

within the Officers' Corps, but this intrigue, although it penetrated to the highest military level, never succeeded in doing more than wound Hitler once out of a dozen efforts to assassinate him. The power of the army was steadily subjected to Hitler. The old officers were removed from control of the fighting troops after their failure in Russia in December 1941, and by 1945 the Officers' Corps had been so disrupted from within that the army was being guided to defeat after defeat by nothing more tangible than Hitler's "intuition" in spite of the fact that most army officers objected to subjecting themselves and Germany to the jeopardies of such an unpredictable and unproductive authority.

Business was in a somewhat similar but less extreme position. At first, unity of outlook seemed assured, largely because Hitler's mind was able to adopt the colors of an industrialist's mind whenever he made a speech to businessmen. By 1937 businessmen were convinced that armaments were productive, and by 1939 ... had even decided that war would be profitable. But once the war began, the urgent need for victory subjected industry [smaller industries, not large industries] to controls which were hardly compatible with the vision of industrial self-government which Hitler had adopted from business. The Four-Year Plan, created as early as 1936, became the entering wedge of outside control. After war began the new Ministry of Munitions under the control of Fritz Todt and Albert Speer (who were Nazis but not businessmen) began to dominate economic life.

Outside its rather specialized area, the organization of the Four-Year Plan, almost completely Nazi, was transformed into a General Economic Council in 1939, and the whole range of economic life was, in 1943, subjected to four Nazis forming the Inner Defense Council. Industry accepted this situation because profits were still protected, promises of material advantages remained bright for years, and the hope did not die that these controls were no more than temporary wartime measures.

Thus the precarious balance of power between party, army, and industry, followed in a secondary role by bureaucracy and landlords, drove themselves and the German people to a catastrophe so gigantic that it threatened for a while to destroy completely all the established institutions and relationships of German society.

Part Ten—Britain: the Background to Appeasement: 1900-1939

Chapter 29—The Social and Constitutional Background

In the course of the twentieth century Britain experienced a revolution as profound, and considerably more constructive, than those in Russia or Germany. The magnitude of this revolution cannot be judged by the average American because Britain has been, to most Americans, one of the less familiar countries of Europe. This condition is not based on ignorance so much as on misconceptions. Such misconceptions seem to arise from the belief that the English, speaking a similar language, must have similar ideas. These misconceptions are as prevalent among the better-educated classes of Americans as in less well-informed circles, and, as a result, errors and ignorance about Britain are widespread, even in the better books on the subject. In this section, we shall emphasize

the ways in which Britain is different from the United States, especially in its constitution and its social structure.

From this political point of view, the greatest difference between Britain and the United States rests in the fact that the former has no constitution. This is not generally recognized. Instead, the statement is usually made that Britain has an unwritten constitution based on customs and conventions. Such a statement seriously misrepresents the facts. The term "constitution" refers to a body of rules concerned with the structure and functioning of a government, and it clearly implies that this body of rules is superior in its force and is formed by a different process than ordinary statute law. In Britain this is not so. The so-called "constitutional law" of England consists either of statutes which differ in no way (either in method of creation or force) from ordinary statutes or it consists of customs and conventions which are inferior in force to statutes and which must yield to any statute.

The major practices of the "constitution" of Britain are based on convention rather than on law. The distinction between the two reveals at once the inferiority of the former to the latter. "Laws" (based on statutes and judicial decisions) are enforceable in courts, while "conventions" (based on past practices regarded as proper) are not enforceable in any legal way. The precedents of the British system of government are generally in the nature of conventions which cover the most important parts of the system: the Cabinet and the political parties, the monarchy, the two Houses of Parliament, the relationships between these, and the internal discipline and conduct of all five of these agencies.

The conventions of the system have been highly praised, and described as binding on men's actions. They are largely praiseworthy, but their binding character is much overrated. Certainly they are not sufficiently binding to deserve the name of constitution. This is not to say that a constitution cannot be unwritten. It is perfectly possible to have an unwritten constitution, but no constitution exists unless its unwritten practices are fairly clearly envisaged and are more binding than ordinary law. In Britain neither of these is true. There is no agreement even on fairly clear-cut issues. For example, every textbook asserts that the monarchy no longer has the power to veto legislation because that power has not been used since the reign of Queen Anne. Yet three of the four great authorities on constitutional law in the twentieth century (Sir William Anson, A. V. Dicey, and Arthur Berriedale Keith) were inclined to believe that the royal veto still existed.

The customs of the constitution are admittedly less binding than law; they are not enforceable in the courts; they are not clearly stated anywhere and, accordingly, their nature, binding or not, is left largely to the interpretation of the actor himself. Since so many of the relationships which are covered by conventions are based on precedents which are secret (such as relationships between monarchy and Cabinet, between Cabinet and political parties, between Cabinet and civil service, and all the relationships within the Cabinet) and since, in many cases, the secrecy of these precedents is protected by law under the Official Secrets Act, the binding nature of the conventions has become steadily weaker. Moreover, many of the so-called conventions which have been pointed out by

writers on the subject were never true, but were inventions of the writers themselves. Among these was the convention that the monarch was impartial—a convention which accorded not at all with the conduct of Queen Victoria in whose reign the rule was explicitly stated by Walter Bagehot.

Another convention which appeared in textbooks for years was to the effect that Cabinets are overthrown by adverse votes in Parliament. In fact, there have been in the last two generations scores of cases where the Cabinet's desires met with an adverse vote, yet no Cabinet has resigned as a result of such a vote in over sixty years. As early as 1853 the Coalition government was defeated in Commons three times in one week, while as late as 1924 the Labour government was defeated ten times in seven months. It is seriously stated in many books that the Cabinet is responsible to the House of Commons, and controlled by it. This control is supposed to be exercised by the voting of the members of the Parliament with the understanding that the government will resign on an adverse vote and can be compelled to do so by the House of Commons' control over supply. This whole interpretation of the British system of government had little relationship to reality in the nineteenth century and has almost none in the twentieth century. In truth, the Cabinet is not controlled by the Commons, but the reverse.

As W. I. Jennings says in more than one place in his book *Cabinet Government*, "It is the Government that controls the House of Commons." This control is exercised through the Cabinet's control of the political party machinery. This power over the party machinery is exercised through control of party funds and above all by control of nominations to constituencies. The fact that there are no primary elections in Britain and that party candidates are named by the inner clique of the party is of tremendous importance and is the key to the control which the inner clique exercises over the House of Commons, yet it is rarely mentioned in books on the English political system.

In the United States the political parties are very decentralized, with all power flowing from the local districts inward to the central committee. Any man who wins the party nomination in a local primary and in the election can become a party leader. In Britain the situation is entirely different. The party control is almost completely centralized in the hands of a largely self-perpetuating inner clique, and this clique, because of the lack of primary elections, has power of approval over all candidates and can control party discipline by its ability to give the better constituencies to the more docile party members. The statement that the Commons controls the Cabinet, through its control over supply, is not valid, because the Cabinet, if it has a majority in Parliament, can force that majority, by using the party discipline, to pass a supply bill exactly as it forces it to pass other bills. This statement that control of supply provides control of the government was never used to justify the House of Lords' control over the Cabinet, although the Lords could refuse supply as well as the Commons could until 1911.

Another convention, generally stated in most emphatic terms, is concerned with the impartiality of the Speaker of the House of Commons. The validity of this convention can be judged by reading Hansard for 1939 and observing the way in which the Speaker protected the members of the government from adverse questioning. Such questioning of

members of the government by the opposition in Parliament has frequently been pointed out as one of the guarantees of free government in Britain. In practice, it has become a guarantee of little value. The government can refuse to answer any question on the grounds of "public interest." To this decision there is no appeal. In addition, when questions are not refused, they are frequently answered in an evasive fashion which provides no enlightenment whatever. This was the regular procedure in answering questions on foreign policy in the period 1935-1940. In that period, questions were even answered by outright falsehoods without any possible redress available to the questioners.

Violation and distortion of the "conventions of the constitution" have steadily increased in the twentieth century. In 1921 a convention of over five hundred years' duration and another of over one hundred years' duration were set aside without a murmur. The former provided that the Convocations of the Church of England be simultaneous with the sessions of Parliament. The latter provided that the Royal Address be approved in council. Even more serious were the distortions of conventions. In 1931 the convention that the leader of the opposition be asked to form a government when the Cabinet resigns was seriously modified. In 1935 the rule regarding Cabinet solidarity was made meaningless. In 1937 the Conservative government even violated a constitutional convention with impunity by having George VI take the coronation oath in a form different from that provided by law.

This process of the weakening and dissolution of the so-called "constitution" went so far in the twentieth century that, by 1932, Sir Austen Chamberlain and Stanley (Lord) Baldwin were agreed that " 'unconstitutional' is a term applied in politics to the other fellow who does something that you do not like." This statement is too sweeping by far. A more accurate estimation of the situation would, perhaps, be worded thus: " 'Unconstitutional' is any action likely to lead to public disorder in the immediate future or likely to affect adversely the government's chances at the polls in any future election."

The kind of act which could lead to such a result would be, in the first place, any open act of repression. More important, it would be, in the second place, any open act of "unfairness." This idea of "unfairness," or, on its positive side, "fair play," is a concept which is very largely Anglo-Saxon and which is largely based on the class structure of England as it existed up to the early twentieth century. This class structure was clearly envisioned in the minds of Englishmen and was so completely accepted that it was assumed without need to be explicitly stated. In this structure, Britain was regarded as divided into two groups the "classes" and the "masses." The "classes" were the ones who had leisure. This meant that they had property and income. On this basis, they did not need to work for a living; they obtained an education in a separate and expensive system; they married within their own class; they had a distinctive accent; and, above all, they had a distinctive attitude. This attitude was based on the training provided in the special educational system of the "classes." It might be summed up in the statement that "methods are more important than goals" except that this group regarded the methods and manners in which they acted as goals or closely related to goals.

This educational system was based on three great negatives, not easily understood by Americans. These were (a) education must not be vocational—that is, aimed at assisting one to make living; (b) education is not aimed directly at creating or training the intelligence; and (c) education is not aimed at finding the "Truth." On its positive side, the system of education of the "classes" displayed its real nature on the school level rather than on the university level. It aimed at developing a moral outlook, a respect for traditions, qualities of leadership and cooperation, and above all, perhaps, that ability for cooperation in competition summed up in the English idea of "sport" and "playing the game." Because of the restricted numbers of the upper class in Britain, these attitudes applied chiefly to one another, and did not necessarily apply to foreigners or even to the masses. They applied to people who "belonged," and not to all human beings.

The functioning of the British parliamentary system depended to a very great extent on the possession by the members of Parliament of this attitude. Until the end of the nineteenth century, most members of Parliament, coming from the same class background, had this attitude. Since then, it has been lost to a considerable extent, in the Conservative Party by the grow-in" influence of businessmen and the declining influence of the older aristocracy, and in the Labour Party by the fact that the majority of its members were never subjected to the formative influences, especially educational, which created this attitude. The loss of this attitude, however, has not been so rapid as one might expect because, in the first place, plutocracy in England has always been closer to aristocracy than in other countries, there being no sharp divisions between the two, with the result that the aristocracy of today is merely the plutocracy of yesterday, admission from the latter group to the former being generally accomplished in one generation through the financial ability of the first generation of wealth to send its children to the select schools of the aristocrats. This process is so general that the number of real aristocrats in Britain is very small, although the number of nominal aristocrats is quite large. This can be observed in the fact that in 1938 more than half of the peerage had been created since 1906, the overwhelming majority for no other reason than recognition of their ability to acquire a fortune. These new peers have aped the older aristocrats, and this has had the effect of keeping the attitudes which allow the constitution to function alive, although it must be confessed that the new businessmen leaders of the Conservative Party (like Baldwin or Chamberlain) displayed a more complete grasp of the forms than of the substance of the old aristocratic attitude.

Within the Labour Party, the majority of whose members have had no opportunity to acquire the attitude necessary to allow the proper functioning of the constitutional system, the problem has been alleviated to a considerable extent by the fact that the members of that party who are of working-class origin have given very wide influence to the small group of party members who were of upper-class origin. The working-class members of the Labour Party have proved very susceptible to what is called the "aristocratic embrace." That is, they have shown a deference to the points of view and above all to the manners and position of the upper classes, and have done so to a degree which would be impossible to find in any country where class lines were not so rigidly drawn as in England. The working-class members of the Labour Party, when they entered Parliament, did not reject the old upper-class methods of action, but on the contrary

sought to win upperclass approval and to retain lower-class support by demonstrating that they could run the government as well as the upper class had always done. Thus the business-class leaders of the Conservative Party and the working-class leaders of the Labour Party both consciously sought to imitate the older aristocratic attitude which had given rise to the conventions of parliamentary government. Both failed in essence rather than in appearance, and both failed from lack of real feeling for the aristocratic pattern of thought rather than from any desire to change the conventions.

The chief element in the old attitude which both groups failed to grasp was the one which we have attempted to describe as emphasis on methods rather than on goals. In government, as in tennis or cricket, the old attitude desired to win but desired to win within the rules, and this last feeling was so strong as to lead a casual observer to believe that they lacked a desire to win. In parliamentary life this appeared as a diffidence to the possession of high office or to the achievement of any specific item of legislation. If these could not be obtained within the existing rules, they were gracefully abandoned.

This attitude was based to a very considerable degree on the fact that the members of both government and opposition were, in the time of Queen Victoria, from the same small class, subjected to the same formative influences, and with the same or similar economic interests. Forty out of 69 Cabinet ministers were sons of peers in 1885-1905, while 25 out of 51 were sons of peers in 1906-1916. To resign from office or to withdraw any item of projected legislation did not, at that time, represent any surrender to an adverse group. This was not an attitude which either the new business leaders of the Conservative Party or the working-class leaders of the Labour Party could accept. Their goals were for them of such immediate concrete value to their own interests that they could not regard with equanimity loss of office or defeat of their legislative program. It was this new attitude which made possible at one and the same time the great increase in party discipline and the willingness to cut corners where possible in interpreting the constitutional conventions.

The custom of the constitution thus rests only on public opinion as a sanction, and any British government can do what it wishes so long as it does not enrage public opinion. This sanction is not nearly so effective as might appear at first glance, because of the difficulty which public opinion in England has in obtaining information and also because public opinion in England can express itself only through the ballot, and the people cannot get an election unless the government wishes to give one. All the government needs to do is to prevent an election until public opinion subsides. This can be done by the Conservative much more easily than by the Labour Party because the Conservatives have had a wider control over the avenues of publicity through which public opinion is aroused and because the actions of a Conservative government can be kept secret more easily, since the Conservatives have always controlled the chief other parts of the government which might challenge a government's actions. The first point will be discussed later. The second point can be amplified here.

The Commons and Cabinet are generally controlled by the same party, with the latter controlling the former through the party machinery. This group can do what it wishes

with a minimum of publicity or public protest only if the other three parts of the government cooperate. These three parts are the monarchy, the House of Lords, and the civil service. Since all three of these have been traditionally Conservative, a Conservative government could generally count on their cooperation. This meant that a Conservative government, on coming to power, had control of all five parts of the government, while a Labour government had control of only two. This does not necessarily mean that the Conservatives would use their control of the monarchy, the Lords, or the civil service to obstruct a Labour-controlled Commons, since the Conservatives have generally been convinced of the long-run value to be derived from a reluctance to antagonize public opinion. In 1931 they abandoned the gold standard, without any real effort to defend it, as a result of the mutiny in the British fleet; in 1935 they used their control of the British Broadcasting Corporation relatively fairly as a result of public protests at the very unfair way they had used it in 1931.

Nonetheless, the Conservative control of these other parts of the government at a time when they do not control the government have been very helpful to them. In 1914, for example, the army refused to enforce the Irish Home Rule bill which had been passed after two general elections and had been approved three times by the Commons. The army, almost completely Conservative, not only refused to enforce this bill but made it clear that in any showdown on the issue its sympathies would be with the opponents of the bill. This refusal to obey the Liberal government of the day was justified on the grounds that the army's oath of loyalty was to the king and not to the government. This might well be a precedent for a rule that a Conservative minority could refuse to obey the law and could not be forced by the army, a privilege not shared by a Liberal or Labour minority.

Again, in 1931, George V, on the resignation of MacDonald, did not call upon the leader of the opposition to form a government, but encouraged an intrigue which tried to split the Labour Party and did succeed in breaking off 15 out of 289 Labour M.P.'s. MacDonald, who then represented no party, became prime minister on a majority borrowed by the king from another party. That the king would have cooperated in such an intrigue in favor of the Labour Party is very dubious. The only satisfaction which Labour had was in defeating the sessionists in the election of 1935, but this did little to overcome the injury inflicted in 1931.

Or again, in 1929-1931, under the second Labour government, the Conservative House of Lords prevented the enactment of all important legislation, including a Trades Disputes Act, the long-needed democratization of education, and electoral reform. For any Act to pass over the opposition of the Lords, it must, since 1911, be voted in the Commons three times in identical form in not less than two years. This meant that the Conservatives have a suspensive veto over the legislation of opposition governments. The importance of this power can be seen in the fact that very few bills ever became law without the Lords' consent.

Unlike the government of the United States, that of England involves no elements of federalism or separation of powers. The central government can govern in respect to any

subject no matter how local or detailed, although in practice it leaves considerable autonomy to counties, boroughs, and other local units. This autonomy is more evident in regard to administration or execution of laws than it is in regard to legislation, the central government usually blocking out its wishes in general legislation, leaving the local authorities to fill in the gaps with administrative regulations and to execute the whole under supervision of the central authorities. However, the needs of local government, as well as the broadening scope of general governmental regulation, have made a congestion of legislation in Parliament so great that no member can be expected to know much about most bills. Fortunately, this is not expected. Voting in Parliament is on strict party lines, and members are expected to vote as their party whips tell them to, and are not expected to understand the contents of the bills for which they are voting.

There is also no separation of powers. The Cabinet is the government and "is expected to govern not only within the law, but, if necessary, without law or even against the law." There is no limit on retroactive legislation, and no Cabinet or Parliament can bind its successors. The Cabinet can enter into war without Parliament's permission or approval. It can expend money without Parliament's approval or knowledge, as was done in 1847 for relief in Ireland or in 1783-1883 in regard to secret-service money. It can authorize violations of the law, as was done in regard to payments of the Bank of England in 1847, in 1857, or in 1931. It can make treaties or other binding international agreements without the consent or knowledge of Parliament, as was done in 1900, 1902, and 1912.

The idea, widely held in the United States, that the Commons is a legislative body and the Cabinet is an executive body is not true. As far as legislation is concerned, Britain has a multi-cameral system in which the Cabinet is the second chamber, the Commons the third, and the Lords the fourth. Of these three the Conservatives always have control of the Lords, and the same party generally has control of the other two. Legislation originates in the meetings of the inner clique of the party, acting as a first chamber. If accepted by the Cabinet it passes the Commons almost automatically. The Commons, rather than a legislative body, is the public forum in which the party announces the decisions it has made in secret party and Cabinet meetings and allows the opposition to criticize in order to test public reactions. Thus all bills come from the Cabinet, and rejection in Commons is almost unthinkable, unless the Cabinet grants to party members in Commons freedom of action. Even then this freedom usually extends only to the right to abstain from voting, and does not allow the member to vote against a bill. Although machinery for private members' bills exists similar to that in the United States, such bills rarely become law. The only significant one in recent years was an unusual bill of an unusual member from an unusual constituency. It was the divorce law of A. P. Herbert, famous humorist, and Member from Oxford.

This situation is sometimes called "Cabinet dictatorship." It could more accurately be called "party dictatorship." Both the Cabinet and the Commons are controlled by the party, or more accurately by the inner clique of the party. This inner clique may hold seats in the Cabinet, but the two are not the same thing, since members of one may not be members of the other, and the gradations of power are by no means the same in one as in the other. The inner clique of the Conservative Party sometimes meets in the Carlton

Club, while the inner clique of the Labour Party meets in a trade-union conclave, frequently in Transport House.

The implication here that the Cabinet controls the Commons, that Commons will never overthrow the Cabinet, and that it will not reject legislation acceptable to the Cabinet is based on the assumption that the party has a majority in Commons. A minority government, usually a coalition government, has no such control over Commons because its powers of party discipline are very weak over any party but its own. With other parties than its own, a government has few powers beyond the threat of dissolution, which, while it does threaten members of all parties with the expenses of an election and the possibility of losing their seats, is a double-edged weapon that may cut both ways. Over its own members the Cabinet has the additional powers arising from control of nominations to constituencies, party funds, and appointment to government offices.

It is not generally recognized that there have been many restrictions on democracy in Britain, most of them in nonpolitical spheres of life, but nonetheless effectively curtailing the exercises of democracy in the political sphere. These restrictions were considerably worse than in the United States, because in the latter country they have been made on a variety of grounds (racial, religious, national, and so on), and because they are recognized as being unjust and are the occasion for feelings of guilt from those whom they benefit and loud protests from others. In Britain the restrictions were almost all based on one criterion, possession of wealth, and have been the occasion for relatively mild objections, because in Britain the idea that wealth entitled its possessor to special privileges and special duties was generally accepted, even by the non-possessing masses. It was this lack of objections from both classes and masses which concealed the fact that Britain, until 1945, was the world's greatest plutocracy.

Plutocracy restricted democracy in Britain to a notable but decreasing degree in the period before 1945. This was more evident in social or economic life than in political life, and in politics it was more evident in local than in national affairs. In political life local government had a restricted suffrage (householders and their wives; in some localities only half as many as in national suffrage). This restricted suffrage elected members of local boards or councils whose activities were unpaid, thus restricting these posts to those who had leisure (that is, wealth). In local government the old English tradition that the best government is government by amateurs (which is equivalent to saying that the best government is government by the well-to-do) still survived. These amateurs were aided by paid secretaries and assistants who had the necessary technical knowledge to handle the problems that arose. These technicians were also of the middle or upper classes because of the expense of the educational system which screened out the poor on the lower levels of schooling. The paid expert who advised the unpaid members of the borough councils was the town clerk. The paid expert who advised the unpaid justice of the peace in the administration of local justice was the clerk of Quarter Sessions.

In national politics the suffrage was wide and practically unrestricted, but the upper classes possessed a right to vote twice because they were allowed to vote at their place of

business or their university as well as at their residence. Members of Parliament were, for years, restricted to the well-to-do by the expenses of office and by the fact that Members of Parliament were unpaid. Payment for Members was adopted first in 1911 and fixed at £400 a year. This was raised in 1936 to £500 with an additional £100 for expenses. But the Member's expenses in Commons were so great that a Conservative Member would need at least £ 1,000 a year additional income and a Labour Member would need about £350 a year additional. Moreover, each candidate for Parliament must post a deposit of £150, which is forfeited if he does not receive over one-eighth of the total vote. This deposit amounted to more than the total annual income of about three-quarters of all English families in 1938, and provided another barrier to the great majority if they aspired to run for Parliament. As a result of these monetary barriers, the overwhelming mass of Englishmen could not participate actively in politics unless they could find an outside source of funds. By finding this source in labor unions in the period after 1890, they created a new political party organized on a class basis, and forced the merger of the two existing parties into a single group also organized on a class basis.

From this point of view the history of English political parties could be divided into three periods at the years of 1915 and 1924. Before 1915 the two major parties were the Liberals and the Unionists (Conservatives); after 1924 the two major parties were the Conservatives and Labour; the decade 1915-1924 represented a period in which the Liberal Party was disrupted and weakened.

Until 1915 the two parties represented the same social class—the small group known as "society." In fact both parties—Conservatives and Liberals—were controlled from at least 1866 by the same small clique of "society." This clique consisted of no more than half-a-dozen chief families, their relatives and allies, reinforced by an occasional recruit from outside. These recruits were generally obtained from the select educational system of "society," being found in Balliol or New College at Oxford or at Trinity College, Cambridge, where they first attracted attention, either by scholarship or in the debates of the Oxford or Cambridge Union. Having attracted attention in this fashion, the new recruits were given opportunities to prove their value to the inner clique of each party, and generally ended by marrying into one of the families which dominated these cliques.

At the beginning of the twentieth century the inner clique of the Conservative Party was made up almost completely of the Cecil family and their relatives. This was a result of the tremendous influence of Lord Salisbury. The only important autonomous powers in the Conservative Party in 1900 were those leaders of the Liberal Party who had come over to the Conservatives as a result of their opposition to Gladstone's project for Home Rule in Ireland. Of these, the most important example was the Cavendish family (dukes of Devonshire and marquesses of Hartington). As a result of this split in the Liberal Party, that party was subjected to a less centralized control, and welcomed into its inner clique many newer industrialists who had the money to support it.

Since 1915 the Liberal Party has almost disappeared, its place being taken by the Labour Party, whose discipline and centralized control bears comparison with that of the Conservative Party. The chief differences between the two existing parties are to be

found in methods of recruitment, the inner clique of the Conservative Party being built on the basis of family, social, and educational connections, while that of the Labour Party is derived from the hard school of trade-union politics with a seasoning of upper-class renegades. In either case the ordinary voter in Britain, in 1960 as in 1900, was offered a choice between parties whose programs and candidates were largely the creations of two small self-perpetuating groups over which he (the ordinary voter) had no real control. The chief change from 1900 to 1960 was to be found in the fact that in 1900 the two parties represented a small and exclusive social class remote from the voters' experience, while in 1960 the two parties represented two antithetical social classes which were both remote from the average voter.

Thus, the lack of primary elections and the insufficient payment for Members of Parliament have combined to give Britain two political parties, organized on a class basis, neither of which represents the middle classes. This is quite different from the United States, where both the major parties are middle-class parties, and where geographic, religious, and traditional influences are more important than class influences in determining party membership. In America the prevalent middle-class ideology of the people could easily dominate the parties because both parties are decentralized and undisciplined. In Britain, where both parties are centralized and disciplined and controlled by opposing social extremes, the middle-class voter finds no party which he can regard as representative of himself or responsive to his views. As a result, by the 1930's the mass of the middle classes was split: some provided continued support for the Liberal Party, although this was recognized as relatively hopeless; some voted Conservative as the only way to avoid Socialism, although they objected to the proto-Fascism of many Conservatives; others turned to the Labour Party in the hope of broadening it into a real progressive party.

A study of the two parties is revealing. The Conservative Party represented a small clique of the very wealthy, the one-half percent who had incomes of over £2,000 a year. These knew each other well, were related by marriage, went to the same expensive schools, belonged to the same exclusive clubs, controlled the civil service, the empire, the professions, the army, and big business. Although only one-third of one percent of Englishmen went to Eton or Harrow, 43 percent of Conservative members of Parliament in 1909 had gone to these schools, and in 1938 the figure was still about 32 percent. In this last year (1938) there were 415 Conservative M.P.'s. Of these, 236 had titles and 145 had relatives in the House of Lords. In the Cabinet which made the Munich Agreement were one marquess, three earls, two viscounts, one baron, and one baronet. Of the 415 Conservative M.P.'s at that time, only one had had poor parents, and only four others came from the lower classes. As Duff Cooper (Viscount Norwich) said in March, 1939, "It is as difficult for a poor man, if he be a Conservative, to get into the House of Commons as it is for a camel to get through the eye of a needle." This was caused by the great expenses entailed in holding the position of Conservative M.P. Candidates of that party were expected to make substantial contributions to the party. The cost of an electoral campaign was £400 to £1,200. Those candidates who paid the whole expense and in addition contributed £500 to £1,000 a year to the party fund were given the safest

seats. Those who paid about half of these sums were given the right to “stand” in less desirable constituencies.

Once elected, a Conservative M. P. was expected to be a member of one of the exclusive London clubs where many important party decisions were formed. Of these clubs the Carlton, which had over half of the Conservative M. P.'s as members in 1938, cost a £40 entrance fee and 17 guineas annual dues. The City of London Club, with a considerable group of Conservatives on its rolls, had an entrance fee of 100 guineas and annual dues of 15 guineas. Of 33 Conservative M. P.'s who died leaving recorded wills in the period before 1938 all left at least £1,000, while the gross estate of the group was £7,199,151. This gave an average estate of £218,156. Of these 33, 14 left over £10,000 each; 14 more left from £20,000 to £100,000; and only 5 left between £10,000 and £20,000.

Of the 415 M. P.'s on the Conservative side in 1938, 44 percent (or 181) were corporation directors, and these held 775 directorships. As a result, almost every important corporation had a director who was a Conservative M. P. These M. P.'s did not hesitate to reward themselves, their companies, and their associates with political favors. In eight years (1931-1939) thirteen directors of the "Big Five banks" and two directors of the Bank of England were raised to the peerage by the Conservative government. Of ninety peers created in seven years (1931-1938), thirty-five were directors of insurance companies. In 1935 Walter Runciman, as president of the Board of Trade, introduced a bill to grant a subsidy of £2 million to tramp merchant vessels. He administered this fund, and in two years gave £92,567 to his father's company (Moor Line, Ltd.) in which he held 21,000 shares of stock himself. When his father died in 1937 he left a fortune of £2,388,453. There is relatively little objection to activities of this kind in England. Once having accepted the fact that politicians are the direct representatives of economic interests, there would be little point in objecting when politicians act in accordance with their economic interests. In 1926 Prime Minister Baldwin had a direct personal interest in the outcome of the coal strike and of the General Strike, since he held 194,526 ordinary shares and 37,591 preferred shares of Baldwin's, Ltd., which owned great collieries.

The situation of 1938 was not much different from the situation of forty years earlier in 1898 except that, at the earlier date, the Conservative Party was subject to an even more centralized control, and the influence of industrial wealth was subordinated to the influence of landed wealth. In 1898 the Conservative Party was little more than a tool of the Cecil family. The prime minister and leader of the party was Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil (Lord Salisbury), who had been prime minister three times for a total of fourteen years when he retired in 1902. On retirement he handed over the leadership of the party as well as the prime minister's chair to his nephew, protégé, and hand-picked successor, Arthur James Balfour. In the ten years of the Salisbury-Balfour government between 1895 and 1905, the Cabinet was packed with relatives and close associates of the Cecil family. Salisbury himself was prime minister and foreign secretary (1895-1902); his nephew, Arthur Balfour, was first lord of the Treasury and leader in Commons (1895-1902) before becoming prime minister (1902-1905); another nephew, Gerald Balfour (brother of Arthur), was chief secretary of Ireland (1895-1900) and president of the Board

of Trade (1900-1905); Lord Salisbury's son and heir, Viscount Cranborne, was undersecretary for foreign affairs (1900-1903) and lord privy seal (1903-1905); Salisbury's son-in-law, Lord Selborne, was undersecretary for the colonies (1895-1900) and first lord of the Admiralty (1900-1905); Walter Long, a protégé of Salisbury, was president of the Board of Agriculture (1895-1900), president of the Local Government Board (1900-1905), and chief secretary for Ireland (1905-1906); George Curzon, another protégé of Salisbury, was undersecretary for foreign affairs (1895-1898) and viceroy of India (1899-1905); Alfred Lyttelton, Arthur Balfour's most intimate friend and the man who would have been his brother-in-law except for his sister's premature death in 1875 (an event which kept Balfour a bachelor for the rest of his life), was secretary of state for the colonies; Neville Lyttelton, brother of Alfred Lyttelton, was commander in chief in South Africa and chief of the General Staff (1902-1908). In addition, a dozen close relatives of Salisbury, including three sons and various nephews, sons-in-law, and grandchildren, and a score or more of protégés and agents were in Parliament or in various administrative positions, either then or later.

The Liberal Party was not so closely controlled as was the Conservative Party, but its chief leaders were on intimate relations of friendship and cooperation with the Cecil crowd. This was especially true of Lord Rosebery, who was prime minister in 1894-1895, and H. H. Asquith, who was prime minister in 1905-1915. Asquith married Margot Tennant, sister-in-law of Alfred Lyttelton, in 1894, and had Balfour as his chief witness at the ceremony. Lyttelton was the nephew of Gladstone as Balfour was the nephew of Salisbury. In later years Balfour was the closest friend of the Asquiths even when they were leaders of two opposing parties. Balfour frequently joked of the fact that he had dinner, with champagne, at Asquith's house before going to the House of Commons to attack his host's policies. On Thursday evenings when Asquith dined at his club, Balfour had dinner with Mrs. Asquith, and the prime minister would stop by to pick her up on his way home. It was on an evening of this kind that Balfour and Mrs. Asquith agreed to persuade Asquith to write his memoirs. Asquith had been almost as friendly with another powerful leader of the Conservative Party, Lord Milner. These two ate their meals together for four years at the scholarship table in Balliol in the 1870's, and had supper together on Sunday evenings in the 1880's. Mrs. Asquith had a romantic interlude with Milner in Egypt in 1892 when she was still Margot Tennant, and later claimed that she got him his appointment as chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue by writing to Balfour from Egypt to ask for this favor. In 1908, according to W. T. Stead, Mrs. Asquith had three portraits over her bed: those of Rosebery, Balfour, and Milner.

After the disruption of the Liberal Party and the beginnings of the rise of the Labour Party, many members of the Liberal Party went over to the Conservatives. Relationships between the two parties became somewhat less close, and the control of the Liberal Party became considerably less centralized.

The Labour Party arose because of the discovery by the masses of the people that their vote did not avail them much so long as the only choice of candidates was, as Bagehot put it, "Which of two rich people will you choose?" The issue came to a head because of a judicial decision. In the Taff Vale case (1901) the courts decided that labor unions were

responsible for damages resulting from their economic actions. To overcome this decision, which would have crippled the unions by making them financially responsible for the damages arising from strikes the working classes turned to political action by setting up their own candidates in their own party. The funds needed were provided by the labor unions, with the result that the Labour Party became for all practical purposes, the Trade-Union Party.

The Labour Party is, in theory, somewhat more democratic than the Conservatives, since its annual party conference is the final authority on policies and candidates. But, since unions provide the bulk of the members and the party funds, the unions dominate the party. In 1936, when the party membership was 2,444,357, almost 2 million of these were indirect members through the 73 trade unions which belonged to the party. Between party conferences, administration of the party's work was in the hands of the National Executive Committee, 17 of whose 25 members could be elected by the unions.

Because of its working-class basis, the Labour Party was generally short of funds. In the 1930's it spent on the average £300,000 a year, compared to £600,000 a year for the Conservatives and £400,000 a year for the Liberals. In the election of 1931 the Labour Party spent £81,629 in campaigning, compared to the £472,476 spent by non-Labour candidates. In the election of 1935 the two figures were £196,819 and £526,274.

This shortage of money on the part of the Labour Party was made worse by the fact that the Labour Party, especially when out of office, had difficulty in getting its side of the story to the British people. In 1936 the Labour Party had support from one morning paper with a circulation of two million copies, while the Conservatives had the support of six morning papers with a circulation of over six million copies. Of three evening papers, two supported the Conservatives and one supported the Liberals. Of ten Sunday papers with an aggregate circulation of 13,130,000 copies, seven with a circulation of 6,330,000 supported the Conservatives, one with a circulation of 400,000 supported Labour, and the two largest, with a circulation of 6,300,000, were independent.

The radio, which is the second most important instrument of publicity, is a government monopoly, created by the Conservatives in 1926. In theory it is controlled by an impartial board, but this board was created by Conservatives, is generally manned by Conservative sympathizers, and permits the government to make certain administrative decisions. Sometimes it is run fairly; sometimes it is run very unfairly. In the election of 1931 the government allowed fifteen periods on the B.B.C. for political campaigning; it took eleven periods for the Conservatives, gave three to Labour, and one to the Liberals. In 1935, somewhat more fairly, it permitted twelve periods, taking five for the Conservatives, and giving four to Labour and three to the Liberals.

Since the two chief parties in England do not represent the ordinary Englishman, but instead represent the entrenched economic interests directly, there is relatively little "lobbying," or attempting to influence legislators by political or economic pressure. This is quite different from the United States where lobbyists sometimes seem to be the only objects on a congressman's horizon. In England, where the economic interests are

directly represented in Parliament, lobbying comes chiefly from groups influenced by non-economic issues like divorce, women's suffrage, antivivisection, and so on.

On the whole, if we were to look at politics Britain would appear at least as democratic as America. It is only when we look outside the sphere of politics to the social or economic spheres that we see that the old division into two classes was maintained relatively rigidly until 1939. The privileged classes were generally able to maintain their grasp on the professions, the educational system, the army, the civil service, and so on, even when they were losing their grasp on the political system. This was possible because training in the expensive educational system of the upper classes continued to be the chief requirement for entrance into these nonpolitical activities. The educational system, as we have said, was divided roughly into two parts: (a) one part for the ruling classes consisted of preparatory schools, the so-called "public schools" and the old universities; and (b) the other for the masses of the people consisted of public elementary schools, the secondary schools, and the newer universities. This division is not absolutely rigid, especially on the university level, but it is quite rigid on the lower level.

As Sir Cyril Norwood, headmaster of Harrow School, said, "The boy of ability from a poor home may get to Oxford—it is possible, though not easy—but he has no chance to enter Eton." A private school (called "public school") cost about £300 a year in 1938, a sum which exceeded the annual income of more than 80 percent of English families. The masses of the people obtained free primary schools only after 1870, and secondary schools in 1902 and 1918. These latter, however, were not free, although there were many part-payment places, and less than 10 percent of children entered a secondary school in 1938. On the highest level of education, the twelve universities of England and Wales had only 40,000 students in 1938. In the United States, at the same period, the number of students on the university level was 1,350,000, a difference which was only partially compensated by the fact that the population of the United States was four times as numerous as that of Britain.

The educational system of Britain has been the chief bottleneck by which the masses of the people are excluded from positions of power and responsibility. It acts as a restriction because the type of education which leads to such positions is far too expensive for any but an insignificant fraction of Englishmen to be able to afford it. Thus, while Britain had political democracy at a fairly early period it was the last civilized country to obtain a modern system of education. In fact, it is still in process of obtaining such a system. This is in sharp contrast with the situation in France where the amount of education obtainable by a student is limited only by his ability and willingness to work; and positions of importance in the civil service, the professions, and even business are available to those who do best in the educational system. In Britain ability to a considerable degree commands positions for those who pass through the educational system, but the right to do this is based very largely on ability to pay.

The civil service in Britain in 1939 was uniform in all the regular departments of the government, and was divided into three levels. From the bottom up, these were known as "clerical," "executive," and "administrative." Promotion from one level to another was

not impossible but was so rare that the vast majority remained in the level they first entered. The most important level—the administrative—was reserved to the well-to-do classes by its method of recruitment. It was open in theory to everyone through a competitive examination. This examination, however, could be taken only by those who were twenty-two or twenty-four years old; it gave 300 out of 1,300 points for the oral part; and the written part was based on liberal subjects as taught in the "public schools" and universities. All this served to restrict admission to the administrative level of the civil service to young men whose families could afford to bring them up in the proper fashion. In 1930, of 56 civil servants in posts commanding salaries of over £2,000 each, only 9 did not have the upperclass background of Oxford, Cambridge, or a "public school." This policy of restricting was most evident in the Foreign Office, where from 1851 to 1919 every person on the administrative level was from Oxford or Cambridge, one-third were from Eton, and one-third had titles. The use of educational restrictions as a method for reserving the upper ranks of the civil service to the well-to-do was clearly deliberate and was, on the whole, successful in achieving the purpose intended. As a result, as H. R. G. Greaves wrote, "The persons to be found in the principal positions of the civil service in 1850, 1900, or 1930 did not differ markedly in type."

A similar situation was to be found elsewhere. In the army in peacetime the officers were almost entirely from the upper class. They obtained commissions by an examination, largely oral, based on study at the universities or at the two military schools (Sandhurst and Woolwich) which cost £300 a year to attend. The pay was small, with heavy deductions for living expenses, so that an officer needed a private income. The navy was somewhat more democratic, although the proportion of officers risen from the ranks decreased from 10.9 percent in 1931 to 3.3 percent in 1936. The naval school (Dartmouth) was very expensive, costing £788 a year.

The clergy of the Established Church represented the same social class, since, until well into the twentieth century, the upper ranks of the clergy were named by the government, and the lower acquired their appointments by purchase. As a consequence, in the 1920's, 71 of 80 bishops were from expensive "public" schools.

The various members of the legal profession were also very likely to be of the upper class, because legal training was long and expensive. This training generally began at one of the older universities. For admission to the bar a man had to be a member of one of the four Inns of Court (Inner Temple, Middle Temple, Lincoln's Inn, Gray's Inn). These are private clubs to which admission was by nomination of members and payment of large admission fees varying from £58 to £208. A member was expected to eat dinners in his inn twenty-four nights a year for three years before being called to the bar. Then he was expected to begin practice by acting as "devil" (clerk) to a barrister for a couple of years. During these years the "devil," even in 1950, paid 100 guineas to the barrister, £130 a year for his share of the rent, 50 guineas a year to the clerk, 30 guineas for his wig and gown, and numerous other "incidental" expenses. Accordingly, it is not surprising to find that sons of wage earners formed less than 1 percent of the admissions to Lincoln's Inn in 1886-1923 and were only 1.8 percent in the period 1923-1927. In effect, then, a member

of the bar might well pass five years after receiving the bachelor's degree before he could reach a position where he could begin to earn a living.

As a result, members of the bar have been, until very recently, almost entirely from the well-to-do classes. Since judges are appointed exclusively from barristers with from seven to fifteen years of experience, the judicial system has also been monopolized by the upper classes. In 1926, 139 out of 181 judges were graduates of expensive "public" schools. The same conditions also exist on the lower levels of justice where the justice of the peace, an unpaid official for whom no legal training was required, was the chief figure. These justices of the peace have always been offshoots of the "county families" of well-to-do persons.

With a system of legal administration and justice such as this, the process of obtaining justice has been complex, slow and, above all, expensive. As a result, only the fairly well-to-do can defend their rights in a civil suit and, if the less well-to-do go to court at all, they find themselves in an atmosphere completely dominated by members of the upper classes. Accordingly, the ordinary Englishman (over 90 percent of the total) avoid all litigation even when he has right on his side.

As a result of the conditions just described, the political history of Britain in the twentieth century has been a long struggle for equality. This struggle has appeared in various forms: as an effort to extend educational opportunities, as an effort to extend health and economic security to the lower classes, as an effort to open the upper ranks of the civil services and the defense forces, as well as the House of Commons itself, to those classes which lacked the advantages in leisure and training provided by wealth..

In this struggle for equality the goal has been sought by leveling the upper classes down as well as by leveling the lower classes up. The privileges of the former have been curtailed, especially by taxation and more impersonal methods of recruitment to office, at the same time that the opportunities of the latter have been extended by widening educational advantages and by the practice of granting a living payment for services rendered. In this struggle, revolutionary changes have been made by the Liberal and Conservative parties as well as by the Labour Party, each hoping to be rewarded by the gratitude of the masses of the people at the polls.

Until 1915 the movement toward equality was generally supported by the Liberals and resisted by the Conservatives, although this alignment was not invariable. Since 1923 the movement toward equality has generally been supported by Labour and resisted by the Conservatives. Here, again, the alignment has not been invariable. Both before and after World War I there have been very progressive Conservatives and very reactionary Liberals or Labourites. Moreover, since 1924 the two major parties have, as already mentioned, come to represent two opposing vested economic interests—the interests of entrenched wealth and of entrenched unionism. This has resulted in making the positions of the two parties considerably more antithetical than they were in the period before 1915 when both major parties represented the same segment of society. Moreover, since 1923, as the alienation of the two parties on the political scene has become steadily wider, there

has arisen a tendency for each to take on the form of an exploiting group in regard to the great middle class of consumers and unorganized workers.

In the two decades, 1925-1945, it seemed that the efforts of men like Lord Melchett and others would create a situation where monopolized industry and unionized labor would cooperate on a program of restricted output, high wages, high prices, and social protection of both profits and employment to the jeopardy of all economic progress and to the injury of the middle and professional classes who were not members of the phalanx ranks of cartelized industry and unionized labor. Although this program did succeed to the point where much of Britain's industrial plant was obsolescent, inefficient, and inadequate, this trend was partly ended by the influence of the war but chiefly by the victory of the Labour Party in the election of 1945.

As a result of this victory, the Labour Party began an assault on certain segments of heavy industry in order to nationalize them, and initiated a program of socialized public services (like public medicine, subsidized low food prices, and so on) which broke the tacit understanding with monopolized industry and began to distribute the benefits of the socialized economy outside the ranks of trade-union members to other members of the lower and lower middle classes. The result was to create a new society of privilege which from some points of view looked like an inversion of the society of privilege of 1900. The new privileged were the trade-union elite of the working classes and the older privileged of the upper classes, while the exploited were the middle class of white-collar and professional workers who did not have the unionized strength of the one or the invested wealth of the other.

Chapter 30—Political History to 1939

The domestic political history of Britain in the twentieth century could well be divided into three parts by the two great wars with their experience of coalition or "national" government.

In the first period ten years of Conservative government (in which Salisbury was succeeded by Balfour) were followed by ten years of Liberal government (in which Campbell-Bannerman was succeeded by Asquith). The dates of these four governments are as follows:

A. Conservative

1. Lord Salisbury, 1895-1902
2. Arthur J. Balfour, 1902-1905

B. Liberal

1. Henry Campbell-Bannerman, 1905-1908