limited to 'people who are of Teutonic race'.<sup>228</sup> In the month before a General Election, Kee's comments were an unwelcome reminder of the Conservative Party's embarrassing pre-1939 connections with the extreme right. The Monday Club acknowledged fears that it attracted external extremists when its Executive Council discussed the problems of infiltration and how to deter unwelcome members.<sup>229</sup> Williams also understood this, and informed du Cann that Monday Club members were being encouraged to 'do whatever possible to help the Conservative Party during the Election'.<sup>230</sup> However, when the electorate returned a Labour government with a much-increased majority at the end of March 1966, Williams reverted quickly to attacking the Conservative Party

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<sup>226</sup> Statement Issued by Mr. Paul Williams, Chairman of the Monday Club, on Behalf of the Monday Club on 14<sup>th</sup> January 1966 at 11.00 a.m. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall. Monday Club 40/5, February 1965 – December 1966.

<sup>227</sup> See 233.

<sup>228</sup> Robert Kee, 'Monday Club', *The Times*, 9 February 1966, 13.

<sup>229</sup> Memorandum on Membership and "Vetting" Problems for Discussion by Monday Club Executive Council, nd. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall. Monday Club 40/5, February 1965 – December 1966.

<sup>230</sup> Paul Williams to Edward du Cann, 15 March 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

for its insufficient opposition to Labour, and to demanding fair treatment for the Monday Club.

On 4 April 1966, the Monday Club's Executive Council met at the Wig and Pen Club in Fleet Street. Foremost amongst the issues it discussed was the Conservative Party's post-election policies and attitudes. The Executive agreed on a delegation to du Cann and highlighted the need for aggressive opposition and a general philosophy that differed from Socialism.<sup>231</sup> This was a criticism of Heath's leadership, and his study groups, with which Heath continued. The Executive Council also resolved to 'demand that Right-Wing Candidates receive fair consideration and the bias of the recent past be corrected',<sup>232</sup> which evinced a sense of increased exasperation at perceived bias against the Monday Club. Du Cann tacitly admitted that bias existed when he explained that, 'the Right Wing has a dirty name'.<sup>233</sup> Du Cann asked Williams to inform him if he 'ever came across any discrimination against the Monday Club'.<sup>234</sup> This Williams did. He told du Cann that the Northern Area Young Conservatives had informed him that their National Officers' implored them to co-operate 'with the universities and the Bow Group', and concluded, 'I hardly need say any more about discrimination'.<sup>235</sup> The following day, Williams telephoned Central Office and additionally complained that the Conservative Political Centre did not stock a particular Monday Club pamphlet, which was contrary to du Cann's undertaking.<sup>236</sup> Du Cann denied any 'conscious discrimination',<sup>237</sup> but his Personal Assistant, Miss Benton, asked the Young Conservatives National Organising Secretary, Mr. Durant, for his comments.<sup>238</sup> Layton-Henry argued in 1973 that in the 1960s the Young Conservatives' National Officers were firmly in the progressive mould of Butler,

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<sup>231</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council Meeting, 4 April 1966, 1-2. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall: Monday Club 40/5, February 1965 – December 1966.

<sup>232</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council Meeting, 4 April 1966, 1. Private papers of Sir Patrick Wall: Monday Club 40/5, February 1965 – December 1966.

<sup>233</sup> Paul Williams to Edward du Cann, 11 May 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

<sup>234</sup> Paul Williams to Edward du Cann, 17 May 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

<sup>235</sup> Paul Williams to Edward du Cann, 17 May 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

<sup>236</sup> Paul Williams, telephone message, 20 May 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

<sup>237</sup> The letter is unattributed, but the personal language suggests strongly du Cann wrote it. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

<sup>238</sup> Melissa Benton to Mr. Durant, 25 May 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

Macleod, Macmillan and Boyle, and were to the left of its membership.<sup>239</sup> He described Durant as 'the embodiment' of the Young Conservative's progressive leadership.<sup>240</sup> Central Office files that were unavailable to Layton-Henry in 1973 proved that he, and the Monday Club, was correct. Ian Durant informed Benton that, 'There is no doubt that the present National Officers have very little at all in sympathy with the aspirations of the Monday Club', and claimed that it was therefore 'natural that they should tend to ignore them'.<sup>241</sup> This proved the substance of the Monday Club's complaint. Durant denied that this was discrimination and described it instead as 'their honest opinions as to the way the Party should go'.<sup>242</sup> However, as this came from an organisation that supposedly represented all Young Conservatives, and was not a policy-forming body, this was a specious argument that admitted to the omission of a sizeable and growing section of the party. Durant dismissed the Northern Area Young Conservatives as 'rather out on a limb politically, being rather extreme right wing',<sup>243</sup> and showed that he thought that political respectability did not extend to those he considered extreme. When he stated that this extremism made it 'natural' for Northern Area members to express their concerns to Williams, Durant made it clear that he did not consider the Monday Club to be respectable.<sup>244</sup> Finally, when Durant suggested raising this matter when National Officers and the Party Chairman 'next had a meeting',<sup>245</sup> Durant, whose office was within Central Office, revealed that the Young Conservatives National Officers were indeed part of the party machine.<sup>246</sup>

The Monday Club's justified suspicion of discrimination received confirmation in July, when Williams again complained about the Young Conservatives. Williams advised du Cann that the last meeting of the latter's National Advisory Committee had agreed, 'at the discretion of its National Officers', to invite observers from outside bodies to its meetings.<sup>247</sup> Williams claimed that the Young Conservatives

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<sup>239</sup> Z. Layton-Henry, 'The Young Conservatives 1945-70', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 8, 2 (Apr., 1973), 143-156.

<sup>240</sup> Layton-Henry, 'Young', 150.

<sup>241</sup> R. A. B. Durant to Miss Benton, 25 May 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

<sup>242</sup> R. A. B. Durant to Miss Benton, 25 May 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

<sup>243</sup> R. A. B. Durant to Miss Benton, 25 May 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

<sup>244</sup> R. A. B. Durant to Miss Benton, 25 May 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

<sup>245</sup> R. A. B. Durant to Miss Benton, 25 May 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

<sup>246</sup> See xviii-xix.

<sup>247</sup> Paul Williams to Edward du Cann, 'Young Conservative National Advisory Committee', 14 July 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

Committee did this ‘to allow such people as the Bow Group’s liaison officer to attend meetings without being made a formal member’.<sup>248</sup> He made a thinly veiled accusation of discrimination and expressed his ‘trust that our liaison officer on these matters will also be welcomed to future meetings’.<sup>249</sup> Williams had a strong case. There was no equitable reason for the Young Conservatives to treat any bone-fide Conservative organisation differently. However, the response to Williams showed that the Young Conservatives were prepared to continue to do exactly that. Inside Central Office, Mr. Craig dismissed Williams as having a ‘persecution complex both personally and on behalf of the Monday Club’.<sup>250</sup> Sir Adrian FitzGerald, a founder member of the Monday Club, denied this description emphatically and described it as indicative of someone with a ‘bitter grudge’ against Williams.<sup>251</sup> This is a salutary reminder of the importance of personal animosities in institutional relationships. Craig thought it necessary to acquire the advice of Richard Webster. Webster adopted the time-honoured Central Office tactic of disassociating itself from trouble. He stated that the Monday Club should put a proper request to the Young Conservatives, and that ‘We should not be involved in this anyway.’<sup>252</sup> However, Webster added in handwriting, ‘I’ve warned Durant.’<sup>253</sup> This was not a disinterested action. Subsequent events proved that Central Office actually worked closely with the National Young Conservatives on this issue, despite Webster’s comments. On 1 August 1966, Williams wrote to Alan Haselhurst, National Chairman of the Young Conservatives, and demanded fair treatment for the Monday Club.<sup>254</sup> Haselhurst perfunctorily dismissed Williams’ accusation of unfairness and criticised him for approaching the Party Chairman on a matter ‘solely within the province of the Young Conservatives National Officers’.<sup>255</sup> Williams replied that as a former Vice-Chairman of the Young

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<sup>248</sup> Paul Williams to Edward du Cann, ‘Young Conservative National Advisory Committee’, 14 July 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

<sup>249</sup> Paul Williams to Edward du Cann, ‘Young Conservative National Advisory Committee’, 14 July 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

<sup>250</sup> Mr. Craig to Mr. Webster, ‘Mr. Paul Williams’, 20 July 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

<sup>251</sup> Sir Adrian FitzGerald interview, 20 May 2008.

<sup>252</sup> R. J. Webster to Mr. Craig, ‘Mr. Paul Williams – The Monday Club’, 25 July 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

<sup>253</sup> R. J. Webster to Mr. Craig, ‘Mr. Paul Williams – The Monday Club’, 25 July 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

<sup>254</sup> Paul Williams to Alan Haselhurst Esq., 1 August 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

<sup>255</sup> Alan Haselhurst to Paul Williams, 9 August 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

Conservatives he understood that its responsibility, like all National Committees of the party, was to reflect all opinions within the party.<sup>256</sup> He also probably touched on Central Office's real concern when he argued that, 'many people have too easily accepted Harold Wilson's smear that we are semi-Fascist'.<sup>257</sup> However, what Williams cannot have known is that before he responded Haselhurst had forwarded a draft to Mr. Craig at Central Office and stated that, 'If the Chairman is happy about it, this is the reply I will send.'<sup>258</sup> Central Office amended it, noted Haselhurst's agreement to their involvement, and added it to its growing Monday Club file.

This was not the only example of bias against the Monday Club in the summer of 1966. On 26 May, Williams wrote to du Cann and expressed his wish to submit names of suitable Monday Club members for Heath's study groups.<sup>259</sup> This request does not seem to have borne fruit. The following month, Williams noted that Heath had requested the Bow Group to examine capital taxation and asked du Cann whether 'there is any chance that the Monday Club will be consulted in a similar way'.<sup>260</sup> Again, this request appeared to have been unsuccessful. In July, Williams enquired about the prospects of Monday Club member F. J. Abbott, who had applied to join the Conservative Research Department and had even secured an interview.<sup>261</sup> Central Office officials concocted an excuse for Abbott's failure that stated that no vacancies existed.<sup>262</sup> Taken in isolation, these incidents seemed trivial. Collectively, they suggest discrimination against the Monday Club, for the reason that Central Office and the leadership considered it to be extremist. In this respect, therefore, Central Office's negative action was consistent with that adopted towards external organisations that the Conservative Party deemed potentially embarrassing.

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<sup>256</sup> Paul Williams to Alan Haselhurst, 10 August 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

<sup>257</sup> Paul Williams to Alan Haselhurst, 10 August 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

<sup>258</sup> Alan Haselhurst to Colin Craig, 3 August 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

<sup>259</sup> Paul Williams to Edward du Cann, 26 May 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

<sup>260</sup> Paul Williams to Edward du Cann, 15 June 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

<sup>261</sup> Paul Williams to Edward du Cann, 6 July 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

<sup>262</sup> Mr. Sewill to Mr. Craig, 'Mr. F. J. Abbott', 14 July 1966 & Edward du Cann to Paul Williams, 20 July 1966. CPA CCO 20/43/1, Monday Club, 1964-66.

There were other reasons for the Conservative leadership's negative stance towards the Monday Club. This included the nature of its publications and the company it kept. In 1966, the Monday Club published *The Wreckers: Communist Disruption in British Trade Unions*. The author was Frederic Abbott, the unsuccessful applicant to the Conservative Research Department. The document identified widespread communist infiltration, and cited the 1965 Devlin Report's judgement that communists and Trotskyites had caused the recent dock strikes.<sup>263</sup> This confrontational document may have found approval in sections of the Conservative Party, but it is unlikely to have pleased Edward Heath, who had spoken during the 1966 General Election campaign of his belief in the need for 'partnership, not confrontation',<sup>264</sup> in industrial relations. Moreover, in choosing Sapphire Press to print the document, the Monday Club again risked associating the Conservative Party with its proprietor, Edward Martell. Nor was Edward Martell the only, or even potentially most problematic person with whom the Monday Club was associated. In October 1966, Sir Arthur Bryant was the Monday Club's Guest of Honour at its Hatfield House Conference. Andrew Roberts described Bryant as 'a Nazi sympathiser and fascist fellow-traveller, who only narrowly escaped internment as a potential traitor in 1940'.<sup>265</sup> Roberts exonerated those who gave Bryant an honorary lunch in 1979 on the grounds of ignorance because they did not have access to his private papers.<sup>266</sup> The same must apply to the Monday Club in 1966. Yet, it is inconceivable that the Conservative Party bureaucracy or Monday Club was ignorant of Bryant's political sympathies. Before the Second World War, Bryant edited the party's *Ashridge Journal*, and was an educational adviser to Central Office with close connections to the party chairman.<sup>267</sup> Bryant praised Hitler and Mussolini, kept company with members of Mosley's *BUF*, and published anti-Semitic books authored by future internees and justified Kristalnacht.<sup>268</sup> One Conservative MP referred to Bryant's books when he visited Central Office and warned against the party's association with 'this kind of Fascism'.<sup>269</sup> In June 1939, another MP proclaimed in the

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<sup>263</sup> F. Abbott, *The Wreckers: Communist Disruption in British Trade Unions*, Monday Club, London (1966).

<sup>264</sup> Heath, *Life*, 280.

<sup>265</sup> A. Roberts, *Eminent Churchillians*, Phoenix, London (1994), 288.

<sup>266</sup> Roberts, *Churchillians*, 288.

<sup>267</sup> Roberts, *Churchillians*, 288-294.

<sup>268</sup> Roberts, *Churchillians*, 290-299.

<sup>269</sup> Roberts, *Churchillians*, 294-295.

House of Commons that Bryant's fascist sympathies were well known.<sup>270</sup> When war commenced, Bryant involved himself with 'pro-peace' extreme-right groups that Griffiths argued were in reality pro-Nazi.<sup>271</sup> Bryant backtracked furiously when the government interned his fellow-sympathisers and associates, and sought exculpation in producing patriotic histories that lauded Britain's fighting spirit. It is difficult to understand why the Government did not intern Bryant. His connections may have saved him. As well as those at Central Office, Bryant's associates included Conservatives with connections to the extreme right, such as Henry Drummond-Wolff MP, and Sir Joseph Ball of the Conservative Research Department and *Truth*.<sup>272</sup> The government interned one Conservative MP who did not retract his views, Archibald Maule Ramsay MP.<sup>273</sup> Interning Bryant would have embarrassed the Conservative Party further. Yet, even during the war, Bryant's true feelings were obvious. He joined Kinship-in-Husbandry, a group Dan Stone identified as one of the 'organo-fascist' cultural representations of England's nativist fascist groups.<sup>274</sup> Bryant was the literary twin of A. K. Chesterton. It is not surprising that in 1963 he too campaigned against coloured immigration.<sup>275</sup>

The Monday Club's desire to expand also disconcerted the Conservative leadership. Former Monday Club chairman Paul Bristol claimed that there was no intention of turning the early Monday Club into a mass organisation.<sup>276</sup> However, from December 1966 to May 1967 the Monday Club debated in its monthly *Newsletter* whether it should remain a small, manageable organisation or seek growth throughout the country. The Monday Club chose growth and a higher profile. Central Office monitored events. On 2 January 1967 Central Office's Agent in the North West, A. S. Garner, reported that individuals were meeting 'from all over Lancashire' to discuss forming a Monday Club branch.<sup>277</sup> He stated that they 'all seemed to be very loyal to

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<sup>270</sup> Roberts, *Churchillians*, 301.

<sup>271</sup> Griffiths, *Patriotism*, 200-215.

<sup>272</sup> See vi, n. 9 & 15.

<sup>273</sup> See vii.

<sup>274</sup> Stone, 'Far Right', 182-198.

<sup>275</sup> *Illustrated London News*, 27 March 1963.

<sup>276</sup> Interviewed by Patrick Seyd. Seyd, 'Factionalism', 469.

<sup>277</sup> A. S. Garner, 'The Monday Club', 2 January 1967. CPA CCO 3/7/33, Monday Club, 1965-77.

the Party',<sup>278</sup> which revealed that the loyalty and intentions of Monday Club sympathisers was in question. The Monday Club was also to the fore in political demonstrations. In January 1967, it provided two speakers and eighty stewards for a 'Peace with Rhodesia' rally at Trafalgar Square that television stations broadcast.<sup>279</sup> In a debate in the House of Commons, MPs denounced the rally as a nasty, racist and squalid exercise, and referred to the 1962 ban on Fascist demonstrations at Trafalgar Square.<sup>280</sup> In June, the Monday Club held a press conference that launched an 'Action Fund' appeal of £100,000 to facilitate activity throughout the country.<sup>281</sup> At the time, Chairman Paul Williams felt it necessary to explain that the Monday Club 'considered itself realist rather than extremist'.<sup>282</sup> This was a public admission that some perceived an association between extremism and the Monday Club. It failed to stop Central Office and the party leadership becoming extremely concerned about the Action Fund. The Party Chief Whip, William Whitelaw, reported to Heath that his investigations had revealed that the purpose of the Action Fund was 'to set up the Monday Club on a permanent basis with office, staff, etc'.<sup>283</sup> Whitelaw identified G. K. Young as the Monday Club member behind the Action Fund, and highlighted his previous employment in the Foreign Office and Security Services.<sup>284</sup> Also noted was the assistance of 'a "General Williams" formerly in our Central Office'.<sup>285</sup> The realisation that General Williams was a Central Office pensioner provoked an investigation into the feasibility of using financial pressure to curtail his activities.<sup>286</sup> Lord Chelmer advised that that there was no such sanction, but stated that, 'there surely should be in every future case'.<sup>287</sup> Thus, Central Office was also prepared to use financial actions to counter the Monday Club.

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<sup>278</sup> A. S. Garner, 'The Monday Club', 2 January 1967. CPA CCO 3/7/33, Monday Club, 1965-77.

<sup>279</sup> Copping, *Story*, 11.

<sup>280</sup> 'Squalid exercise', in Trafalgar Square, *The Times*, 24 January 1964, 16.

<sup>281</sup> Copping, *Story*, 13.

<sup>282</sup> 'Monday Club appeal', *The Times*, 8 June 1966, 2.

<sup>283</sup> William Whitelaw to Edward Heath, cc. Edward du Cann, 3 July 1967. CPA CCO 20/43/4, Monday Club, 1967-69.

<sup>284</sup> William Whitelaw to Edward Heath, cc. Edward du Cann, 3 July 1967. CPA CCO 20/43/4, Monday Club, 1967-69.

<sup>285</sup> William Whitelaw to Edward Heath, cc. Edward du Cann, 3 July 1967. CPA CCO 20/43/4, Monday Club, 1967-69.

<sup>286</sup> Private memo to Lord Chelmer, the Chief Whip and Sir Michael Fraser, 6 July 1967. CPA CCO 20/43/4, Monday Club, 1967-69.

<sup>287</sup> Lord Chelmer to the Chairman, 'Monday Club', 12 July 1967. CPA CCO 20/43/4, Monday Club, 1967-69.

Unsurprisingly, the party bureaucracy continued to obstruct the Monday Club. On 12 September, Monday Club member Dr. Wyndham Davies visited Sir Michael Fraser at Central Office. The Monday Club had asked Davies to encourage its activities in the universities, and therefore he asked Fraser's permission 'to liaise with the Universities Department of the Central Office' and 'made a tentative suggestion about getting some central financial help for Monday Club conferences in the universities'.<sup>288</sup> Fraser refused Davies' request. He stated that he wanted to 'maintain friendly relations with all the various Conservative groups – Bow Group, PEST, Monday Club – that have some membership in the universities and elsewhere', and that therefore the party 'could not favour any one of them more than the others'.<sup>289</sup> Fraser's claims were disingenuous, for, not only did Central Office look favourably on PEST, it had also formed a close relationship with the Bow Group. At the same time that Davies made his request, Central Office granted the Bow Group exactly the kind of assistance that Fraser had denied to the Monday Club, and indeed much more.

In 1967, PEST was still a young organisation. Although formed in 1963, it 'emerged on the scene' only in 1965 according to the *Daily Telegraph*.<sup>290</sup> During 1965, PEST set out its progressive credentials. It desired easier entry for immigrants and their assimilation, an end to the Conservative Party's social isolation and greater social opportunity, an increase in economic planning and an increase in 'comprehensive' education, and it opposed Smith's regime in Rhodesia.<sup>291</sup> PEST's views were diametrically opposite those of the Monday Club, a position it made clear by having R. A. Butler as its patron. Central Office exhibited no hostility towards PEST. Although Central Office was inclined to deny PEST's request for funds and offices in 1965,<sup>292</sup> this was only until PEST had established itself and proved useful.<sup>293</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> Private and Confidential letter from Sir Michael Fraser to Miss Walker, 'Monday Club and the Universities', 13 September 1967. CPA CCO 20/43/4, Monday Club, 1967-69.

<sup>289</sup> Private and Confidential letter from Sir Michael Fraser to Miss Walker, 'Monday Club and the Universities', 13 September 1967. CPA CCO 20/43/4, Monday Club, 1967-69.

<sup>290</sup> 'PEST attack "feeble" Opposition', *Daily Telegraph*, 26 April 1965.

<sup>291</sup> Michael Spicer, 'Report on Pressure for Economic and Social Toryism for the Year 1965', 31 December 1965. Spicer was a PEST member. The report identifies the conferences, pamphlets, policy statements and press releases setting out its views. A copy of the report is in CPA CCO 3/7/43, Pressure for Economic and Social Toryism (PEST), 1965-73. The LSE Special Collections also houses PEST's documents.

<sup>292</sup> Aidan Crawley to Edward du Cann, 10 March 1965. CPA CCO 3/6/138, Pressure for Economic and Social Toryism (PEST), 1960-65.

Moreover, PEST was aware of Central Office's positive attitude towards it. Michael Spicer, PEST's chairman, wrote to Edward du Cann on 25 May 1965, and claimed to be 'well aware of how much you are in sympathy with our activities'.<sup>294</sup> Du Cann's comments to Conservative MP Anthony Barber supported Spicer's claim. He advised Barber that Central Office had held a number of discussions about PEST, and revealed it had decided that, 'we should try and give them limited encouragement'.<sup>295</sup> By the end of 1965, PEST was solvent.<sup>296</sup> It was an established progressive group when Sir Michael Fraser referred to it in 1967 to justify his refusal of Dr. Davies' request. Two years later, Douglas Hurd, Head of Heath's Private Office, wrote to Central Office noting that PEST had 'recently been doing good work, particularly in the universities'.<sup>297</sup> This attitude contrasted with the responses to Monday Club requests for assistance. The contrast with the similarly progressive Bow Group was much starker.

On 12 June 1967, senior Central Office officials attended a Bow Group dinner. Beforehand, Mr. Craig advised his colleagues at Central Office of items that the Bow Group wished to discuss. These included its activities, finances, party reorganisation, policy-making and public meetings, and thus revealed the breadth of Central Office's connection with the Bow Group.<sup>298</sup> On 13 June, the same colleagues received another memo from Craig. It noted the agreements reached at the dinner. These included co-ordination of press relations, liaison about the progress of Heath's study groups with the Bow Group undertaking a major policy study, the formation of a diary to facilitate political statements reacting to events, and the use of the Bow Group to make

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<sup>293</sup> Sir Michael Fraser to Edward du Cann, 'P.E.S.T.', 26 March 1965. CPA CCO 3/6/138, Pressure for Economic and Social Toryism (PEST), 1960-65.

<sup>294</sup> Michael Spicer to Edward du Cann, 2 April 1965. CPA CCO 3/6/138, Pressure for Economic and Social Toryism (PEST), 1960-65.

<sup>295</sup> The Rt. Hon. Edward du Cann to The Rt. Hon. Anthony Barber, 13 April 1965. CPA CCO 3/6/138, Pressure for Economic and Social Toryism (PEST), 1960-65.

<sup>296</sup> Michael Spicer, 'Report on Pressure for Economic and Social Toryism for the Year 1965', 31 December 1965, 7. CPA CCO 3/7/43, Pressure for Economic and Social Toryism (PEST), 1965-73.

<sup>297</sup> Douglas Hurd, 23 May 1969. CPA CCO 3/7/43, Pressure for Economic and Social Toryism (PEST), 1965-73.

<sup>298</sup> Colin Craig to the Chairman, Sir Michael Fraser, Mr. Rathbone, Mr. Webster, Mr. Sewill and Mr. Lewis, 'Bow Group Dinner – Monday June 12<sup>th</sup>', 9 June 1967. CPA CCO 20/43/2, Bow Group, 1965-71.

statements deemed inappropriate for shadow ministers.<sup>299</sup> Even more interesting Craig's memo also revealed that the Bow Group received an annual subvention of £4000 from a Colonel Hobbs, which for some reason was about to cease.<sup>300</sup> Hobbs was the individual whom the Bow Group had contacted at Sir Toby Low's suggestion.<sup>301</sup> Passage of the Companies Act (1967) had made disclosure of political contributions obligatory, and that threatened to reveal that the Bow Group's benefactor, British United Industrialists, existed for no other purpose than to channel funds to the Conservative Party and related organisations. It was a worrying situation for the Bow Group, which sought Central Office assistance at the meeting. On the same day that Craig circulated his colleagues, du Cann wrote to the Bow Group Chairman Reginald Watts, and stated that he 'should be very pleased if we could have a discussion about finance in the immediate future'.<sup>302</sup> Watts confirmed that the meeting they agreed for 30 June was to 'discuss finance', and asked du Cann if he was confident of reaching a solution to the Bow Group's difficulties before the end of the month.<sup>303</sup> It is unclear whether the Bow Group found a solution in time. Nor is du Cann's role clear, for Heath replaced him with Anthony Barber in summer 1967. What is clear is that Central Office subsequently co-ordinated press releases with the Bow Group,<sup>304</sup> and permitted the Bow Group to organise joint functions with the Federation of Conservative Students.<sup>305</sup> Moreover, whereas Central Office frequently declined invitations to Monday Club functions, Party Chairman Barber actually hosted a dinner for senior officers of the Bow Group.<sup>306</sup> There is no record of a similar event in Central Office's Monday Club files. In contrast, a confidential Central Office memo of December 1967 from a Mr. Drewe stated that, 'Long ago it was

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<sup>299</sup> Colin Craig to the Chairman, Sir Michael Fraser, Mr. Rathbone, Mr. Webster, Mr. Sewill and Mr. Lewis, 'Notes of Meeting With Bow Group – 12 June', 13 June 1967. CPA CCO 20/43/2, Bow Group, 1965-71.

<sup>300</sup> Colin Craig to the Chairman, Sir Michael Fraser, Mr. Rathbone, Mr. Webster, Mr. Sewill and Mr. Lewis, 'Notes of Meeting With Bow Group – 12 June', 13 June 1967. CPA CCO 20/43/2, Bow Group, 1965-71.

<sup>301</sup> See 96-97.

<sup>302</sup> Edward du Cann to Reginald Watts, 13 June 1967. CPA CCO 20/43/2, Bow Group, 1965-71.

<sup>303</sup> Reginald Watts to Edward du Cann, 15 June 1967. CPA CCO 20/43/2, Bow Group, 1965-71.

<sup>304</sup> Reginald Watts to the Rt. Hon Anthony Barber MP, 11 October 1967. CPA CCO 20/43/2, Bow Group, 1965-71.

<sup>305</sup> John Cope to John Wilkinson, 'The Bow Group', 15 December 1967. CPA CCO 20/43/2, Bow Group, 1965-71.

<sup>306</sup> John Cope to John Wilkinson, 'The Bow Group', 15 December 1967. CPA CCO 20/43/2, Bow Group, 1965-71.

decided that money should be provided to them from the British United Industrialists'.<sup>307</sup> Drewe does not say who had decided this, but he was aware of it. His comments supported the notion that Central Office was complicit in the initial help given to the Bow Group. Drewe also mentioned that Lord Chelmer had helped safeguard Bow Group funds, and protect the Conservative Party's finances, by turning the British United Industrialists into an 'unincorporated association', and thus not subject to the Companies Act (1967).<sup>308</sup> The earlier investigation into former employee's pensions showed that Chelmer's connection with Central Office.<sup>309</sup> Therefore, Central Office had helped to resolve the Bow Group's financial concerns at the same time as it resolved the Conservative Party's wider concerns about its own revenue. This is a significant example of Central Office's contrasting attitude towards the Bow Group and Monday Club.

In September 1967, the Monday Club congratulated Barber on his appointment.<sup>310</sup> Barber honoured du Cann's scheduled meeting with the Monday Club on 5 October. At the meeting, Paul Williams advised 'we are convinced that what is loosely called the Right Wing point of view has been under-represented in Party Councils in recent years', and promised to write to Barber about the specific example of the Commonwealth Council.<sup>311</sup> On 16 October, Williams informed Barber that the Commonwealth Council had excluded his members, and that he believed that the Conservative Party funded and constituted this organisation.<sup>312</sup> Williams once more asked for fair treatment from an all-party organisation. A document in Central Office files that provided a comparison between the Commonwealth Council's current constitution and its previous one proved that Williams' claim was accurate.<sup>313</sup> The constitution of the Commonwealth Council showed that the party organisation appointed its president and chairman. The address of the body nominally responsible

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<sup>307</sup> Confidential internal memo from Mr. Drewe to the Chairman, 'Bow Group Finances', 13 December 1967. CPA CCO 20/43/2, Bow Group, 1965-71.

<sup>308</sup> Confidential internal memo from Mr. Drewe to the Chairman, 'Bow Group Finances', 13 December 1967. CPA CCO 20/43/2, Bow Group, 1965-71.

<sup>309</sup> See 245.

<sup>310</sup> Paul Williams to Anthony Barber MP, 20 September 1967. CPA CCO 20/43/4, Monday Club, 1967-69.

<sup>311</sup> Paul Williams to Anthony Barber, 6 October 1967. CPA CCO 20/43/4, Monday Club, 1967-69.

<sup>312</sup> Paul Williams to Anthony Barber, 16 October 1967. CPA CCO 20/43/4, Monday Club, 1967-69.

<sup>313</sup> CPA CCO 20/43/4, Monday Club, 1967-69.

for the Commonwealth Council, the Conservative Overseas Bureau, was the same as that of Central Office.<sup>314</sup> Williams' complaint failed. Mr. Milne at Central Office reported to Mr. Craig that, 'at no time has there been any discrimination against the Monday Club'.<sup>315</sup> Unfortunately, the list of those whom Milne identified as excluded contained prominent Monday Club members. Craig probably realised this and asked Milne to 'draft a 'safe' letter' to Paul Williams.<sup>316</sup> A change of party chairman had not resulted in a more favourable attitude towards the Monday Club.

Despite Central Office obstruction, the Monday Club's attempt to influence youth opinion bore fruit with conferences of university students and Young Conservatives in November and December respectively.<sup>317</sup> In winter 1967, meanwhile, the Monday Club launched *The Monday World*, a magazine that provided a regular vehicle for its views. In the first edition, Chairman Williams protested that: 'Critics often assume that the Monday Club is composed of feudal Blimps wedded to an irrelevant past. In fact, as will be seen from this first issue of "The Monday World", the Club more nearly represents the attitudes, views and emotions of a modern Conservative.'<sup>318</sup> *The Monday World* frequently attacked the Conservative Opposition for its poor performance, which reinforced the view that the Monday Club sought to either transform or replace the Conservative Party. In many respects, the Monday Club resembled Martell's Freedom Group, especially concerning domestic issues. On Rhodesia, it owed much to the League of Empire Loyalists. When it engaged in rallies, sought the creation of a mass movement including a youth wing, and highlighted fears about coloured immigration, the Monday Club operated in a manner similar to extreme-right parties. The Monday Club's focus on coloured immigration was evident to all, as in its demand at a Caxton Hall meeting in October 1967 that the government impose 'stringent limitations on immigration'.<sup>319</sup> By the end of 1967, it had presented the Conservative Party with an altogether different level of concern.

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<sup>314</sup> CPA CCO 20/43/4, Monday Club, 1967-69.

<sup>315</sup> Mr. Milne to Mr. Craig, 'Monday Club/Commonwealth Council', 26 October 1967. CPA CCO 20/43/4, Monday Club, 1967-69.

<sup>316</sup> Mr. Craig to Mr. Milne, 'Monday Club - Commonwealth Council, 31 October 1967. CPA CCO 20/43/4, Monday Club, 1967-69.

<sup>317</sup> Copping, *Story*, 11.

<sup>318</sup> 'Message from Paul Williams, Chairman of the Monday Club', *The Monday World*, Winter 1967/68, 3.

<sup>319</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 109.

However, the Conservative Party was experienced in neutralising its extremists. In 1962, the Conservative Government had limited the extreme-right's appeal by reaching rightwards and passing the Immigration Act.<sup>320</sup> In 1967, the same year that the external extreme right coalesced into the National Front and the Monday Club determined on growth, the Conservative Party again reached rightwards. Unlike the legislation of 1962, the Conservative Opposition could not neutralise the extreme right by legislation. Instead, it moved its political stance. It adopted a tougher stance on immigration and trade unions, and thus absorbed the resurgent right. A dramatic increase in the number of right wing motions at party conference in the years 1967-69, the election of known right wing MPs to parliamentary committees, and the selection of more Monday Club members as parliamentary candidates are evidence of this change and absorption. Ramsden, questioned the extent of this change, but acknowledged that the Monday Club played a role in it.<sup>321</sup> Walker believed that the Monday Club deserved 'a great deal of the credit' for the change.<sup>322</sup> If correct, it questioned the effectiveness of Central Office obstruction of the Monday Club. However, Seyd argued in favour of a coincidence between Monday Club activity and the Conservative Party's changed political stance, based on a favourable cultural context.<sup>323</sup>

The emergence of the National Front probably played a part in this rightwards move too. The Conservative Party always carefully distanced itself from it. In November 1969, for example, the leader of Wandsworth Conservatives Ernest Sorrie claimed that there was little difference between Conservative Party and National Front policy.<sup>324</sup> This resulted in complaints from the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women.<sup>325</sup> Alderman Michael Fidler, the President of The Board of Deputies of British Jews, wrote to Central Office. He highlighted the National Front's Nazi

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<sup>320</sup> See 101 & 134.

<sup>321</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 297.

<sup>322</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 117.

<sup>323</sup> Seyd cites personal correspondence, in which the co-ordinator of the party's policy groups rejects any *Monday Club* influence. Seyd, 'Factionalism', 481.

<sup>324</sup> 'We Won't resign – National Front Councillors', *Balham and Tooting News and Mercury*, 28 November 1969.

<sup>325</sup> Stanley Brilliant to the Rt. Hon. Anthony Barber, 5 December 1969. CPA CCO 20/73/2, National Front, 1969.

connections, and argued that Sorrie's comments damaged the Conservative Party.<sup>326</sup> This letter raised once again for the Conservative Party the fear of being associated with right-wing extremism, and resulted in immediate action from Central Office. A Central Office Area Agent reported that Sorrie realised that he had 'dropped an almighty clanger', and suggested that Chairman Barber and Heath should co-ordinate repudiation of Sorrie's comments.<sup>327</sup> Barber downplayed Sorrie's remarks as 'inadvertent' and 'not correct', and emphasised the Conservative Party's difference from the National Front when he replied to Jewish organisations.<sup>328</sup> The absence of any further correspondence suggested that in this instance Central Office's action was effective. However, it is doubtful that the Conservative leadership knew much of the National Front at that time, other than its dangerousness to the party. Heath's Parliamentary Private Secretary reflected this when he advised in one 'co-ordinated' letter that, 'Mr. Heath has no precise knowledge of the policies of the National Front but they are in important ways different from those of the Conservative Party'.<sup>329</sup> Nor, given its poor electoral performances to date, is it probable that the National Front unduly concerned the Conservative Party. Therefore, despite the Conservative Party's determination not to be associated with the National Front, if we are to identify any particular organisation as responsible for its rightward move it is the Monday Club. This showed that the Conservative leadership and Central Office also thought that the Monday Club was of a far higher calibre than other extreme-right groups, and that its location within the Conservative Party was more problematic. This situation made it difficult for the party leadership and bureaucracy to oppose the Monday Club. Any action against the Monday Club had to be more circumspect than that taken against other extreme-right groups. Therefore, when Heath moved the party in a rightwards direction it was both a response to the impact made by the Monday Club and a means of countering it. However, regardless of the role of the Monday Club or National Front, the person who played the most visible role in this change was the prominent Conservative MP, Enoch Powell.

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<sup>326</sup> Michael M. Fidler JP, to Anthony Barber Esq, PC, MP, 18 December 1969. CPA CCO 20/73/2, National Front, 1969.

<sup>327</sup> C. A. J. Norton to Mr. Webster, 'Ernie Sorrie', 11 December 1969. CPA CCO 20/73/2, National Front, 1969.

<sup>328</sup> Anthony Barber to Stanley Brilliant Esq., 11 December 1969 & Anthony Barber to Alderman Michael M. Fidler, JP, 31 December 1969. CPA CCO 20/73/2, National Front, 1969.

<sup>329</sup> Anthony Kershaw MC, MP, to Mrs. J. Toye, 17 December 1969. CPA CCO 20/73/2, National Front, 1969.

### *Always Right: The Impact of Enoch Powell*

On 20 April 1968, with the House of Commons about to debate the Race Relations Bill, Enoch Powell delivered arguably the most memorable post-war speech by a British politician. The speech contained incendiary language and apocalyptically warned that if coloured immigration continued it would result in 'rivers of blood'. Powell echoed the concerns of extreme-right parties and the Monday Club. However, his comments posed greater problems for the Conservative Party than any of these organisations. In 1937, Powell became the youngest professor in the Commonwealth. In the war, he rose from a private to become the youngest brigadier in the British Army. He was one of the high calibre new Conservative MPs who entered parliament at the 1950 General Election. Thereafter, he gained a reputation as a powerful parliamentary performer. Powell became Financial Secretary to the Treasury in 1957 and in 1960 Minister of Health. Moreover, Powell allied intellect and performance with principle. Denis Healy described Powell's criticism of the Hola Camp atrocities in 1957 as one of the greatest parliamentary speeches, delivered with moral passion and rhetorical force. In 1958, Powell resigned from the Treasury rather than accept spending compromises. Powell also refused to serve in Home's government because he believed Macmillan had manipulated the succession. He came a poor third in the 1965 Conservative leadership election, but was an obvious option should Heath fall. The latter appointed Powell shadow Defence Secretary. Powell's stature was far greater than his fellow anti-immigrant Conservative MPs. His 'rivers of blood' speech lent credibility to the extreme right.

Powell did not forward his speech to Central Office for prior approval, a failure that breached accepted procedure.<sup>330</sup> This indicated that Powell was aware of Central Office's power. Former Conservative MP Humphrey Berkeley denounced Powell's speech as 'the most disgraceful public utterance since the days of Sir Oswald Mosley' and demanded his sacking,<sup>331</sup> once more raising the Conservative Party's post-war fear of identification with the extreme right, and fascism in particular. Heath believed

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<sup>330</sup> Heath, *Life*, 292.

<sup>331</sup> 'Mosley speeches recalled', *The Times*, 22 April 1966, 2.

the speech was racist and sacked Powell on 21 April.<sup>332</sup> Reaction to Powell's speech suggested that Heath was wise to do so. On 23 April, Midlands' workers staged token strikes in support of Powell.<sup>333</sup> The same day, London's dockers and meat porters rose spontaneously and marched on parliament with slogans that proclaimed, 'We Want Enoch.'<sup>334</sup> Leading Union Movement member and life-long Mosleyite, Dan Harmston, was prominent amongst the marchers. Harmston later contrasted this spontaneity with his own inability to politicise Smithfield meat market,<sup>335</sup> and thus showed that Powell's potential impact was greater than Mosley's was. By 1968, Mosley's Union Movement was little more than the fan club of a discredited individual who was no longer even resident in Britain. The National Front was more prominent. On 24 April, A. K. Chesterton told *The Times* that, 'What Mr. Powell has said does not vary in any way from our view.'<sup>336</sup> However, the editor of its regular publication realised that Powell had encroached upon the National Front's political space. He reacted coolly and accused Powell of political opportunism.<sup>337</sup> Yet, the external extreme-right generally welcomed Powell's comments. If Powell's intervention resulted in his departure from the Conservative Party, he might provide the external extreme right with the calibre of leadership it had lacked since the 1930s. How, then, did Powell impact on the recently coalesced extreme right?

Initially, Powell's intervention appeared to increase National Front membership. John Bean described Powell's speech as a catalyst for the National Front's growth.<sup>338</sup> *The Times*' 'News Team' reported that Conservative Officials claimed to be 'deluged with letters from Tories enraged because of Mr. Powell's dismissal from the Shadow Cabinet and expressing interest in the Front'.<sup>339</sup> Sykes argued that Powell's action had assisted National Front recruitment and boosted its chances of joining the political mainstream.<sup>340</sup> Increased membership allowed it to make organisational changes in autumn 1968, including the establishment of a training scheme for branch and group

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<sup>332</sup> Heath, *Life*, 293.

<sup>333</sup> '50 Stop Work To Back Powell', *The Times*, 23 April, 2. The headline refers to one incident, whereas the article contains many other examples.

<sup>334</sup> 'Dockers march for Powell', *The Times*, 24 April 1968, 1.

<sup>335</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 110.

<sup>336</sup> Quoted in Walker, *National Front*, 114.

<sup>337</sup> Quoted in Walker, *National Front*, 111.

<sup>338</sup> Bean, *Shades*, 206.

<sup>339</sup> 'The Jordanites and Mosleyites are rejoicing', *The Times*, 24 April 1968.

<sup>340</sup> Sykes, *Radical Right*, 106.

organisers.<sup>341</sup> In December 1968, National Front members registered approval of Powell by marching to his home.<sup>342</sup> Walker quoted the National Front's organiser in Huddersfield claiming that, 'Before Powell spoke, we were getting only cranks and perverts. After his speeches we started to attract, in a secret sort of way, the right-wing members of the Tory organizations.'<sup>343</sup> In 1969, the chairman of a Huddersfield local Conservative Association, councillor Colin Campion, formed the British People's Union, which acted as a platform for Powellite sympathisers and as a forum in which local Conservatives and the National Front could meet.<sup>344</sup> Pro-Powell letters continued to pour into Central Office; many expressed a belief in the National Front's eventual success unless the Conservative Party adopted Powell's stance.<sup>345</sup> Many National Front members and extreme-right voters saw Powell as their saviour. It appeared that his speech had affected the National Front positively.

However, as Walker argued, the National Front also had to avoid losing its own members to the Powellite wing of the Conservatives.<sup>346</sup> Its emphasis on their differences with Powell in its literature is evidence that the National Front was aware of this possibility.<sup>347</sup> The National Front's regular publication, *Combat*, accused the 'so-called right-wing of the Tory Party' of jumping on the immigration issue simply because it was realized "here is a vote-getter".<sup>348</sup> Not all Powellite Conservative groups that emerged throughout the country were as attracted to the National Front as those in Huddersfield.<sup>349</sup> Many stressed their Conservatism and independence, such as the Immigration Control Association of Mary Howarth and Joy Page.<sup>350</sup> Even in Huddersfield, the local Conservative leadership exerted pressure to stop councillor Campion's British People's Union.<sup>351</sup> The National Front felt that it was necessary to

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<sup>341</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 115-116.

<sup>342</sup> 'On Choosing One's Friends', *The Advertiser and Surrey County Reporter*, 13 December 1968.

<sup>343</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 115.

<sup>344</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 115. See also P. Ward, 'Witness Seminar: Anti-Fascism in 1970s Huddersfield', *Contemporary British History*, 20, 1, (March 2006), 122.

<sup>345</sup> CPA CCO 20/66/1-12, Correspondence regarding Enoch Powell's race relations speeches, 1968-1970.

<sup>346</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 116.

<sup>347</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 116.

<sup>348</sup> *Combat*, Spring 1968. Oswald Mosley Papers: Diana Mosley Deposit. University of Birmingham Information Services, Special Collections. XOMD/8/6.

<sup>349</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 116.

<sup>350</sup> Dave Shipper, 'The extreme Right and the Conservatives', *Tribune*, 28 March 1969, 6-7.

<sup>351</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 115.

restore its connections with organisations such as the Racial Preservation Society, and bolstered its presence in areas traditionally sympathetic to the extreme right.<sup>352</sup> Powell's comments had highlighted the National Front's most obvious feature, its anti-immigration stance, but this did not necessarily result in any sustained influx of new members. John Bean claimed that the initial spurt in membership after Powell's speech faded after twelve months.<sup>353</sup> Instead, Powell's comments simply reinforced the existing quandary posed to all extreme-right voters: whether to waste a vote by opting for a miniscule extreme-right party or vote Conservative. Dan Harmston reflected this quandary when he sought answers to the Smithfield Workers concerns over immigration in January 1970 from the Conservative Party Chairman, not the National Front.<sup>354</sup> Powell's decision to remain within the Conservative Party made this quandary even more acute, and thus increased the likelihood that these extreme-right voters would vote Conservative.

Powell's speech had also affected the Monday Club. This was far more dangerous to the Conservative leadership. It risked giving an impetus to an organisation that represented extreme-right views within the Conservative Party and had recently determined on growth. If Powell decided to join the Monday Club, he could probably become its leading figure. In an interview with me, former Monday Club Chairman Jonathan Guinness stated that he shared this view, and would not have resisted Powell's leadership.<sup>355</sup> Such an outcome would threaten the leadership and split the Conservative Party. Events after Powell's speech gave further cause for concern. When the Monday Club publicly supported Powell, Edward Heath personally justified his sacking.<sup>356</sup> Powell accepted numerous invitations to speak at Monday Club events.<sup>357</sup> In 1968, Powell was guest of honour at the Monday Club's annual dinner, and told his audience that people who might otherwise remain outside the Conservative Party had joined it because of the Monday Club.<sup>358</sup> These comments showed that the Conservative Party both attracted members and voters away from the

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<sup>352</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 116.

<sup>353</sup> Bean, *Shades*, 209.

<sup>354</sup> Dan Harmston to the Chairman of the Conservative Party, 12 January 1970. CPA CCO 20/66/19, Immigration, 1969-71.

<sup>355</sup> Correspondence with Jonathan Guinness, 28 June 2008.

<sup>356</sup> Edward Heath to Frederick Stockwell, 25 April 1968. CPA CCO 20/43/4, Monday Club, 1967-69.

<sup>357</sup> Copping, *Story*, 27.

<sup>358</sup> Copping, *Story*, 27.

extreme right, and revealed an increased presence within the Party. Nor were Powell's contributions to Monday Club events solely focused on immigration. In 1968, Powell gave his views on defence policy at a Monday Club meeting at Westminster, and on economics at Norcott Court, the home of a Monday Club member.<sup>359</sup> Powell's contributions revealed that the Monday Club was not, unlike many external right-wing parties, a single-issue entity. At the Monday Club's Annual General Meeting of April 1969, Chairman Williams announced that membership exceeded 1500.<sup>360</sup> This was a 90% increase on the figure in the month before Powell's 'rivers of blood speech'.<sup>361</sup>

How could the Conservative Party combat Powell's alliance with the Monday Club? The answer lay not in the problem Powell posed to the Conservative Party, but in the reverse. Powell operated at the heart of a paradox. The Conservative Party needed, as a monolithic party within a liberal democracy, to secure enough votes to achieve power. That required the votes of progressive Conservatives for whom anything that resembled extremism was anathema. Yet, the Conservative Party also contained extremists. The result was a heterogeneous party that contained a wide range of views. This allowed the Conservative Party room to manoeuvre between the centre and the right. The leader contained conflict by adjusting the composition of the frontbench. One example came in 1966 when Heath promoted prominent Monday Club member Geoffrey Rippon to the shadow cabinet.<sup>362</sup> The Monday Club's divisions over Europe were well known.<sup>363</sup> That Rippon favoured entry into Europe, unlike many Monday Club members, probably influenced the ardently pro-European Heath's decision. The leader's ability to act in this way also allowed the Conservative Party to exploit divisions amongst its extremists. For example, Powell avoided supporting the National Front's call for compulsory repatriation, although Heath recalled that in 1968 Powell admitted at a One Nation Group dinner that he favoured it.<sup>364</sup> The person to whom Powell confessed this, described by Heath as 'incandescent'

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<sup>359</sup> Copping, *Story*, 27.

<sup>360</sup> Copping, *Story*, 13.

<sup>361</sup> Copping, *Story*, 13.

<sup>362</sup> Heath, *Life*, 283.

<sup>363</sup> Copping, *Story*, 19.

<sup>364</sup> Heath, *Life*, 294.

on hearing it, was Geoffrey Rippon.<sup>365</sup> The result of such manoeuvres was that the Conservative Party both absorbed and expunged its extremists. Those unwilling to accept the demands of collective responsibility concomitant with holding office faced the dilemma of whether to stay within the party or, feeling sufficiently alienated, strike out on their own or join an openly extremist party. Thus, the Conservative Party acted negatively towards internal as well as external extremists.

In 1968, the Conservative leadership used the opportunities afforded by this paradox to its advantage and marginalised Powell. In September 1968, Heath announced the end of bi-partisan consensus, and stated that a future Conservative government would tighten immigration controls. It would remove Commonwealth citizens' right of entry as British passport holders and reduce their status to that of aliens. This looked like a tougher line. Heath viewed it as a balanced approach to an intractable problem.<sup>366</sup> However, the policy merely talked tough on immigration. Nowhere was there a promise to reduce the level of immigration, let alone actual number of immigrants, or to impose a colour bar. Powell probably recognised this. However, Heath's move presented Powell with a choice: accept this as a step in the right direction, or remain outside the official party line and show his true feelings over coloured immigration. Heath probably suspected Powell's real views on immigration were extremer than his public pronouncements suggested. Powell's support for Ulster's Loyalists and opposition to Britain's entry to the Common Market already mirrored the views of the National Front. Would he really identify himself further with an extreme-right party associated with neo-Nazism by advocating the same immigration policy? This was one option for Powell. The other was to hope that Heath lost the next election and, having proved his loyalty, challenge for the leadership. Powell remained within the Conservative Party. That did not mean that he ceased to criticize the leadership. At the party conference in 1968, he argued that whatever steps any government took to limit immigration, the cost to Britain would still be unacceptable.<sup>367</sup> The following month, Powell stated that a West Indian or an Indian did not become an Englishman simply

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<sup>365</sup> Heath, *Life*, 294.

<sup>366</sup> Heath, *Life*, 455.

<sup>367</sup> Walker, *The National Front*, 112.

by being born in England.<sup>368</sup> This language was reminiscent of that of Hilton and the True Tories. However, unlike Hilton Powell did not offer voters an alternative party.

In early January 1969, Heath responded to Powell by making his toughest comments yet on immigration. He called for legislation to stop further immigration.<sup>369</sup> The Conservatives' opponents accused Heath of being, 'in effect Powell's Shadow Immigration Minister ... The policy is basically the same. The aim is the same. Only the political accent is different.'<sup>370</sup> The details suggested that this was not quite accurate. The Opposition demanded an end to the right of immigrants' dependants to settle in Britain, and annually renewable work permits that specified an immigrant's job and its duration. This was little more than administrative obfuscation on Heath's part. No limits were set, no means of enforcement suggested. In contrast, evidence existed that Central Office really tried to marginalise Powell. The same day that Heath announced this apparently tougher stance, a confidential Central Office letter to Douglas Hurd, Head of Heath's Private Office, revealed what motivated Heath's policy on immigration. It described it as one that, 'skillfully kept a balance between the liberal and the restrictionist opinions', and that Heath would presumably want to continue with 'in any public statement in the West Midlands'.<sup>371</sup> The West Midlands was the heartland of Powell's support, as well as many other anti-immigration Conservative MPs. When Duncan Sandys quickly introduced a Bill that contained these demands, Heath abstained, while 126 Conservatives supported it.<sup>372</sup> Doubtless, Heath sought to avoid a damaging split. Powell, meanwhile, did not join the National Front. As implied by Samuel Brittan in *The Spectator*, one year after his explosive speech Powell remained a member of the Conservative Party and thus acted as a safety valve that vented extreme-right views and retained its support.<sup>373</sup> Brittan was correct. However, Heath's moving of the party rightwards and continual spelling out of the options available, also countered Powell's impact.

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<sup>368</sup> Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever*, 237.

<sup>369</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 113.

<sup>370</sup> 'Heath is treading Powell's path – MP', *Morning Star*, 10 February 1969.

<sup>371</sup> Brendon Sewill to Douglas Hurd, cc. Sir Michael Fraser, Mr. Wolff, Mr. John Cope and Mr. McDonnell, 'Immigration', 3 January 1969. CPA CCO 20/66/19, Immigration, 1969-71.

<sup>372</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 113.

<sup>373</sup> Samuel Brittan, 'The book of Enoch', *The Spectator*, 25 April 1969.

The comments from wider Conservatism also showed the workings of the complexities of the Conservative Party's attitude towards the extreme right. In September 1968, a former treasurer of the Seychelles advised the Gloucester Trades Council of his fears of 'a new onslaught' of fascism, and warned that, 'the extreme right wing of the Conservative party could be following in the footsteps of Sir Oswald Mosley'.<sup>374</sup> In November, the Liberal candidate in Worthing, where sanctions against Rhodesia were contentious,<sup>375</sup> pointed to tensions within the local Conservative Association and drew similarities between previous support for Mosley and current support for Powell.<sup>376</sup> The Liberals identified the Worthing Debating Society as the local Conservatives' front organisation for their move to the right, and claimed that nearby Surbiton 'had become openly Powellite'.<sup>377</sup> These provincial comments associated Powell with Mosley and threatened to associate the Conservative Party with the extreme right. The response from some Conservative-supporting newspapers turned negative. The *Evening Standard* is London's regional newspaper and is from the same stable as the *Daily Mail*. In 1934, the *Daily Mail* had proclaimed 'Hurrah for the Blackshirts!'<sup>378</sup> Now, the *Evening Standard* proclaimed that, 'In Enoch Powell we always supposed we were dealing with a rational man with a background and assumptions common to our own. Now, with a growing sense of horror we realise we are not.'<sup>379</sup> The article used phrases such as 'cowardly' and 'illiterate demagogue', and proceeded to liken what was happening with Powell to Mosley in the 1930s. Conservatism itself had raised the fear of association with the extreme right. The danger was obvious, and opponents quickly took advantage. Left wing publications pointed to the similarity between Powell's views and the National Front and British Fascism.<sup>380</sup> In December 1968, *The Advertiser and Surrey County Reporter*, a regional newspaper from the Conservative stockbroker-belt, succinctly summed up Powell's problem when it stated that although many Conservatives agreed with

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<sup>374</sup> 'City Group Warned On Dangers Of The Tory Right Wing', *The Citizen*, 27 September 1968.

<sup>375</sup> See 235-236.

<sup>376</sup> 'Get Rid Of This Middle Class Mafia: Liberals warned of a 'Powellism centre'', *Worthing Gazette*, 12 November 1968.

<sup>377</sup> 'Get Rid Of This Middle Class Mafia: Liberals warned of a 'Powellism centre'', *Worthing Gazette*, 12 November 1968.

<sup>378</sup> *Daily Mail*, 15 January 1934.

<sup>379</sup> 'Enoch Powell', *Evening Standard*, 18 November 1968.

<sup>380</sup> 'Workers Must Unite Against Powellism', *Socialist Leader*, 23 November 1968. 'How Powell Lines Up With The British Fascists', *Tribune*, 22 November 1968.

Powell, loyalty to their leader resulted in them accepting policies they disagreed with.<sup>381</sup> The *Industrial Charter* was an earlier example of this. Furthermore, the article continued, although Powell was ‘a man who might be prepared, in the last resort, to launch his own political organisation’, he would never join the National Front out of despair with the Conservative Party because he understood, as a historian, that a similar motivation on Mosley’s part had cost him his political life.<sup>382</sup>

At the end of January 1969, the Conservative Party’s fear of the public connecting it with the extreme right received satirical confirmation. *Private Eye* published an article headed ‘League of Empire Powellists’. However, the article did more than simply reflect a perceived similarity between Powell’s position and that of the League of Empire Loyalists. It also highlighted Conservative councillors’ attempts to overturn a ban that prohibited Colin Jordan from using Birmingham Council property,<sup>383</sup> and thus associated Conservatives with an individual who from 1968 flaunted his views in the openly Nazi British Movement.<sup>384</sup> *Private Eye* inferred that Powell’s comments on immigration were irresponsible. The article also referred to the emergence of other extreme-right anti-immigration groups. It identified a Peter Crozier as leading Action 69 and the United National Party, and Victor Norris as heading the 5000 Group.<sup>385</sup> By also mentioning Crozier’s criminal record, the prominence of Norris in the Anglo-Rhodesian Society, and their respective groups’ use of violence and infiltration, *Private Eye* had tacitly associated the Conservative Party with the wilder shores of the extreme right. Even more interesting is what the article said about how these groups viewed Powell. *Private Eye* claimed that they, and other extreme-right groups, held Powell ‘in deep contempt’ for remaining a member of the Conservative Party.<sup>386</sup> It thereby agreed with *The Advertiser and Surrey County Reporter*’s view that Powell had limited their chances of success by failing to solve the quandary posed by the Conservative Party of whether to remain within its confines, or strike out with another party. *Private Eye* may have received its information second-hand rather than through

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<sup>381</sup> ‘On Choosing One’s Friends’, *The Advertiser and Surrey County Reporter*, 13 December 1968.

<sup>382</sup> ‘On Choosing One’s Friends’, *The Advertiser and Surrey County Reporter*, 13 December 1968.

<sup>383</sup> ‘League of Empire Powellists’, *Private Eye*, 31 January 1969, 14.

<sup>384</sup> Thurlow, *Fascism*, passim.

<sup>385</sup> ‘League of Empire Powellists’, *Private Eye*, 31 January 1969, 14.

<sup>386</sup> ‘League of Empire Powellists’, *Private Eye*, 31 January 1969, 14.

its own investigation. However, it was a publication that usually saved its criticism for the political establishment and vested interests. This characteristic made its article a striking one and showed wide perception of the Conservative Party's association with the extreme right.

Whilst Powell limited the National Front's chances, the Conservative Party bureaucracy continued to work against the Monday Club. In August 1968, the Central Office Agent for the South-Eastern Area, A. N. Banks, forwarded a report on a meeting of the Surrey branch of the Monday Club. He identified platform speakers, audience size and its attitude towards the Conservative Party leadership.<sup>387</sup> At the same time in the North West, the Central Office Area Agent, A. S. Garner, watched attempts to form a Monday Club branch in Liverpool. He reported a Monday Club approach for funds to a party contributor, and asked Central Office to assist him in 'preventing their supporters collecting money in the Constituencies'.<sup>388</sup> This is consistent with the line that Central Office had adopted towards all right-wing groups since 1945. Mr. Webster's response from Central Office showed exasperation at this inability to control the party's own extremists: 'I am afraid that we neither subsidise nor "control" the Monday Club in any way.'<sup>389</sup> Webster explained that, 'we cannot bring any pressure to bear on them with regard to their collecting funds'.<sup>390</sup> This comment suggested that Webster wanted to limit the growth of unwelcome organisations. Webster also revealed that Central Office monitoring of the Monday Club went further than just Liverpool when he stated his awareness that 'they have been trying to raise [money] for some time'.<sup>391</sup> Moreover, Webster asked Garner for the 'name of the Monday Club collector in this case, just in case we have any contact with him in any other direction'.<sup>392</sup> Garner responded that the individual concerned was a 'hot-head' unsusceptible to Central Office pressure, and that therefore 'I think

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<sup>387</sup> A. N. Banks, 'Meeting of the Surrey Branch Monday Club 25<sup>th</sup> July 1968', 5 August 1968. CPA CCO 3/7/33, Monday Club, 1965-77.

<sup>388</sup> A. S. Garner to Mr. R. J. Webster, 'The Monday Club', 6 August 1968. CPA CCO 3/7/33, Monday Club, 1965-77.

<sup>389</sup> R. J. Webster to A. S. Garner, 'Monday Club', 8 August 1968. CPA CCO 3/7/33, Monday Club, 1965-77.

<sup>390</sup> R. J. Webster to A. S. Garner, 'Monday Club', 8 August 1968. CPA CCO 3/7/33, Monday Club, 1965-77.

<sup>391</sup> R. J. Webster to A. S. Garner, 'Monday Club', 8 August 1968. CPA CCO 3/7/33, Monday Club, 1965-77.

<sup>392</sup> R. J. Webster to A. S. Garner, 'Monday Club', 8 August 1968. CPA CCO 3/7/33, Monday Club, 1965-77.

we will have to let the matter drop.’<sup>393</sup> Webster’s response is unknown, but he and Garner had clearly desired to damage the Monday Club’s growth.

In September 1968, Paul Bristol resigned from the Monday Club. He was one of its founders. *The Times* explained that he had resigned ‘because he believes it to be taking an “extreme attitude” on race relations’.<sup>394</sup> The catalyst for Bristol’s resignation was a forthcoming Monday Club pamphlet on immigration, which, *The Times* explained, ‘throws some light on the extent to which the club has attracted right-wing dissidents from Tory policy’.<sup>395</sup> This comment showed that the leadership’s opposition to the Monday Club had not prevented it from growing. However, it also supported the idea that the Conservative leadership acted negatively on the Monday Club. Although *The Times* blamed previous resignations, most notably that of Boyd, from the Monday Club on Enoch Powell’s comments on race relations and immigration, Bristol revealed that Heath’s actions had played an important role too. Bristol, *The Times* reported, ‘has declared himself to be in favour of the more moderate view urged 10 days ago by Mr. Heath’.<sup>396</sup> This referred to Heath’s plan to treat Commonwealth immigrants the same as non-EEC immigrants by removing their right of guaranteed entry as British passport holders,<sup>397</sup> and showed how a limited move rightwards by the leadership could drive a wedge between the party’s extremists. The conclusion reached by *The Times* over Bristol’s resignation also showed how Heath’s positions made the Monday Club appear even more right wing. Using Bristol’s support for Heath’s stance as a yardstick, *The Times* article concluded that, ‘the pamphlet, which is now apparently being considered by the club executive for publication, must be considerably further right’.<sup>398</sup> This showed how a minimal move onto its space had pushed the Monday Club into a more open revelation of its extremism.

The month after Bristol’s resignation, Central Office once again took an interest in the Monday Club’s provincial activities. However, whereas it did little in Liverpool, this

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<sup>393</sup> A. S. Garner to R. J. Webster, ‘Monday Club’, 13 August 1968. CPA CCO 3/7/33, Monday Club, 1965-77.

<sup>394</sup> ‘Monday Club founder quits on race policy’, *The Times*, 30 September 1968, 2.

<sup>395</sup> ‘Monday Club founder quits on race policy’, *The Times*, 30 September 1968, 2.

<sup>396</sup> ‘Monday Club founder quits on race policy’, *The Times*, 30 September 1968, 2.

<sup>397</sup> See 259.

<sup>398</sup> ‘Monday Club founder quits on race policy’, *The Times*, 30 September 1968, 2.

time Central Office attempted to counter the Monday Club. Miss de Jonge, Area Agent in the East Midlands, reported that the Monday Club had hired Churchill House, home of Nottingham Conservative Association, for a meeting on 25 October where the guest speaker was to be Paul Biggs-Davison.<sup>399</sup> The use of these premises appeared to give official Party sanction to the Monday Club. De Jonge's investigation suggested that she understood this. The individual who accepted the booking acted in good faith as the Monday Club 'was never mentioned'.<sup>400</sup> This may reveal that the Monday Club was also aware that by remaining anonymous it would acquire the image of official sanction. When de Jonge advised that there was 'a strong movement afoot to stop this meeting by telling the Monday Club that the hall will after all not be available',<sup>401</sup> she showed that animosity towards the Monday Club existed amongst the wider Conservative Party. This attempted denial of premises contrasted markedly with the previous assistance given to the Bow Group. After the event, another Central Office Agent, P. K. Livingston, confirmed that the Monday Club had used false credentials in booking Churchill House. Livingston additionally claimed that one individual had resigned from the Young Conservatives because 'the Party was not enough to the right' and that the Monday Club had appealed for donations without prior approval in his area.<sup>402</sup> One individual's resignation hardly mattered, but the Monday Club's request for donations was serious. Central Office consistently discouraged party members from funding the external extreme-right. It also responded furiously when the Monday Club sought funds from party members. Webster stated that, 'This is just the sort of ammunition I need when I receive the next visitation from the Director of the Monday Club.'<sup>403</sup>

Concern about the Nottingham Monday Club continued into 1969. In April, Livingston reported that the Monday Club intended holding a rally the same day that Enoch Powell visited the city, and stated that the Chief Constable was incredulous at

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<sup>399</sup> Miss Jeanne de Jonge to Mr. R. Webster, 'The Nottinghamshire & East Midlands Conservative Monday Club', 15 October 1968. CPA CCO 3/7/33, Monday Club, 1965-1977.

<sup>400</sup> Miss Jeanne de Jonge to Mr. R. Webster, 'The Nottinghamshire & East Midlands Conservative Monday Club', 15 October 1968. CPA CCO 3/7/33, Monday Club, 1965-1977.

<sup>401</sup> Miss Jeanne de Jonge to Mr. R. Webster, 'The Nottinghamshire & East Midlands Conservative Monday Club', 15 October 1968. CPA CCO 3/7/33, Monday Club, 1965-1977.

<sup>402</sup> P. K. Livingston to R. J. Webster Esq., 'Monday Club - Nottingham', 12 December 1968. CPA CCO 3/7/33, Monday Club, 1965-1977.

<sup>403</sup> R. J. Webster to P. K. Livingston, 'Monday Club, Nottingham', 16 December 1968. CPA CCO 3/7/33, Monday Club, 1965-1977.

Nottingham Conservatives' inability to control the Monday Club.<sup>404</sup> The Monday Club was again engaged in street politics that was typical of the extreme right, but anathema to Conservatives, especially the leadership. The Chief Constable appeared to blame the Conservative Party for this agitation. The Monday Club's acquisition of offices in Nottingham concerned Area Agent Livingston. He opined that, 'It would seem that this club is setting up another political organisation in the city.'<sup>405</sup> Did the Monday Club merely seek to influence the Conservative Party, or did its actions indicate the formation of a new party? Livingston believed that, 'before long, the Nottingham City Conservatives will publicly disown them'.<sup>406</sup> However, he felt this would not stop the Monday Club and therefore asked Webster whether someone could exercise pressure on the two parliamentary candidates who appeared on the Monday Club's letterhead.<sup>407</sup> Webster's response showed just how negatively Central Office viewed the Monday Club: 'It really does look as though they have gone too far this time and perhaps we may be able to solve the problem once and for all.'<sup>408</sup>

Livingston's request for action bore fruit. On 1 May, one of the aforementioned parliamentary candidates, Geoffrey Stewart-Smith, reported the Chief Constable's concerns to a Monday Club official, and warned that if it were 'not above reproach', he would reconsider sponsoring the Nottingham branch.<sup>409</sup> However, the Nottingham Monday Club did not accept this meekly. Instead, a Councillor Whitehead, having spoken to Stewart-Smith, sought clarification from the Chief Constable. The Chief Constable denied saying or implying that the Monday Club was involved in street demonstrations or violence, and therefore Whitehead wrote to Livingston and provided an alternative scenario. Whitehead claimed that there had been 'a number of attempts in recent months to maliciously misrepresent the Monday Club in this area',

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<sup>404</sup> P. K. Livingston to Mr. Richard Webster, 'Nottingham & East Midlands Conservative Monday Club', 15 April 1969. CPA CCO 3/7/33, Monday Club, 1965-1977.

<sup>405</sup> P. K. Livingston to Mr. Richard Webster, 'Nottingham & East Midlands Conservative Monday Club', 15 April 1969. CPA CCO 3/7/33, Monday Club, 1965-1977.

<sup>406</sup> P. K. Livingston to Mr. Richard Webster, 'Nottingham & East Midlands Conservative Monday Club', 15 April 1969. CPA CCO 3/7/33, Monday Club, 1965-1977.

<sup>407</sup> P. K. Livingston to Mr. Richard Webster, 'Nottingham & East Midlands Conservative Monday Club', 15 April 1969. CPA CCO 3/7/33, Monday Club, 1965-1977.

<sup>408</sup> R. J. Webster to P. K. Livingston, 'Nottingham and the Monday Club', 17 April 1969. CPA CCO 3/7/33, Monday Club, 1965-1977.

<sup>409</sup> G. Stewart-Smith to Mr. Dennis Hartshorne, 'Nottingham & East Midlands Conservative Monday Club', 15 April 1969. CPA CCO 3/7/33, Monday Club, 1965-1977.

and that Livingston knew this.<sup>410</sup> Whitehead named 'two individuals in particular' who were responsible, and warned that the Monday Club's 'Executive Council has decided that any such future underhand activity shall be severely stamped upon', and challenged Livingston to tell him where he had received the information about the Chief Constable's views from.<sup>411</sup> A number of interpretations of these events are possible, ranging from confusion to underhand activity on both sides. However, Central Office's desire to counter the Monday Club was evident. Moreover, the Monday Club was prepared to name individuals and level accusations regarding Livingston's awareness. It suspected deliberate sabotage of its interests. There is no evidence that Central Office denied these accusations, so it is possible that it had engaged in a smear campaign similar to those it had implemented against the League of Empire Loyalists and Martell's organisations.

Also in 1969, the Monday Club published *Who Goes Home?* Attributed to G. K. Young, it went to the heart of the issue raised by Powell's 'rivers of blood' speech. In 1968, Young had authored *Finance and World Power: A Political Commentary*, in which he stated, 'No subject has been so wrapped and trapped in esoteric semantic obscurantism as international banking finance.'<sup>412</sup> This sounded like a euphemism for Jews similar to those adopted by A. K. Chesterton. Now, Young proposed the repatriation of immigrants. As chairman of its 'Action Fund' from 1967-69, Young was increasingly prominent in the Monday Club. By 1969, he represented the section within it that accepted the consequences of Powell's views. In 1969 especially, Central Office monitored the Action Fund's money raising activities closely. Its Agents forwarded many copies of its appeal letter.<sup>413</sup> They noted that potential donors frequently asked whether this appeal meant that the Monday Club was 'forming another Party within the Party'.<sup>414</sup> Central Office used the activities of the Action Fund against the Monday Club. It requested that Agents and Constituency Associations forward original letters of complaint, which, Central Office's Mr.

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<sup>410</sup> Counc. A. Whitehead to Mr. Livingston, 21 June 1969. CPA CCO 3/7/33, Monday Club, 1965-1977.

<sup>411</sup> Counc. A. Whitehead to Mr. Livingston, 21 June 1969. CPA CCO 3/7/33, Monday Club, 1965-1977.

<sup>412</sup> J. Fairhead, 'Shorter Reviews', *The Monday World*, Vol. 1, Issue 3, Autumn 1968, 26.

<sup>413</sup> CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>414</sup> A. L. Stephens to Peter Horton, 26 February 1969. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

Webster revealed, the Party Chairman used ‘in one of his regular series of meetings’ with Paul Williams.<sup>415</sup>

These actions, together with the rightwards shift of the Conservative Party from 1967 onwards, are examples of how the Conservative Party tried to marginalise its extremists. A similar example, albeit involving a different area of policy, was the resignation on 15 October of the Monday Club’s chairman, Paul Williams. Although Williams vaguely invoked business commitments as his reason, he also stated a wish to be, ‘completely free to criticise any possibility of Britain signing the Treaty of Rome’.<sup>416</sup> In this instance, the Conservative frontbench’s desire to enter the European Economic Community had deprived the Monday Club leadership of a valuable member. The issue of the EEC divided the Monday Club’s Executive and membership.<sup>417</sup> The Conservative Political Centre reinforced this division in 1969 when it published *Right Angle: A philosophy for Conservatives*. Pro-European Monday Club and Shadow Cabinet member Geoffrey Rippon authored it. No such approving imprimatur ever applied to G. K. Young’s offerings. Yet, these events also touched upon another way in which the Conservative Party limited the extreme-right’s fortunes. Unlike the Labour Party, the Conservative Party does not claim to be ideologically driven. It prefers a pragmatic handling of social change, even if initially resistant to such changes. The *Industrial Charter* is but one example of this. Organisations such as the One Nation Group, Bow Group and Pressure for Economic and Social Toryism (PEST) reflected this approach. Membership of the EEC was as an example of social change, just as immigration was. Therefore, the proscriptive, restraining attitude of the extreme right in these and other areas often clashed with the Conservative Party’s pragmatism. Former Conservative MP Humphrey Berkeley reflected this when, with Powell effectively marginalised, he rejoined the party in 1969. He identified the party’s historical role as ‘to accept the organic growth of society, and to bind people into one nation by mutual interdependence, while supporting freedom and the protection of minorities’.<sup>418</sup>

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<sup>415</sup> R. J. Webster to Mr. Mitchell, ‘Monday Club’, 30 April 1969. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>416</sup> ‘Williams Quits As Monday Club Chairman’, *The Daily Telegraph*, 15 October 1969.

<sup>417</sup> Divisions confirmed by Jonathan Guinness interview, 23 May 2008.

<sup>418</sup> Humphrey Berkeley, ‘Why I left and why I rejoined the Tory Party’, *Catholic Herald*, 9 September 1969.

A more obvious example of Conservative leadership opposition came after the Monday Club launched a 'Powell for Premier' campaign in October 1969. It attempted to replace progressive Conservative MPs with Powellites. The Monday Club had tried to secure selection of its candidates for some time. Now its strategy was more organised. In November 1968, Julian Critchley, a former Conservative MP, now a journalist, claimed that the Monday Club's recent growth allowed it to exert a disproportionate power; he identified candidate selection as 'the point at which pressure can best be applied'.<sup>419</sup> Critchley implied that this new strategy resulted from Central Office countering the Monday Club's attempt to influence the Conservative Party by the 'gesture' of publishing a few of its publications.<sup>420</sup> He said that the Monday Club had formed 'Constituency Liaison Committees' to 'encourage Monday Club members to join in the activities of the Conservative Party, and to advise them how to do so'.<sup>421</sup> In a letter to the editor of *The Times*, the Monday Club denied that it was a conspiracy aiming to subvert local Conservative Associations, and claimed to be an open and loyal group whose radical views Central Office and others heeded.<sup>422</sup> However, when it claimed to present 'no challenge to the Conservative Party but only to the pseudo-intellectuals of the neo-Socialist fringe, who seek to move the Party away from Conservatism',<sup>423</sup> the Monday Club made clear that it was willing to attack any party member it felt fitted this description. Events in Surbiton proved that this included sitting MPs.

Critchley thought that the Surrey branch of the Monday Club was the most interesting one outside London. He highlighted Surbiton where the sitting Conservative MP, Nigel Fisher, had to contend with a Monday Club 'cell' that considered him to be left wing.<sup>424</sup> The Club's 'Powell for Premier' campaign of 1969 provided a credible

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<sup>419</sup> Julian Critchley, 'The Monday Club's idea of 'true conservatism'', *The Times*, 23 November 1968, 8.

<sup>420</sup> Julian Critchley, 'The Monday Club's idea of 'true conservatism'', *The Times*, 23 November 1968, 8.

<sup>421</sup> Julian Critchley, 'The Monday Club's idea of 'true conservatism'', *The Times*, 23 November 1968, 8.

<sup>422</sup> Frederick Stockwell to the Editor of *The Times*, 26 November 1968. CPA CCO 20/43/4, Monday Club, 1967-69.

<sup>423</sup> Frederick Stockwell to the Editor of *The Times*, 26 November 1968. CPA CCO 20/43/4, Monday Club, 1967-69.

<sup>424</sup> Julian Critchley, 'The Monday Club's idea of 'true conservatism'', *The Times*, 23 November 1968, 8.

figurehead to a campaign that was already running. When Critchley stated that, ‘What the Monday Club really cares about is colour’,<sup>425</sup> he revealed what he thought motivated the Monday Club’s campaign. In 1969, the local Monday Club attempted to remove Fisher. It demanded that the Conservative Association hold a secret referendum on Fisher’s ‘liberal views’, and presented fifty signatures for an extraordinary general meeting if they refused.<sup>426</sup> The Conservative Party hierarchy responded by making their support for Fisher known. Shadow Cabinet members publicly supported Fisher, the 1922 Committee elected him to its National Executive for the first time, and the Party Chairman visited Surbiton.<sup>427</sup> *The Times* covered events at Surbiton with ‘A News Team Inquiry’. It described the campaign to remove Fisher as ‘Sustained, skilfully directed, and totally unprecedented’, and stated that it threw ‘a startling new light on the activities of certain members of the right-wing Monday Club’, amongst whom many supported Powell.<sup>428</sup> The News Team claimed that Central Office and many Conservative MPs were, ‘known to be disturbed by the implications of this attempt ... to oust a sitting M.P.’.<sup>429</sup> Such concern was understandable. Opponents would have interpreted the adoption of a new candidate as a victory for racists. The comments of those involved reinforced the leadership’s concern. Mr. E. W. Chester, a Monday Club member, thought that, ‘Integration could never work and the only solution was to offer coloured people the “necessary incentives” to leave.’<sup>430</sup> Mr. F. S. Legg supported the Monday Club and thought he ought to be a member; he thought that Fisher was ‘all in favour of filling the country with niggers and browns’.<sup>431</sup> Mrs. Viola Roberts openly admitted her racism and thought a ‘fifth column’ of coloured immigrants had infiltrated Britain, which she wanted to keep white.<sup>432</sup>

These views were unwelcome to the Conservative leadership. They again risked associating the party with the extremism usually exhibited by neo-Nazi groups. Central Office maintained a file on events in Surbiton and especially noted any

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<sup>425</sup> Julian Critchley, ‘The Monday Club’s idea of ‘true conservatism’’, *The Times*, 23 November 1968, 8.

<sup>426</sup> ‘Secret vote demanded on Tory MP’, *The Times*, 25 October 1969, 1.

<sup>427</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 298.

<sup>428</sup> ‘Right-wing move to oust Tory’, A News Team Inquiry, *The Times*, 25 October 1969, 6.

<sup>429</sup> ‘Right-wing move to oust Tory’, A News Team Inquiry, *The Times*, 25 October 1969, 6.

<sup>430</sup> ‘Right-wing move to oust Tory’, A News Team Inquiry, *The Times*, 25 October 1969, 6.

<sup>431</sup> ‘Right-wing move to oust Tory’, A News Team Inquiry, *The Times*, 25 October 1969, 6.

<sup>432</sup> ‘Right-wing move to oust Tory’, A News Team Inquiry, *The Times*, 25 October 1969, 6.

support for Powell.<sup>433</sup> The leader of the campaign to remove Fisher realised the potential damage of the racist comments, but he failed to deny or contradict them.<sup>434</sup> The new Chairman of the Monday Club, George Pole, complained in a letter to the *The Times* that the News Team's article left the impression that the Monday Club and its Surrey branch was 'a group of sinister extremist conspirators', which he stated was 'most misleading'.<sup>435</sup> Pole did not condemn the racist views expressed by the Monday Club's supporters. Instead, he justified their actions and, stated disingenuously that he was surprised that the Monday Club was 'officially frowned on by the Conservative Central Office'.<sup>436</sup> As the 1970 General Election campaign began, the Monday Club released a statement that denied accusations of disloyalty.<sup>437</sup> However, the comments of the independent candidate who stood against Fisher suggested that Central Office did not agree. He complained about pressures to stand down brought to bear upon not only him and Powell, but the Monday Club too.<sup>438</sup> Events in Surbiton had again showed that the Conservative Party' was willingness to act against the Monday Club.

### *Electively Right*

As the General Election approached, the extreme-right's position was different from any other time after the Second World War. Although small extreme-right parties still existed, many had coalesced into the National Front. Fears over immigration, the Common Market, the economy and the 'permissive society, provided a propitious context. The National Front grew and was increasingly well organised. It appeared capable of benefiting from dissident Conservative votes more than any other post-war extreme-right party had. However, the National Front faced the dilemmas of all extreme-right parties that competed with the Conservative Party. The Monday Club also possessed more credibility and operated within the political mainstream, thus exacerbating the National Front's problems. Yet, the Monday Club's existence also forced Heath, unlike his predecessors, to confront an organised extreme right within

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<sup>433</sup> CPA CCO 20/67/2, Surbiton – pro-Enoch Powell Support, 1969-70.

<sup>434</sup> 'Right-wing move to oust Tory', A News Team Inquiry, *The Times*, 25 October 1969, 6.

<sup>435</sup> 'Move To Oust Tory: Position Of The Monday Club', *The Times*, 28 October 1969, 11.

<sup>436</sup> 'Move To Oust Tory: Position Of The Monday Club', *The Times*, 28 October 1969, 11.

<sup>437</sup> Monday Club, *Press Release*, 22 May 1970. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>438</sup> 'Candidate officially adopted: Independent's first broadside', *Kingston Borough News*, 29 May 1970.

the Party. The danger that the Monday Club posed to Heath's chances of electoral success surfaced in a bizarre meeting in April 1970. The Market Bosworth Monday Club met and considered calls for the resignation from it of a Sir Wolstan and his wife Lady Dixie. The alleged offence was a briefing Sir Wolstan gave to a Derby news agency that stated that, 'the Monday Club was run by a group of extremists' and that one senior figure 'was a henchman of Sir Oswald Mosley'.<sup>439</sup> The first part of the claim went to the heart of the Conservative Party's problem of how to deal with extremists within its ranks. The second part referred to prominent Monday Club member Jonathan Guinness. As Guinness was the son of Oswald Mosley's wife Diana Mitford, this was an easy accusation to make. It raised again the possibility of remembering the Conservative Party's interwar association with the extreme right.

However, the problems this growing and organised extreme right posed to Heath at the 1970 General Election were not as serious as they might seem at first sight. The Monday Club leadership made clear to Central Office that it supported 'all official party candidates to the full' and was ready to act against members who did not.<sup>440</sup> Therefore, no matter how distasteful Heath thought the Monday Club, its support was essential to winning votes on the right and could make him Prime Minister. Although the National Front was growing, it was miniscule compared to the Conservative Party, and fielded only ten candidates. These candidatures were in working-class constituencies, and arguably damaged the Labour Party more. Even if some Conservatives entertained the possibility of losing votes to the National Front, none other than Oswald Mosley provided the party with reassurance. On the eve of the 1970 General Election, Mosley claimed that even though the majority of the electorate agreed with his views on immigration, 'they nevertheless voted when it came to the point in the traditional party fashion'.<sup>441</sup>

From 1967 onwards, Heath had moved sufficiently rightwards to make Mosley's prediction more probable. The climacteric of this rightward shift came in the 'Selsdon

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<sup>439</sup> "Resign' call to Sir Wolstan after row', *Leicester Mercury*, 21 April 1970.

<sup>440</sup> Frederick Stockwell to Anthony Barber, 20 May 1970. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>441</sup> Mosley was also pointing out the differences between himself and Powell, saying, "We have nothing in common. I am a man of the centre, he belongs to the Extreme Right." Sam White, 'Surprise! What Mosley thinks about Powell', *Evening Standard*, 18 June 1970.

declaration' of January 1970. Asked in private if the party was moving to the right, Heath responded 'Just a bit'.<sup>442</sup> This was quite an admission from a leader committed to One Nation Group principles. Heath subsequently complained that Harold Wilson used Selsdon to portray 'us all as right-wing extremists'.<sup>443</sup> Although Heath rejected the accusation, Wilson's ability to level it confirmed the perception that the Conservative Party had moved rightwards. This was exactly the point. For, although the change arguably went only so far, and certainly did not extend to the kind of policies desired by the National Front, people believed that the Conservative Party had become more right wing. Gilmour, for example, noted that the press suggested Selsdon was a 'sharp swerve to the right'.<sup>444</sup> Conservative parliamentary candidate Norman Tebbit certainly thought so.<sup>445</sup> A desire to limit any damage to the Conservative Party's prospects by Enoch Powell's comments had motivated Heath's actions. Yet the extreme right helped as much as hindered in that Powell, who had remained firmly within the Conservative Party, attracted votes away from the likes of the National Front. On Election Day, 18 June 1970, a cartoon in *The Sun* graphically illustrated this when it portrayed Heath standing on a swing that reached 3%, but trailing Powell on a swing that had reached 4%.<sup>446</sup>

*The Sun's* message that a Conservative victory resulted from Powell's spectacular intervention of 1968 may have been an exaggeration. Although trailing Labour in the polls during the 1970 General Election, many factors pointed towards Conservative victory. Heath's House of Commons performances had improved. Labour's inability to stem rising industrial unrest, notably the failure of *In Place of Strife* (1969), made it more likely that the electorate would turn to the Conservatives. Labour's economic mismanagement had dissipated much of the goodwill enjoyed in 1964. The embarrassment of devaluation in 1967 had shattered Wilson's reputation and forever associated him with an oft-parodied and widely disbelieved claim that it 'would not affect the pound in the pocket.' In the unlikely event that electors had forgotten, the release of unexpectedly poor balance of payments figures in election week reminded

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<sup>442</sup> P. Whitehead, *The Writing on the Wall: Britain in the Seventies*, Michael Joseph, London (1985), 40.

<sup>443</sup> Heath, *Life*, 302.

<sup>444</sup> Gilmour and Garnett, *Whatever*, 242.

<sup>445</sup> Tebbit, *Upwardly*, 94.

<sup>446</sup> *The Sun*, 18 June 1970.

them of Labour's poor economic performance.<sup>447</sup> The election result, a 31 seat Conservative majority, was nonetheless surprising, as virtually all polls had predicted a Labour victory. The overall context largely explained the result, but Powell received the credit for it. Diane Spearman, formerly of the Conservative Research Department, assessed the nearly six thousand letters Powell received during and immediately after the election.<sup>448</sup> Only just over 1% objected to his views. Many revealed that they voted Conservative because of Powell's comments, or attributed the swing towards the Conservative Party to them. These letters came from across the country and included many social classes and occupations. From Colchester: 'We are voting Tory just for you. Thank you.'<sup>449</sup> From Cardiff: 'We feel you brought the campaign to life for the Conservative Party and set us all on the road to success.'<sup>450</sup> From Dumbarton: 'You have helped the Conservative cause tremendously.'<sup>451</sup> Letters from Conservative Party workers added weight to the centrality of Powell's role. Typical of this was the comment of one such individual in Essex who said that, 'Our Canvassing has proved overwhelming support for what you are saying.'<sup>452</sup> Defeated Labour MPs attributed their loss to 'Powellism'.<sup>453</sup> Perhaps most telling, only one letter disagreed with this view, and that was from a defeated Conservative candidate.<sup>454</sup> The sixteen substantial Central Office files that contained correspondence about Enoch Powell's race relations speeches support the breadth, depth and opinion of Spearman's findings.<sup>455</sup> These letters alone did not prove Powell's agency in Heath's 1970 victory. However, subsequent research argued confidently that Powell was responsible for attracting over 4 million votes to the Conservative Party.<sup>456</sup>

Thus in summer 1970, a tough-minded individual took the reins of power having defeated a duplicitous leader. From outside the ruling establishment, this individual swept existing structures aside and contended with radicals' demands within his own

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<sup>447</sup> Ramsden, *Winds*, 313.

<sup>448</sup> D. Spearman, 'Enoch Powell's Election Letters', in J. Wood (ed), *Powell and the 1970 Election*, Paperfront, Kingswood (1970), 19-49.

<sup>449</sup> Spearman, 'Letters', 38.

<sup>450</sup> Spearman, 'Letters', 24.

<sup>451</sup> Spearman, 'Letters', 24.

<sup>452</sup> Spearman, 'Letters', 28.

<sup>453</sup> Spearman, 'Letters', 29.

<sup>454</sup> Spearman, 'Letters', 19.

<sup>455</sup> CPA CCO 20/66/1-16, Correspondence regarding Enoch Powell's race relations speeches, 1968-74.

<sup>456</sup> Heffer, *Powell*, 568.

party. This was a brilliantly acted if factually flawed portrayal by Richard Harris in *Cromwell* (1970). Would Edward Heath, a lower-middle class grammar school boy, former Chief Whip and pilot of the unpopular Resale Price Maintenance Bill, be able to deal with the demands of his radicals as effectively?

## Chapter 5: 'Heathco' meets the extreme-right challenge, 1970-75

Whilst historians of Britain have often portrayed the Forties and Fifties as decades of radical rebuilding, growth and prosperity, and the Sixties as a cultural golden age, the Seventies have attracted a less flattering description. Christopher Booker judged that the Seventies were a 'sober, gloomy' decade, little more than 'a prolonged anti-climax to the manic excitements of the Sixties'.<sup>1</sup> Norman Shrapnel stated that crises became a daily condition of life, and described the Seventies as a decade of increasing introversion when Britain developed a new insularity and withdrew into itself.<sup>2</sup> Phillip Whitehead accepted Shrapnel's judgement. He concluded that, 'The Seventies will be remembered for their reactive pessimism as well as their sharper conflicts.'<sup>3</sup> This negative view of the Seventies has persisted. In 1998, Francis Wheen argued that, 'If the Sixties were a wild weekend and the Eighties were a hectic day at the office, the Seventies were one long Sunday evening, heavy with gloom and torpor.'<sup>4</sup> In 2003, Richard Weight described this period as 'the most dreadful of the post-war era, a litany of racial conflict in England, nationalist discontent in Scotland and Wales, war in Ireland and perpetual strikes everywhere'.<sup>5</sup> According to Weight, 'Many Britons believed that their country was sliding into anarchy and even revolution in the 1970s.'<sup>6</sup> In 2008, David Marquand stated that Heath became Prime Minister when the post-war golden age had begun 'petering out', capitalism had entered a 'turbulent new phase', and just after 'autumn had set in'.<sup>7</sup>

These descriptions have weaknesses. Continuities with previous decades existed. Ascribing a characteristic to a decade is arbitrary. Bernstein recognised both of these facts when he identified economic, political and cultural strengths and weaknesses in

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<sup>1</sup> C. Booker, *The Seventies: Portrait of a Decade*, Allen Lane, London (1980), 3.

<sup>2</sup> N. Shrapnel, *The Seventies: Britain's inward march*, Constable, London (1980), 13.

<sup>3</sup> Whitehead, *Wall*, xv.

<sup>4</sup> F. Wheen, 'The Stagnant Years', *The Modern Review*, March 1998, 25.

<sup>5</sup> Weight, *Patriots*, 475.

<sup>6</sup> Weight, *Patriots*, 519.

<sup>7</sup> Marquand, *Britain*, 235.

the Seventies within an overall picture of Britain's steady rise since 1945.<sup>8</sup> People who grew up in the decade do not necessarily recognise the picture of negativity. Many fondly remember the popular culture that anaesthetised the gloom. The continued success of television programmes from the Seventies such as *Fawlty Towers*, *Dad's Army* and *The Two Ronnies* is evidence of this nostalgia. Likewise, the popularity of the modern television programme *Life on Mars*, in which a twenty-first century policeman awakes in 1973 and experiences the type of policing made famous by the Seventies' series *The Sweeney*. Nostalgia for the Seventies has even found expression in a proliferation of websites on the internet that hark back to the decade as a cultural golden age.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, historians have re-appraised the Seventies. In 2004, the New Economics Foundation saw the mid-1970s as the time when Britain was at its happiest.<sup>10</sup> Howard Sounes highlighted the quality and quantity of popular music, more socially liberal attitudes, radical humour, groundbreaking architecture, and popular literature and blockbuster films as evidence that showed that the Seventies were a 'Brilliant Decade'.<sup>11</sup> Similarly for Alwyn Turner, rather than being the decade 'that could scarcely be mentioned without condemnation, conjuring up images of social breakdown, power cuts, the three-day week, rampant bureaucracy and all powerful trade unions', the Seventies were 'a golden age of TV, popular fiction, low-tech toys and club football'.<sup>12</sup>

Yet, cultural manifestations cannot hide the serious problems of the Seventies. Glam rock, space-hoppers and *Monty Python's Flying Circus* were simply Elastoplast amnesia for Britain's most troubled post-war decade. Indeed, of all decades since the Second World War, the Seventies were the most propitious for extremism. The 'golden age' of Britain's post-war economy ended. Averaging 4% from 1945-70, inflation soared, reaching a peak of 27% in mid-decade. Unemployment increased. A balance of payments surplus of over £400m in 1970 became a deficit that exceeded £1500m by the end of 1974. When unemployment reached the totemic figure of one

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<sup>8</sup> George L. Bernstein, *The Myth of Decline: The Rise of Britain Since 1945*, Pimlico, London (2004).

<sup>9</sup> For example, [www.escape-to-the-seventies.com](http://www.escape-to-the-seventies.com).

<sup>10</sup> 'Social Progress Stagnant as GDP Soars', [www.neweconomics.org/gen/news\\_mdp.aspx](http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/news_mdp.aspx), 16 March 2004.

<sup>11</sup> H. Sounes, *Seventies: The Sights, Sounds and Ideas of a Brilliant Decade*, Simon & Schuster, London (2006), passim

<sup>12</sup> Alwyn W. Turner, *Crisis? What Crisis? Britain in the 1970s*, Aurum, London (2008), ix-xx.

million in January 1972,<sup>13</sup> anger in the House of Commons led to the suspension of Prime Minister's Question Time.<sup>14</sup> Heath may have been unlucky to be Prime Minister at the time of the 1973 oil crisis, but there was a feeling that his government presided over an unfair economy, in which unscrupulous capitalists had enriched themselves whilst the hard-pressed masses paid the price for the government's mistakes. In 1973, *Pink Floyd* parodied the acquisitiveness of capitalism and effects of consumerism in the track 'Money' on their multi-award winning album 'Dark Side of the Moon'. In the same year, Heath himself memorably denounced the Lonrho Company, mired at the time in a tax evasion scandal that benefitted its chairman, as 'the unpleasant and unacceptable face of capitalism'.<sup>15</sup> As Heath later admitted, the Lonrho affair was, 'a considerable provocation', at a time when the government was urging workers to moderate wage demands for the sake of the country.<sup>16</sup> Intriguingly, the chairman concerned was Monday Club member Duncan Sandys.

Opportunities for the exploitation of nationalist fears also increased in the Seventies. This revolved around two issues: Britain's world role, and the state of the union of the United Kingdom. Rapid decolonisation had ended the British Empire. The Commonwealth had evolved into a multi-racial entity of little political coherence in which Britain was little more than titular head. The only viable alternative, if Britain aspired to continuing world importance, appeared to be membership of the European Economic Community (EEC). Conservative and Labour frontbenches agreed with this assessment. The imposition of decimal currency on 15 February 1971 ended Britain's peculiar imperial weights and measures system that dated from 791.<sup>17</sup> The White Paper of July 1971 that supported Britain's entry into the EEC stated that there would be no diminution of 'essential national sovereignty', but admitted that Britain would lose some of its sovereignty.<sup>18</sup> On 1 January 1973, Britain joined the EEC. For those whose nationalism included imperialism, independent traditional currency and national institutions, the political establishment had colluded and submerged Britain

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<sup>13</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 21 January 1971.

<sup>14</sup> 'Sitting suspended: Mr Heath booed in Labour uproar on jobless: censure debate Monday', *The Times*, 21 January 1972, 7.

<sup>15</sup> 'Mr Heath Calls Lonrho affair "the unpleasant and unacceptable face of capitalism"', *The Times*, 16 May 1973, 16.

<sup>16</sup> Heath, *Life*, 418.

<sup>17</sup> Weight, *Patriots*, 486-487.

<sup>18</sup> *The United Kingdom and the European Communities* (1971), 8.

in internationalism. Worse still, the integrity of the United Kingdom itself appeared to be threatened. In the 1970 General Election, Plaid Cymru had failed to win a single constituency. However, Plaid Cymru possessed a solid base of support. It secured two and then three seats in the General Elections of February and October 1974 respectively and subsequently proved it was not simply a transient protest party. In Scotland, the Scottish National Party performed even better. It improved from one seat in 1970 to eleven in 1974 and virtually trebled its vote. Northern Ireland was even more worrying. In 1972, Heath's government responded to the undeclared civil war between republicans and loyalists and suspended the Stormont Assembly. In July 1973, the Northern Ireland Constitution Act imposed a devolved assembly that forced loyalists to share power with republicans. Ulster's Loyalists viewed the Sunningdale Agreement of 1973 that resulted from this assembly as a sell-out that would lead to a united Ireland.<sup>19</sup> Right-wing extremists on the mainland contacted Ulster's loyalists.<sup>20</sup> Britain thus appeared endangered by separatist Celtic nationalism. Wilson had realised that this was a potential problem and had appointed a royal commission in 1969 to examine Britain's constitution and the governance of its constituent parts. On 31 October 1973, the Kilbrandon Commission reported. It accepted the need for Welsh and Scottish devolution. Devolution already existed in Northern Ireland. However, England was not to have its own Assembly. The commission suggested the division of England into eight regions. These events inflamed the passions of those whose nationalism entailed the maintenance of the United Kingdom, and those for whom nationalism meant 'England'.

Weak government made the growth of extremism even more likely in the Seventies. This was especially so during the Heath government. His party's manifesto promised an end to Macmillan's corporatism. It signalled a softening of the Conservative Party leadership's attitude towards the neo-liberalism of the 'freedom groups' on the extreme right. When Heath came to power, he also promised a more business-like approach in which, having carefully arrived at a policy, 'the Prime Minister and his

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<sup>19</sup> 'Cold blast of loyalist opposition greets Mr Faulkner after Sunningdale', and 'Unionists duped at Sunningdale, Mr Paisley tells Ulster Assembly in three-hour speech', *The Times*, 11 December 1973, p. 1 and 15 December 1973, 4.

<sup>20</sup> Sykes, *Radical Right*, 108.

colleagues should have the courage to stick to it'.<sup>21</sup> This was sufficient for many 'freedom groups' to lessen their activities.<sup>22</sup> Reality, however, did not match promise as Heath abandoned neo-liberalism when difficulties arose. His government performed major policy U-turns not once, but five times. In industry, the promise to let so-called 'lame duck' industries fail ended when Heath's government used public money to rescue Rolls Royce and the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders. In October 1970, the Budget removed the apparatus of state intervention in the economy, but in 1972 the creation of an Industrial Development Executive and the Industry Bill reintroduced state interventionism. Heath's government passed legislation to solve industrial unrest, then undermined and eventually abandoned it when trade unions vigorously opposed it. The government introduced a compulsory prices and incomes policy in an attempt to combat spiralling inflation, despite promises to the contrary. Finally, it ended the promise to reduce governmental spending when it increased public expenditure massively from late 1972. These U-Turns resulted in the 'freedom right' returning to prominence.

*Private Eye* parodied Heath as the managing director of 'Heathco', an incompetent individual who led a useless company incapable of dealing with its problems.<sup>23</sup> Once the tough man of the Conservative Party, Prime Minister Heath was incapable of firm leadership, too easily forced to reverse policy when challenged. A growing genre of novels depicting the rise of a right-wing strong man emerged in this period. This was an implicit response to Heath's weak leadership.<sup>24</sup> They were also a reaction to a belief that Heath presided over an increasingly decadent society. On 17 November 1970, the *Sun's* page 3 girl appeared topless for the first time. Increased incidence of abortion and divorce, and the widened gap between rich and poor and young and old juxtaposed in a society that remained largely conservative outside London. Britain in the Seventies presented an image of a society that was polarised morally and culturally as much as it was politically. Films provided evidence of decadence for those who chose to interpret them thus. The release viewing of *Performance* (1971)

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<sup>21</sup> *A Better Tomorrow* (1970), 1.

<sup>22</sup> N. Nugent, 'The National Association for Freedom', in R. King and N. Nugent, *Respectable Rebels: Middle Class Campaigns in Britain in the 1970*, Hodder and Stoughton, London (1979), 76-100.

<sup>23</sup> Ramsden, *Appetite*, 394.

<sup>24</sup> Turner, *Crisis*, 31-32.

shocked the wife of one film executive so much that she vomited. In the same year, *Straw Dogs* depicted a violent British countryside and rape, and attracted from one film critic the description of 'a fascist work of art'.<sup>25</sup> Turner described *Get Carter* (1971) as 'almost an elegy for a passing world',<sup>26</sup> wherein there was an absolute demarcation between villain and citizen. So intense was the reaction to *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), in which drug-taking youths engaged in rape and nihilistic destruction, that its producer withdrew it from viewing in 1974. These trends, and their cultural manifestations, continued throughout the decade, and eventually found their apogee in the emergence of punk music. As Shrapnel says, the Seventies were 'Not a decade, however you looked at it, to solace the moralists.'<sup>27</sup> Heath's government seemed incapable, or unwilling, to enact any remedy for the ills of society. Indeed, the passage of the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971), which separated the classification of cannabis from harder drugs like heroin, suggested that Heath's government did not intend to roll back the permissive society at all. Mary Whitehouse, the once ridiculed former member of Moral Rearmament and force behind the 'Clean-Up TV' campaign in the Sixties, became an influential figure. In 1971, she led the National Festival of Light that harked back to a less morally dubious time. Indeed 'harking back' was a noticeable feature of the Seventies. Norman Shrapnel noticed this long before Griffin identified 'harking back' as an important element within his palingenesis theory of fascism, the core of which is fascist groups' identification of a mythical 'golden age'.<sup>28</sup> The Seventies clearly was a decade in which conditions for extremism existed, not least during Heath's government. Two of the main battlegrounds for this extremism, industrial unrest and immigration, are particularly associated with Heath's government.

Industrial unrest was the leitmotif of Heath's premiership. The official number of days lost to strikes during the Heath government, which was never less than 10 million, exceeded any post-war decade. In 1970, the number of days lost were the most since the General Strike of 1926. In 1972, it more than doubled to give a figure

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<sup>25</sup> Turner, *Crisis*, 76.

<sup>26</sup> Turner, *Crisis*, 59.

<sup>27</sup> Shrapnel, *Seventies*, 16.

<sup>28</sup> Shrapnel, *Seventies*, 15 and *passim*.

ten times worse than when Harold Wilson became Prime Minister.<sup>29</sup> Edward Heath used the Emergency Powers Act (1920) five times to declare a State of Emergency in less than four years. Governments had previously only used this act twelve times in its eighty-four years on the statute book. Each declaration responded to a strike. However, it was not simply the number and extent of strikes, but their nature that particularly identified Heath's premiership with industrial unrest. During the 1972 miners strike, television brought into people's homes the police's inability to stop intimidatory flying pickets. At Birmingham's Saltley Coke Depot in February 1972, the miners' legal use of sheer numbers defeated police efforts to block their attempted closure of the depot. These events also brought National Union of Mineworkers' (NUM) leaders Arthur Scargill and Mick McGahey to prominence. Both men expressed objectives beyond merely the improvement of their members' working conditions. Scargill thought Saltley proved the working class could bring the whole of Britain to a standstill.<sup>30</sup> Late in 1973, at a meeting in Downing Street that attempted to secure an end to an NUM work-to-rule, McGahey told Heath that he sought the government's downfall.<sup>31</sup> This introduced into industrial relations a political objective in which left-wing extremists apparently sought revolutionary ends. Former Monday Club members confirmed Turner's conclusion that at this time some of them suspected that, 'Britain was getting close to a pre-revolutionary situation'.<sup>32</sup>

However true or realistic this suspicion was, the actions of Heath's government inflamed the situation and in the process added to the impression of a pre-revolutionary Britain. In 1971, Heath's government passed the Industrial Relations Act and implemented a National Industrial Relations Court (NIRC) as a mechanism to rule on industrial disputes. Heath subsequently claimed that the motivation for this Act was to redress the balance of power in industry and reduce the climate of confrontation, and not to weaken the trade unions.<sup>33</sup> This accorded with Heath's 'One Nation' Toryism. However, as Robert Taylor argued, the minutes of the Selsdon Park Conference before the 1970 General Election showed that the Conservative

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<sup>29</sup> Turner, *Crisis*, 11.

<sup>30</sup> Turner, *Crisis*, 13.

<sup>31</sup> Whitehead, *Wall*, 104. Heath, *Life*.

<sup>32</sup> Turner, *Crisis*, 13. Interviews with John Gouriet, Sir Adrian FitzGerald, Jonathan Guinness, Neil Hamilton and Gregory Lauder-Frost.

<sup>33</sup> Heath, *Life*, 408-409.

frontbench did intend to lessen union power.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, as the Industrial Relations Act contained within it the means by which trade unions could avoid its provisions lawfully, it was seriously flawed legislation.<sup>35</sup> The government's attempts to enforce it made it appear vindictive, bullying, and, worst of all for any government, impotent. This impotence revealed itself when the government showed that it was not even prepared to stand by the consequences of its own legislation. In 1972, the Government used its own Official Solicitor to overturn the NIRC's imprisonment of five dockers. This action signalled the end of the Industrial Relations Act's effective life. Earlier in 1972, the Government had also capitulated to the miners and awarded them a pay rise three times greater than that initially offered. Heath looked less like Cromwell and more like 'Brave Sir Robin' from *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, inappropriately armed and unwilling to fight. The image of impotence extended to the rest of the government. When the Cabinet met in candlelight due to a power cut, it juxtaposed starkly with the image of vigorous mineworkers who had secured their objectives at Saltley by force.<sup>36</sup> Popular culture represented the situation. In 1971, *Carry On at Your Convenience* continued the parody of unions as seen in *I'm All Right Jack* (1959). The Strawbs criticised union power in *Part of the Union* (1973). However, when Heath decided to take a stand against the miners he discovered that these representations did not reflect public sympathies. Heath responded to the miners' industrial action of late 1973 and imposed a three-day working week from January 1974. This action limited energy usage and imposed heavy penalties for non-compliance. It affected everybody negatively, but Heath's action disproportionately hit hardest those least able to cope. These included the elderly and disabled who had moved into the new tower blocks that now relied on relatives to bring their shopping or hauled it up exhausting flights of stairs themselves.<sup>37</sup> Heath would have done better to observe the messages sent by the popular culture for which he showed no interest before he introduced the three-day week. Although the trade union official in *Carry On at Your Convenience*, Vic Spanner, was a comedic figure, he was also prepared to sanction violence. The film took five years to recoup its costs and was the *Carry On*

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<sup>34</sup> R. Taylor, 'The Heath government and industrial relations: myth and reality', in S. Ball and A. Seldon (eds), *The Heath Government 1970-1974: A Reappraisal*, Longman, London (1996), 168.

<sup>35</sup> Taylor, 'Heath', 172-173.

<sup>36</sup> Turner, *Crisis*, 13.

<sup>37</sup> Personal knowledge.

team's first flop, which suggested that the film's target working-class audience disliked its negative portrayal of Spanner.<sup>38</sup> As the February 1974 General Election loomed, Alf Garnett, the archetypal working-class Conservative voter, also turned his back on the Conservative Government and Prime Minister Heath.<sup>39</sup> Many other working-class Conservatives probably did likewise. Thus, the three-day week had reinforced the existing image of governmental impotence and alienated potential supporters. Therefore, when Heath called a General Election one month after he had imposed the three-day week and asked the electorate, who governed the country, the elected government or the unions?, the electorate responded with a resounding 'not you'.

Alf Garnett is associated in popular memory not with industrial unrest, but another prominent issue of the Seventies: immigration. Enoch Powell's 1968 'rivers of blood' speech had placed immigration firmly at the centre of British politics. Immigration bedevilled Heath's leadership and government. Before the 1970 General Election, Heath promised to assist those immigrants that wished to return to their country of origin, but he also added that, 'we are going to do everything to prevent a climate being created which will make them wish to leave against their own free will'.<sup>40</sup> Heath had made this stance explicit in the Conservatives' General Election manifesto, which also included the promise of no further large-scale immigration.<sup>41</sup> It was a position that contained obvious fault-lines. In 1972, two events tested these manifesto promises severely. In January, Bangladesh secured independence. This resulted in Pakistan seceding from the Commonwealth in protest. There were two consequences of these developments. Pakistani citizens who were resident in Britain were no longer British subjects. Bangladeshis who were resident in Britain became another ethnic minority for the extreme right to attack. Enoch Powell spotted the consequences and exploited them. Powell pointed out that Pakistanis were now aliens and therefore lost the right to vote and bring their dependents to Britain, and called for the repatriation of both Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. Powell had created exactly the kind of negative

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<sup>38</sup> Turner, *Crisis*, 78-79.

<sup>39</sup> *Till Death Us Do Part*, 'Strikes and Blackouts', 23 January 1974 and 'Three Day Week', 30 January 1974.

<sup>40</sup> *The Campaign Guide 1970* (Conservative and Unionist Central Office, 1970), 469.

<sup>41</sup> *A Better Tomorrow: The Conservative Programme for the Next 5 Years* (Conservative Central Office, 1970), 23-24.

climate that Heath and the party leadership wished to avoid. Idi Amin's decision to expel all Asians from Uganda in August caused even greater problems for Heath. The existence of approximately 57,000 stateless Ugandan Asians with British passports challenged Heath's promise that there would be no further large-scale immigration.

Immigration posed greater problems for the Conservative Party than the mere questioning of the credibility of its election promises, however. Powell potentially provided the extreme right with charismatic leadership. He frequently commented on immigration, as well as other issues that troubled the Conservative Government, and therefore regularly reminded electors and elected that an alternative to Heath was available. Letters from people of all political persuasions continued to pour into Central Office overwhelmingly supporting Powell. This proved that the initial favourable response to Powell in 1968 was not a passing phenomenon. Opinion polls confirmed that many people supported Powell's views. The government could not ignore this. However, it had to be careful how it responded because Heath faced more than simply a charismatic extreme-right individual. For a number of reasons, the extreme right was far more dangerous than at any time since 1945. Outside the Conservative Party, the extreme right enjoyed its period of greatest unity in the shape of the National Front, a party composed of racial-nationalists and imperial die-hards. From its creation in 1967, the National Front gained a reputation for street politics and violence against non-white immigrants. It dominated news coverage of extreme-right politics during Heath's premiership and provided a potential repository for extreme-right voters. Events such as the Ugandan Asian crisis provided the National Front with an excuse for its activities, increased its membership and gave it an electoral boost. In 1973, the National Front saved its first deposit when Martin Webster secured 16% of the vote at the West Bromwich by-election. That same year, Harold Wilson claimed there was a danger that Britain would 'lurch into fascism'.<sup>42</sup> As Weight argued, British Fascism enjoyed more success during Heath's premiership 'than during its original heyday in the 1930s'.<sup>43</sup> Shrapnel agreed, describing Britain in this period as, 'marching right back to the 1930s', only this time with blacks, not Jews as the scapegoats.<sup>44</sup> Fears of a resurgent fascism were understandable. Yet, its opponents

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<sup>42</sup> Turner, *Crisis*, 226.

<sup>43</sup> Weight, *Patriots*, 537.

<sup>44</sup> Shrapnel, *Seventies*, 177.

were not prepared to allow the National Front to grow without a fight. Popular culture rejected it. Youths took action against the National Front through 'Rock against Racism' concerts, counter-marches and the Anti-Nazi League. From Powell's Wolverhampton constituency, Ambrose Slade adopted the 'skinhead' image of the late 1960s, but changed it when they realised its association with extreme-right violence, and subsequently became famous as simply Slade. In 1973, Pink Floyd lampooned the ethnocentric divisiveness at the heart of racism in the single from *Dark Side of the Moon*, 'Us and Them'. Therefore, if the Conservative leadership failed to act against the National Front it risked alienating the Party from a sizable section of the electorate.

Unfortunately, for the Conservative leadership, the Party's own extreme right contained supporters of the National Front's views. Connections between the Monday Club and National Front were public knowledge. This presented troubling possibilities. The number of dissident Conservatives who joined the National Front might increase. The Monday Club might exploit the issue of immigration to capture control of the Conservative Party. Most dangerously, the National Front and Monday Club could amalgamate, which would present a far greater challenge to the Conservative Party. Immigration was the issue around which such possibilities revolved. However, because the Monday Club was an integral part of the Conservative Party, the leadership could not dismiss it as easily as it had external extreme-right groups. The Monday Club's growth suggested that it enjoyed significant support amongst Conservatives, and questioned the effectiveness of Central Office's counter measures against it. Yet the Conservative leadership was unable and unwilling to ignore the threat posed by the Monday Club and its association with the National Front. This threat revolved around attitudes towards race. The post-1945 Conservative leadership viewed any organisation that exhibited racism as disreputable. It identified racism as a hallmark of fascism and Nazism, as in the example of the League of Empire Loyalists. This attitude was a long-standing consequence of the Second World War, and is evident in Central Office using its strongest counter measures against racist groups. The National Front was openly racist. The Monday Club, by focusing on the issue of immigration and associating with the National Front, tested the Conservative leadership's commitment to this post-1945 attitude severely. Yet, even though action against the Monday Club risked

harming the Party, the Conservative leadership and Central Office adhered to the policy of countering this particular part of the extreme right. The leadership once more reached rightwards and introduced a new Immigration Bill, whilst refusing to accede totally to the extreme-right's demands. Most striking, Central Office confronted the Monday Club about its connections with the National Front and pressurised the Club's leadership into removing the National Front from its ranks.

### *Extreme-Right Reaction*

The problems of the Heath government provided veterans of the extreme right with an opportunity to grab the limelight from the beginning. Strikes seemed extensive and widespread soon after Heath became prime minister. They affected many and diverse concerns, such as beer production, rugby league and even the *Daily Mail*.<sup>45</sup> People considered the possibility that a General Strike was imminent three months after the General Election. Heath declared his readiness to meet such a challenge on television, and defended his government's non-intervention in industrial disputes.<sup>46</sup> Council workers struck on 29 September. Fears increased for public safety as raw sewage entered rivers and waste piled up.<sup>47</sup> Arbitration resulted in an inflationary pay settlement.<sup>48</sup> Heath criticised the settlement during a *Panorama* interview, but his later argument that this award led the government to redouble efforts with those employers that the government could influence did not alter the view of some that Heath had not provided strong leadership.<sup>49</sup> Newly elected MP Norman Tebbit acknowledged Heath's criticism of the settlement, but also noticed that he kept to his promise to remain aloof from industrial disputes.<sup>50</sup> In winter 1970, electricians began industrial action, which resulted in the first power cuts of Heath's premiership.<sup>51</sup> Homes and businesses used candle light, even the House of Commons.<sup>52</sup> The extent

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<sup>45</sup> 'Another strike hits brewery', *The Times*, 15 August 1970, 15. 'Rugby League strike to go on', *The Times*, 28 August 1970, 10. 'Strike notice at Daily Mail', 8 September 1970, 1.

<sup>46</sup> 'Mr Heath says he would be prepared to face general strike this winter', *The Times*, 25 September 1970, 1.

<sup>47</sup> 'Pollution spreads and schools close in council strike areas', *The Times*, 6 October 1970, 2.

<sup>48</sup> 'Committee admits its proposals to end strike by council workmen are inflationary', *The Times*, 6 November 1970, 4.

<sup>49</sup> Heath, *Life*, 336.

<sup>50</sup> Tebbit, *Upwardly*, 102.

<sup>51</sup> 'Electricity unions may strike to win pay claim', *The Times*, 12 November 1970, 23.

<sup>52</sup> Tebbit, *Upwardly*, 102.

and nature of strikes led some to believe that extreme left were behind them. The unions' response to the impending Industrial Relations Bill added fuel to this belief. In November, for example, British Leyland warned its workers of the dangers of such action after its workers walked out in protest over the Bill.<sup>53</sup> Heath announced at Prime Minister's Question Time that he would not tolerate any political strike.<sup>54</sup> By 27 November, Britain had experienced its worst year for strikes since the General Strike of 1926.<sup>55</sup>

When Heath appeared to promise in the Selsdon Programme a more free-market approach that included limiting trade union power, he had altered the nature of 'freedom' groups'. For many of them, their 'extremism' amounted to little more than advocacy of free market economics unfettered by vested interest. It is true that contemporaries probably misunderstood the nature of the Selsdon programme. Keegan argued that it encouraged the right wing's exaggerated view of its influence over the Conservative Party.<sup>56</sup> Heath later rejected any idea that Selsdon marked his conversion to new liberal economics, and ridiculed those who thought otherwise.<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, Selsdon had brought such views back into the political mainstream. Therefore, when Heath failed to deliver this programme, he forced these groups to return to operating in the political space outside the Conservative Party's right.<sup>58</sup> It was during the electricians' dispute, for example, that Edward Martell resurfaced. He teamed up with former Freedom Group members and formed a company called Modern Organisers Ltd.<sup>59</sup> He used his non-unionised printing company to publish a *News Special* on 8 December.<sup>60</sup> Concerns about union activity dominated the *News Special*. It claimed that recent events had justified the Freedom Group's earlier warnings that failure to counter the unions would lead to politically motivated strikes, and particularly criticised the Heath government for refusing to intervene in the

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<sup>53</sup> 'BLMC warning on political strikes', *The Times*, 13 November 1970, 22.

<sup>54</sup> 'Strike action for political reasons could not be tolerated – Prime Minister', *The Times*, 27 November 1970, 4.

<sup>55</sup> 'Britain's worst year for strikes since 1926', *The Times*, 27 November 1970, 1.

<sup>56</sup> W. Keegan, *Mrs Thatcher's Economic Experiment*, Penguin, Harmondsworth (1985), 27.

<sup>57</sup> Heath, *Life*, 302.

<sup>58</sup> R. King and N. Nugent (eds), *Respectable Rebels: Middle Class Campaigns in Britain in the 1970s*, Hodder and Stoughton, London (1979), esp. 76-100.

<sup>59</sup> See 200.

<sup>60</sup> CPA CCO 20/52/1, Edward Martell (Freedom Group), June 1965-70.

electricians' dispute.<sup>61</sup> The *News Special* also argued that failure to promise trade union reform had lost the Conservative Party the 1964 General Election, whereas its commitment to it allowed it to return to power in 1970.<sup>62</sup> The *News Special* did not accept that Heath's Government had fulfilled this commitment. Under the sub-heading 'Let's Have The Showdown', the *News Special* stated that, 'For all the bold faces they wear when they talk about the unions Mr. Heath and Mr. Carr are still treating them with velvet gloves. They gave way to the dockers. They gave way to the dustmen. It will be a grave mistake if they give way to the electricians.'<sup>63</sup> Like Norman Tebbit, Martell harboured concerns about the government's approach. However, Martell had a drastic remedy. He inferred that the government was too cowardly to deal with strikers, and called for the use of troops if necessary.<sup>64</sup>

A number of reasons suggested that Martell's comments found a receptive audience. Apart from Martell's support for Donald 'Pathfinder' Bennett at the Nuneaton by-election of 1967,<sup>65</sup> his 'extremism' had not usually amounted to more than advocating economic liberalism at a time when the Conservative Party pursued corporatist policies. Heath's recent adoption of economic liberalism and trade union reform, plus the continued industrial unrest, should have made Martell appear credible and boost him politically. Yet this was not the case. Instead, the *News Special* was merely a death spasm of Martell's political career. Martell's financial difficulties as the Freedom Group collapsed substantially explained this.<sup>66</sup> However, there were other explanations. The *News Special* was only four pages long, which compared unfavourably to *The New Daily*. This did not give an image of dynamic resurgence, or make Martell look capable of leading an offensive against the unions. Martell had also timed his attack badly. He may have been right to suspect the Government's resolve. However, others who later shared Martell's view were not yet of the same opinion. Tebbit later doubted Heath's commitment to the Selsdon programme, but at this stage simply wanted the government to adhere to it.<sup>67</sup> Selsdon had indeed reduced the 'freedom' groups' 'extremism' by bringing their objectives into the mainstream. Only

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<sup>61</sup> *News Special*, 8 December 1970, 1.

<sup>62</sup> *News Special*, 8 December 1970, 1.

<sup>63</sup> *News Special*, 8 December 1970, 3.

<sup>64</sup> *News Special*, 8 December 1970, 3.

<sup>65</sup> See 199.

<sup>66</sup> See 195-200.

<sup>67</sup> Tebbit, *Upwardly*, 105-6.

after the U-Turns of 1972 proved that Heath was unable to deliver, did these groups return to the space outside the Conservative Party's right. These included the Selsdon Group (1973), a new Middle Class Alliance (1974) and the National Association of Freedom (1975).<sup>68</sup> Heath's government had been in power for less than four months when the *News Special* appeared, and could hardly have moved more swiftly against the unions. Martell had voluntarily placed himself outside the political mainstream by acting precipitately. People were hardly likely to act on Martell's demands when the government had only four days previously published the Industrial Relations Bill that aimed to reduce industrial unrest. Martell added poor timing to the persistent quandary that the Conservative party posed to all extreme-right groups: how could they compete with the Conservative Party? Martell's demands were risible, especially as they came from a financially discredited individual.

Meanwhile, concerns over immigration provided oxygen for those extreme-right individuals and groups who had not totally accepted unity in the National Front. In August 1970, for example, the remnants of the Racial Preservation Society produced a bulletin that revealed deep suspicions about the new Conservative government. It levelled the usual extreme-right charge at a Conservative government when it stated that, 'The colour has changed from pale red to surreptitious pink ... The song's the same; only the tempo is different.'<sup>69</sup> The bulletin claimed that the left dominated the Conservative government, and argued that, 'For every new man of the Right elected there were at least three of the Tory left.'<sup>70</sup> The bulletin also made personal attacks combining anger over immigration with decadence. It singled out as proof that the left dominated the Home Secretary, 'the great pink creampuff Reggie Maudling'.<sup>71</sup> The Racial Preservation Society levelled two charges at Maudling. He had failed to condemn his daughter for having children out of wedlock, which indicated Maudling supported the permissive society, and he had admitted nearly one hundred Kenyan Asians on becoming Home Secretary, which showed Maudling was complicit in the

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<sup>68</sup> W. N. Coxall, *Parties and Pressure Groups*, Longman, London (1986), 54. N. Nugent, 'The National Association for Freedom', and R. King, 'The middle class in revolt?', both in R. King and N. Nugent, *Respectable Rebels: Middle Class Campaigns in Britain in the 1970s*, Hodder and Stoughton, London (1979), passim.

<sup>69</sup> 'R.P.S. News Bulletin', July/August 1970, 1.

<sup>70</sup> 'R.P.S. News Bulletin', July/August 1970, 1.

<sup>71</sup> 'R.P.S. News Bulletin', July/August 1970, 2.

Conservative Party's hoodwinking of the vast majority of its supporters.<sup>72</sup> However, the bulletin blamed Heath for this state of affairs. It described his commitment to 'One Nation' principles as, 'quite simply, just a variation on the "melting pot" theme beloved of international collectivists of whom Heath is undoubtedly one'.<sup>73</sup> The bulletin ended with a plea for Enoch Powell to provide the remedy: 'So speak up Enoch! Put country before party and earn the eternal gratitude of all honest patriots.'<sup>74</sup>

However, like Martell the Racial Preservation Society's position was weak. It criticised the government's tougher stance on immigration as unenforceable and demanded repatriation.<sup>75</sup> Like Martell's criticism of the government's industrial relations policy, this attack was premature. Heath's government had been in power for barely two months. Like Martell, the Racial Preservation Society made their criticisms before U-turns and various crises had damaged Heath's reputation. For the moment, voters did not necessarily see Heath the same way. As for Powell, what, exactly, did the Racial Preservation Society expect him to do? Attached to the bulletin was a 'Campaign for Democratic Conservatism' sticker that demanded 'Powell for Premier'. However, Powell had never revealed any desire to leave the Conservative Party and lead an extreme-right party like the National Front, despite its enthusiastic support for him. Even Powell's political opponents knew this. Denis Barker claimed in the *Guardian* that, 'As Mr Powell has never indicated nor even remotely implied that he would act other than through the normal machinery of the Conservative Party, such enthusiasm is not likely to provide the non-Conservative Right with a leader big enough and generally acceptable enough to bring unity.'<sup>76</sup> As there was no prospect in 1970 of the National Front forming a government, the only way Powell could become premier was as leader of the Conservative Party. However, Conservative MPs elected the party leader, not extreme-right voters. Thus, if the Racial Preservation Society's claim that left-wing MPs dominated the Conservative parliamentary party is accurate, then the 'Powell for Premier' campaign was futile. In this respect, the Conservative Party's constitutional arrangements deprived the extreme right of a charismatic leader. The Racial Preservation Society subsequently declined and eventually merged into its

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<sup>72</sup> 'R.P.S. News Bulletin', July/August 1970, 2.

<sup>73</sup> 'R.P.S. News Bulletin', July/August 1970, 3.

<sup>74</sup> 'R.P.S. News Bulletin', July/August 1970, 3.

<sup>75</sup> 'R.P.S. News Bulletin', July/August 1970, 2-3.

<sup>76</sup> D. Barker, 'On the patriotic frontier', *Guardian*, 2 June 1972, 10.

Chairman's own organisation, the National Democratic Party. Neither was able to operate successfully in political space occupied by the Conservative Party and National Front.

Despite limited political space extreme-right groups continued to proliferate. The situation in Worthing, where there had been tensions within the local Conservative Association over Rhodesian sanctions,<sup>77</sup> was of particular note. According to one reporter, no less than nine far right groups in Worthing formed a 'Patriotic Front' that included the National Front, Racial Preservation Society, Anglo-Rhodesian Society and the Campaign for Democratic Conservatism.<sup>78</sup> Major-General Richard Hilton, now a veteran of the extreme right-wing cause, was the President of the Worthing Debating Society, the Worthing Ex-Services Association and the True Tories, three other groups that comprised this 'Patriotic Front'. The Worthing Debating Society shared the extreme-right's traditional concerns over immigration and decadence, and viewed them as part of a Communist-led plan to bring Britain to the verge of a 1917-style revolution.<sup>79</sup> Such views were common amongst ultra-Conservatives. However, when the Worthing Debating Society disseminated scurrilous poems that depicted immigrants eating 'Good "PAL" to fill my tummy',<sup>80</sup> it expressed sentiments that were more in tune with Mosley's claims that immigrants consumed Kit-E-Kat. Fear of Communism led the Worthing Debating Society to become involved, from July 1972, in the outlandish attempts of Sir Walter Walker, the former Commander-in-Chief of NATO's forces in Northern Europe, to forge an organisation to resist forcibly any communist invasion.<sup>81</sup> The Worthing Debating Society, and the Patriotic Front, reflected an increased polarisation which some thought only be remediable by a coup d'état.

Proliferation of extreme right-wing movements, of which Worthing was but one example, was evidence of the peculiarly propitious circumstances during the Seventies in general and Heath's government in particular. However, Conservative

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<sup>77</sup> See 235.

<sup>78</sup> M. Cockerell, 'Inside the National Front', *The Listener*, 28 December 1972, 879.

<sup>79</sup> 'The Worthing Debating Society', (nd), *Harvester Primary Social Sources. The Radical Right and Patriotic Movements in Britain – 1975 update*, British Library, Mic. F. 19 (5) 1975.

<sup>80</sup> *England My England*, in British Library, Mic. F. 19 (5) 1975.

<sup>81</sup> *The Worthing Reveille*, 1 July 1972, British Library, Mic. F. 19 (5) 1975.

Central Office's files do not to reflect any such proliferation. Indeed, Central Office activity provides an opposite image. Whereas Central Office maintained files on an average of twenty-two outside organisations per year between 1941 and 1965, thereafter the figure drops to four. Of the fifty-five groups investigated after 1965, only four can unarguably be termed extreme right, and one of these was the defunct Freedom Group of Edward Martell.<sup>82</sup> In part, this reflected the extreme right's coalescence into the National Front in 1967, which made many groups appear even more miniscule. Yet, size had not stopped Central Office from investigating small extreme-right groups such as The Right Party, Clan Briton or the Elizabethan Party. Most extreme-right groups prior to 1967 were, in fact, small. Nor does investigation of two of the remaining three files on extreme-right groups after 1965 betray any concern in Central Office. The file that covers the Racial Preservation Society merely contains its bulletins, and no Central Office comment. The file on the National Front is similarly sparse. One Central Office employee, for example, even revealed in 1971 his contempt and lack of concern when he claimed that despite efforts to give an appearance of modernisation and respectability, 'In the event, of course, the National Front has degenerated into a fairly wild but right-wing organisation.'<sup>83</sup> Abhorrence at their tactics, views, difference of class and a belief that the National Front could never gain political power, fuelled this disdain.<sup>84</sup> More practically, the National Front's leadership was weak. Chesterton resigned in 1971 and retired to South Africa. Enoch Powell, described as 'The one politician within the established parties who both fascinated the Front and constantly says the kind of things it wants to hear',<sup>85</sup> refused the chairmanship when Chesterton resigned.<sup>86</sup> Thereafter, at a time when it needed to consolidate its position by presenting a united image, the National Front indulged in a bitter leadership struggle that soon gave control of the party to the neo-Nazis initially barred from membership in 1967. Individuals who shared this disdain for the National Front included high-ranking members of the Monday Club, the Conservative group that many thought shared its objectives. Jonathan Guinness, Monday Club chairman

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<sup>82</sup> The other three being the National Front, the Monday Club and the Racial Preservation Society. CPA CCO 3 Series.

<sup>83</sup> R. K. Carrick to Mr. John F. Brown, 30 April 1971, CPA CCO 3/7/37, National Front, 1967-77.

<sup>84</sup> Jonathan Guinness, Sir Adrian FitzGerald, John Gouriet, Neil Hamilton and Gregory Lauder-Frost confirmed this in interviews I conducted during 2008.

<sup>85</sup> M. Cockerell, 'Inside the National Front', *The Listener*, 28 December 1972, 880.

<sup>86</sup> M. Cockerell, 'Inside the National Front', *The Listener*, 28 December 1972, 880.

1972-1974, described the National Front leadership as, 'very mediocre'.<sup>87</sup> Sir Adrian FitzGerald was even more dismissive. He recollected the National Front's neo-Nazi antecedents and the quality of people it attracted, and stated that the National Front had no chance of political representation and thus he always found it 'very hard to take seriously'.<sup>88</sup> These comments support the image of nonchalance garnered from Central Office's files on the National Front. However, this is deceptive. For, although Central Office was unconcerned with the National Front per se, it was nevertheless alarmed about its possible impact on the Conservative Party. What fed this alarm was the position of the Monday Club and its connections with the National Front.

### *Inside the Inside Right*

The official history of the Monday Club described the 1970 General Election as 'The Break Through'. The Club's representation in the House of Commons increased from sixteen to twenty-nine MPs, with six more joining subsequently and there were thirty-three members in the House of Lords.<sup>89</sup> These figures increased the likelihood that Monday Club members would gain government office. Prime Minister Heath appointed Monday Club members to six positions.<sup>90</sup> However, all but one was a junior position and none involved the sensitive issue of race and immigration. Only Geoffrey Rippon secured a high profile position as Minister of Technology, despite the views of some that he was too right-wing.<sup>91</sup> His opposition to Powell's position on immigration and advocacy of Britain's entry into Europe, which were contrary to many Monday Club members' views, made Rippon the one Monday Club member whose credentials Heath appreciated.<sup>92</sup> In July 1970, Heath moved Rippon to the Duchy of Lancaster to take charge of the negotiations for Britain's membership of the EEC.

Away from Westminster, the Monday Club grew. In November 1970, the Monday Club's University Group held its fifth Annual Conference at New College, Oxford,

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<sup>87</sup> Interview with Jonathan Guinness, 23 May 2008.

<sup>88</sup> Interview with Sir Adrian FitzGerald, 20 May 2008.

<sup>89</sup> Copping, *Story*, 21-22.

<sup>90</sup> Copping, *Story*, 22.

<sup>91</sup> Heath, *Life*, 311.

<sup>92</sup> Heath, *Life*, 294, 310-311 & 320.

and claimed fifty-five branches by 1971.<sup>93</sup> In March 1971, the Monday Club's provincial branches showed their growth and increased organisational capability by holding the first National Conference of Branches at Nottingham.<sup>94</sup> Ian Walker in the *Sunday Telegraph* thought that the Monday Club had now overtaken the Bow Group, and described it as, 'undoubtedly in tune with the current mood among Conservatives', and thought that 'it is skilfully led and of wide appeal'.<sup>95</sup>

It was not necessarily 'in tune' with Central Office, which continued to have a close relationship with the Bow Group and PEST. In December 1970, the Bow Group furnished the Party Chairman with details of its financial situation after the Party Chairman advised them that he would be meeting with the Party Treasurer.<sup>96</sup> It would seem that Central Office continued its positive interest in the Bow Group's financial affairs. PEST's archive revealed a similarly positive relationship.<sup>97</sup> Considering that Central Office's role reflected the leader's views, this means that the Monday Club presented Heath with a credible dissident organisation from the beginning of his premiership, one that Central Office had already described as extreme-right wing.<sup>98</sup>

Unlike Edward Martell, the Monday Club did not precipitately condemn the government's stance on industrial relations. During the electricians' dispute, the Taunton & District Monday Club sent Heath their 'Congratulations on your firm stand', and advised him to 'Keep it up' and 'Don't submit to Communist inspired blackmail.'<sup>99</sup> However, when it came to immigration, the Monday Club was closer to the Racial Preservation Society, if not in tone, then in substance. Ranged against the Monday Club were those who pressurised the government to adopt a more permissive immigration policy. In July 1970, *The Times* reported the Bow Group's launch of its publication, *The Greatest Claim*, which demanded easier entry into Britain for Asians in Uganda and Kenya.<sup>100</sup> The following month, *The Times*' undisclosed sources reported that the attitude within the government to this issue had thawed, and

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<sup>93</sup> Copping, *Story*, 14.

<sup>94</sup> Copping, *Story*, 14.

<sup>95</sup> Quoted in Copping, *Story*, 28.

<sup>96</sup> Michael Howard to the Rt. Hon. Peter Thomas, QC, MP, 16 December 1970. CPA CCO 20/43/2, Bow Group, 1965-71.

<sup>97</sup> London School of Economics and Political Science, TRG/1 PEST.

<sup>98</sup> See 162.

<sup>99</sup> Telegram to E. Heath, 9 December 1970. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>100</sup> 'Tory call to ease entry for Asians, *The Times*, 27 July 1970, 2.

ministers' private hints that they would not be embarrassed at pressure being brought to bear on the government to relax its stance on immigration in favour of the African Asians.<sup>101</sup> Attempts to enforce the Immigration Act (1968) received bad publicity.<sup>102</sup> In October, those Asians who held British passports took their case to the European Commission on Human Rights.<sup>103</sup> In Britain, opponents of the government's official position began an 'Admit the British' national campaign.<sup>104</sup> The government's changing attitude became more obvious. Press reports suggested that the government would make African Asians a special case in forthcoming immigration legislation, and stated that this would not result in all of the 170,000 passport holders coming to Britain.<sup>105</sup> The Monday Club took this as evidence that the government intended to allow up to 170,000 East African Asians into Britain, and its National Executive Council convened and released a press statement in November. It issued a 'strong warning' that such a policy would raise racial tensions as it was contrary to the wishes of the people, and pointed out that it would also 'be to go back on an election pledge that there would be no further large scale immigration into Britain'.<sup>106</sup>

The Monday Club voted Enoch Powell their Politician of the Year at the end of 1970 for the second year in succession.<sup>107</sup> Support for Heath at the 1970 General Election had not removed the Monday Club's threat to create an extreme-right bloc within the Conservative Party that offered a viable alternative to the current leadership. Opposition to Heath from the internal extreme right would continue. In January 1971, the Monday Club reinforced differences between it and the party leadership when fifteen members, led by Chairman George Pole, re-established direct contacts with Ian Smith's renegade government during a trip to Rhodesia and South Africa.<sup>108</sup> On 11 February, Enoch Powell attacked the official immigration figures.<sup>109</sup> Four days later, he claimed that by 1985 coloured immigrants would total 4 million by 1985, and

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<sup>101</sup> 'Asians get new hope of entry', *The Times*, 13 August 1970, 1.

<sup>102</sup> 'Asians sent back and forth', *The Times*, 12 August 1970, 3.

<sup>103</sup> 'Asians' protest at human rights meeting', *The Times*, 3 October 1970, 4.

<sup>104</sup> 'National campaign for Asians' entry', *The Times*, 15 October 1970, 2.

<sup>105</sup> 'A strategy for the East Africa's Asians: opportunity in new Immigration Bill', *The Times*, 17 October 1970, 12.

<sup>106</sup> 'Monday Club opposed to more Asian admissions', *The Times*, 14 November 1970, 3.

<sup>107</sup> Copping, *Story*, 27.

<sup>108</sup> Copping, *Story*, 22.

<sup>109</sup> 'Mr Powell's charge on coloured birthrate', *The Times*, 12 February 1971, 1.

proposed 'massive, albeit voluntary repatriation'.<sup>110</sup> On 16 February, the Monday Club issued a statement that supported Powell 'in his latest warnings about the growing size of the coloured population of this country and the ensuing problems we shall face from such a growth', and demanded that the Government 'must now accept Mr. Powell's remedies as well as his diagnosis'.<sup>111</sup> John Pilger noticed the Monday Club's activities. In an article of 15 March billed as 'Day one of an explosive series', Pilger outlined the Monday Club's growth and power. From 400 members in 1964, the Monday Club had grown to 2,100 in the national organisation and 6,000 in thirty and fifty-five regional and university branches respectively.<sup>112</sup> Pilger implied that the Monday Club could pressurise the existing leadership severely. He claimed that one third of Conservative MPs supported the Monday Club, and quoted an anonymous Monday Club official's boast that, 'We are now able to bring pressure to bear in a number of constituencies where a member's ideas conflict with those of true conservatism.'<sup>113</sup> What may have disconcerted the remaining two-thirds of Conservative MPs was the same official's claim that, 'Within ten years we, the party's tail, shall wag the dog.'<sup>114</sup>

We cannot dismiss these comments as hyperbolic indiscretion happily reported by an opponent of the Conservative Party. Heath had not yet performed any policy U-turns. Pilger's comment that the Monday Club's Director, Frederick Stockwell, had identified the club with the Government's direction revealed that the Club was willing to work with Heath's government.<sup>115</sup> However, far more worrying for the Conservative Party leadership was a change that Pilger identified in the composition of the Monday Club. In doing so, Pilger touched on another way in which the Conservative Party opposed the extreme right, the issue of class. Pilger described how five Chelsea Tories had founded the Monday Club in reaction to Macmillan's

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<sup>110</sup> 'Coloured population four million by 1985, Mr Powell says', *The Times*, 16 February 1971, 2.

<sup>111</sup> Copping, *Story*, 17.

<sup>112</sup> J. Pilger, 'What The Monday Club Men Have In Store For You', *Daily Mirror*, 15 March 1971, 16-17.

<sup>113</sup> J. Pilger, 'What The Monday Club Men Have In Store For You', *Daily Mirror*, 15 March 1971, 16-17.

<sup>114</sup> J. Pilger, 'What The Monday Club Men Have In Store For You', *Daily Mirror*, 15 March 1971, 16-17.

<sup>115</sup> J. Pilger, 'What The Monday Club Men Have In Store For You', *Daily Mirror*, 15 March 1971, 16-17.

decolonization policy, but argued that subsequent concentration on domestic issues had begun to change the Club's character. He stated that it was no longer heavily influenced by Lord Salisbury, and described how Monday Club members were 'now coming from the suburbs: municipal men who dream of garbage and glory and managerial men who see, at last, a chance of their elevation to a ruling class from which an absence of breeding has long excluded them'.<sup>116</sup> Consequently, Pilger thought that the Monday Club in 1971 was an 'alliance of upper class romanticism and middle class ambition'.<sup>117</sup> However, the Monday Club was potentially even more dangerous than such an alliance seemed to suggest. For, although Jonathan Guinness and Adrian FitzGerald were typical of those members who dismissed the National Front as politically irrelevant lower-class thugs,<sup>118</sup> there existed within the Club sympathy for the National Front. Pilger intimated this when he quoted the Monday Club Chairman George Pole as joking that the National Front were people who had not been given enough red meat, but also stating that 'the National Front must not be turned aside as of no account; they have people who are motivated by the highest ideals'.<sup>119</sup> Pole's comments showed that some members of the Monday Club and National Front shared views. Pole was also disdainful and did not betray any belief in the National Front's importance. However, the Monday Club's provincial branches had no credible vetting system and were ripe for infiltration by the National Front, or those sympathetic to it. The National Front's infiltration of the Monday Club would increase its importance.<sup>120</sup> Pilger highlighted this when he quoted John Ormowe, the twenty-five year old chairman of the Sussex Monday Club: 'The Monday Club you see in London is no more than a parliamentary debating group of rather socially exclusive people. We in the branches are what it's all about.'<sup>121</sup> Ormowe also claimed to be a Hitler-admiring racialist.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> J. Pilger, 'What The Monday Club Men Have In Store For You', *Daily Mirror*, 15 March 1971, 16-17.

<sup>117</sup> J. Pilger, 'What The Monday Club Men Have In Store For You', *Daily Mirror*, 15 March 1971, 16-17.

<sup>118</sup> Interviews with Jonathan Guinness, Lord Moyne, and Sir Adrian FitzGerald.

<sup>119</sup> J. Pilger, 'What The Monday Club Men Have In Store For You', *Daily Mirror*, 15 March 1971, 16-17.

<sup>120</sup> Some leading Monday Club officials claim only to have realised the weakness of the branch system subsequently. Interviews with Jonathan Guinness and Adrian FitzGerald.

<sup>121</sup> J. Pilger, 'What The Monday Club Men Have In Store For You', *Daily Mirror*, 15 March 1971, 16-17.

<sup>122</sup> J. Pilger, 'What The Monday Club Men Have In Store For You', *Daily Mirror*, 15 March 1971, 16-17.

A provincial Monday Club also made class-based comments later in 1971. On 27 May, Labour overturned a 10,874 Conservative Majority at the Bromsgrove by-election. The Taunton & District Monday Club, once pleased by Heath's stance against the electricians, blamed the Prime Minister. It claimed that Heath had shunned the limelight, left too much to his ministers, and enjoyed 'a rich man's sport in sailing'.<sup>123</sup> The Conservative MP for Wells, Robert Boscawen, wrote to the Taunton & District branch and stated that such comments were 'adding to the reasons why I am at present seriously considering not renewing my subscription and withdrawing my support' from the Monday Club.<sup>124</sup> Boscawen was the son of the eighth Viscount Falmouth and a member of the Cornish aristocracy. That Boscawen sent a copy of his letter to Central Office revealed that Central Office's intelligence gathering continued to thrive. The correspondence between Boscawen, the Taunton & District Monday Club and Central Office indicated that class attitudes shaped views within the wider Conservative Party.

According to old-Etonian Jonathan Guinness, one common insult that National Monday Club members bandied about at this time was to describe someone as a National Front supporter.<sup>125</sup> This was not because of the political views that such an insult implied, but the class connotations. Actual proof of National Front membership would have led to automatic dismissal from the Monday Club. Sir Adrian FitzGerald, Monday Club founder member and old-Harrobian, confirmed that National Monday Club members were disdainful of the National Front and that membership of it meant expulsion from the Club. When asked whether members he knew treated the National Front with disdain, FitzGerald replied, 'Oh Complete. I mean as soon as we knew somebody was in The National Front they were out.'<sup>126</sup> Harvey Proctor, a former Scarborough Boys High School pupil and York University student, was one Monday Club member who received the insult that Guinness revealed.<sup>127</sup> Proctor resigned as assistant to the Monday Club Director in November 1971 upon finding his personal

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<sup>123</sup> Mrs. Ailsa Wilson to the Rt. Hon. P. J. M. Thomas QC, MP, Chairman of the Conservative Party, 27 May 1971. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>124</sup> R. Boscawen MP, to A. Wilson, 4 June 1971. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>125</sup> Interview with Jonathan Guinness, 23 May 2008.

<sup>126</sup> Interview with Sir Adrian FitzGerald, 20 May 2008.

<sup>127</sup> Interview with Jonathan Guinness, 23 May 2008.

mail opened at the club.<sup>128</sup> Class may have played a role in Proctor's removal. Cedric Gunnery, the old-Etonian who was the Club's acting Director at the time, for some reason did not inform Proctor of Chairman Pole's instructions regarding the opening of private mail.<sup>129</sup> Proctor offered to serve out his month's notice if he could open his own mail, but the Monday Club refused,<sup>130</sup> which suggested that Proctor was the specific target of this measure. Jonathan Guinness recalled that, 'we all thought that Harvey Proctor was National Front'.<sup>131</sup> However, the fact that Proctor remained within the Monday Club indicated that factors other than class might have applied. However, the reaction to Proctor's dismissal contained class-based comments. On 23 November 1971, *The Times* reported that Proctor's opponents within the Monday Club felt he was 'getting too big for his boots', whereas the activists who supported Proctor thought the Club had declined 'into a social clique' that did not live up to its reputation as 'a right-wing pressure group'.<sup>132</sup> Unfounded or un-provable suspicions over Proctor's affiliations may have determined Pole's actions. Alternatively, Pole may have doubted Proctor's loyalty. Proctor was a protégé of G. K. Young. On 24 November, *The Times Diary* described reaction to Proctor's resignation as a '*putsch* against George Pole, the chairman'.<sup>133</sup> It inferred that others wanted to lead the Monday Club, and stated that if Pole resigned it expected unidentified 'possible pretenders to come forward'.<sup>134</sup> This is not a clear picture. However, this episode revealed the class-based barriers within the Monday Club that acted in conjunction with political ones to limit the extreme-right's fortunes.

Jonathan Guinness admitted that class played a part in the Monday Club when he said that, 'One of the main things that got me into the Monday Club was a feeling that my own class, the toffs if you like, was letting down both the party and the country.'<sup>135</sup> The preponderance of individuals of similar class to Guinness resulted in accusations that a 'Chelsea Tea Set' dominated the National Monday Club.<sup>136</sup> Indeed, Guinness accepted that class determined some Monday Club members' attitude: 'the lower-

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<sup>128</sup> 'How Proctor was Pole-axed', *The Times*, 23 November 1941, 14.

<sup>129</sup> 'How Proctor was Pole-axed', *The Times*, 23 November 1971, 14.

<sup>130</sup> 'How Proctor was Pole-axed', *The Times*, 23 November 1971, 14.

<sup>131</sup> Interview with Jonathan Guinness, 23 May 2008.

<sup>132</sup> 'How Proctor was Pole-axed', *The Times*, 23 November 1971, 14.

<sup>133</sup> 'The Times Diary: More ado at the Monday Club', *The Times*, 24 November 1971, 14.

<sup>134</sup> 'The Times Diary: More ado at the Monday Club', *The Times*, 24 November 1971, 14.

<sup>135</sup> Correspondence with Jonathan Guinness, 24 May 2008.

<sup>136</sup> Correspondence with Jonathan Guinness, 28 June 2008.

middle people were more tolerant of the National Front. ... like it or not there was a certain correlation between class and the intensity of this pull'.<sup>137</sup> The problem for these members was that the National Monday Club, which people of Guinness's ilk dominated, determined policy and not the provincial branches, where the 'lower-middle people' predominantly were. Moreover, Guinness's perception of the Monday Club's relationship with the Conservative Party made it unlikely that the sympathies of the lower-middle class Monday Clubbers would ever be realised if class continued to shape it. Guinness stated that, 'for me the whole point of the Monday Club was that it was part of the Conservative Party and needed to have tolerable relations with the rest of the Party. This meant that adherence to any other party had to be out. This, to me, was a matter of definition. Members of the Monday Club had to be a subset of the Conservative Party, and that was that.'<sup>138</sup> Consequently, if Chairman Pole resigned and 'pretenders' sympathetic to the National Front tried to gain control of the Monday Club, they would be thwarted if someone like Guinness, a friend of Pole who had brought Guinness into the Club,<sup>139</sup> succeeded him.

### *Was Guinness good for them?*

Suspicious of extreme-right infiltration provided the background to the Monday Club's 1972 leadership contest. In his *Guardian* expose, Dennis Barker implied that there were connections between the Monday Club and the Patriotic Front in Worthing. He stated that the Society for Individual Freedom was part of the Patriotic Front and named Frederick Stockwell as its Secretary.<sup>140</sup> Stockwell was one of the Monday Club members Pilger had quoted.<sup>141</sup> Barker identified a number of other extremists in the Patriotic Front. He named Alan Hancock, leader of the Racial Preservation Society, and quoted his claim that, 'local Conservatives have used all our literature during the last general election'.<sup>142</sup> Barker identified individual members of the National Front, David Brown of the National Democratic Party and Air Vice-Marshal Donald Bennett who now led an organisation called the Political Freedom

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<sup>137</sup> Correspondence with Jonathan Guinness, 28 June 2008.

<sup>138</sup> Correspondence with Jonathan Guinness, 28 June 2008.

<sup>139</sup> 'The Times Diary: More ado at the Monday Club', *The Times*, 24 November 1971, 14.

<sup>140</sup> D. Barker, 'On the patriotic Front', *Guardian*, 2 June 1972.

<sup>141</sup> See 298.

<sup>142</sup> D. Barker, 'On the patriotic Front', *Guardian*, 2 June 1972.

Movement.<sup>143</sup> In doing so, he associated the Monday Club, and hence the Conservative Party, with racism, fascism and neo-Nazism. Other evidence supported this connection. The Worthing Debating Society shared its meeting place with the local branch of the Monday Club, and invited prominent Monday Club and National Front members to address it.<sup>144</sup> However, Barker thought that the Monday Club differed from these extreme-right movements in one important regard. Although they operated at the Conservative Party's nebulous extremity, Barker stated that the Monday Club was 'the gauge of how far radical or Patriotic Right views are acceptable to those who wish and intend to stay firmly within the respectable ranks of the established Right'.<sup>145</sup> Barker supported his opinion by quoting Michael Woolrych, the Monday Club's Director. Woolrych claimed that there was 'no danger of the Monday Club becoming a para-Fascist group,' and stated that it had 'nothing to do with the National Front. We do not have any members in it. If we found them out, we would eject them. Generally speaking, we identify them before they get in.'<sup>146</sup> Hence, Barker thought that the Monday Club determined respectability and ensured that less reputable elements could not join the Conservative Party through it. However, the proliferation of the Monday Club's branches had made Woolrych's views naïve. The victor of the Monday Club's 1972 leadership contest would have to prove whether Woolrych's claims were accurate.

Jonathan Guinness, Richard Body and Tim Stroud contested the Monday Club's 1972 leadership election. Guinness represented the pro-EEC element within the Monday Club whilst Body represented those who opposed it. Tim Stroud entered the contest late. He was aged only twenty-eight and was little known in the Monday Club and stood little chance of success. Walker described Stroud as little more than a pawn in G. K. Young's efforts to control the Monday Club.<sup>147</sup> Young had served as Chairman of the Action Fund and thus played a leading role in the Monday Club's expansion, and was the current chairman of the Economic Policy Group. His authorship of *Who goes home?* (1969), a hard-line pamphlet on immigration, placed Young on the extreme right of the Monday Club. Walker claimed that Young funded Stroud's

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<sup>143</sup> D. Barker, 'On the patriotic Front', *Guardian*, 2 June 1972.

<sup>144</sup> Colwell, *Radical*, 15-16.

<sup>145</sup> D. Barker, 'On the patriotic Front', *Guardian*, 2 June 1972.

<sup>146</sup> D. Barker, 'On the patriotic Front', *Guardian*, 2 June 1972.

<sup>147</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 127.

campaign in the hope that it would draw support away from Guinness and result in victory for Body, a member known to have little knowledge of the Club's administration, which would leave Young free to control the Monday Club.<sup>148</sup> Conservative Central Office remained aloof, except for one event. Stroud wrote to party chairman Lord Carrington. He described the Monday Club's aims, and expressed his hope that Carrington would agree that they 'do not depart from acceptable Conservative thinking'.<sup>149</sup> Ian Deslandes replied on behalf of Carrington, and stated that 'it would not be right for him to comment on them while the Monday Club's Election for a new Chairman was in progress'.<sup>150</sup> Mr. Webster at Central Office suggested this response because he believed that 'anything sent out above your name might be passed round the Monday Club in support of Mr. Stroud's candidature'.<sup>151</sup> Deslandes's letter may have simply reflected Central Office's desire not to be involved in the Monday Club leadership election. However, the lack of other documentation concerning other contestants leaves open the possibility that Central Office did not want to be associated with G. K. Young.

Guinness won the election comfortably. The Monday Club announced the results on 5 June. Newspapers portrayed it as a victory for the Right. For *The Times*, Guinness was 'unquestionably the candidate of the right' whose victory 'is seen by the more moderate members as a triumph for the "law and order fetishists"'.<sup>152</sup> The *Sunday Telegraph* headlined with 'Guinness is good for them' and revealed that Enoch Powell's rivers of blood speech had sparked Guinness's interest in politics, which meant that immigration would remain an important issue during his chairmanship.<sup>153</sup> Guinness stated that he intended to 'keep the Tory party on the "Right" road'.<sup>154</sup> Guinness became chairman at a time when many in the Monday Club thought that the government was under attack for policy reversals and for having veered off the "Right" road. The Monday Club had already participated in these attacks before Guinness became chairman. In February and March 1972, individual Monday Club

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<sup>148</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 127.

<sup>149</sup> T. Stroud to Lord Carrington, 21 May 1972. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>150</sup> I. Deslandes to T. J. Stroud Esq., 24 May 1972. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>151</sup> I. Deslandes to the Chairman, 24 May 1972. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>152</sup> 'Right wing victory in Monday Club poll', *The Times*, 6 June 1972, 2.

<sup>153</sup> 'Guinness is good for them', *Sunday Telegraph*, 11 June 1972.

<sup>154</sup> 'Guinness is good for them', *Sunday Telegraph*, 11 June 1972.

members voiced their concerns over picketing miners and events in Northern Ireland.<sup>155</sup> These attacks continued, becoming more concerted. Less than two weeks after the election, the Monday Club's Economic Policy Group, chaired by G. K. Young, issued a press statement that criticised the Heath government's performance and recent U-turns.<sup>156</sup> According to the Economic Policy Group, the government had broken its election promises to oppose further nationalisation and reduce state involvement in nationalised industries. Instead, the Economic Policy Group argued, the recent Industries Bill had reintroduced the mechanism of state intervention and the number of civil servants had actually grown, while failure to reduce trade union power had resulted in public sector wage increases and inflation higher than during the previous Labour government. It warned that, 'The next election will be won neither on a past record of nor a future programme of neo-socialism',<sup>157</sup> and accused the government in the language typical of the extreme right. In July, John Biggs-Davison called for tougher action in Ulster.<sup>158</sup> At the same time John de Vere Walker, chairman of the Monday Club's Ulster Group, wrote privately to party chairman Lord Carrington. He denounced the government for appeasing terrorists and betraying loyalists, and warned Carrington that Heath's actions threatened 'an irrevocable split within the Conservative and Unionist Party'.<sup>159</sup> When Walker received an anodyne and tardy reply that merely acknowledged his comments but did not address them, he reiterated charges of disloyalty tinged with cowardice, and described the use of British troops against Loyalists and working class Conservative voters in Ulster thus: 'Doubtless this was done in the hope of appeasing the I.R.A. and Mr. Wilson.'<sup>160</sup> There is no evidence in Central Office files that Carrington responded to this charge.

However, in 1972 the party leadership openly responded to the Monday Club's criticism of its immigration policy. On 4 August, Idi Amin gave Asians in Uganda one month to leave. Heath recalled that 'intense pressure was placed on us by the right

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<sup>155</sup> R. Copping, *The Monday Club – Crisis and After*, Monday Club, London (1975), 5.

<sup>156</sup> *Could Do Better: Monday Club Mid-Term Report On Tory Economic Record*, Monday Club (1972). CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74

<sup>157</sup> *Could Do Better: Monday Club Mid-Term Report On Tory Economic Record*, Monday Club (1972). CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>158</sup> R. Copping, *The Monday Club – Crisis and After*, Monday Club, London (1975), 6.

<sup>159</sup> J. de Vere Walker to Lord Carrington, 12 July 1972. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>160</sup> J. de Vere Walker to Lord Carrington, 23 September 1972. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

wing to renege upon our political and moral obligations'.<sup>161</sup> Enoch Powell led the 'intense pressure' and denied that there was any British obligation to the Ugandan Asians.<sup>162</sup> Support for Powell had resulted in the formation of 'Powellight', a group devoted to his policies. Bee Carthew, Monday Club member and Honorary Secretary of 'Powellight', was one of many who attacked Powell's critics.<sup>163</sup> In September at Central Hall, Westminster, the Monday Club held a 'Halt Immigration Now' meeting. It passed a resolution that demanded an immediate halt to all immigration, repeal of the Race Relations Act and the commencement of a full repatriation scheme.<sup>164</sup> Guinness forwarded the resolution to Heath on 16 September. The response this time was not neither anodyne nor tardy. Instead, Heath attacked the Monday Club's resolution by letter on 20 September, and immediately released his letter as a press statement. Heath addressed the Monday Club's three demands. Immigration had fallen, but the government would not stop it altogether as Britain had a moral and legal responsibility to admit some immigrants, and needed those that possessed skills useful to Britain.<sup>165</sup> Nor would the government repeal the Race Relations Act, as this was not in the election manifesto.<sup>166</sup> It was on the issue of repatriation that Heath questioned the Monday Club's respectability most. Heath pointed out that the Immigration Act (1971) contained provision for voluntary repatriation. However, when Heath asserted that the government would not 'tolerate any attempt to harass or compel them to go against their will',<sup>167</sup> he rejected the compulsory nature of the Monday Club's proposal. Once again, Heath's response demonstrated the persistent dilemma that the Conservative Party posed to all extreme-right voters of whether to accept its measures or look elsewhere for satisfaction. Moreover, when Heath witheringly stated that it had not been the Monday Club's earlier position 'that a future Conservative Government should attempt to find quibbles and excuses to

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<sup>161</sup> Heath, *Life*, 457.

<sup>162</sup> 'Mr Powell rejects obligations to Asians', *The Times*, 17 August 1972, 1.

<sup>163</sup> 'Support for Mr Powell', *The Times*, 7 September 1972, 15.

<sup>164</sup> Copping, *Crisis*, 6-7.

<sup>165</sup> 'Text of a letter from the Prime Minister to the Chairman of the Monday Club Mr Jonathan Guinness,' 20 September 1972, 2. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>166</sup> 'Text of a letter from the Prime Minister to the Chairman of the Monday Club Mr Jonathan Guinness,' 20 September 1972, 1. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>167</sup> 'Text of a letter from the Prime Minister to the Chairman of the Monday Club Mr Jonathan Guinness,' 20 September 1972, 1. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

enable it to run away from Britain's obligations',<sup>168</sup> he made it clear that he was prepared to take on the Monday Club's challenge, if necessary in public.

How far the Monday Club's resolution revealed that it had become unrespectable is unclear. It is possible that the resolution reflected the divisions within the Monday Club rather than any rightwards move. Walker claimed that Monday Club member Harold Soref always maintained that G. K. Young had deliberately created the Halt Immigration Now Committee to by-pass Soref's opposition to him on the Monday Club's Immigration Committee.<sup>169</sup> Walker's reliability is questionable, for he rarely attributed his information. In this instance, other evidence corroborated Walker's claim. Jonathan Guinness believed that Walker's account 'sounds plausible' as 'Young and Soref loathed each other'.<sup>170</sup> It would seem that a personality clash played a role in the formation of the Halt Immigration Now Campaign. However, Soref did not base his opposition to Young solely on personality. Walker also recounted Soref's claims to have opposed Young's control of the Monday Club's Action Fund from the beginning, and to have 'issued direct warnings' to Guinness on becoming chairman about this and the 'dangers of take-over by extremists'.<sup>171</sup> Again, Guinness confirmed this. He described Soref as a 'moderating influence' on the Monday Club's Immigration Committee, and admitted that Soref 'never stopped warning me' about extremists within the Monday Club, and that, 'In many individual instances he was right.'<sup>172</sup> How much credibility Guinness gave at the time to Soref's warning is unclear. It is possible that people ignored his warnings because of his manner. Yet, as a former member of the Intelligence Corps, Soref possessed some personal credibility when it came to acquiring information. Soref was the person who had previously informed Central Office of Martell's intentions.<sup>173</sup> These considerations give credence to Walker when he claimed that the National Front comprised approximately twenty per cent of the audience at the Monday Club's Central Hall meeting, and that Soref 'ostentatiously refused' to participate in a march from Central Hall that the National

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<sup>168</sup> 'Text of a letter from the Prime Minister to the Chairman of the Monday Club Mr Jonathan Guinness,' 20 September 1972, 4. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>169</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 127.

<sup>170</sup> Correspondence with Jonathan Guinness, 28 June 2008.

<sup>171</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 118-119.

<sup>172</sup> Correspondence with Jonathan Guinness, 28 June 2008.

<sup>173</sup> See 120.

Front organised against the wishes of the Monday Club leadership.<sup>174</sup> Guinness was probably also correct, therefore, when he described the Halt Immigration Campaign as ‘just a splitting tactic’.<sup>175</sup> This can only refer to G. K. Young, which meant that Guinness led an organisation that was experiencing its own challenge from extremists.

If extremists unpalatable to the leadership were in the Monday Club, they would have entered predominantly via the branches. G. K. Young had played a leading role in creating provincial branches as head of the Monday Club’s Action Fund. This was dangerous. The members of the national Monday Club voted for the Club’s national officers. The national Monday Club vetted these members. However, as branch members did not vote for national officers, the national Monday Club allowed individual branches to act as they saw fit over membership. Jonathan Guinness subsequently admitted that this was rash.<sup>176</sup> Sir Adrian FitzGerald, who had opposed the formation of branches, stated that thought branches attracted ‘undesirables’ who ‘brought the club into disrepute’.<sup>177</sup> For FitzGerald, this was an issue of control: ‘There were branches everywhere, I mean there were branches at universities, there were branches in large towns, small cities, and I just don’t accept that when you start building membership up on that basis there’s any way that an organisation with two or three permanent members of staff can possibly vet membership.’<sup>178</sup>

Central Office appeared to recognise the potential danger posed by the Monday Club’s loose organisational control. In October 1972, the Oxford University Monday Club invited Lord Jellicoe to one of its functions. Described as a ‘distinctly pink’ Conservative,<sup>179</sup> Jellicoe was also an honorary vice-president of Pressure for Economic and Social Toryism (PEST). He wrote to Party Chairman Lord Carrington and stated that he was unsure ‘what attitude Ministers should take to invitations to speak at Monday Club functions’.<sup>180</sup> This suggested that no specific policy for ministers to take towards the Monday Club existed. However, it did not prove that

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<sup>174</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 127.

<sup>175</sup> Correspondence with Jonathan Guinness, 28 June 2008.

<sup>176</sup> Correspondence with Jonathan Guinness, 28 June 2008.

<sup>177</sup> Interview with Sir Adrian FitzGerald, 20 May 2008.

<sup>178</sup> Interview with Sir Adrian FitzGerald, 20 May 2008.

<sup>179</sup> P. Dixon in P. Ziegler and D. Seward (eds), *Brooks’s: A Social History* (1991).

<sup>180</sup> Lord Jellicoe to the Rt. Hon. The Lord Carrington, KCMG, MC, 31 October 1972. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

Central Office did not have one, or had begun to form one. Jellicoe made his view known when he stated that, 'My natural inclination would be to turn down Monday Club invitations for a whole host of reasons of which I need not expand.'<sup>181</sup> This suggested that Jellicoe expected that Carrington understood to what he referred. Jellicoe apparently also knew that different Monday Clubs possessed different characteristics. He stated that he had found the people within the Oxford University Monday Club to be pleasant, intelligent and possibly not in agreement with Enoch Powell, and reasoned therefore that, it might be 'foolish to adopt a stand-offish attitude' as they may wish to take themselves 'out of the fold'.<sup>182</sup> This comment showed that Jellicoe realised that the Conservative Party worked on its own extremists' divisions. Jellicoe also stated that the Monday Club's opponents expected that Central Office opposed the Club, and that 'Central Office have probably worked out a policy line here.'<sup>183</sup> Carrington denied that a firm policy towards the Monday Club existed, but added 'I think there may come a time when we shall need one, but for the present I believe that one can only take such decisions in context.'<sup>184</sup> No firm policy existed towards all the other extreme-right groups investigated by Central Office either other than that they should be investigated, which is exactly what Central Office had done since the Monday Club was created. Carrington also revealed why he thought a definite policy might become necessary. He stated that, 'Between ourselves, I would frankly not advise colleagues at this time to accept invitations from Monday Club branches', which showed that Carrington knew the national and provincial Monday Club were different, a difference that he clearly did not believe extended to the universities, which, Carrington added, were 'in a rather different situation.'<sup>185</sup> Carrington was aware of the Monday Club's development, and its nature, making it unlikely that Central Office had no policy at all towards it. This might explain why Carrington qualified his denial of such a policy with the epithet 'firm'.

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<sup>181</sup> Lord Jellicoe to the Rt. Hon. The Lord Carrington, KCMG, MC, 31 October 1972. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>182</sup> Lord Jellicoe to the Rt. Hon. The Lord Carrington, KCMG, MC, 31 October 1972. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>183</sup> Lord Jellicoe to the Rt. Hon. The Lord Carrington, KCMG, MC, 31 October 1972. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>184</sup> Lord Carrington to the Lord Jellicoe, 10 November 1972. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>185</sup> Lord Carrington to the Lord Jellicoe, 10 November 1972. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

Carrington's caution may also have reflected a belief that the Monday Club, which once operated simply on the right of the Conservative Party, had become extreme. Admittedly, Central Office files revealed that it viewed the Monday Club as an extreme-right group from its beginning. However, this may simply reflect the political orientation within Central Office. Central Office's opinion of the Monday Club did not surprise Sir Adrian FitzGerald. He explained it thus: 'I think you've got to remember that there were some pretty pink Tories at that stage both in the House of Commons party at large and in Central Office. And I would have said the pinkest were in Central Office. They had a number of members of staff who really fitted into that Butskellist category.'<sup>186</sup> FitzGerald therefore rejected the description 'extreme right' for the early Monday Club. However, he agreed that by 1972 the situation had changed: 'I do not deny that there were some people who I would regard as extreme right who infiltrated the club and not only in the branches. There were one or two who got onto the main committee.'<sup>187</sup> The attempted removal of Geoffrey Rippon from the Monday Club suggested that FitzGerald was correct. Rippon's critics accused him of 'trying to face two ways on the question of immigration'.<sup>188</sup> The national committee comfortably defeated them. The official record of these events stated that by December 1972 signs of a revolt by extremists were 'apparent to all'.<sup>189</sup> It described the revolt as 'well financed and organised', and stated that the rebels had acquired membership lists and began a campaign against the national Monday Club leadership.<sup>190</sup> This was a more serious situation than mere infiltration of the branches. Suspicions about Monday Club collusion with extremists outside the party were already a matter of public record. If extremists captured the national Monday Club, it would present an even greater problem for the Conservative leadership. The activities of some Monday Club branches exacerbated this situation. They also showed that Central Office's policy towards the Monday Club, if not 'firm' beforehand, definitely became so.

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<sup>186</sup> Interview with Sir Adrian FitzGerald, 20 May 2008.

<sup>187</sup> Interview with Sir Adrian FitzGerald, 20 May 2008.

<sup>188</sup> 'Monday Club move to oust Mr Rippon fails', *The Times*, 18 October 1972, 3.

<sup>189</sup> Copping, *Crisis*, 7.

<sup>190</sup> Copping, *Crisis*, 7.

On 7 December, the Conservative government faced two by elections, one at Sutton and Cheam, the other at Uxbridge. Both were Conservative seats. These by-elections would be difficult in normal circumstances as they occurred at the government's mid-term. Heath's many U-turns had made them even more difficult. At Sutton and Cheam, the Conservatives enjoyed a comfortable 12,696 majority. The *Guardian* thought Sutton and Cheam a solidly Conservative seat in which the Liberal Party could only hope to come second.<sup>191</sup> The Conservative candidate also faced an anti-Common Market Candidate, and a National Independent Party Candidate described by the *Guardian* as 'a Powellite on the Market and immigration issues'.<sup>192</sup> At Uxbridge, the Conservatives defended a less robust majority of 3,646. Four fringe candidates also stood. Dan Harmston, leader of the Powell-supporting Smithfield meat porters, represented Mosley's virtually defunct Union Movement. Clare Macdonald, whom Barker identified earlier in the year as a National Front treasurer who attended Patriotic Front meetings in Worthing,<sup>193</sup> represented the National Independence Party, whilst John Clifton was the National Front candidate. Reginald Simmerson, an opponent of the EEC, stood as a Democratic Conservative. The number of fringe candidates had increased during the Heath government. The number of by-elections they contested in this period exceeded the number of by-elections in an administration for the first time since 1945, with most candidates being recognisably right wing.<sup>194</sup> Their chances of success were miniscule. Yet, they could limit the Conservative candidates' chances if they attracted their potential voters. The Chairman's Office within Central Office monitored these by-elections, as was normal. Reports from Central Office agents revealed that local Monday Club branches supported non-Conservative candidates.

At Sutton and Cheam, the secretary of the North Kent Monday Club stated that their motivation in supporting a non-Conservative candidate was dislike of the EEC rather than immigration, hence their support for the anti-Common Market candidate Mr.

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<sup>191</sup> M. Lake, 'Hard Core of Conservatism', *Guardian*, 29 November 1972.

<sup>192</sup> M. Lake, 'Hard Core of Conservatism', *Guardian*, 29 November 1972.

<sup>193</sup> D. Barker, 'On the patriotic Front', *Guardian*, 2 June 1972.

<sup>194</sup> The 281 by-elections between 1945 and 1970 involved 112 fringe candidates excluding separatist nationalists. Between 1970 and 1974, 34 fringe candidates contested 30 by-elections. [www.psr.keele.ac.uk/area/uk.htm](http://www.psr.keele.ac.uk/area/uk.htm)

Frere-Smith.<sup>195</sup> Frere-Smith's statement that anyone who supported him thinking it would keep the blacks out 'will be voting under a misapprehension' backed-up the North Kent Monday Club's claim.<sup>196</sup> Nevertheless, Frere-Smith's position on the EEC was contrary to official Conservative policy. The position of the West Middlesex Monday Club at the Uxbridge by-election was different. Its members supported the National Front candidate, and some even worked for him.<sup>197</sup> This was even more dangerous. Moreover, other branches seemed willing to follow their example. Len Lambert, chairman of the Essex Monday Club, which at some 300 members was one of the largest branches, threatened that, 'There is a strong possibility that this branch would support the National Front or any other right-wing candidate if, in an Essex election, the Conservative candidate was not following what we believe was Conservative policy. This feeling is general throughout the Monday Club branches, especially in the Midlands.'<sup>198</sup> Typical of the post-1945 extreme-right, Lambert wanted the Conservative Party to stand for 'true-Conservatism.' The action of the two Monday Club branches was disloyal to the Conservative Party and confirmed the fears of those like FitzGerald who had opposed the creation of a branch system.

At this stage, Guinness and the national executive of the Monday Club appeared to prove their loyalty to the Conservative Party. Guinness suspended the West Middlesex Monday Club and recommended its disaffiliation and the expulsion of all those found to have worked for the National Front.<sup>199</sup> On 4 December, the Monday Club's National Executive met to consider events. *The Times* quoted a spokesman who claimed that the Monday Club, 'had always expelled people who did not support officially adopted Conservative candidates'.<sup>200</sup> The national executive duly disbanded the West Middlesex branch unanimously and insisted that its secretary, Mrs. Gillian Goold, resign.<sup>201</sup> The *Daily Telegraph* quoted Guinness's insistence that the Monday

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<sup>195</sup> L. Marks and D. Keys, 'Monday Club clash over anti-Tory candidates', *Observer*, 3 December 1972.

<sup>196</sup> L. Marks and D. Keys, 'Monday Club clash over anti-Tory candidates', *Observer*, 3 December 1972.

<sup>197</sup> L. Marks and D. Keys, 'Monday Club clash over anti-Tory candidates', *Observer*, 3 December 1972.

<sup>198</sup> L. Marks and D. Keys, 'Monday Club clash over anti-Tory candidates', *Observer*, 3 December 1972.

<sup>199</sup> L. Marks and D. Keys, 'Monday Club clash over anti-Tory candidates', *Observer*, 3 December 1972.

<sup>200</sup> 'Monday Club will expel by-election 'rebels'', *The Times*, 4 December 1972, 2.

<sup>201</sup> 'Monday Club branch to be disbanded', *The Times*, 5 December 1972, 1.

Club condemned any support for non-Conservatives.<sup>202</sup> Guinness followed up this action with an explicit and unequivocal circular to all Monday Club branches. It stated that any support for non-Conservative candidates was 'incompatible with membership of the club, just as it would be incompatible with membership of a Conservative association or branch'.<sup>203</sup> Guinness declared that the case for expelling anyone who contravened this rule was 'irrefutable'.<sup>204</sup> He added that the Monday Club, as a part of the Conservative Party, had no special rights to choose party officers, candidates, ministers or leader, and owed any position of influence it enjoyed to 'a total loyalty to the organization'.<sup>205</sup> Guinness and the Monday Club's national executive had acted as the agent of the Conservative Party in its role as barrier to the extreme right when it responded to the West Middlesex Monday Club's activities.

However, the treatment meted out to the other branches was different. The Monday Club's National Executive did not take any immediate action against the North Kent Monday Club. Instead, it preferred to seek clarification after the North Kent Monday Club's chairman, Mr. Deverell Stone, claimed that the individuals concerned had acted privately.<sup>206</sup> The Essex Monday Club also appeared to escape any punishment. Their respective offences probably explained this difference. The West Middlesex Monday Club had openly supported the National Front candidate, an offence that Guinness described as 'an open and shut one'.<sup>207</sup> Guinness cannot explain why the national executive did not treat the North Kent Monday Club immediately in the same manner.<sup>208</sup> However, Frere-Smith was not a National Front candidate. Therefore, unlike the National Front candidate, his candidature brought no obvious link to fascism or neo-Nazism with which to concern the Monday Club's National Executive. Len Lambert had threatened to support National Front candidates on behalf of the Essex Monday Club. However, he was only one individual and there was no actual evidence that he carried out his threat. Therefore, it was proof of a National Front connection, and consequently with Nazism, which put Uxbridge beyond the pale.

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<sup>202</sup> R. Summerscales, 'Monday Club Ban Branch', *Daily Telegraph*, 5 December 1972.

<sup>203</sup> 'Back Tories warning by Monday Club', *The Times*, 13 December 1972, 3.

<sup>204</sup> 'Back Tories warning by Monday Club', *The Times*, 13 December 1972, 3.

<sup>205</sup> 'Back Tories warning by Monday Club', *The Times*, 13 December 1972, 3.

<sup>206</sup> 'Monday Club branch to be disbanded', *The Times*, 5 December 1972, 1. R. Summerscales, 'Monday Club Ban Branch', *Daily Telegraph*, 5 December 1972.

<sup>207</sup> Correspondence with Jonathan Guinness, 28 June 2008.

<sup>208</sup> Correspondence with Jonathan Guinness, 28 June 2008.

Guinness's comments supported the idea that the Monday Club took a harder line with the West Middlesex Monday Club when he warned them that, 'They can appeal but we are not going to forgive them. Working for a National Front candidate is unacceptable.'<sup>209</sup>

Mrs. Goold of the West Middlesex Monday Club swiftly joined the National Front, which confirms that the Monday Club had acted as the Conservative Party's agent in blocking the extreme right. Its action had forced Goold to leave the comfort of a successful political monolith for the cold reality of the National Front's miniscule chances. Nevertheless, the equivocal treatment of the different Monday Club branches left room for doubt about the National Executive's desire to purge extremists within the Club. This would have worried the Conservative Party. Disbandment of the West Middlesex Monday Club had not stopped the media from reporting the Monday Club's connections with extremists. For example, later in December *The Listener* carried an article based on a recent BBC *Midweek* documentary. It quoted a West Middlesex Monday Club member who said that they only disagreed with the National Front over whether to send Asians 'back by boat or in boxes'.<sup>210</sup> This kept recent events at Uxbridge fresh in the public's mind. The article also prominently noted that former Conservatives were in the National Front, such as John O'Brien. *The Listener* mentioned O'Brien's support for Enoch Powell, and described him as, 'for 20 years a pillar of the Shrewsbury Conservative Association'.<sup>211</sup> It also noted that O'Brien had left the Conservative Party and eventually succeeded A. K. Chesterton as chairman of the National Front.<sup>212</sup> O'Brien was an example of how the Conservative Party alienated extreme-right individuals. *The Listener* also identified Monday Club member Oliver Gilbert as the Patriotic Front's liaison officer in Worthing and as the National Front's local organiser.<sup>213</sup> It also noted that Gilbert was a member of the Worthing Conservative Association, where he had tried to oust the Conservative MP Terrence Higgins for 'not being right-wing enough'.<sup>214</sup> Gilbert reinforced the notion that the Conservative Party and the fascist, neo-Nazi extreme right were linked. The

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<sup>209</sup> R. Summerscales, 'Monday Club Ban Branch', *Daily Telegraph*, 5 December 1972.

<sup>210</sup> M. Cockerell, 'Inside the National Front', *The Listener*, 28 December 1972, 877.

<sup>211</sup> M. Cockerell, 'Inside the National Front', *The Listener*, 28 December 1972, 878.

<sup>212</sup> M. Cockerell, 'Inside the National Front', *The Listener*, 28 December 1972, 878.

<sup>213</sup> M. Cockerell, 'Inside the National Front', *The Listener*, 28 December 1972, 879.

<sup>214</sup> M. Cockerell, 'Inside the National Front', *The Listener*, 28 December 1972, 879.

article reminded its readers of the type of person with whom the Conservative Party associated with via the Monday Club when it resurrected the Nazi past and paramilitary proclivities of the National Front's John Tyndall.<sup>215</sup> It also quoted Chesterton's comments when he retired that: 'Two percent of the members of the National Front are really evil men – so evil that I placed intelligence agents to work exploring their backgrounds, with results so appalling that I felt obliged to entrust the documents to the vaults of a bank. Some of these men are at present placed close to the centre of things.'<sup>216</sup> No legitimate political party desired association with such individuals or the party that included them. Therefore, could Jonathan Guinness maintain the Monday Club's position as a barrier to the National Front, or would it increasingly become the gateway for further infiltration of the Conservative Party? *The Listener's* portrayal of Guinness probably did not inspire confidence within Central Office. It described him as a political naïf who admitted that he was 'not experienced in fringe-type politics'.<sup>217</sup> In the wake of the by elections at Uxbridge and Sutton and Cheam, Central Office proceeded to construct the 'firm policy' towards the Monday Club that Carrington previously claimed was absent.

A by-election at Lincoln expected early in 1973 provided Central Office with the opportunity to implement its policy against the Monday Club. Lincoln's pro-EEC Labour MP had resigned his seat to fight against his own party's anti-EEC stance. Labour defended its majority of 4750 with an official candidate, which meant that the Conservative government had an unexpected chance of a rare by-election gain. *The Times* described the Conservative Party as seeing these developments as 'an excellent chance of gaining from the Labour split', and reported that Central Office had made 'urgent calls' to the local Conservative leaders, who had not even picked a candidate, and told them to 'get on with it'.<sup>218</sup> Within Central Office, Chris Patten informed chairman Lord Carrington on 20 November that he was concerned that one of the two candidates short-listed by the Lincoln Conservative Association was Jonathan Guinness. Patten stated that, 'The disadvantages of the selection of Guinness (quite apart from the fact that it would not be very easy to win the seat with him) are

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<sup>215</sup> M. Cockerell, 'Inside the National Front', *The Listener*, 28 December 1972, 878.

<sup>216</sup> M. Cockerell, 'Inside the National Front', *The Listener*, 28 December 1972, 878.

<sup>217</sup> M. Cockerell, 'Inside the National Front', *The Listener*, 28 December 1972, 879.

<sup>218</sup> 'Lincoln Tories are hoping to break Labour's hold', *The Times*, 9 November 1972, 4.

numerous and obvious.<sup>219</sup> What, exactly, did Patten mean? Guinness made comments that embarrassed the Conservative leadership. He stated a preference for gassing over hanging and advocated leaving razor blades in convicted murderers' cells so they could do the decent thing.<sup>220</sup> Guinness's comments earned him the nickname 'old razor blades'. They also highlighted the Conservative Party's divisions over capital punishment. However, as they occurred four months later than Patten's letter to Carrington, Guinness's comments cannot explain Patten's concerns. Patten may have suspected that Guinness was likely to make gaffes, but he made no mention of them. The other feasible possibilities for Patten's comments are Guinness's connection with pre-war fascism or his leadership of the Monday Club. A connection with pre-war fascism was easy to make because Guinness was Oswald Mosley's stepson. This was a barely credible accusation as Guinness was not Mosley's blood relative, and had played no part in active politics until the late 1960s when Mosley's political career was long over. However, the Monday Club was a much different prospect. Guinness's victory at Lincoln would add electoral credibility to an organisation that recent events and reports had indicated strongly contained extremists, an organisation that operated within the Conservative Party. In this respect, Patten had acted in accord with Central Office's stance towards potentially embarrassing connections since the Second World War. Unfortunately, for Central Office, the Lincoln Conservatives selected Guinness as their official candidate on 23 November.<sup>221</sup> Central Office files proved that it was concerned at such an outcome. Political opponents also were in no doubt about the root cause of the Conservative leadership's concern. The *Manchester Evening News* pointed to the power of the Monday Club as responsible for Guinness's selection, and stated that, 'It was the organisational ability of this "party within a party" – plus the undoubted talents of Mr Guinness himself – that gave the Tory leadership and Mr Heath the shock of having Mr Guinness as their standard-bearer.'<sup>222</sup> Central Office responded by acting in accord with its consistent post-1945 policy of blocking the extreme right.

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<sup>219</sup> Confidential memo from Christopher Patten to the Chairman, cc. Rt. Hon. J. Prior MP, 'Lincoln By-Election, 20 November 1972. CPA CCO 20/55/59, Lincoln, Dec. 1972 – March 1973.

<sup>220</sup> 'Lincoln urged to reject extremes', *The Times*, 22 February 1973, 3. J. Ramsden and R. Jay, 'Lincoln: The Background to Taverne's Triumph', in C. Cook and J. Ramsden (eds), *By-Elections in British Politics*, Macmillan, London (1973), 304-305.

<sup>221</sup> 'Mr J. Guinness Tory choice for Lincoln', *The Times*, 24 November 1972, 1.

<sup>222</sup> A. Roth, 'No Outsider in the Lincoln Handicap', *Manchester Evening News*, 27 December 1972.

On 30 November, Guinness provided Central Office with the opportunity to implement its policy. According to Guinness, the Conservative Party's 1972 Conference Handbook listed the Vice President of the National Advisory Committee of the Federation of Conservative Students (FCS) as the Chairman of the Bow Group. Guinness expressed to Lord Carrington his delight at seeing 'another group within the Conservative party' gain official party recognition, and requested that the FCS afford the Monday Club similar treatment as, 'we feel we are entitled to it, having more members than the Bow Group, and with 140 full members who are students, almost certainly more students'.<sup>223</sup> This was the persistent complaint that the Conservative Party organisation barred Monday Club members from offices within the party. If Monday Club members had been aware of reaction within Central Office to Guinness's complaint, their suspicions would have increased. The FCS was under progressive leadership at this stage, and had joined with the Young Conservatives to defeat Enoch Powell's resolution at the 1972 Party Conference that attacked the Heath Government's decision to admit the Ugandan Asians.<sup>224</sup> So incensed was one Young Conservative, Anthony Reed-Herbert, that he resigned after the conference and joined the National Front,<sup>225</sup> which was another example of the Conservative Party alienating its own members. Like the Young Conservatives, but unlike the Monday Club, the FCS was effectively part of the Conservative Party's approved organisation. Chris Patten sought advice from the FCS on how to respond to Guinness's complaint.<sup>226</sup> The National Secretary of the FCS, John Bowis, replied that Guinness would not welcome it if Carrington interfered in Monday Club elections and suggested that Patten tell Guinness to approach the FCS directly if the Monday Club wanted representation on it.<sup>227</sup> However, Bowis also intimated strongly that any such approach would fail because the Monday Club had never shown any interest in the

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<sup>223</sup> Jonathan Guinness to Lord Carrington, 30 November 1972. CPA CCO 20/55/59, Lincoln, Dec. 1972 – March 1973.

<sup>224</sup> Z. Layton-Henry, 'Immigration and the Heath Government', in S. Ball and A. Seldon (eds), *The Heath Government 1970-1974: A Reappraisal*, Longman, London (1996), 230.

<sup>225</sup> Taylor, *National Front*, 101.

<sup>226</sup> C. Patten to John C. Bowis, 5 December 1972. CPA CCO 20/55/59, Lincoln, Dec. 1972 – March 1973.

<sup>227</sup> John C. Bowis to C. Patten, cc. Sir Richard Webster, 6 December 1972. CPA CCO 20/55/59, Lincoln, Dec. 1972 – March 1973.

FCS,<sup>228</sup> and had not even provided them with a copy of their recent publication on Higher Education.<sup>229</sup> On 18 December, Carrington responded to Guinness and used Bowis' comments, but also invited him to arrange a mutually convenient time to discuss the Lincoln By-Election.<sup>230</sup> Coming from the Party chairman, Carrington's invitation to a Conservative Party candidate was in reality a command.

Before the meeting with Guinness on 10 January, Patten wrote an eight-point plan detailing the line Carrington was to adopt. After the meeting, Patten wrote another note recording Carrington's conversation with Guinness for Central Office's Monday Club file. Comparing these documents revealed that Carrington implemented Patten's plan closely. Both documents claimed that the loss of Sutton and Cheam had resulted in Carrington wishing to take a closer look at all by-elections before any campaign started, and that was why Carrington had asked Guinness to meet him.<sup>231</sup> The lack of similar meetings in the Chairman's by-election files for other contests does not disprove this claim, but it does question it.<sup>232</sup> Both documents expressed concern that extremists might take over Guinness's campaign, and result in voters deserting the Conservative Party.<sup>233</sup> Yet who were these extremists? Patten noted that Guinness reassured Carrington in their meeting that he would not invite Powell to speak, and that 'A number of extreme Monday Club supporters would have some difficulty in getting up to Lincolnshire and others like Harvey Proctor he hoped to exclude.'<sup>234</sup> This showed that Central Office viewed Powell as an extremist and that Guinness was aware of this view. It also showed that Guinness thought that there were extremists within the Monday Club, including Proctor, too. Guinness believed that Powell's possible involvement in the by-election was Central Office's main concern at this

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<sup>228</sup> John C. Bowis to C. Patten, cc. Sir Richard Webster, 6 December 1972. CPA CCO 20/55/59, Lincoln, Dec. 1972 – March 1973.

<sup>229</sup> S. Swerling, *Who's Getting at Our Kids?* Monday Club, London (1972).

<sup>230</sup> Lord Carrington to Jonathan Guinness, 18 December 1972, CPA CCO 20/55/59, Lincoln, Dec. 1972 – March 1973.

<sup>231</sup> C. Patten to The Chairman cc. Rt. Hon Jim Prior, 'Meeting With Jonathan Guinness', 9 January 1973, Point 1. CPA CCO 20/55/59, Lincoln, Dec. 1972 – March 1973. C. F. Patten, 'Note of a Meeting with Jonathan Guinness', 14 January 1973, Point 2. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>232</sup> CPA CCO 20/55 Series, Chairman's Office, By-Election Files.

<sup>233</sup> C. Patten to The Chairman cc. Rt. Hon Jim Prior, 'Meeting With Jonathan Guinness', 9 January 1973, Point 4. CPA CCO 20/55/59, Lincoln, Dec. 1972 – March 1973. C. F. Patten, 'Note of a Meeting with Jonathan Guinness', 14 January 1973, Point 3. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>234</sup> C. F. Patten, 'Note of a Meeting with Jonathan Guinness', 14 January 1973, Point 4. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

meeting.<sup>235</sup> However, although the earlier document mentioned Powell, it suggested that Carrington should do nothing more than ascertain what Guinness had to say about this possibility.<sup>236</sup> There is no mention of what response Carrington should make to whatever information Guinness imparted. There is no mention of Harvey Proctor either. However, when Patten turned to the Monday Club's role in general, he revealed the real objects of Central Office concerns. Patten advised Carrington to say that although he personally had never been a member of any pressure group or lobby within the Conservative Party, there was room for such organisations provided that any disagreements 'were subordinated to the general objectives of supporting the Party and furthering its interests'.<sup>237</sup> He thus urged Carrington to imply that the Monday Club was disloyal to the Conservative Party, which Carrington did.<sup>238</sup> Patten's comments made it plain that Carrington could infer this because of the Monday Club's connections with the National Front and other extreme-right organisations. He suggested that Carrington should claim to be 'disturbed by some indications that the Monday Club has been increasingly concerned with attacking Government and the official Party line rather than supporting it', and advised Carrington to use the Uxbridge by-election as the 'most notorious example' of it.<sup>239</sup> Furthermore, Patten stated that whilst Carrington should acknowledge Guinness's firm action against the West Middlesex Monday Club, he should also say to Guinness that he was 'not convinced that this is the only example where this sort of thing has happened',<sup>240</sup> and provided Carrington with an example. Carrington duly expressed to Guinness his concern at 'reports of Monday Club support for National Front candidates at by-elections and of prominent Monday Club supporters speaking at meetings organised by bodies like the British Campaign to Stop Immigration which had fought against the Conservative Party in Parliamentary and local elections'.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Interview with Jonathan Guinness, 23 May 2008.

<sup>236</sup> C. Patten to The Chairman cc. Rt. Hon Jim Prior, 'Meeting With Jonathan Guinness', 9 January 1973, Point 5. CPA CCO 20/55/59, Lincoln, Dec. 1972 – March 1973.

<sup>237</sup> C. Patten to The Chairman cc. Rt. Hon Jim Prior, 'Meeting With Jonathan Guinness', 9 January 1973, Point 7. CPA CCO 20/55/59, Lincoln, Dec. 1972 – March 1973.

<sup>238</sup> C. F. Patten, 'Note of a Meeting with Jonathan Guinness', 14 January 1973, Point 6. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>239</sup> C. Patten to The Chairman cc. Rt. Hon Jim Prior, 'Meeting With Jonathan Guinness', 9 January 1973, Point 8. CPA CCO 20/55/59, Lincoln, Dec. 1972 – March 1973.

<sup>240</sup> C. Patten to The Chairman cc. Rt. Hon Jim Prior, 'Meeting With Jonathan Guinness', 9 January 1973, Point 8. CPA CCO 20/55/59, Lincoln, Dec. 1972 – March 1973.

<sup>241</sup> C. F. Patten, 'Note of a Meeting with Jonathan Guinness', 14 January 1973, Point 6. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

The loss of Sutton and Cheam was a pretext that enabled Central Office to implement its plan to confront Guinness with its concerns about the Monday Club and the National Front. The National Front had not even contested Sutton and Cheam. It had contested Uxbridge, which was the example that Patten advised Carrington to use against the Monday Club. However, the meeting with Guinness delivered much more than Central Office concerns. Both documents revealed explicitly that Central Office believed the National Front had infiltrated the Monday Club. Carrington raised this concern with Guinness and stated that, 'He wondered to what extent the Monday Club had been infiltrated from the extreme right.'<sup>242</sup> Any such infiltration was an intolerable situation for the Conservative Party leadership, and for a Central Office that had worked consistently to avoid association with the extreme right from 1945 onwards. Patten advised Carrington to inform Guinness of his intention to take 'a very firm line from now on, especially as we get closer to the next Election, with those who seem more interested in pursuing political vendettas than in helping widen support for the Conservative Government and Conservative policies'.<sup>243</sup> Guinness replied that he was willing to pass on to Central Office the names of anyone suspected of infiltration, but refused to participate in 'hounding' members of the Monday Club.<sup>244</sup> Carrington replied that 'if anybody was to take responsibility for removing extremists from the Monday Club then it had to be Mr. Guinness'.<sup>245</sup> Guinness recalled that the meeting was cordial, but admitted that his main desire at the meeting was to be the party's candidate at Lincoln.<sup>246</sup> No matter how cordially delivered, Carrington had made it clear that it was Guinness's duty to remove extremists from the Monday Club. However, one other feature of this meeting was not cordial. Patten advised Carrington to warn Guinness that the involvement of extremists made it difficult for the 'Party Organisation and for your colleagues to give their whole-hearted and committed support to Guinness in Lincoln both during the Election

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<sup>242</sup> C. F. Patten, 'Note of a Meeting with Jonathan Guinness', 14 January 1973, Point 6. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>243</sup> C. Patten to The Chairman cc. Rt. Hon Jim Prior, 'Meeting With Jonathan Guinness', 9 January 1973, Point 8. CPA CCO 20/55/59, Lincoln, Dec. 1972 – March 1973.

<sup>244</sup> C. F. Patten, 'Note of a Meeting with Jonathan Guinness', 14 January 1973, Point 6. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>245</sup> C. F. Patten, 'Note of a Meeting with Jonathan Guinness', 14 January 1973, Point 6. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>246</sup> Interview with Jonathan Guinness, 23 May 2008.

campaign and in the longer term'.<sup>247</sup> This was an astonishing threat for Central Office to make to a candidate selected by the local Conservative Associations. Nevertheless, Carrington delivered it unequivocally.<sup>248</sup> This threat contrasted sharply with Guinness's own circular to Monday Club members that stressed the requirement of loyalty to the Conservative Party.<sup>249</sup> When Carrington threatened not to support an officially adopted candidate in a contest in which a Labour Party division had presented the Conservative party with an opportunity for victory, he revealed that Central Office was even prepared to accept electoral defeat rather than countenance extreme-right infiltration.

The day after Patten recorded the meeting with Guinness, an article in *The Times* reported Conservative Party managers' fears about extremist infiltration. The tone and content indicated strongly that these 'managers' were the source of the report. The article identified the Monday Club as one of two sources of trouble, and stated that party managers had asked, 'whether something drastic needs to be done to check the mischief that is feared'.<sup>250</sup> One possible remedy suggested in the article was 'that before long the Conservative candidates' list will be purged of a few members of the Monday Club whose loyalties to the Conservative Party and Mr Heath come under question'.<sup>251</sup> This threat targeted aspiring candidates, especially as it was Central Office and the party leadership who would do any questioning. The reporter also seemed to know that it was the Monday Club leadership's responsibility for purging its extremists, and was aware that 'Senior Conservatives' believed 'that the Monday Club is dangerously vulnerable to infiltration from the undemocratic right-wing extreme of politics'.<sup>252</sup> There were also comments that reflected Carrington's views on membership of groups within the Conservative. For example, the article admitted that the Monday Club's organisation and promotion in no way 'differed from the methods of the Bow Group and PEST', although interestingly it described PEST as

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<sup>247</sup> C. Patten to The Chairman cc. Rt. Hon Jim Prior, 'Meeting With Jonathan Guinness', 9 January 1973, Point 4. CPA CCO 20/55/59, Lincoln Dec. 1972 – March 1973.

<sup>248</sup> C. Patten to The Chairman cc. Rt. Hon Jim Prior, 'Meeting With Jonathan Guinness', 9 January 1973, Point 3. CPA CCO 20/55/59, Lincoln Dec. 1972 – March 1973.

<sup>249</sup> See 312.

<sup>250</sup> 'Curbing critics on the Tory right wing', *The Times*, 15 January 1973, 13.

<sup>251</sup> 'Curbing critics on the Tory right wing', *The Times*, 15 January 1973, 13.

<sup>252</sup> 'Curbing critics on the Tory right wing', *The Times*, 15 January 1973, 13.

having more backbenchers and Ministers.<sup>253</sup> However, the article stated that doubts about the Monday Club's loyalty after recent by-elections set the Monday Club apart from these groups. It claimed that, 'Party managers are therefore watching the Monday Club anxiously', and whilst the loyalty of most members was undoubted, these managers 'still feel it necessary to ask whether the club may not be at risk of being used by extremists to do Mr Heath and the Government serious harm'.<sup>254</sup> There was even a threat of 'circumstances in which Ministers and backbenchers might come under persuasion to end their association with the club'.<sup>255</sup> There was some support for Guinness's claim that Powell was Central Office's main concern at their meeting. However, the article limited its comments on Powell to his criticisms of the Government and mention of his power-base in the crucial West Midlands constituencies, and described the similarities and differences between him and the Monday Club. The Monday Club was the subject of approximately three quarters of the article. The article also mirrored the record of Carrington's meeting with Jonathan Guinness closely, indicating that Central Office were the 'party managers' either directly or indirectly behind it. If so, Central Office had ensured that Carrington's message to Guinness reached a much wider audience.

Whilst Guinness recollected the cordiality of his meeting with Carrington, his reaction to the article in *The Times* was scathing. He was bewildered as to how the reporter 'gets the idea those he describes as "Conservative party managers" think Mr Heath's Government is damaged by the Monday Club'.<sup>256</sup> He added that the Monday Club was able to voice concerns that the leadership was sometimes unable to, and admitted that it was sometimes necessary to criticise government policy, but also warned against any witch-hunt, which would question the party leadership's 'credentials as Conservatives'.<sup>257</sup> Guinness was not the only senior Monday Club member who responded. Sam Swerling, the author of two Monday Club publications, retorted: 'If there is any mischief in the Conservative Party which needs to be eradicated, as is suggested, it lies in the small but growing coterie of self-effacing liberals who have infiltrated the party at all levels, particularly in the Young Conservative movement.'

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<sup>253</sup> 'Curbing critics on the Tory right wing', *The Times*, 15 January 1973, 13.

<sup>254</sup> 'Curbing critics on the Tory right wing', *The Times*, 15 January 1973, 13.

<sup>255</sup> 'Curbing critics on the Tory right wing', *The Times*, 15 January 1973, 13.

<sup>256</sup> 'Monday Club: Jonathan Guinness', *The Times*, 20 January 1973, 15.

<sup>257</sup> 'Monday Club: Jonathan Guinness', *The Times*, 20 January 1973, 15.

That is where the real danger to Conservatism lies.<sup>258</sup> Nor did the wider Monday Club cease its criticism of the Conservative Party, or Government. In his capacity as Honorary Secretary of the Provincial Council of Monday Club Branches, the Essex Monday Club Chairman Len Lambert requested on 2 February that Central Office included the Monday Club in future party diaries 'as a Conservative political organisation'.<sup>259</sup> This was once more the complaint that the party organisation denied the Monday Club official recognition whilst granting it to others like the Bow Group. Central Office replied that it had, 'no intention, or reason' to change current practice.<sup>260</sup> On 24 March 1973, the Monday Club passed a resolution that criticised the Government's White Paper on Ulster.<sup>261</sup> Carrington rejected it by telling Guinness witheringly that, 'There is a responsibility on everyone of good-will to try and make these proposals work rather than to stir up old fears and antagonisms.'<sup>262</sup> Carrington's meeting with Guinness had not stopped the Monday Club's attacks on the government. In the event, Guinness failed to win the Lincoln by-election on 1 March and finished a poor third nearly three times further behind the victor than the previous Conservative candidate. The following day Chris Patten wrote confidentially to Carrington and outlined what the party's position about this outcome should be. He cited the presence of three Cabinet Ministers and other junior ministers in the Lincoln campaign, and claimed that therefore, Guinness's chairmanship of the Monday Club 'made no difference to the support we gave him'.<sup>263</sup> Patten's claim is justifiable. Once Guinness had provided assurances about the campaign, Central Office could hardly refuse to support him. Yet, if Patten meant to convey Central Office's total support for Guinness, his comments were disingenuous. Any support for Guinness was, as the meeting of 10 January shows, conditional.

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<sup>258</sup> 'Monday Club: S. M. Swerling', *The Times*, 27 January 1973, 15.

<sup>259</sup> L. H. Lambert to the Conservative Party Chairman, 2 February 1973. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>260</sup> Central Office letter to L. H. Lambert, 19 February 1973. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>261</sup> Telex of Monday Club Resolution, 24 March 1973. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>262</sup> Lord Carrington to Jonathan Guinness, 2 April 1973. CPA CCO 20/43/6, Monday Club, 1969-74.

<sup>263</sup> C. Patten to the Chairman, 'By-Election Notes', 2 March 1973. CPA CCO 20/55/59, Lincoln, Dec. 1972 - March 1973.

One month after the Lincoln by-election, evidence appeared of a campaign against the Monday Club by the 'self-effacing liberals' within the Conservative Party. Late in March, the Monday Club's Halt Immigration Now Campaign, led by G. K. Young, launched a national petition that sought one million signatures in support of 'an end to all "tropical immigration" and the institution of an effective repatriation policy'.<sup>264</sup> On 2 April, the Bow Group attacked the petition. It argued that it would harm race relations, and that the HINC could only achieve its objectives 'if accompanied by intimidation'.<sup>265</sup> Here, the Bow Group pinpointed the violent element inherent in all repatriation schemes, regardless of claims to the contrary. The following day, PEST joined this criticism in the press. It described the Monday Club's position on immigration and repatriation as 'rabid extremism' and 'emotional bigotry', in which the word 'effective' was synonymous with 'compulsory', PEST called on ministers Rippon, Amery and Goodhew to resign from the Club.<sup>266</sup> On the same day, PEST sent a letter to all its university branches and urged them to start a letter writing campaign against the Monday Club's anti-immigration campaign.<sup>267</sup> Like the Bow Group letter, PEST's intervention was an example of how progressives in the Conservative Party countered right-wing extremists. Both groups were recipients of notably better treatment from Central Office than the Monday Club, which added weight to the notion of a concerted attack on the extreme right. However, what probably disconcerted the Monday Club leadership even more than this attack by its Conservative opponents was an attack by opponents from within the Club. This proved to be the decisive test of the Monday Club leadership's claim that the Club was subordinate to the Conservative Party. When it passed this test, the Monday Club also proved that it was the Conservative Party's gatekeeper against the extreme right.

The revolt within the Monday Club became public knowledge in the same month that PEST and the Bow Group attacked the HINC's immigration policy. The leadership had known of a campaign against it within the Monday Club since December 1972.<sup>268</sup> Now that the campaign was in the open, three Club members who were also MPs wrote to the *Daily Telegraph* in April and referred to the 'disloyal and disruptive

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<sup>264</sup> 'Monday Club immigration policy called irresponsible', *The Times*, 2 April 1973, 2.

<sup>265</sup> 'Monday Club immigration policy called irresponsible', *The Times*, 2 April 1973, 2.

<sup>266</sup> 'Ministers urged to quit Monday Club', *The Times*, 3 April 1973, 3.

<sup>267</sup> Clive Hammersley to all University Group Chairmen, 3 April 1973. LSE TRG 1/1/4.

<sup>268</sup> Copping, *Crisis*, 8.

propaganda by a political “mafia” in certain branches of the Club and in the Executive itself.<sup>269</sup> If their claims were correct, extremist infiltration of the Monday Club went further than the provincial branches. Sir Adrian FitzGerald corroborated that by this time one or two right-wing extremists had indeed managed to join the Monday Club’s national executive.<sup>270</sup> The person who led the challenge to Guinness was the one extremist that FitzGerald identified: G. K. Young. As chairman of the Club’s Action Fund, Young was largely responsible for the Monday Club’s growth, especially the formation of branches. Young was also prominent in the Monday Club’s stance on immigration, first as chairman of the Immigration Committee and then leader of the Halt Immigration Now Campaign. Thus, Young was at the forefront of the populist issue that his supporters argued was responsible for the Monday Club’s huge increase in publicity.<sup>271</sup> Moreover, as a merchant banker with Kleinwort Benson, Young had the personal wealth to fund campaigns, as in Stroud’s 1972 leadership challenge and the HINC, and probably had the financial connections to fund much more. Therefore, Guinness faced a formidable opponent.

The campaign was acrimonious, with accusations of underhand activity. All Monday Club members received anonymous broadsheets that used a fictitious address, and a letter with Guinness’s forged signature. This revealed that somebody had acquired the Monday Club’s membership list illegally, and resulted in the Club’s National Executive asking Scotland Yard to investigate.<sup>272</sup> The Monday Club leadership vaguely blamed right-wing extremists.<sup>273</sup> However, the *Guardian* reported that the Monday Club had called in the police because it believed that ‘its offices have been infiltrated by a supporter of the extreme Right who has used its membership list in an effort to discredit the chairman, Mr Jonathan Guinness, in his campaign for re-election’.<sup>274</sup> An anonymous document stated that ‘shadowy figures’ controlled the Monday Club, and claimed that connections between individual members and extreme-right groups continued, with fascists and neo-Nazis still ‘very close to the

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<sup>269</sup> Copping, *Crisis*, 8.

<sup>270</sup> Interview with Sir Adrian FitzGerald, 20 May 2008.

<sup>271</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 129.

<sup>272</sup> Copping, *Crisis*, 8.

<sup>273</sup> Copping, *Crisis*, 8.

<sup>274</sup> M. Stuart, ‘Monday Club suspects spy’, *Guardian*, 10 April 1974.

heart of the Club and its leaders', despite recent expulsions.<sup>275</sup> This may have been an attack on Young, whom the document described as the 'single most powerful political figure in the Monday Club'.<sup>276</sup> However, whether the purpose was to smear Young is unclear. Guinness explicitly rejected any involvement by the Monday Club leadership, and stated that, 'I don't think we ever discovered who was responsible for that pamphlet.'<sup>277</sup> Powell's involvement is extremely unlikely. He showed no interest in the contest probably because by 1973, as Guinness believed, it had become 'increasingly clear that his agenda was simply to dish Heath'.<sup>278</sup> This was not the behaviour of a putative leader of a new, credible extreme-right political force.

In the event, Guinness defeated Young comfortably by 625 votes to 455 in April. *The Times* announced the result, and thought that Guinness's success meant 'that the "moderates" have won the first stage of their campaign against more extreme right wingers'.<sup>279</sup> In one year, Guinness had gone from being the champion of the right to leader of the moderates! Despite its qualifications, *The Times'* comment confirmed that Guinness had acted as the Conservative Party's blocking agent against the extreme right. However, *The Times* was only partly accurate when it described Guinness's victory as the first stage of a campaign against the extreme right. Guinness had already commenced it when he expelled the West Middlesex Monday Club in December 1972. Carrington had added impetus to the campaign when he threatened Guinness in January 1973, which 'party managers' then reinforced in the press. However, what ensured the success of this 'campaign' was the actions of the Monday Club's own MPs and many of its members. For, as *The Times* also reported, many Monday Club MPs had 'let it be known privately that they would resign if Mr Young and his faction came out on top', whilst many members had supported Guinness 'because they believed he would be firmly against reported infiltration by National Front members'.<sup>280</sup> Therefore, Guinness's victory was also the culmination of pressure applied by, and the votes of, Monday Club members who opposed the extreme right. The final stage of the campaign came when Guinness finished what he

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<sup>275</sup> Anon., *The Monday Club: A Danger to British Democracy*, (nd), 2.

<sup>276</sup> Anon., *The Monday Club: A Danger to British Democracy*, (nd), 11.

<sup>277</sup> Correspondence with Jonathan Guinness, 28 June 2008.

<sup>278</sup> Correspondence with Jonathan Guinness, 28 June 2008.

<sup>279</sup> 'Mr Guinness is re-elected chairman of the Monday Club', *The Times*, 30 April 1973, 2.

<sup>280</sup> 'Mr Guinness is re-elected chairman of the Monday Club', *The Times*, 30 April 1973, 2.

started. In June, Guinness expelled Young supporter Len Lambert from the National Monday Club because he invited John Tyndall of the National Front to address the Essex Monday Club.<sup>281</sup> When Lambert tried to use his membership of the Essex Monday Club to counter the expulsion, Guinness disaffiliated the whole branch.<sup>282</sup> Guinness also oversaw the expulsion of fifty extremists from the national Monday Club in July, and dismissed them by saying that the ‘old, solid members of the club have finally lost patience with this disruptive minority’.<sup>283</sup> The expelled rebels retorted that Guinness was a weak chairman who had acted under orders from Lord Carrington. They claimed that, ‘Lord Carrington is known to have told Mr Guinness when he was adopted as the Conservative candidate at Lincoln that under no circumstances were the “wild men on the right of the club” to go to Lincoln to canvas for their chairman.’<sup>284</sup> The rebels were correct, but all this proved, apart from Carrington’s role, is that Guinness agreed with the Conservative Party chairman in the need to remove extremists from the Monday Club. Guinness maintained his position, and defeated two further attempts to remove him in 1973.<sup>285</sup>

Guinness’s chairmanship damaged the ambitions of those who saw the Monday Club as a vehicle for the extreme right severely. Young swiftly resigned. In 1974, he formed his own extreme-right group, Tory Action, and subsequently wrote for the anti-Semitic *Liverpool Newsletter*.<sup>286</sup> Others also left. Many joined the National Front. However, these events had also damaged the Monday Club. Expulsions and infighting undermined its credibility. In August, *The Journal of Commerce* described the Monday Club as having disintegrated, which left a need for ‘an effective right-wing pressure group within the Conservative Party’.<sup>287</sup> Several correspondents at the *Daily Telegraph* turned on the Monday Club, and claimed that they no longer understood

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<sup>281</sup> ‘Branch is expelled by Monday Club’, *The Times*, 20 June 1970, 4 & ‘Essex Monday Club to challenge expulsion’, *The Times*, 21 June 1973, 2.

<sup>282</sup> ‘Branch is expelled by Monday Club’, *The Times*, 20 June 1970, 4.

<sup>283</sup> ‘50 expelled as move to oust Monday Club chairman fails’, *The Times*, 25 July 1973, 2.

<sup>284</sup> ‘50 expelled as move to oust Monday Club chairman fails’, *The Times*, 25 July 1973, 2.

<sup>285</sup> ‘Break inevitable in Monday Club’, *The Times*, 20 August 1973, 1 & ‘Monday Club rebels fail in move to expel Mr Guinness’, *The Times*, 25 September, 1973, 5.

<sup>286</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 130. N. Toczec, *The Bigger Tory Vote: The Covert Sequestration of the Bigotry Vote*, AK Press, Stirling (1992), 30-33. O Maolain, *Radical Right*, 319.

<sup>287</sup> J. Szemerey, ‘What’s in the wind at Westminster’, *The Journal of Commerce*, 2 August 1973. In Oswald Mosley Papers, Diana Mosley Deposit, University of Birmingham Information Services, Special Collections, XOMD/8/6.

what its role was.<sup>288</sup> Walker claimed that only ten MPs retained membership, whilst the national membership figure stood at 1800. These are suspiciously round figures, and a lack of attribution calls Walker's claims into question. Nevertheless, a significant fall in Monday Club membership is believable. Copping stated that a, 'much reduced and impoverished Monday Club set about re-building its strength'.<sup>289</sup> This contrasted markedly with the Monday Club's confidence in 1970. According to Copping, some members closest to events thought that all the Monday Club's troubles were, 'a pre-conceived conspiracy by ill-disposed persons who had infiltrated the Club for the purpose of wrecking it'.<sup>290</sup> Jonathan Guinness appeared to accept this view in 1973 when he stated he was certain 'that the disruption was too systematic not to have been planned'.<sup>291</sup> Yet, to whom did this refer? The National Front denied any involvement to Walker, and claimed that such activity was in any case unnecessary as Monday Club defections were inevitable.<sup>292</sup> Walker's acceptance of the National Front's claims at face value weakens his account, but the lack of any similar accusation in Copping's official account suggested that Walker was correct. Instead, immediately after he after posed the question of culpability, Copping implied the guilt of 'a main instigator of the troubles' who soon 'gave indications of Communist sympathies' and campaigned against the Conservatives in the February 1974 General Election.<sup>293</sup> Copping did not name the individual. However, the only person ever identified by Copping as being at the forefront of the Monday Club rebellion was G. K. Young. This had led Monday Club members to wonder who exactly G. K. Young was.

Some investigators have portrayed G. K. Young as a sinister extreme-right figure. Typical is N. Toczek, who identified Young's involvement in many extreme-right movements.<sup>294</sup> However, these accounts often attempt merely to prove the nastiness of the right wing, and sometimes rely on questionable evidence and conspiracy theory. For example, when Toczek focused on proving that Young engineered the extreme right's takeover of the Conservative Party with Thatcher's leadership, he

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<sup>288</sup> Copping, *Crisis*, 9.

<sup>289</sup> Copping, *Crisis*, 15.

<sup>290</sup> Copping, *Crisis*, 9.

<sup>291</sup> Copping, *Crisis*, 8.

<sup>292</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 130.

<sup>293</sup> Copping, *Crisis*, 9.

<sup>294</sup> Toczek, *Tory*, 28-34.

failed to consider the Conservative Party's impact on the extreme right. Consequently, Toczek overly relied on 'guilt by association'. He implied Guinness's extremism because his mother had married Oswald Mosley, and Margaret Thatcher's extremism because her 'close personal associate' Nicholas Ridley 'lived in the same block of flats' as two fascist activists.<sup>295</sup> Such a method is inadequate. A better approach is to examine the known facts about Young, the impact this had on events he was involved in, and the opinion of contemporaries. Young was a merchant banker with Kleinwort Benson. Therefore, he probably did have the personal wealth to fund campaigns, as in Stroud's 1972 leadership challenge and the HINC. This meant that Young possessed the financial resources with which to challenge Guinness. Also verifiable is Young's previous membership of the Labour Party, his employment on the left wing *Glasgow Herald* and subsequent diplomatic career. Young's involvement with the intelligence community is equally well known. Young possessed, as a former deputy head of MI6 and thus involved in intelligence activities for a substantial period, the experience and knowledge to run the type of dirty tricks campaign witnessed in the 1973 Monday Club leadership challenge. This made the Monday Club's decision to call in the police over the forged letter that purported to come from Guinness more interesting. The person responsible for the forgery used a letterhead that closely resembled that of the Market Bosworth Monday Club of which Guinness was a member. Therefore, the culprit was also capable of acquiring private documents. Young was also adept at the subtle response, as seen in his reply to Guinness's accusation that Young's supporters were behind the forgery. When Young stated that, 'I thought it was vintage Guinness, an exact account of Jonathan's views. I was surprised to learn it was a forgery',<sup>296</sup> he gave the impression of ignorance yet still smeared Guinness.

These details and actions resulted in some contemporaries wondering what motivated Young. The most remarkable accusation came from John Gouriet, who was a new recruit to the Monday Club in 1973. Gouriet identified Young as one of the dubious characters 'hanging around' a British political establishment that he believed communists had deeply penetrated.<sup>297</sup> Gouriet recalled that he was not alone in thinking Young 'might be a member of the Cambridge Group, along with Philby and

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<sup>295</sup> Toczek, *Tory*, 30, 7 and passim.

<sup>296</sup> M. Stuart, 'Monday Club suspects spy', *Guardian*, 10 April 1974.

<sup>297</sup> Interview with John Gouriet, 19 June 2007.

Burgess, Maclean and Blunt', and that there was 'certainly circumstantial evidence to suggest he could have been the fifth man'.<sup>298</sup> He also included Conservative Central Office in his theory of a communist conspiracy, describing it as, 'deeply penetrated, deeply infiltrated'.<sup>299</sup> Therefore, Gouriet implied that Young had attempted to destroy the Monday Club as some minor part in a wider communist plot for world domination, and that Central Office accepted or directed his activity. If Gouriet is correct, then Central Office definitely blocked the extreme right, although not to protect the Conservative Party. However, the absence of any evidence that corroborated Gouriet's opinion leaves it stuck in the realms of conspiracy theory alongside Toczek. This is not to deny the possibility that Young was a communist agent. After his 1973 victory, Guinness inferred it when he said of the leadership challenge that, 'He had a sneaking suspicion that the minority was Communist-run.'<sup>300</sup> There is no doubt that Young ran the 1973 challenge to Guinness. Recently, Guinness described Young as 'Sinister',<sup>301</sup> but remained unsure about his role and motives. Asked if he thought Young was trying to wreck the Monday Club, Guinness answered: 'Wreck it or control it? If he was going to control it, what did he want to control it for? God knows, there were those who said he was trying to wreck it. That was said, but all sorts of things were said ... So he might have just been out to wreck it, but from what point of view, Communist? I don't know.'<sup>302</sup> However, although Guinness considered the possibility that Central Office supported Young in the Monday Club leadership election, he believed they would have preferred him to Young.<sup>303</sup> Sir Adrian FitzGerald's recollections chimed with Guinness's comments. He also wondered which part of the political spectrum Young was in, but opted for the extreme right rather than extreme left and stated, 'I think he was extreme right.'<sup>304</sup> FitzGerald believed Young was 'a racialist with a capital R', and added that if Young had secured the chairmanship, 'I would have walked straight out as would others.'<sup>305</sup> Here, FitzGerald confirmed the unwillingness of many Conservatives to allow the extreme right to succeed. When it comes to Young's motives, FitzGerald too remains

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<sup>298</sup> Interview with John Gouriet, 19 June 2007.

<sup>299</sup> Interview with John Gouriet, 19 June 2007.

<sup>300</sup> '50 expelled as move to oust Monday Club chairman fails', *The Times*, 25 July 1973, 2.

<sup>301</sup> Interview with Jonathan Guinness, 23 May 2008.

<sup>302</sup> Interview with Jonathan Guinness, 23 May 2008.

<sup>303</sup> Interview with Jonathan Guinness, 23 May 2008.

<sup>304</sup> Interview with Sir Adrian FitzGerald, 20 May 2008.

<sup>305</sup> Interview with Sir Adrian FitzGerald, 20 May 2008.

perplexed: 'I wish I knew. I really don't know. He must have known what he wanted to do. But I just don't know.'<sup>306</sup> As for Central Office's opinion of Young, FitzGerald too is unsure, but believed that, 'In purely political terms everything should indicate that they'd be very concerned about him,' and that therefore they would have supported Guinness.<sup>307</sup>

On balance, and saving contradictory evidence, the most feasible interpretation is that Young operated on the extreme right and probably intended to use the Monday Club to form a larger political bloc that included the National Front. With this, Young could challenge the Conservative Party. Walker referred to a *Sunday Telegraph* investigation into a meeting between Young and the National Front' John Tyndall, but accepted Martin Webster's denial that this took place.<sup>308</sup> Yet, Webster only denied that a specific meeting occurred. Guinness believed that Young probably was in contact with the National Front.<sup>309</sup> Therefore, in this scenario Central Office probably viewed Guinness as the lesser of two evils, and, having ensured that Guinness understood its position, refrained from involvement in the leadership contest and happily watched the Monday Club tear itself apart. The lack of any comment at all about the Monday Club's 1973-leadership contest within Central Office's files supports this theory. There is also more tangible evidence. Walker recounted that when Guinness had brought the Monday Club under control, Carrington said to him, 'Well done that, getting it under control.'<sup>310</sup> Guinness confirmed this account and pithily paraphrased Carrington's viewpoint as being, 'if the bloody thing must exist let it be under respectable leadership'.<sup>311</sup> This interpretation also fitted Central Office's consistent refrain that the extreme-right after the Second World War simply was not respectable.

Therefore, despite the troubles that beset it, Heath's Government by 1974 had effectively marginalised the Monday Club. It had done this by moving closer to the Monday Club on issues such as immigration, but also by threatening its leadership.

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<sup>306</sup> Interview with Sir Adrian FitzGerald, 20 May 2008.

<sup>307</sup> Interview with Sir Adrian FitzGerald, 20 May 2008.

<sup>308</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 130.

<sup>309</sup> Correspondence with Jonathan Guinness, 28 June 2008.

<sup>310</sup> Walker, *National Front*, 132.

<sup>311</sup> Correspondence with Jonathan Guinness, 28 June 2008.

By doing so, it minimised the most likely avenue for embarrassing connections with the extreme right since the Second World War. This assured that any associations with the National Front would not be a significant issue in the February 1974 General Election. However, it would be difficult to assess what impact this action had on the outcome of that contest. The electorate was probably more concerned about increased inflation and unemployment. Five 'states of emergency' and five major policy u-turns probably weighed heavier on voters minds than the Conservative Party's shadowy connections. Nor, unlike the General Election of 1970, did the Conservative Party in 1974 benefit from the electoral appeal of Enoch Powell. Powell resigned from the Conservative Party just before the General Election.<sup>312</sup> He elected to stand instead for the Ulster Unionists. Until the Sunningdale Agreement, the Ulster Unionists were the political associates of the Conservative 'and Unionist Party'. Thus, Powell proved his commitment to his personal perception of Conservatism. There is no evidence that Powell contemplated taking over the National Front seriously. Nor did Powell even advocate a vote for the extreme right on the mainland. Instead, Powell announced his postal vote for the Labour Party, based on what he saw as their opposition to membership of the EEC, and called on the electorate to do likewise. Therefore, for Powell the principle and logic of an argument overrode any desire to be leader of a political party other than the Conservative Party: that and the desire to harm Heath.

There is some evidence that Central Office minimised the prospects of Powellites before the contest. The neo-Conservative American Institute for Public Policy Research published A. Ranney's analysis of the 1974 General Election. Ranney's article identified Central Office's increased control of candidate selection via changed bureaucratic procedures that allowed it to veto selection of Powellite candidates. If correct, this supported Guinness's perception that Central Office was more concerned about Powell's impact than the Monday Club. However, the evidence however is not strong. Ranney based his article on a single *Sunday Times* article.<sup>313</sup> It also lacked any corroboration. For example, Ranney stated that the vice-chairman at Central Office passed a 'Word' to local Conservative Associations on the unsuitability of specific

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<sup>312</sup> 'Exit Enoch Powell, lonely fighter, *The Times*, 8 February 1974, 2.

<sup>313</sup> M. Bowen, 'Crushing the Right Wing', *Sunday Times*, 17 February 1974, 18.

Powellite candidates.<sup>314</sup> This sounded similar to the claims of Edward Martell's associate, Donald Johnson MP.<sup>315</sup> It is feasible that Central Office officials operated this way, but this claim remains unproved without evidence that supports it. The examples Ranney cited also weakened his claim. The three Powellites that Ranney identified as vetoed by Central Office aimed to contest Labour controlled constituencies.<sup>316</sup> As Powell attracted voters who had never previously voted Conservative, it is possible that these candidates would secure unexpected victories. However, the wider context of economic crises and industrial unrest weakened this argument. So, too, does Ranney's admittance that Central Office approved twenty-four other Powellites.<sup>317</sup> As Ranney does not identify any of these approved Powellites, it is impossible to conclude whether these individuals had already secured nomination, or were even MPs already. The theft of the Powellight membership list shortly after a Conservative Party conference exacerbated this difficulty. Ranney also quoted Sir Richard Webster's claim in the *Sunday Times* that Central Office had, 'no policy to exclude Right-Wing candidates, Powellites, or Monday Clubbers'.<sup>318</sup> A number of facts suggested Webster was not being wholly accurate. These were the long-standing general policy of investigating the extreme right, the exclusion of Monday Club members from the party's organisations, and written evidence of a policy to counter the danger posed by the Monday Club composed before Carrington summoned Guinness to Central Office. These considerations question Webster's claim severely. On the other hand, if Webster's claim reflected Central Office's belief that it had contained the threat posed by the Monday Club, Enoch Powell and the extreme right, it was accurate apart from the fact that the remit that empowered Central Office to investigate the extreme right remained in force.

The results of the February 1974 General Election indicated that the extreme right was indeed contained. The electorate did not turn to it. The most successful of the extreme-right parties was the National Front. It polled a miserly 0.2% of the vote.

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<sup>314</sup> A. Ranney, 'Selecting the Candidates', in Howard R. Penniman (ed.), *Britain At The Polls: The Parliamentary Elections of 1974*, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, Washington DC (1975), 44.

<sup>315</sup> See 178-179.

<sup>316</sup> Viz. John Kershaw, Dr. Bernard Stone and Michael Farrar. Ranney, 'Candidates', 43-44.

<sup>317</sup> Ranney, 'Candidates', 44.

<sup>318</sup> Ranney, 'Candidates', 44.

This result justified the opinion of those Conservatives who dismissed the National Front's electoral prospects, and indicated that when it saved its deposit at the West Bromwich by-election of 1973 it would probably be the National Front's political apogee. Other extreme-right parties fared even worse. The National Independence Party, which by 1974 included the former National Front chairman John O' Brien alongside Donald 'Pathfinder' Bennet, lost its deposit at Tottenham. The National Democratic Party, the political manifestation of the Racial Preservation Society, fared even worse at Ipswich. The British Movement of former League of Empire Loyalist Colin Jordan, which was the most overt neo-Nazi Party, attracted less than one thousand votes. In contrast, the Conservative Party retained nearly 38% of the vote, and won the popular vote in a contest that provided no party with an overall majority. This proved that even in the most propitious circumstances since the Second World War, the extreme right was unable to capitalise. However, with fewer seats than the Labour Party Heath was unable to forge a coalition with the Liberals and therefore resigned. Harold Wilson formed a minority government. Commentators expected Wilson to seek another General Election soon, to provide a majority government. Yet, the extreme right fared little better when Wilson went to the country in October 1974. At 0.4% of the vote, the National Front's performance proved Adrian FitzGerald's view that they were 'a pretty good joke'.<sup>319</sup> Former 'Independent Conservatives', many opposed to entry into the EEC, banded together as the United Democratic Party, but its fourteen candidates attracted an average of less than 400 votes. With twenty fewer seats and a drop of nearly one and a half million votes, the October 1974 General Election was also a personal disaster for Edward Heath. The Conservative Party was not prepared to accept the continuing leadership of an individual beaten at three of the previous four General Elections. It removed Heath and on 11 February 1975 installed Margaret Thatcher as leader.

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<sup>319</sup> Interview with Sir Adrian FitzGerald, 20 May 2008.

## **CONCLUSION: KEEPING IT RIGHT**

The Second World War ended the Conservative Party's sanguine attitude towards indigenous fascism and extreme-right movements. Association with right-wing extremism was no longer acceptable. Consequently, the Conservative Party after 1945 adopted a refractory attitude towards the extreme right. However, avoiding connections with extremism was not easy. A title that included labels such as 'Fascist', 'Nazi' and 'National Socialist' was no longer acceptable for political movements. Very few groups or individuals identified themselves with these pariah terms and ideologies in the way that the National Socialist Movement (1962) did. No organisation that carried such a title appeared in the Conservative Party Archive as one of the outside organisations investigated by Central Office. The same is true of groups tainted by internment as possible collaborators with Nazi Germany. There is no file on Mosley's Union Movement or the British People's Party in the Conservative Party Archive, although in these cases the rudimentary nature of Central Office's intelligence gathering may also play a role. There is one reference to an open National Socialist, Colin Jordan, but it is superficial and reveals that Central Office was eager to avoid any association, no matter how tangential, with him. Either the Conservative Party shredded their files on these groups or, more likely, it simply avoided any official contact with them whatsoever.

Many groups doubtless eschewed their interwar positions or conveniently forgot them. This included those that had sympathised with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. Admittedly, not all of the pre-war extreme-right groups were fascist or Nazi. Some were ultra-Conservatives who wanted nothing to do with groups involved in mass politics and which contained lower middle and working-class people. However, these were fine distinctions, and ultra-Conservatives in Europe had allied with fascism and Nazism. It was unlikely, therefore, that the British electorate would distinguish between various strands of the extreme right. However, these pre-war extreme-right groups had unarguably contained Conservatives. This was a matter of public record. After the Second World War, these connections were an embarrassment to the

Conservative Party. The Conservative Party did not want the public reminding of these associations, and it could not afford any recurrence of them. Therefore, the Conservative Party had to find ways to identify and investigate extreme-right groups so that it could achieve these objectives.

The answer was to investigate the extreme right. The main response was bureaucratic. Initially the Conservative Party used what remained intact of the party bureaucracy after the Second World War to gather intelligence. The party leadership soon reinvigorated the party machine. This included increasing the number of Central Office Agents, which had an impact on intelligence gathering. Additionally, Central Office used an existing ad hoc committee to formalise intelligence gathering within its Voluntary Organisations Section in 1948. This department's terms of reference mandated the monitoring of extreme-right groups and, if necessary, the taking of action against them. In this, Central Office and its Area Agents played a prominent role. A substantial part of the files in the 'Outside Organisations' section of the Conservative Party Archive consists of information sent by Area Agents, or their requests for information on certain groups or individuals. However, Central Office's intelligence gathering went beyond passively receiving the literature of extreme-right groups. At times, Central Office was proactive. Its representatives posed as disinterested members of the public to ascertain the nature of some extreme-right groups, as in the case of the Guild of Good Neighbours. They also attended extreme-right groups' meetings. On one occasion, Central Office officers infiltrated an extreme-right group. However, not all information emanated from the party bureaucracy. Wider Conservatism played a role too. Conservative MPs forwarded extreme-right literature, or advised Central Office of events and rumours in their constituencies. Party members and contacts in business provided information. Sometimes, the information and intelligence was superficial and short-lived, which usually reflected the small size of the group concerned. This was the case with the Right Party. At other times the forwarding of information resulted in correspondence that lasted years. Central Office commissioned reports on some extreme-right groups. These, too, varied in size. Reports on The New Crusade and New Reform Party consisted of a few pages, whilst those on the People's League for the Defence of Freedom, Middle Class Alliance, League of Empire Loyalists, Elizabethan Party and

Freedom Group were more extensive. Regardless of the nature and extent of its investigation into these groups, Central Office obstructed or blocked them all.

The degree of Central Office's response varied. These variations usually reflected Central Office's opinion of an organisation's nature. A minimally hostile response by Central Office was to suggest that an organisation's members would have more chance of success if they pursued their objectives with the Conservative Party and not an outside organisation. Another was to warn individuals not to fund a group because that would reduce contributions to the Conservative Party. Central Office adopted this stance towards organisations that it identified as predominantly mainstream Conservative and therefore as posing little threat to the Party, as in the examples of the Middle Class Union and Middle Class Alliance. Central Office adopted a slightly different minimally obstructive response to those groups with which it had an unofficial relationship, but wished to avoid becoming public knowledge. These groups operated outside the political mainstream, yet possessed views or objectives with which many Conservatives agreed, or methods that the Conservative party found difficult to employ. AIMS and Drake's Drum, for example, advocated policies that many Conservatives agreed with. However, their policies were inexpedient in the contemporary climate. The Conservative Party may have signalled acceptance of Labour's political programme by producing the *Industrial Charter*, but there was no large-scale rejection of this programme when the Conservatives regained office in 1951. Therefore, too close a connection with such groups would lay the Conservative Party open to charges of hypocrisy. However, both of these groups attempted to convey their argument in areas that seemed beyond the reach of the Conservative Party. If successful, it would make it possible for the Conservative party leadership to put forward policies that its membership favoured without angering an electorate that had so overwhelmingly welcomed Labour's policies in 1945. Consequently, Central Office only minimally obstructed these groups. Frequently this amounted to little more than Central Office instructing Area Agents to deny any connection, and ensuring that these groups denied any connection with the Conservative Party. Denial of association with a group whose objectives or methods could benefit the Conservative Party might also include action to ensure that Conservatives ceased involvement with a group, as occurred with the Workers' Forum. Groups whose

‘extremism’ amounted to no more than a Conservative reaction to a new paradigm usually attracted only these limited counter measures.

Sometimes, Central Office’s view of these ‘Conservative’ groups hardened. Initially, Conservatives shared platforms with the British Housewives League. However, when Central Office considered the British Housewives League’s response to the Labour Government too extreme, it explicitly denied any connection with it, and consistently thereafter refused to assist it. Likewise, Central Office came to view the Society for Individual Freedom as an extreme-right organisation, and consequently it discouraged Conservatives from joining it. The same applied to Common Cause. Central Office was initially unconcerned about Common Cause. It therefore merely discouraged Conservative Officials from joining it, but saw no reason why individual Conservatives should not. As Central Office increasingly became aware that Common Cause contained an extreme potential, it dispatched officials to attend its meetings and warned Conservatives not to join it. It is also possible that identification of a group as ‘extreme’ was conditional on the harm that it could do to the Conservative Party. For example, Central Office was wary of the Fighting Fund for Freedom, probably due to its involvement in ‘anti-alien’ campaigns, but it only explicitly identified it as an extreme-right organisation after a right-wing Conservative MP resigned from it.

Nevertheless, the common thread that applied to increased blocking activity was Central Office’s perception that a group was ‘extreme right wing’. This perception also applied when Central Office’s attitude was apparent from the beginning without it necessarily explicitly identifying the group as an extreme-right one. The New Reform Party is one example. Central Office advised its Area Agents to warn Conservatives against any connection with the New Reform Party because it believed that it was a bigoted, sectarian movement. The New Reform Party’s ultra-Protestantism placed it beyond the non-confessional Conservative Party, as did its anti-trade union rhetoric. Thus, even though there was no obvious connection between the New Reform Party and fascism, Central Office viewed its opinions as ones that divided society in extreme-right terms and consequently wanted nothing to do with it.

Central Office could also appear to modify its attitude towards an extreme-right movement, as seen in its relationship with Edward Martell’s groups. Central Office

was particularly active against Martell's Peoples League for the Defence of Freedom. It formed a Committee of Investigation, and advised that the Conservative Party as a whole should not have any connection with the PLDF. This was not the limit of Central Office's action against Martell and the PLDF. It refused Martell's offer of a joint candidature to defeat Labour at the East Ham by-election in 1957. Central Office also observed the PLDF's meetings during the East Ham by-election campaign, ensured that Cabinet Ministers were present during it, recruited an individual for 'intelligence duties' in the constituency, and was prepared to smear Martell with accusations of fascism to limit his chances. Central Office continued to try to harm Martell's chances six years later in a by-election that the Conservatives were not even contesting. The Conservative Party did not contest the 1963 Bristol South East by-election because it did not believe that Tony Benn should have to forfeit his seat on becoming a peer. The Party and Central Office advised Conservatives to abstain. However, as Martell was standing as a 'National Fellowship Conservative' in an attempt to attract the Conservative vote, this instruction also limited Martell's chances of success. The negative comments of local Conservative officials showed that Central Office wanted to stop Martell from taking advantage of the Conservative Party's absence. Nevertheless, Central Office did enter into a relationship with Martell's Freedom Group. During the 1964 General Election, Central Office accepted Martell's offer of assistance, especially his attempt to unseat Labour leader Harold Wilson. Thereafter, Central Office reverted to a more negative stance. It denied any association with Martell and monitored closely his involvement with the National Party.

These changes of attitude merely reflected different contexts. The PLDF's fierce anti-unionism placed it firmly to the right of the Macmillan Government and made it attractive to Conservatives who believed that the Conservative Party had accepted the Labour programme without a fight. This explained Central Office's action at East Ham and Bristol. Likewise, Home's acquisition of the Conservative Party leadership in 1963 explained Central Office's co-operation at the 1964 General Election. Home was a recognised right-winger, which made Martell's Freedom Group appear to be less outside the political mainstream. A desire to avoid association with Martell's financial difficulties ostensibly explained Central Office's reversion to a more negative stance after the 1964 General Election. Nevertheless, it is probably not

coincidental that this occurred after Home's replacement by the more progressive Heath. Neither is it surprising that Central Office monitored Martell's involvement with the National Party. In supporting the National Party, Martell had continued his rightwards journey, leaving 'freedom right' organisations for an overtly anti-immigrant extreme-right one at a time when immigration was an increasingly difficult political phenomenon. However, regardless of changes, at no time did Central Office collaborate unconditionally with Martell. The heavy qualification of its co-operation during the 1964 General Election suggested that this was a temporary situation and reflected Home's leadership. In reality, therefore, Central Office consistently countered Martell's groups.

There is no such ambiguity, however, when it came to groups or individuals capable of being associated with the wilder forms of the extremism, especially Fascism or Nazism. Central Offices attitude towards these groups never deviated. Central Office was always careful to identify anti-Semitism or Nazism in groups that it investigated, such as in the examples of The Guild of Good Neighbours and The New Crusade. When Central Office discovered that the anti-Semitic L. N. Tomlinson of Clan Briton was a Conservative Party member, it abruptly ended its correspondence with him. Andrew Fountaine's anti-Semitism caused Central Office to withdraw official party support from him. Discovery of BUF antecedents led Central Office to take further action against the founder of the Right Party. Central Office's knowledge of BUF membership was probably the factor in its decision to block John Charnley's attempts to become a Conservative MP or local councillor. Additionally, Central Office explicitly identified the miniscule Elizabethan Party as fascist when it warned all Conservative MPs, candidates, constituency and area agents to have nothing to do with it

The most obvious example of a perception of fascism by Central Office involved the League of Empire Loyalists, a 1950s reaction to decolonization. Here, Central Office did not act alone, as wider Conservatism contributed to thwarting this greater threat from the extreme right. Aware of some members' BUF antecedents, Central Office commissioned a report, which concluded that the League of Empire Loyalists was fascist and anti-Semitic. Central Office advised Conservative MPs, candidates and party officials of this conclusion. Some of these individuals repeated this accusation

in the press. Central Office introduced more vigorous vetting of party membership applications to block League of Empire Loyalist supporters from joining the Conservative Party. It also sought the identities of party members already within the LEL, some of whom subsequently left the Conservative Party. It was made clear that membership of the League of Empire Loyalists was incompatible with Conservative Party membership. Meanwhile, the League of Empire Loyalists' leader complained of a wider campaign to ostracise its members. Considering the presence of Conservatives in the League of Empire Loyalists, and the milieu of this campaign, it is likely that ordinary Conservatives were hostile to what many viewed as a fascist re-emergence. The League of Empire Loyalists' attempt to gain political recognition allowed Central Office to infer its fascism and orchestrate denigration of it by using the Conservative-supporting *Daily Telegraph*. League of Empire Loyalists' disruption of Conservative Party events met increasingly stiff resistance from local Conservative Association officials, culminating in their violent removal from the Party Conference at Blackpool in 1958. The Conservative Party leadership cut the ground away from the League of Empire Loyalists anti-immigrant stance by introducing the Immigration Bill in 1961. This applied also to the neo-Nazi or racial nationalist groups splintering from the League of Empire Loyalists from 1958, including the True Tories of Richard Hilton and those variously associated with John Bean, Colin Jordan, John Tyndall and Andrew Fountaine. From a peak in 1958, the League of Empire Loyalists declined, whilst its splinter groups made no impact. The Conservative Party's actions played a significant role in their failure.

Decolonization provided the impetus for the emergence of the Monday Club in 1961, an equally, if not more troubling development than the LEL as its members were unarguably Conservative Party members. Unsure of its nature, Central Office initially dismissed the Monday Club as an example of youthful exuberance. However, concluding it was an extreme-right organisation Central Office attempted to hinder its growth. It ordered Young Conservatives to cease all contacts with the Monday Club and denied it financial, or any other assistance. As in Martell's case, a temporary thawing of Central Office's attitude coincided with Home's leadership. After Home's departure in July 1965, however, Central Office's attitude became even more negative. An unattributed *Daily Telegraph* report of ministerial criticism in November 1965 indicated that the new leadership disapproved of the Monday Club. From 1965

onwards, Monday Club complaints of prejudice by the party bureaucracy increased. Over the following two years, the Monday Club identified discrimination from Conservative organisations and in their omission from the party's policy study groups. Central Office correspondence confirms the Monday Club's accusation.

Central Office's counter measures against the Monday Club continued in the pivotal years of 1967 and 1968. In early 1967, the external extreme right coalesced into the National Front. At this stage, however, Central Office exhibited no concerns over the National Front, dismissing it as an irrelevant amalgamation of discredited fascists like Chesterton and former members of the League of Empire Loyalists. The Monday Club's decision to become a mass movement in June 1967 was a different matter. The Conservative Party could not tolerate a potential threat to take it over from within, or the possibility of a credible party forming to its right. The activity engendered by the Monday Club's decision reflects the Conservative Party's concern. The Chief Whip became involved in investigating the Monday Club's activities from July 1967. Central Office considered the extraordinary possibility of harming one of its former employees' pension and restricting the activities of its future pensioners. It denied the Monday Club fair access to the Universities Department within Central Office, and dismissed its claims of discrimination by other 'all-party' groups such as the Conservative Overseas Bureau.

On 20 April 1968, Enoch Powell's 'rivers of blood' speech transformed the extreme right. The Monday Club or the National Front now had a potential leader. From this moment onwards, the Conservative Party leadership opposed the extreme right even more determinedly. Heath's immediate sacking of Powell was an obvious, if limited attempt to limit his appeal. More effective was a rightwards move in the party's political programme. Commenced in 1967, this rightwards move continued with legislative measures and policy statements designed to attract Powell's potential supporters without ever acceding to all of his demands. At the same time, Central Office continued thwarting the Monday Club. Area Agents monitored the Monday Club's fund raising activities and requested help from Central Office to counter it. Central Office organised the collation of complaints to counter the Monday Club chairman's frequent allegations of bias. Senior Conservatives supported an incumbent

MP when faced with a local Monday Club campaign to deselect him. Meanwhile, the Conservative Party denied any connection with the National Front.

Such was the success in constraining Powell and his supporters within Conservatism, that the Conservative Party scored an unexpected victory at the 1970 General Election. However, although Powell's threat never materialised, a growing realisation of an increasing connection between the extreme right outside and within the party became a source of serious concern. The 'freedom right' still existed in the likes of the Society for Individual Freedom and AIMS, but these groups remained peripheral. The freedom right possessed no charismatic figures. Martell had long since left the freedom right behind, and no organisation had yet appeared that was capable of uniting the freedom right. This left the field clear for the National Front, a nationalist-racist organisation possessing antecedents, policies and behaviour that marked it in many eyes as a fascist or neo-Nazi party. This was as intolerable as any connection with the League of Empire Loyalists. Indeed it was more so, because most of the openly neo-Nazis who left the League of Empire Loyalists were by now in the National Front, whilst the internal group with which it was connected, the Monday Club, was no longer a rudimentary organisation but a developed and growing entity capable of challenging the Conservative Party. This dangerous situation was the most serious test of the Conservative Party's determination to block the extreme right after the Second World War. The Conservative bureaucracy did not deviate from the mandate given to the Voluntary Organisation Department in 1948. Nor did the party leadership remain idle. Heath's government neutralised the Monday Club's appeal by moving towards it areas such as the economy, trade unions and immigration, whilst in public it attacked the Monday Club's objectives. In January 1973, Central Office formulated a policy threatening not to support the Monday Club chairman's by-election campaign unless he removed extremists. Desiring this support, the Monday Club chairman complied, turning the Monday Club into another Central Office agency of refraction against the extreme right.

From 1945-75, the Conservative Party leadership, and Central Office especially, consistently blocked the extreme right. It did so by implementing counter measures against the extreme right, and sometimes by adopting some of its themes. This was an institutionalised policy. The policy's objective was avoidance of embarrassing or

inexpedient associations. The level of blocking correlated to the perceived degree of extremism and threat posed. The Conservative Party bureaucracy implemented this policy not only to external extremists, but also to its own extreme-right, the Conservative Monday Club. Contrasting with this was a favourable attitude towards progressive groups such as the One Nation Group, Bow Group and PEST. The effect of this policy was the limitation of space to the extreme right and attraction of its potential voters. At the same time, the Conservative Party sloughed off individuals, forcing them to operate without the comforts provided by a monolithic, powerful and successful mainstream party. Extreme-right voters constantly faced the dilemma of whether it was worth voting for any party other than the Conservative Party, whilst extreme-right parties persistently faced the dilemma of whether they could make any electoral impact. From 1945-75, the extreme right failed abjectly to win political representation, its highlight being one saved deposit at a 1973 by-election. The extreme-right's failure indicates that the Conservative Party's policy was successful.

After 1975, the Conservative Party continued this policy. The Conservative Party met the challenge of a resurgent 'freedom right', particularly in the shape of the National Association for Freedom, by adopting many of its policies in its 1979 General Election manifesto. The Conservative Party marginalised the National Front further. In January 1978, Conservative leader Margaret Thatcher commented on Granada TV's *World in Action* that 'people are really rather afraid that this country might be rather swamped by people with a different culture'.<sup>1</sup> This was a premeditated statement. Thatcher's further comments in the interview make clear this was an appeal to the National Front's potential voters. The National Front interpreted Thatcher's comments this way. Accusing her of simply uttering 'cunning phrases which SOUND anti-immigration at first hearing but which on closer study do not commit a future Conservative government to take ANY action to halt immigration,' the National Front warned the electorate that the Conservative Party had pulled off this 'trick' before.<sup>2</sup> The National Front recognised that the Conservative Party was again reaching rightwards and attacked its immigration policy as a fraud up to the

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<sup>1</sup> TV Interview for Granada *World in Action* ("rather swamped"), 27 January 1978. [www.margaretthatcher.org](http://www.margaretthatcher.org).

<sup>2</sup> 'Immigration: Tories Re-issue 1970 Vote-Catch Swindle', *National Front News*, March 1978, 1.

General Election.<sup>3</sup> However, there was little that the National Front could do to counter the Conservative Party's election manifesto promise of a British Nationality Act offering a tougher stance on immigration. At the 1979 General Election, all 303 National Front candidates lost their deposits, gaining 0.61% of the total vote.<sup>4</sup> The National Front blamed the Conservative Party, accusing it of stealing National Front policies and supporters.<sup>5</sup> Implementing the British Nationality Act (1981), which provided stricter immigration criteria without acceding to the National Front's demands, probably helped the Conservative Party retain these voters and contributed to the National Front demise in the early 1980s.

The purged Monday Club welcomed Thatcher's leadership as promising 'a return to Conservatism.'<sup>6</sup> Whilst in opposition, Thatcher appointed Lord Thorneycroft party chairman at Central Office. As the Chancellor who resigned in 1958 when Macmillan's Cabinet refused to cut government spending sufficiently, Thorneycroft was more in tune with Monday Club thinking. This was a much-changed party machine, reflected in Sir Victor Raikes' February 1977 comment to Thorneycroft that the Monday Club 'has deep loyalty to our leader and our relations with you as Chairman of the Party are very happy'.<sup>7</sup> In government, Thatcher absorbed much of the Monday Club's objectives. Economic policy, anti-trade union legislation and a tough anti-Soviet Union stance were but some of the areas agreeable to the Monday Club, whilst the British Nationality Act (1981) went as far as moderate Monday Clubbers ever went. Economically liberal, yet socially authoritarian, Thatcher's three governments were amenable to the Monday Club. After Thatcher's removal, the Conservative Party entered into a prolonged internecine struggle revolving ostensibly around whether to maintain 'Thatcherism', or present a more progressive, tolerant image. Bitterly divided, the Conservative Party lost the 1997 General Election by a landslide to a reformed 'New Labour' that accepted much of Thatcherism but promised to heal the social divisions it caused. This appealed to an electorate still

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<sup>3</sup> For example, 'Unveiled: The great Tory damp squib', "'Tories? We Don't Hate Them – We Despise Them'", 'Labour-Tories Agree: "Black Immigration Must Continue"', *National Front News*, May 1978, 1.

<sup>4</sup> [www.psr.keele.ac.uk/area/uk.htm](http://www.psr.keele.ac.uk/area/uk.htm).

<sup>5</sup> 'Thatcher The Betrayer', *National Front News*, October 1979, 1. 'Tory Betrayals Are N.F. Opportunities', *National Front News*, October 1979, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Copping, *Crisis*, 22.

<sup>7</sup> Sir Victor Raikes, KBE, to The Rt. Hon. Lord Thorneycroft, CH. CPA CCO 3/7/33, Monday Club, 1965-77.

coming to terms with the economic restructuring that had damaged communities in the 1980s, and with a younger generation more amenable to an increasingly cosmopolitan society and the European Union.

As in 1945, therefore, the Conservative Party at the end of the twentieth century faced a new paradigm. Unable to resolve their divisions, the Conservative Party lost the next two elections in 2001 and 2005. In quick succession, William Hague, Iain Duncan Smith and Michael Howard joined Austen Chamberlain as the only Conservative leaders since 1900 who failed to become Prime Minister. The Conservative Party, realising as always the pragmatic need to adapt to society's changes, found itself increasingly at odds with the Monday Club's intolerant positions on race and immigration. The Monday Club's call for voluntary repatriation, placing it once more on the extreme right, was no longer acceptable. In October 2001, the Conservative leader instructed three MPs to leave the Monday Club, and the Shadow Chancellor declared that, 'There is no room for extremist views in the Conservative Party.'<sup>8</sup> Two weeks later, the leader suspended the Monday Club from the Conservative Party.<sup>9</sup> In May 2002, the Monday Club expressed its desire to re-establish links with the Conservative Party,<sup>10</sup> and belief in a quick return to the Tory fold.<sup>11</sup> However, the Monday Club remains estranged from the Conservative Party. When this research commenced, Central Office's guardian of the Conservative Party Archive advised that 'The modern day Monday Club is not an organisation that we wish to be affiliated or associated with' and that he considered it an 'unpleasant organisation'.<sup>12</sup> Together with the party's actions after 1975, these comments show that the Conservative leadership and bureaucracy continues and maintains the negative, refractory role that blocked the extreme right in the period 1945-75.

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<sup>8</sup> 'Tory MPs resign from far-right club', *BBC News*, 7 October 2001.

<sup>9</sup> 'Tories cut Monday Club link over race policies', *Guardian*, 19 October 2001.

<sup>10</sup> 'Right-wing club appeals for Tory return', *BBC News*, 10 May 2002.

<sup>11</sup> 'Monday Club predicts a quick return to Tory fold', *The Independent*, 11 May 2002.

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