‘PARTLY MADE POLITICIANS’: THE YOUTH WINGS OF THE BRITISH POLITICAL PARTIES, 1918-1939

The Complete Imp, *The Imp*, April 1931, p. 16.

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of History PhD by Matthew David Seddon, Lancaster University, May 2020.

Abstract

This thesis is a comprehensive study of the youth wings of the major political parties between the wars. It examines the Conservative Party's Junior Imperial League, the Labour Party's League of Youth, the Liberal Party's National League of Young Liberals, and the Communist Party of Great Britain's Young Communist League. This thesis makes a significant contribution to our understanding of how the 1918 and 1928 Franchise Acts changed British political culture, and how young people were inducted into the British political system.

The central premise of this thesis is that it is only by looking at these groups comparatively that we can get the full story of politicised youth. It will argue that, while their primary purpose was to recruit activists and party workers, these organisations were far more than insular, narrow interest groups. Rather than operating in isolation, these organisations learned from one another, adapted and reacted to each other's activities, and actively sought to cast their recruiting nets as wide as possible to counter each other's influence.

Whereas studies of the class and gender dynamics of interwar politics abound, this thesis brings youth to the forefront of its examination of political culture between the wars. This thesis uses youth as a new lens through which to explore the themes of citizenship, the relationship between people and politicians, the blurring of the boundaries between public and private lives, and how mass democracy changed the practice of politics. By looking at youth in this way, this thesis paints a picture of a political culture which sought to integrate as many people as possible.

Contents

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

BUF	British Union of Fascists
BWSF	British Workers' Sports Federation
BYPA	British Youth Peace Assembly
CCC	Clarion Cycling Club
CLC	Central Labour College
CPGB	Communist Party of Great Britain
EMB	Empire Marketing Board
GE	General Election
JIL	Junior Imperial League
JWT	J. Walter Thompson
KKK	Ku Klux Klan
LAC	London Advisory Committee
LNU	League of Nations Union
LoN	League of Nations
LoY	League of Youth
LSE	London School of Economics
NAC	National Advisory Committee
NCCL	National Council of Civil Liberties
NCLC	National Council of Labour Colleges
NEC	National Executive Committee
NLYL	National League of Young Liberals
NWSA	National Workers' Sports Association
SDF	Social Democratic Federation
SSS	Socialist Sunday School

UEP United Empire Party

YHA Youth Hostel Association

YMCA Young Men's Christian Association

Section 1: Introduction

Chapter 1: Introduction

Young People Then and Now

Throughout the course of my writing this thesis, generational politics has increasingly come under the spotlight. Some of Britain's most pressing social issues appear increasingly to be divided along generational lines; meanwhile, the significance of winning over young people is understood by both the Labour and Conservative parties. The 2017 General Election saw the coining of the word 'youthquake' to describe the phenomenon of young people turning out in vast numbers to support the Labour Party, potentially snatching Theresa May's majority.[1] Since then there has been significant debate over whether the phenomenon existed at all; however, this did not stop Oxford Dictionaries naming 'youthquake' their word of the year, and the Conservative Party acknowledging that they needed to do more to appeal to young people.[2] More recently, young Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg has been making waves with impassioned speeches delivered directly to world leaders, and young people have organised 'climate strikes' to raise awareness of the issue. What has proven to be especially interesting to me, as a historian of youth, is not events themselves but rather the reaction to them from politicians and commentators. May criticised the climate strikes by accusing children of wasting lesson time.[3] Thunberg has attracted even harsher criticism, bordering on revulsion and

[1] Alan Travis, '"Youthquake" behind Labour election surge divides generations', *The Guardian*, https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/jun/20/youthquake-behind-labour-election-surge-divides-generations?CMP=twt_gu, [accessed 26 September 2019].
[2] The British Election Study Team, 'The myth of the 2017 youthquake election', *British Election Study,* https://www.britishelectionstudy.com/bes-impact/the-myth-of-the-2017-youthquake-election/#.XYyGUn97mUl, [accessed 26 September 2019]; Peter Kellner, 'The British Election Study claims there was no "youthquake" last June. It's wrong', *Prospect*, https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/blogs/peter-kellner/the-british-election-study-claims-there-was-no-youthquake-last-june-its-wrong, [accessed 26 September 2019]; Oxford Dictionaries, 'Word of the Year 2017 is…', https://languages.oup.com/word-of-the-year/word-of-the-year-2017, [accessed 26 September 2019].
[3] Joe Watts, 'Theresa May criticises schoolchildren protesting against looming climate disaster for wasting lesson time', *The Independent,* [accessed 26 September 2019], https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/theresa-may-climate-change-school-pupils-protest-lesson-time-teachers-a8781046.html.

ridicule, whereby she has been accused of 'brainwashing', likened to a 'cult leader', MPs accused of 'fawning over her', and, in the most extreme cases, her autism mocked.[4] When mass democracy arrived in Britain less than one hundred years ago, politicians were also faced with politically active youth; yet, the reaction was somewhat different. Young people were taken seriously, their views and concerns listened to, and a sincere attempt was made to mobilise them for politics. What stands as the greatest contrast is that while inter-war commentators saw potential weaknesses in the ability of young people to understand and practise politics, they did not conclude that young people should therefore be dismissed out of hand. Instead, young people needed to be inducted into the political system and their energies put towards useful political activities. It is with the integration of young people into the British political system which this thesis is concerned. Among its chief interests are exploring how young people were imagined by politicians, exploring how young people were constructed as citizens and what role was created for them in the political system, examining how young people's 'political identity' was formed, and reconstructing their experiences as activists and party workers. All of this is wrapped up in the aim of considering what the effect of mass democracy was on British political culture; that being the set of rules and understandings which govern how politics is practised.

Background

Although Britain had long had a parliamentary system with elected representatives, this was not an equal system. It was only after 1928 that all citizens were granted a vote on equal terms. Following the 1918 Representation of the People Act the electorate in Britain was tripled. The Act removed the

[4] Rebecca Speare-Cole, 'Jeremy Corbyn's brother Piers labels teen climate activist Greta Thunberg an "ignorant brainwashed child"', *Evening Standard*, https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/jeremy-corbyn-s-brother-labels-teen-climate-activist-greta-thunberg-an-ignorant-brainwashed-child-a4125046.html, [accessed 26 September 2019]; Igor Ogorodnev, '"We don't have a future": Greta Thunberg used to offer salvation, now she prepares us for doomsday', *RT*, https://www.rt.com/op-ed/457455-greta-thunberg-cult-british-parliament-doomsday/, [accessed 26 September 2019]; Lloyd Evans, 'Why are our MPs fawning over Greta Thunberg?', *The Spectator*, https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2019/04/why-are-our-mps-fawning-over-greta-thunberg/, [accessed 26 September 2019].

last of the property requirements for men, introducing universal suffrage for men over the age of twenty-one; and enfranchised women over thirty, still subject to some property requirements. This was followed a decade later by a further Representation Act which meant that, in the 1929 General Election, women were able to vote on the same terms as men for the first time in British history and made up the majority of the electorate. This sudden and substantial expansion in the number of eligible voters meant that British politicians were faced with an electorate where the majority had never voted before, and although many had familial or class loyalties to one party or another, they lacked the personal connection of being a 'Labour voter' or 'Conservative voter'. Combine this with the Liberal Party splitting and the Labour Party growing, and the post-1918 voters would have been faced with an 'incredibly confusing political landscape.'[5]

This 'confusing' landscape forced the parties to adapt and change their approach in order to try to appeal to a broader set of the electorate. For the Conservative Party, the traditional party of the landed elite, the introduction of universal suffrage represented an existential threat and they genuinely feared, even after numerous electoral successes, that the electorate would eventually turn against them and return a Socialist government.[6] In addition, behind the scenes, Baldwin was besieged by ideological factions in his party. Some sought modernisation, while others saw Baldwin as a soft, ineffectual Conservative and threatened to drift towards the British Union of Fascists (BUF).[7] For the Labour Party, the challenge came from a need to establish itself in the minds of voters as being the true second party of British politics, supplanting the Liberals. In addition, the party needed to fundamentally restructure itself in order to broaden its base from traditional trade union support.[8]

[5] Andrew Thorpe, *A History of the British Labour Party.* Second Edition (Palgrave, 2001), p. 33.
[6] E.H.H. Green, *Ideologies of Conservatism. Conservative Political Ideas in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 135; David Jarvis, 'Shaping the Conservative Electoral Hegemony 1918-39', in Jon Lawrence and Miles Taylor (eds.), *Party, State and Society. British Electoral Behaviour in Britain since 1820* (Scolar, 1997), p. 131.
[7] C.G. Webber, *The Ideology of the British Right* (Croom Helm, 1986), pp. 27-35.
[8] Matthew Worley, 'Introduction: Labour's Grass Roots', in Matthew Worley (ed.), *Labour's Grass Roots. Essays on the Activities of the Local Labour Parties and Members 1918-45* (Ashgate, 2005), p. 1; Matthew Worley, 'The Fruits on the Tree: Labour's Constituency Party between the Wars', in Matthew Worley (ed.), *The Foundations of the British Labour Party. Identities, Cultures and Perspectives 1900-39* (Ashgate, 2009), p. 193; Matthew Worley, *Labour Inside the Gate. A History of the British Labour Party between the Wars* (IB Tauris, 2005), p. 47.

Later in the period, Labour were plunged into crisis with the loss of many of their early gains following MacDonald's formation of the National Government in 1931. Finally, the Liberal Party needed to overcome the divisions which had beset the party during the First World War and avoid the threat of Labour. Although the 1918 General Election had been a disaster for the party, it was not, at that stage, immediately obvious that it had entered an unstoppable decline. The election, it was believed, was held under unique circumstances: the first election in eight years, the first under the new electorate, and with a well-organised opponent in the coalition parties. Furthermore, the election was widely seen as an endorsement of the government which had just brought the war to a victorious end, rather than as an admonishment of the Asquithian Liberal Party.[9] Thus, the need to reinvent themselves and to find a place in what was now a three party system was felt more keenly than in any of the other parties if a revival was to be achieved.

While many volumes have been written on how the parties adapted to mass democracy, one facet of how they restructured themselves to try and integrate new voters into the political culture remains understudied. All three of the major parties operated youth organisations for some, or all of this period. Although their youngest members were not able to vote, the groups admitted members as young as fourteen who would not have been able to vote until at least the age of twenty-one, the importance of capturing young people before they had the opportunity to develop a party allegiance was recognised. The Director-General of the Conservative Party Robert Topping observed: 'Although it is reasonable to assume that in later years the great majority of people hold fixed political views, it is improbable that any large percentage of… young people… have definitely allied themselves to any party.'[10] Combined with the youth wings of the smaller parties, and with non-political organisations aimed at involving young people in politics, the period 1918-1939 saw an explosion of organised youth groups. The organisations on which my research focuses are the Conservative Party's Junior Imperial

[9] David Dutton, 'Personality Politics and the Break-up of the Party (1914-1929)', in Robert Ingham and Duncan Brack (eds.), *Peace, Reform and Liberation. A History of Liberal Politics in Britain 1679-2011* (Biteback Publishing, 2011), p. 179.
[10] Robert Topping to the Frazer Committee, 1937, Conservative Party Archive, CCO 506/4/1.

League (JIL), the Labour Party's Labour League of Youth (LoY), the Liberal Party's National League of Young Liberals (NLYL), and the Communist Party of Great Britain's (CPGB) Young Communist League (YCL). The value of these organisations was well understood by their adult parties. The Liberal Party even sought to operate juvenile Liberal Clubs for the very youngest children, stating that they had 'obtained many senior members through the energy of these small workers' and had been able to 'furnish the Young Liberal Association with partly made politicians.'[11]

The Four Fears

The mainstream political parties in Britain identified three main threats which their youth wings were intended to guard against: the opposition parties, radical politics, and voter apathy. Underpinning all these threats was a fourth fear, shared by politicians across the political spectrum, that the new electorate would be unable to cast their ballot responsibly. Across a range of intellectuals, journalists, and politicians there existed a concern that people were not educated enough to properly cast their ballot; that they might not understand their roles as citizens; or that they might vote for revolutionary parties.[12] In private correspondence during the JIL's post-war revival efforts, League Chairman Lord Dunglass[13] outlined his thoughts on the problems of politically active youth:

> You will never get young people of this age, 18-30, to produce profound political truths; they like: (a) waving a flag for King, Country and Empire, (b) airing their views which are always immature and in nine cases out of ten the most arrant nonsense, (c) enjoying themselves with their fellows and having a good time. Very natural and right and proper – a nation of political minded youths would be one of prigs and truly fearful.[14]

This quote rather neatly demonstrates three of the four main threats faced by all parties at this time.

[11] *The Forward View*, February 1927, p. 31.
[12] Helen McCarthy, 'Associational and Volunteerism in Interwar Britain', in Matthew Hilton and James McKay (eds.), *The Ages of Voluntarism. How we got to the Big Society* (Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 53.
[13] Now better known as Alec Douglas-Home, Lord Dunglass was Chairman of the JIL from 1937 and oversaw its post-war reconstruction.
[14] 'Notes by Lord Dunglass, Chairman of the Junior Imperial League, January 29th, 1943', Correspondence with Lord Dunglass on the future of the Junior Imperial League, 1942-3, CCO 506/4/4.

Firstly, Dunglass warned of radical politics. To him, young people were only interested in a tub-thumping, flag-waving, simplistic form of nationalism, and his concerns about young people were shared by many of his contemporaries who observed the relative youth of those involved with the BUF.[15] A report from the Lancashire and Cheshire Federation of the JIL warned that 'as soon as a boy left school and entered upon his business career he at once came into touch with socialist and revolutionary agents… Efforts must therefore be directed to get hold of recruits at as early an age as possible.'[16]

Dunglass' first fear is closely related to his second: voter ignorance. There was a widespread fear across the political spectrum that voters would simply be unable to cast their ballot responsibly. Within the Conservative Party there were significant worries about the 'capacity' of new voters – especially the younger ones.[17] Many of Baldwin's speeches were designed to educate his own followers as much as the new electorate.[18] Similarly, the Labour Party understood the importance of political education; Ramsay MacDonald believed that this was the only route to Socialism.[19] Like Baldwin, MacDonald feared the consequences of an uninformed and irrational electorate, considering them to be 'morally and intellectually lazy.'[20]

Thirdly, Lord Dunglass turned his attention to voter apathy. Despite all their fears of radicalisation, and with all the propaganda and education efforts they could muster, there was no guarantee that the new electorate would even turn up at the ballot box. Dunglass warned that most young people were more concerned with enjoying themselves and having a good time than with engaging with politics in a meaningful way. There was great fear amongst politicians who perceived

---

[15] Martin Pugh, *Hurrah for the Blackshirts! Fascists and Fascism in Britain between the Wars* (Pimlico, 2005), p. 139-40; John D. Brewer, *Moseley's Men. The British Union of Fascists in the West Midlands* (Gower Publishing, 1984), p. 7; Colin Cross, *The Fascists in Britain* (Barrie and Rockcliffe, 1961), p. 67; Thomas Linehan, *British Fascism 1918-39. Parties, Ideology and Culture* (Manchester University Press, 200), p. 163.
[16] *Junior Imperial League Gazette*, October 1921, p. 2.
[17] Stuart Ball, *Portrait of a Party: The Conservative Party in Britain 1918-1945* (Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 93.
[18] Philip Williamson, 'The Doctrinal Politics of Stanley Baldwin', in Michael Bentley (ed.), *Public and Private Doctrine* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 189.
[19] Laura Beers, *Your Britain. Media and the Making of the Labour Party* (Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 28.
[20] Quoted in Laura Beers, 'Education or Manipulation? Labour, Democracy, and the Popular Press in Inter-war Britain, *Journal of British Studies*, 48.1 (2009), p. 132.

the emergence of a so-called 'silent majority' who had 'turned away from the usual rituals of participatory politics' in favour of political apathy.[21] In fact, Melanie Tebbutt suggests that apathy was a bigger fear than the potential militarisation of the young.[22] Reaching this majority was both a challenge for the parties to confront, and an opportunity for them to seize.

Finally, the underlying threat faced by all political parties were their opposition parties and the fear that any of the threats identified by Dunglass could lead to one of these parties taking power. Although Baldwin saw Lloyd-George and the Liberal Party as a short-term threat, it was MacDonald and the insurgent Labour Party who were the long-term danger.[23] That politicians of all stripes held such fears suggests a fluid political environment, consisting of floating or undecided voters, rather than one dominated by established loyalties. This factor is especially pertinent when considering the class makeup of the organisations, with working-class support for Labour far from guaranteed and offering the Conservative Party a chance to capture their loyalty. It is important that we understand these four fears because they underpinned all the activities of the parties at the time; any propaganda they published or restructuring they underwent served to counteract one of these influences.

Historiography and Research Questions

The inter-war years saw a growth in the number of voluntary organisations for young people. As well as the official youth wings of the parties there were various affiliated university groups, Co-Operative Society youth groups, and dozens of other specialist organisations all founded with the aim of engaging young people in politics and providing citizenship training. Where most historians choose to focus their research on a single one of these organisations, this thesis will take a fully comprehensive approach. It will look at the youth wings of the three major political parties, and the Communist Party,

[21] Geraint Thomas, 'Political Modernity and "Government" in the Construction of Inter-war Democracy and National Encounters', in Laura Beers and Geraint Thomas (eds.), *Brave New World. Imperial and Democratic Nation-Building between the Wars* (Institute of Historical Research, 2011), p. 53.
[22] Melanie Tebbutt, *Being Boys. Youth, Leisure and Identity in the Inter-War Years* (Manchester University Press, 2012), p. 24.
[23] Maurice Cowling, *The Impact of Labour 1920-1924* (Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 299.

together in order to explore how they interacted, competed with, and learned from each other. Despite being predominantly interested in the youth wings of political parties, some, non-political organisations such as the Kibbo Kift Kindred and the Woodcraft Folk will appear where they can provide extra context. Historians of non-partisan youth organisations have typically been more successful at examining how these groups fitted into wider social and cultural trends in Britain. John Springhall is especially prolific, using youth organisations to explore conceptions of empire and militarism.[24] In addition, non-partisan youth groups have been used to explore citizenship training, moral panics, modernity, and the growing trend of volunteerism in Britain.[25]

The exclusion of these groups from this thesis, of course, has a practical element: attempting to give equal footing to every youth organisation active from 1918-1939 would be a monolithic task far beyond a study of this nature. From a research standpoint, many of these non-political organisations could be better described as interest groups whose focus was on recruiting from certain groups, such as women or religious denominations. The breadth of activities and recruitment, as well as the direct involvement of Britain's political parties, in the official youth wings make these organisations far better platforms to answer the core questions of this study.

Where historians have studied the political parties' reaction to mass democracy they have tended to focus on the adult organisation. Where they have not, the focus has typically been on non-partisan youth organisations. Very few historians have paid serious attention to the youth wings of the political parties. Stephen Heathorn and David Greenspoon, whose article on the JIL and YCL is the only piece of work to look at youth organisations in tandem, have credited this oversight to the youth

[24] J.O. Springhall, 'The Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism in Relation to British Youth Movements, 1908-1930', *International Review of Social History*, 16.2 (1971), pp. 125-158; John Springhall, 'Woodcraft Youth: The Interwar Alternative to Scouting', *The Historian,* 155 (2012), pp. 26-30; John Springhall, 'Baden-Powell and the Scout Movement before 1920: Citizen Trainings or Soldiers of the Future', *English Historical Review*, 102 (1987), pp. 934-942; John Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society: British Youth Movements, 1883-1940* (Croom helm, 1977).

[25] John Springhall, *Coming of Age: Adolescence in Britain 1860-1960* (Gill and Macmillan Ltd., 1986); Paul Wilkinson, 'English Youth Movements, 1908-30', *Journal of Contemporary History* 4.2 (1969), pp. 3-23; James Robinson and Sarah Mills, 'Being observant and Observed: Embodied Citizenship Training in the Home Guard and the Boy Scout Movement, 1907-1945', *Journal of Historical Geography,* 38 (2012), pp. 412-423; Caitríona Beaumont, 'Fighting for the "Privileges of Citizenship": The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), Feminism and the Woman's Movement, 1928-1945', *Women's History Review*, 23.3 (2014), pp. 463-479.

organisations' failure to spark political interest in the majority of young people.[26] This is a fair accusation to level at the organisations. The JIL's peak membership of 250,000 is easily dwarfed by the Boy Scouts whose membership numbered in the millions. However, to dismiss them on these grounds is to make the mistake of assuming that the organisations ever aspired to achieve this, or that it was even a realistic goal. It raises the question, therefore, of whether the principal aim of the organisations was to create voters, or activists and workers. The latter model is more likely, and Claude Scott points out that even if a fraction of the JIL's 250,000 members took on an active role in politics then this still provided the party with thousands of electoral workers at relatively little cost.[27] Still, despite being more than ten years old, Heathorn and Greenspoon's assessment on the state of the historiography of the youth wings of the inter-war political parties remains accurate.

The result of this neglect has been that we know far more about the post-war iterations of the parties' youth organisations than we do about those of the inter-war years. This could be attributed to the much larger quantity of material available for organisations of this period; or, their comparatively longer lifespan: the Second World War created a distinct break between the organisations of the 1920s and 30s, and those of the 1940s onwards. Others may have been spurred to examine youth politics by contemporary changes to the franchise, such as Layton-Henry who, in the years following the enfranchisement of eighteen to twenty-one year-olds, produced articles on both the Young Conservatives and the Young Socialists. In the former, he offers a brief acknowledgement that his contemporary Young Conservatives were a 'direct decedent' of the JIL but offers little more commentary beyond background.[28] Similarly, Lawrence Black offers only a slight nod towards the Young Conservatives' predecessor.[29] The same can be said of the LoY: Layton-Henry utilises the inter-war organisation only as background for his work on their post-war revival, while

[26] Stephen Heathorn and David Greenspoon, 'Organizing Youth for Partisan Politics in Britain, 1918-c.1932', *The Historian,* 68.1 (2006), p. 118-19.
[27] Claude Fredrick Scott, 'Caring about the British Empire. British Imperial Activists Groups, 1900-1967, with Special Reference to the Junior Imperial League and the League of Empire Loyalists', unpublished PhD thesis, King's College London, 2013, p. 176.
[28] Z. Layton-Henry, 'The Young Conservatives 1945-70', *Journal of Contemporary History,* 8.2 (1973), p. 143.
[29] Lawrence Black, 'The Lost World of Young Conservatism', *The Historical Journal,* 51.4 (2008), p. 993.

Abrams and Little were more interested in investigating the state of their contemporary youth activists than creating a history of said activism.[30] The NLYL suffer even more acutely from this problem with essentially nothing being written about them prior to the 1960s, and even then research is sparse. Peter Hellyer is perhaps the organisation's most prolific historian producing two articles on the post-war Young Liberals.[31]

What quickly becomes apparent from studying the inter-war youth organisations is that many of the developments described by historians of the post-war have their roots in this period. What this suggests is that we are best served considering the youth organisations as part of a long-term pattern of reorganisations, which enabled Britain's political parties to adapt to societal changes both before the war and after. For instance, Martin Pugh cites the Primrose League as an example of such an organisation. He suggests that the League aimed to bring people, in this case predominantly women, into the party organisation who were not yet voters, but who would be in the years to come.[32] In this instance, the Conservative Party were anticipating changes which were yet to come: the formation of the Primrose League came a year before the Third Reform Act which expanded the electorate substantially. Just as it had done before the war, the experience of reorganisation gathered in the inter-war years then facilitated that which came in the post-war period. Helen McCarthy argues, for example, that it is insufficient to suggest that Labour's 1945 General Election victory rests on events of the 1940s alone; instead, suggesting that progress made in the inter-war years laid the groundwork.[33] Although organised youth was not part of McCarthy's remit in this instance, it is reasonable to see steps made in this regard as part of Labour's progress towards electability. Similarly,

[30] Z. Layton-Henry, 'Labour's Lost Youth', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 11.2/3 (1976), pp. 275-285; Philip Abrams and Alan Little, 'The Young Activist in British Politics', *the British Journal of Sociology*, 16.4 (1965), pp. 315-333.
[31] Peter Hellyer, 'The Young Liberals and the Left, 1965-70', *Journal of Liberal History*, 67 (2010), pp. 60-67; Peter Hellyer, 'Young Liberals: The "Red Guard" Era', *Journal of Liberal Democrat History*, 17 (1997-98), pp. 14-15.
[32] Martin Pugh, 'Popular Conservatism in Britain: Continuity and Change, 1880-1987', *Journal of British Studies,* 27.3 (1988), p. 259.
[33] Helen McCarthy, 'Whose Democracy? Histories of British Political Culture between the Wars' *The Historical Journal,* 55.1 (2012), pp. 227-28.

the Conservatives' rapid response to their 1945 defeat, of which the reformation of their youth organisation was a part, reflected the understanding that electoral defeats required reorganisation.[34]

Where historians have worked on the inter-war organisations, the JIL have received more attention than any of the others. Most historians of the Conservative Party only mention the JIL in passing. The two most significant works published on the JIL are a chapter in Neal McCrillis' book on the inter-war Conservative Party, which for a long time was acknowledged as the only work to pay any attention to the JIL; and, more recently, a PhD thesis by Claude Scott which explores the JIL alongside other Empire pressure groups.[35] We can learn a lot about the organisation, structure and leadership of the JIL from McCrillis' work which is invaluable to any historian wishing to study them.[36] However, what his work lacks is detail on the culture of the organisation; what would have been expected of a member; many details on their ideology; or any indicators of the members' experiences. Scott's work focuses intensely on one facet of the JIL: its role as an Empire pressure group. While Scott's work makes a significant contribution to debates on imperial culture between the wars[37] his decision to compare the JIL to an adult, non-partisan organisation means its exploration of the JIL's relationship to British political culture, its relationship to their adult party, and how it fits into the wider story of British youth organisations, is comparatively unexplored.

Similarly, the LoY has received only passing attention. The older, traditional histories of the Labour Party make almost no mention of the LoY at all: they are completely absent from Henry Pelling's account and receive only brief mention in G.D.H. Cole's work.[38] Where Cole mentions the LoY initially, it is mainly to acknowledge their existence or to place them in their context of the wider effort

[34] Layton-Henry, 'Young Conservatives', p. 146.
[35] Heathorn and Greenspoon acknowledge McCrillis as the only historian to pay attention to the JIL: Heathorn and Greenspoon, 'Organising Youth', p 94; Neal R. McCrillis, *The British Conservative Party in the Age of Universal Suffrage. Popular Conservatism, 1918-1929* (Ohio State University Press, 1998), pp. 83-109; Scott, 'Caring about the British Empire', unpublished PhD thesis, King's College London, 2013.
[36] The following chapter will go into more detail in this regard.
[37] For example MacKenzie and Porter: John MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire, the Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester University Press, 1984); Bernard Porter, *The Absent Minded Imperialists* (Oxford University Press, 2004); Bernard Porter, 'Further Thoughts on Imperial Absent-Mindedness' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 36.1 (2008), pp. 101-117.
[38] Henry Pelling, *A Short History of the Labour Party* (Macmillan Press, 1978); G.D.H. Cole, *A History of the Labour Party from 1914* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1948), p. 175.

by the party to restructure to allow the introduction of individual members. Where he provides greater detail he does so in a way which set the tone for future accounts of the LoY, describing the conflict between the LoY and the adult party, such as attempts to bar LoY members from associating with other working-class organisations.[39] The first work to look at the LoY in any detail is Zig Layton-Henry's 'Labour's Lost Youth' but he, like Cole, is predominantly interested in the LoY's failings.[40] Layton-Henry's work outlines in great detail the strife experienced by the LoY at the hands of Labour's National Executive Committee (NEC) but the voices of the membership are largely absent. More recently, Michelle Webb has attempted to remedy these problems and has produced the most detailed history of the LoY to date. Webb writes of the LoY in her PhD thesis and in a monograph adapted from said thesis. Her work covers the entire history of Labour's youth organisations from their inception as the LoY to their post-war revival and then to Young Labour in the 1990s and its purpose is to describe the history of the LoY and Labour's subsequent attempts to organise a youth wing.[41] It accounts for some of the pressures which led to the formation of the LoY, describing the 'economic and social uncertainty' of the nineteenth century which 'contributed to the establishment of all major youth movements',[42] but is made unique by the inclusion of oral history interviews which begin to capture for the first time some of the culture behind the organisations and the members' experiences of life in the LoY. However, due to the time elapsed between the inter-war years and the time she conducted her interviews there are very few which cover this period. Webb's interest is specifically the failure of the LoY, focusing extensively at the relationship between the LoY and Labour's NEC, and by her own admission it is a somewhat descriptive history.[43] Although this conflict has been the focus of much of the historiography on the LoY, it is not the whole story. This thesis will redress the balance and demonstrate that in many areas the LoY had the components to be a successful youth

[39] Cole, *Labour Party*, p. 338; p. 358; p. 364.
[40] Layton-Henry, 'Lost Youth', p. 275.
[41] Michelle Webb, *The Labour League of Youth. An Account of the Failure of the Labour Party to Sustain a Successful Youth Movement* (The Edwin Mellen Press Ltd., 2010), p. 1.
[42] Michelle Webb, 'The Rise and Fall of Labour Youth', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Huddersfield, 2007, p. 29.
[43] Webb, *League of Youth*, p. 1.

organisation and that it was only the conflict between the revolutionary and democratic socialists, which has characterised the Labour movement through its entire history, which made the organisation untenable.

The YCL suffer from similar problems to the LoY whereby the youth wing is often compared to the adult organisation and what was distinctive about the youth organisation is not explored. Prolific historian of the left Matthew Worley, for instance, makes frequent reference to them, but his work lacks sustained discussion.[44] Andrew Thorpe's overview of the party's membership makes only occasional reference.[45] One particularly informative monograph is Joel Lewis' work on British and American young Communist anti-Fascism; however, while his work is invaluable to any historian of the YCL his main aim is to trace the evolution of Communist thinking using youth as a case study, rather than to examine political culture or mass democracy more broadly.[46] This means that there is still plenty more to explore about the YCL and Heathorn and Greenspoon's assessment that British Communist groups still 'await their own historian' remains the case.[47] Originally, the YCL was intended to sit at the peripheries of this thesis and feature only where it could illuminate the activities of the LoY. However, it eventually became apparent that by the 1930s the YCL were exerting far more influence than their relatively small membership might lead one to assume.

The NLYL stand in contrast to the other organisations in that they appear to have fallen completely out of the historiographical record. The most likely explanation for this outcome is the dire situation which the party found itself in, something on which historians have generally preferred to focus.[48] We will go into this in more detail in the following chapter, but one of the most obvious effects

[44] Matthew Worley, *Class Against Class. The Communist Party between the Wars* (I.B. Tauris, 2002).
[45] Andrew Thorpe, 'The Membership of the Communist Party of Great Britain, 1920-1945', *The Historical Journal*, 43.3 (2000), pp. 777-800.
[46] Joel A. Lewis, *Youth Against Fascism. Young Communists in Britain and the United States, 1919-1939* (VDM Verlag, 2007).
[47] Heathorn and Greenspoon, 'Organizing Youth', p. 94, n. 20.
[48] A selection: David Dutton and Martin Pugh, 'Liberals in 1906: Flourishing or Doomed?', *Journal of Liberal History,* 54 (2007), pp. 53-58; Gavin J. Freeman, 'The Decline of the Liberal Party in the Heart of England: the Liberals in Leicestershire, 1914-24', *Historical Research*, 89.245 (2016), pp. 531-549; Chris Cook, *A Short History of the Liberal Party. The Road back to Power* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1976).

on the NLYL of the Liberal Party's decline was that there was simply not enough funding or management put into it when compared to the youth wings of other parties. The result of this lack of attention paid to the organisation is that comparatively little archival material has been retained or survived. The most valuable piece of work produced about the NLYL is the organisation's official history, produced by the party itself in the 1950s.[49] This short text provides vital context on some of the motivations behind the formation of the NLYL, but is limited by its brevity.

From these histories we get a fairly comprehensive sense of how each organisation fitted into their party's structure – how closely integrated each organisation was with its adult body, and to what extent this contributed to their electoral success or failure. This question of 'success' or 'failure' is another which has led to the organisations being understudied. As we saw from Michelle Webb's work, the LoY has typically been looked at as a 'failure' for its inability to attract youth in substantial numbers, and its frequent clashes with the adult party. Their relative size has led to them escaping the notice of some historians, but size is not the only way we can measure 'success' and 'failure'. By investigating the culture of these organisations as well as their activities, this thesis will argue that each organisation's ability to inspire a core group of dedicated enthusiasts, which may seem small compared to groups such as the Boy Scouts, was a significant success. They have also, universally, been looked at in their capacity as party workers and activists. Looking at the organisations in this way gives the impression of fairly insular groups whose activities never strayed outside the boundaries of party work, and whose interests were confined to internal party matters. The ways in which historians have typically looked at the parties' youth wings have caused them to overlook what these organisations can tell us about the changing nature of British political culture brought about by mass democracy.

Moving beyond the internal culture of the organisations, this thesis rests on one, simple question: what happens to our understanding of British political culture between the wars when we

[49] Audrey Downs and Evan Richards, *Fifty Years Young. The Story of the National League of Young Liberals 1903-1953* (Liberal Publication Department, 1953), p. 3, LSE Archive, JOSEPHY 14/4.

bring youth to the forefront of the investigation? While this thesis does not limit itself only to questions pertaining to political culture, historians of this topic have proven to be especially influential on this thesis. A recent article by Helen McCarthy is one such work. McCarthy raises the question of what it meant to live in a democratic society. How was the new mass electorate imagined by the political class? How were the political identities of the new electorate constructed and sustained?[50] These big-issue questions have the potential to connect to a vast number of historical debates and bringing youth to the forefront of an investigation into political culture can shed new light on these areas. Exploring the organisations in this way can give us fresh understanding of some of the dynamics at play in Britain's political culture. It will connect to debates surrounding how politicians communicated their message, and how developing technologies influenced political practices. It will also consider not only how people related to their politicians, but also to Parliament itself. Richard Toye, for instance, has suggested that debates over Parliamentary style going on within the Commons itself were reflective of 'more general disputes over the culture and ideology of British politics in this period.'[51] A close study of the youth organisations can offer a fresh perspective on these debates: what were the new generation being taught about the role of Parliament? Did it remain a distant place where decisions were made on people's behalf, or did new voters demand more influence over policy? In addition, what was the character of the conduct of British politics? While inter-war politics is sometimes portrayed as a battle between two parties over the right to govern, was there in fact more room for cooperation despite the inherent adversarial nature of the British system? Pat Thane argues that we tend to take for granted the relative stability of British politics, and while she is correct that there were one-party governments for only seven years during this period, the longevity of the National Government, and the size of its majority, point to a political system which continued to support the established parties while countries in Europe fell to radical politics.[52] It may be, therefore,

[50] McCarthy, 'Whose Democracy?', p. 223.
[51] Richard Toye, 'The Rhetorical Culture of the House of Commons after 1918', *History,* 99:335 (2014), p. 271.
[52] Pat Thane raises the issue of this characterisation in the context of the political stability of the period: Pat Thane, 'The Impact of Mass Democracy on British Political Culture, 1918-1939', in Julie Gottlieb and Richard

that the parties' willingness to accept young people into their ranks is a contributing factor to this stability: by gathering up young people in the numbers they did, the political parties successfully shielded themselves from the allure of the far left and right and reduced the potential for generational conflict. Certainly, as we will come to see, the parties who integrated their youth wings more closely suffered less from this problem. As a final point, this thesis aims not only to increase our understanding of British political culture, but also to do justice to these often overlooked organisations, and to demonstrate that these groups are as significant to the story of organised youth as those which have received more attention from historians.

What is a Youth Organisation?

This thesis makes frequent use of two important terms: youth, and youth organisation. The definition of youth is a complex issue, one with which the parties themselves struggled, and will be dealt with in more depth in the following chapter. The current best definition of a youth organisation is offered by John Springhall who identifies a youth organisation by:

> Its willingness to admit unlimited numbers of children, adolescents, and young adults, with the aim of propagating some sort of code of living. It should also encourage the participation of its youthful members as leaders and organisers, allow for the possibility of competing for awards and badges, and provide them with a specific identity or status in the form of a uniform.[53]

While Springhall's definition remains the most comprehensive, it is clearly designed to fit only with his own research interests of non-partisan organisations. Springhall himself addresses this, and misses the opportunity to correct the record when he dismisses the Young Conservatives as not being a true youth organisation on the grounds that 'They do not aim at comprehensiveness in membership or training, they lack an explicit ideological framework, or they do not include a sufficient degree of youth involvement in leadership and organisation.'[54] He does not mention the youth wings of any other

Toye (eds), *The Aftermath of Suffrage: Women, Gender, and Politics in Britain, 1918-1945* (Macmillan, 2013), p. 56.

[53] Springhall, *Youth*, p. 13.

[54] Springhall, *Youth*, p. 13.

party. Regardless of whether Springhall's assessment is true for the Young Conservatives after 1945 it is certainly an inaccurate assessment of the JIL, and of any of the other youth organisations covered in this thesis. It is therefore necessary to tweak Springhall's definition in order to accommodate the political youth organisations, but not to fundamentally alter the substance.

First, competing for award badges does not translate well into the political youth organisation. Members of the JIL were eligible for material recognition in the form of Special Service Bars, medals awarded to members by the party on recommendation by their branch.[55] However, it is impossible to argue that this is as robust a system as that adopted by the Boy Scouts. Rather, this was an extension of a system already available to any party worker as opposed to something specifically designed for young people. Given that this section of the definition substantially narrows the field of what could constitute a youth organisation, I propose removing it. Secondly, the section about identity being received through a uniform needs addressing. Springhall is right to identify the uniform as being important in identity creation, and this phenomenon has been observed for the BUF as well as the Boy Scouts.[56] However, it is precisely because of this association with Fascism that uniforms were not adopted by the political youth wings of the inter-war years; the LoY specifically identified the association with militarism as a reason why they should not have one.[57] The British government came to the same conclusion that the wearing of uniforms by extreme political parties was helping their image and thus serving to propagate them; thus, the Public Order Act 1936 was passed. This act enshrined in law that 'any person who in any public place or at any public meeting wears uniform signifying his association with any political organisation or with the promotion of any political object shall be guilty of an offence.'[58] It is important, therefore, to place the youth organisations in the unique cultural and social context in which they sit. Their leadership and membership was more wary of

[55] Correspondence related to Special Service Bars, CCO 506/5/10.
[56] Michael A. Spurr, ''Living the Blackshirt Life': Culture, Community and the British Union of Fascists, 1932-1940', *Contemporary European History*, 12.3 (2003), p. 318.
[57] *Monthly Bulletin,* October 1932, p. 1.
[58] Public Order Act 1936 Section 1, https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Edw8and1Geo6/1/6/section/1, [accessed 25 October 2017].

uniforms than that of the non-partisan organisations, and it would simply be unfair to disqualify them as youth organisations on the grounds that one of the criteria for classifying them as such became a criminal offence. Further to this, a uniform is not the only way through which a visual cultural identification could be made and Chapter 3 will go into further detail on how the JIL, LoY, and NLYL utilised membership badges and branded ephemera to achieve this effect.

With these points in mind, I would propose that Springhall's definition should be modified to better accommodate the political youth organisations of the inter-war years:

> A youth organisation is a structured group which is identified by its willingness to admit an unlimited number of children and young adults with the aim of propagating a specific code of living. It should also seek to provide its young members with the opportunity, and encourage them to, participate in the leadership and running of the organisation. It should also cultivate a unique culture and identity through visual iconography, such as the membership badge, and by providing members a connection to a shared history.

Sources and Methodology

As discussed above, historians have tended to adopt a structural approach when discussing the youth organisations, or have placed them in the background when discussing the adult party. Works which seek to explore the social aspect of party membership, or which create bottom-up histories, can provide useful templates for studying the inter-war organisations, regardless of the period or party on which they focus. The work of Raphael Samuel has proven to be influential on historians looking at internal party cultures. His work has been used to explore the social lives of CPGB members, and how party membership could encompass the entirety of a member's life.[59] Lawrence Black describes Samuel's work as 'a method of exploring the world of the politically affiliated, from ideology to the rituals of branch meetings and how much such identities inflected their everyday behaviour and

[59] Pamela Fisher & Roy Fisher, 'The "Autodidact", the Pursuit of Subversive Knowledge and the Politics of Change', *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 28.4 (2007), p. 518.

outlooks' which can be applied across the political spectrum.[60] This thesis, therefore, is as much a social and cultural history as it is a political one. It places youth at the forefront and seeks to create a cultural history of the organisations which gets to the root of the members' experiences, how they related to the organisations to which they belonged, and how they engaged with politics. By applying frameworks created by historians of the post-war, we can begin to better understand the effect the extension of the franchise had on young people and their relationship to politics. Jon Lawrence, for instance, suggests that British politics has always operated with a large gulf between people and politicians.[61] The extent to which politicians of all levels involved themselves with the running of their parties' youth organisations challenges this assessment. This thesis will attempt to reconstruct the experiences of the membership, investigating how they were propagandised to and how they reacted to that propaganda. It will attempt to piece together how much operational agency these organisations were granted by their parent parties; to what extent they were able to create their own programme of activities; and manage their own governance. The extent to which politicians attempt to exercise control over their parties' membership, and the extent to which members went along with this, can be hugely informative about the relationship between politicians and the people in the age of mass democracy.

In order to pursue my research questions this thesis will use a variety of sources, the bulk of which comprises the periodicals of each of the organisations, material which has been underutilised by historians.[62] In researching this thesis I have read through almost twenty years' worth of periodicals, encompassing as close to the entire run of each one as the archives will allow. All of the youth organisations published periodicals for some duration of their existence. The exact history of each periodical will be covered in the following chapter but here I shall critically examine how these

[60] Raphael Samuel, *The Lost World of British Communism* (Verso, 2006); Lawrence Black, 'The Lost World of Young Conservatism', *Historical Journal,* 51.4 (2008), p. 995.
[61] Jon Lawrence, 'The Culture of Elections in Britain', *History,* 96:324 (2011), p. 460.
[62] Garry Love demonstrates the lack of use of such sources by Conservative historians: Garry Love, 'The Periodical Press and the Intellectual Culture of Conservatism in Interwar Britain', *The Historical Journal,* 57.4 (2014), p. 1029.

sources will be used and what they can tell us about their respective organisations. These periodicals are typically housed in the main archive of their respective parties: the Conservative Party Archive in Oxford; the People's History Museum in Salford; and London School of Economic (LSE) for the NLYL. The British Library was able to provide many more issues when some collections were incomplete. Very limited amounts of material survive regarding the NLYL. One-time President of the NLYL, Frances Josephy, retained a modest quantity of organisational material in her personal papers and the majority of the issues of *Forward View* are housed in the British Library, while very few local branch minute books have been kept. For that reason, the NLYL will occupy a much smaller part of the thesis than the other youth organisations. The periodicals were a critical aspect of the coherence of the organisations, allowing otherwise disparate local branches to be joined together in a shared community in a similar fashion to Benedict Anderson's notions of the 'imagined community.'[63]

One of the crucial benefits of using the periodicals as sources is that these materials were delivered directly to the hands of the membership. This means we are able to get a window into how politicians communicated directly with their members, exposing clearly how they sought to mitigate the key problems which mass democracy created for them. Within these periodicals there is a two-way relationship between the party and the member. The adult party leadership created articles telling members what they wanted them to do, and tried to give them the information to politically shape them in the party's image. Then, there was member-created content. These were articles and letters written by members, branch reports detailing local activity, and photographs from local events. These all reflect how individual branches interpreted and acted upon what they were taught by their leadership. The branch reports, for example, could be extensive and detailed, and with so many pages dedicated to them it allows for a wide snapshot to be taken into how these organisations operated, what kinds of activities they organised, and how far they were absorbing the messages which were being sent by their leadership.

[63] Anderson also suggests that the invention of printing played a large part in the development of such communities: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, 1983), p. 46.

One of the key parts of my methodology, therefore, is to read between the lines and attempt to pick apart the relationship between the created object, its creators, and its audience.[64] The first issue is establishing circulation. Some inferences can be made: the fact that so many branch reports were received and published each month suggests that most branches were receiving and engaging with the periodical; however, it is impossible to know how many members of each branch were actually reading what was sent to them. Circulation figures, however, are notoriously unreliable to gauging readership: as Nicholas Pronay points out, an entire household would have had access to a newspaper which one member had bought.[65] In the same vein, a branch which ordered two-dozen copies of a periodical may have shared these around all their membership.[66] The second, and perhaps more significant, point to consider is the role of the editor. Although organisation members were able to write their own articles and reports to appear in the periodicals, it was ultimately the editor's decision what to include. For the JIL, the name of the editor is never given so little can be ascertained about their motives. However, considering the close involvement that the adult party had in the managing of the periodical is it probable that the editor would have exercised serious control over how much dissent from the party line was permitted. The editor of the LoY's periodicals was one of their founding members, Arthur Peacock. Peacock permitted a healthy amount of debate in the periodicals he oversaw, but had significant personal investment in the organisation and bemoaned the tendency for factionalism and infighting which could occur.[67] Of all the editors, it was Eliot Dodds of the NLYL who permitted the maximum amount of dissent from the party line. As we will see later, however, it was the internal debates of the party which consumed much of the NLYL's activities and left them struggling to find a place in the fracturing party.

[64] Sarah Barber and Corinna M. Peniston-Bird, 'Introduction, in Sarah Barber and Corinna M. Peniston-Bird, *History Beyond the Text* (Routledge, 2009), pp. 5-8.
[65] Nicholas Pronay, 'British Newsreels in the 1930s. Their Audience and Production', in Luke McKernan (ed.), *Yesterday's News. The British Cinema Newsreel Reader* (British Universities Film and Video Council, 2002), p. 142.
[66] The usual order of the Leicester branch of the LoY was two-dozen copies: Business Meeting, 4 February 1936, Record Office for Leicester, Lancashire and Rutland, DE8167.
[67] *The New Nation*, May 1936, p. 1.

A potential way of mitigating the influence of the editor is by examining the minute books of local branches. Compared to the numbers of periodical issues, and branch reports contained within, there are comparatively few of these in existence but I have attempted to produce as a good a survey of the surviving books as time and resources allowed. A wide range regional archives were consulted in order to view the organisations' activities at the local level. These include the Bristol Record Office, the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland; the Calderdale Archive Service; the Wolverhampton City Archives; and several others. These minute books provide a record of the meeting-by-meeting activities of the branches which enables us to see how much of the content delivered to them via the periodicals was seeping into how the branches operated in practice. Although they are not doctored to appease an editor, they are still limited in their tendency to either skim over entire debates with a few sentences, or record major events with euphemistic or cryptic phrases. The JIL are the greatest offenders in this regard, with LoY branches tending to give a more comprehensive record of events. These minute books have proven to be especially illuminating of the factional disputes which arose over how closely the organisation should affiliate to the Communist Party.

In addition to these sources I have also utilised the extensive quantity of unpublished documentation related to the youth organisations, produced by their leadership. These sources include Executive Committee minute books, committee reports, and correspondence between politicians working with the organisations. These sources provide valuable insight into the running and operation of the organisations, and enable us to better understand the priorities of the politicians who ran them. Finally, I have consulted an extensive number of digitised newspapers, both local and national, in order to see how far these organisations' activities permeated their communities. These sources have enabled me to gain an understanding of the organisations at all levels of their activity and have provided a comprehensive picture of their operation, goals, and activities.

Structure

The process of democratisation neither began nor ended in 1918. John Gerrard points out that democratisation in Britain was a slow process, an evolutionary process taking place over two centuries.[68] He defines the democratisation process though three phases. Firstly, that the free and fair elections take place, with accountable governments who come and go based on the outcomes of these elections. Secondly, that all adults have the opportunity to influence the democratic process. Thirdly, he restricts his definition to 'liberal' democracies where freedoms of speech, assembly, and the press are upheld.[69] Taking this definition, Britain was still not a full democracy in 1918 as, with a voting age of twenty-one and an unequal gender franchise, not all adults were yet able to influence the democratic process. However, this acts passed in this period changed the face of the British electorate. The 1928 act marked the moment all citizens, regardless of wealth or gender, obtained the right to vote. At the core of the decision to take 1918 as a starting point for this thesis when – as the following chapter will cover in more detail – both the JIL and the NLYL had their origins is the decades before, is the notion that the First World War represented a substantial break in the history of the organisations, and in youth politics. Firstly, the pre-War iterations of the organisations did not admit women, meaning that they still had a way to go before they could be organisations with a true mass appeal. In the years following the First World War, the organisations saw rapid and substantial growth, their membership expand to include women, and they were engaged in a much wider range of activities than simply party activism. In addition, the inter-war years saw a huge rise in the number of party-political youth organisations making it the ideal time period in which to study how these groups interacted.

Secondly, the World Wars represent significant breaks both in the history of the organisations themselves, and in youth politics as a whole. While some historians have sought to play down the First World War as a transformative moment in British society, Britain was undoubtedly different after the

[68] John Gerrard, *Democratisation in Britain: Elites, Civil Society, and Reform since 1800* (Palgrave Macmillan Limited, 2001), p. 1
[69] Gerrard, *Democratisation in Britain,* pp. 1-2.

war.[70] As this thesis will demonstrate, the First World War was a politicising moment for young people, with the war providing a new lens through which both adults viewed young people and young people viewed themselves. Secondly, the primary interest of this thesis is the impact of mass democracy on British political culture. Therefore, although the early years of the organisations will receive attention, 1918 has been chosen as a starting point. Just as the First World War created a break in the organisations' history, so too did the Second World War which caused most activity of the organisations to cease altogether.

It was a conscious decision made early on in the writing process that the typical categories through which historians usually look at inter-war politics, specifically class and gender, would not structure this thesis in order to focus on youth. Through the course of researching this thesis it became apparent that the thematic categories which began to emerge would not allow for class and gender-specific chapters. To do so would require either withholding information, and thus diluting the arguments in certain chapters, or simply re-treading already covered ground. Instead, the issue of class and gender will be threaded throughout the thesis, as and when the themes of each chapter can shed light on how these dynamics played out in the organisations. The thesis is divided into three sections, each encompassing two chapters.

The first section is the introductory section, and the chapter which follows will trace developments of how the concept of youth was imagined in the preceding century. It will argue that these ideas ultimately led to the notion that youth was a unique stage of life with its own culture and set of needs, and that young people should be involved in politics on their own terms. It will also trace the history of each of the youth organisations explored here, as well as outlining their structure and organisation.

The second section will cover the identity of the organisations. Chapter 3 will explore how the political youth organisations attempted to instil a 'sense of belonging' in their membership. This is

[70] Matthew Hendley, *Organised Patriotism in the Crucible of War: Popular Imperialism in Britain, 1914-1932* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012), p. 1.

indicative of a wider change in the aims of the parties which meant that as well as attempting to influence voters election-by-election they were attempting to create life-long voters and activists by creating personal investment between the individual and their party. Chapter 4 will investigate how the parties encouraged young people to use their newfound citizenship, and how they sought to mitigate the perceived ignorance of these voters through political education programmes. It will also explore on what terms the newly-enfranchised women were inducted into the party system.

Section three will move on to explore the activities of the youth organisations. Chapter 5 will examine the political work done by members, and how they were expected to conduct themselves while doing it. It will argue the expectations of young activists were different to those placed on adults: disruptive and boisterous behaviour was more tolerated in the youth organisations. The adult wings of the parties recognised young people's desire to practise politics in this lively way and provided them with activities which allowed them to hone their political skills in a practical way. Chapter 6 will turn to those members who might have been less politically active than most, but whom the party system was not prepared to abandon. It will investigate how the organisations politicised leisure activity, once again capitalising on young people's energy, in order to both boost their membership and to ensure that even when members were enjoying themselves they were still engaging with politics in some form. This was also an extension of the parties' efforts to turn the organisations into self-perpetuating communities which encompassed every part of their members' lives. One of the core themes which this thesis will attempt to address is that of agency. By moving away from the top-down focus of previous histories, it will explore the extent to which the organisations had control over their own activities.

Chapter 2: What is Youth? A History of an Idea and Organisation

Introduction

As indicated previously, the issue of what exactly constituted a 'youth' was a difficult one for the parties. Throughout the period, and between the parties, there was no consensus on what age groups fell into this category. One major issue with discussing youth in this period is the lack of a consistent age range between the parties. For the LoY, the age range was fourteen to twenty-one,[1] and for the JIL fourteen to twenty-five,[2] raising to thirty in 1938.[3] The NLYL opened its membership to those over the age of sixteen, but specified no upper limit.[4] Branches, therefore, used their discretion in choosing an upper limit leading to a somewhat confused picture. The Wolverhampton branch opted for an upper limit of thirty.[5] For the purposes of this thesis, the lower age of youth will be taken as fourteen as this is the age most commonly accepted for admittance into the organisations. While all three parties did feature children's organisations, they will not receive extensive study by this thesis. Finding the upper end of youth, however, is a little more complex with all three parties taking a different approach to the issue. When the parties talked about youth, therefore, they could be talking about people as old as thirty and who would not be eligible for membership of today's political youth wings.[6]

The lack of consistency in how the parties were defining youth can be explained in several ways. Firstly, we can view this as an attempt to cast the recruitment net as wide as possible: by setting such a broad definition of youth the parties were able to recruit more people. Indeed, this did have a practical consideration as the Conservative Party sought to utilise the high upper threshold to ease the transition from the junior to senior section of the party and to keep members invested as they moved into working and married life. This high upper threshold also had a second practical purpose

[1] Organisation of Youth, August 1924.
[2] Handbook for Organisers and Workers, p. 6, CCO 506/5/2.
[3] *Torchbearer*, June 1938, p. 61.
[4] National League of Young Liberals Proposed Branch Rules, JOSEPHY 14/4.
[5] Minutes of Executive Meeting, 24 July 1925, D/SO/27/30-31.
[6] Young Labour currently accept fourteen-twenty six, Young Conservatives up to twenty-five, and Young Liberals under twenty-six.

in that it better enabled the organisations to manage their own affairs. Older members, who were more mature and experienced, tended to occupy executive roles in branches which therefore lessened the need for direct intervention from the adult organisation. Finally, on a somewhat different note, it may be that the parties' open-ended approach to youth was simply down to their lack of experience in creating such organisations. These were, after all, the first iterations of the parties' youth organisations and it may be due to simple experimentation that the age limit was set as wide as it was. Fundamentally, this ambiguous age range was chosen by the parties for broadly the same reason: it being considered the most strategic time to shape the minds of future voters. The Conservative Party chose their age limit in the belief that 'the period of youth which merges into manhood or womanhood is universally recognised as that in which knowledge is most readily assimilated and opinion most susceptible to guidance.'[7] While some in Labour criticised the high age limit, others argued that the younger members could learn something from having older ones present.[8] Meanwhile, the Liberal Party saw this as the opportune age to educate people in the principles of Liberalism so that 'when they grew up, and elections came along' they would be prepared.[9] It is important that in acknowledging the parties' lack of consistency in this matter it does not become an excuse to avoid tackling the issue ourselves. Exactly what was understood as 'youth' in Britain was in development for quite a long time, and it is one of the two issues which this chapter will deal with.

[7] Handbook for Organisers and Workers, p. 6, CCO 506/5/2.
[8] *The New Nation*, February 1933, p. 9; February 1934, p. 17; January 1935, p. 5; May 1936, p. 3.
[9] *Coventry Herald*, 12 December 1924, p. 9.

Year	Organisation Event	National Event
1900		Conservative GE victory
1901	*The Young Socialist launches*	
1902		
1903	**National League of Young Liberals (Liberal)**	
1904-5		
1906	**Junior Imperial League (Conservative)**	Liberal GE victory
1907-13		
1914		First World War
1915		
1916	**Order of Woodcraft Chivalry**	
1917		
1918		First World War ends Representation of the People Act
1919	**Young Communist International**	
1920	**Kibbo Kift Kindred** *Junior Imperial League Gazette launches*	First meeting of the League of Nations in London
1921	*JILG combines with Popular View* **Young Communist League**	
1922		End of Liberal/Conservative coalition
1923		
1924	**Guild of Youth (ILP)** **League of Youth (Labour)**	First Labour Government (January) Conservative GE victory (October)
1925	**Woodcraft Folk** **Young Britons** **Young Pioneers (CPGB)** *The Imp launches*	
1926		General Strike
1927	*The Forward View launches*	
1928		Representation of the People Act
1929	*Monthly Bulletin launches*	Labour become largest single party in HoC
1930		
1931	**New Party**	National Government forms
1932	*The Imp launches new series* **British Union of Fascists**	
1933	*The New Nation launches*	
1934		
1935	*Challenge launches*	
1936		Spanish Civil War
1937	*Torchbearer launches*	
1938		
1939		Second World War

Figure 2.1: Timeline featuring the foundation of significant youth organisations, along with world events

The second major issue is the explanation of why it should be that so many youth organisations were founded in the early twentieth century. Figure 2.1 gives a timeline featuring the foundation years of some of the major organisations operating during this period, along with other significant events, and we can see that these organisations were forming rapidly. The majority of these organisations came after the introduction of universal male suffrage in Britain, and at a time when a vast number of other voluntary organisations were coming into existence with the aim of assimilating new voters into the political system.[10] However, to treat the youth wings of the political parties in the same way as adult voluntary organisations, and to assume that they were entirely the product of the post-1918 world would be erroneous. As Figure 2.1 demonstrates, the political parties were already beginning to consider young people's political engagement in the decade before universal suffrage, suggesting that this alone is not sufficient to explain their existence.

Therefore, this chapter will briefly trace the development of the idea of youth throughout the century preceding the 1918 Franchise Act in order to demonstrate that while it may have served as a catalyst for organised political youth, the phenomenon was also the culmination of centuries of developing ideas. In addition, it will set up the argument, developed throughout the thesis, that the First World War deserves to be seen as a watershed moment in the history of youth; both in terms of adults' understanding of young people, and their understanding of themselves. For many politicised youth, the First World War marked a generational divide between the older generation, whose misguided actions had caused the war; and the younger generation, who had paid the price. Finally, this chapter will outline the development of the key organisations investigated by this thesis, outlining their history, structure, governance, and development of their periodicals.

[10] Helen McCarthy and Pat Thane, 'The Politics of Association in British Society', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22.2 (2011), p. 223.

A History of an Idea

Hugh Cunningham has conducted extensive research into the history of childhood, tracing the concept back hundreds of years. Cunningham soundly rejects the idea that children were historically treated callously and only given value based on what they could contribute to the household budget. Pragmatism, he argues, is not mutually exclusive with affection.[11] Cunningham highlights several turning points in the history of childhood; for example, he argues that the seventeenth century saw a secularisation of childhood meaning that concern was with the child's physical heath rather than spiritual health.[12] Some of the most significant transformations when defining childhood as a distinct stage of life came in the early nineteenth century. Of particular interest when exploring the development of youth as a unique stage of life is his theory about the effects of banning child labour. Cunningham argues that in banning child labour the government were effectively legislating who was and who was not a child, turning childhood into a legally-defined stage of life.[13] The legal protection of childhood brought about a wider shift in societal attitudes towards children. The abolition of child labour brought about a fear regarding what these children would do with their newfound free time. These fears were manifested in a moral panic over child delinquency; this was especially true of the late-nineteenth century when it was believed that not working had created a group of unoccupied youths who had turned to crime.[14] At the same time, the development of child psychology as a discipline led to a more professional understanding of childhood.[15] Historians such as David Fowler have concluded that these factors worked in tandem to form the impetus behind the creation of many of the youth groups and organisations which emerged in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[16]

---

[11] Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500* (Longman, 1995), pp. 106-10.
[12] Cunningham, *Childhood*, p. 62.
[13] Cunningham, *Childhood*, p. 140.
[14] Geoffrey Pearson, *Hooligan. A History of Respectable Fear* (The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1983), p. 55.
[15] Colin Heywood, *A History of Childhood. Children in the West from Medieval to Modern Times* (Polity Press, 2001), p. 28; Cunningham, *Childhood*, p. 137.
[16] David Fowler, *The First Teenagers: The Lifestyle of Young Wage-Earners in Inter-War Britain* (The Worburn Press, 1995), p. 138; John Springhall, *Coming of Age: Adolescence in Britain 1860-1960* (Gill and Macmillan Ltd., 1986), p. 147.

Cunningham and Fowler's ideas are supported by the aims and activities of many of the young organisations active in the early twentieth century and the inter-war years. A great number of youth organisations were founded with the aim of combatting the moral degradation of the nation, their ideas fuelled by emerging psychological principles. Some historians point to the work of American psychologist G. Stanley Hall as being especially influential.[17] Hall's ideas were applied by several of the non-partisan youth organisations at the time, combined with fears of degradation of the nation. Of all the organisations to adopt Hall's views, the Kibbo Kift Kindred were the most high-profile. Hall was one of the most prolific proponents of the theory of 'recapitulation' which argued that for a child to properly develop, they must go through all the stages of man's evolution: acting out hunter-gatherer behaviour by lighting fires and crafting bows, all the way through to throwing stones and playing in the mud to act out modern warfare. It was believed that without undergoing this process, the child would forever be trapped in a 'primitive' stage.[18] At its core is the idea that young people needed a 'natural education' and this is what the Kindred's founder, John Hargrave, believed: that people were living a life 'cut off from nature' and that this was creating a social and moral deficit amongst the people.[19] In a similar fashion the founders of the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry, the Westlake family, believed that the 'loss of vigour of the race' was linked to urban living and being disconnected from the natural world.[20]

While the above organisations had left-leaning, and non-conformist ideologies, the idea of organising youth with a moral imperative was just as common on the right. Many conformist youth organisations were closely linked to patriotism and the military; Kathryn Gleadle's work is especially enlightening on early conceptions of conformist youth. She argues that, for many young people, play and imitation of military service during the Napoleonic Wars was not just part of recreation but a key

[17] Melanie Tebbutt, *Being Boys. Youth, Leisure and Identity in the Inter-War Years* (Manchester University Press, 2012), p. 20; Heywood, *Childhood,* p. 28; Derek Edgell, *The Order of Woodcraft Chivalry 1916-1949 as a New Age Alternative to the Boy Scouts* (Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), p. 45.
[18] Leslie Paul*, Angry Young Man* (Faber and Faber Ltd., 1951), p. 61.
[19] David Prynn, 'The Woodcraft Folk and the Labour Movement', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 18.1 (1983), p. 81.
[20] Edgell, *Woodcraft Chivalry*, p. 39.

part in early military training.[21] Indeed, in 1795 the government set up an experimental Boys' Regiment for boys aged ten to sixteen.[22] In addition, John Springhall identifies a similar link between the military, national crisis, and organised youth when he points out that many of the cadet movements in Britain were founded in response to the threat of invasion during the Napoleonic Wars.[23] Tracing this idea forwards to the twentieth century, we can see that similar fears of the moral degradation of the nation were connected with military service and organised youth. The most high-profile example of such a phenomenon is Baden-Powell and the Boy Scouts. Baden-Powell is noteworthy for his commitment to improving the moral fibre of the nation, something which he closely linked with military service and the Empire. In 1905, Baden-Powell drew on imagery of the Roman Empire, his view being that its decline and fall was down to bad citizenship and feared the same fate for the British Empire.[24] His original draft of the Scouting handbook included segments which can be described as a 'crude social Darwinism'[25] and when the First World War began he encouraged Scouts to take part as much as possible.[26] So concerned was Baden-Powell with the moral character of the nation, that he was a member of the National Council of Public Morals.[27]

Clearly, the idea of organised youth was not new to the inter-war years. For centuries prior, conceptions of young people had been gradually evolving and changing before reaching the inter-war years in which youth was looked at as its own distinct stage of life.[28] Once this shift had taken place, it amounted to a tacit acknowledgement that young people were a significant part of society; indeed, later social theory posited that adolescence is not a private concern but of crucial importance to

[21] Kathryn Gleadle, 'Playing at Soldiers: British Loyalism and Juvenile Ideologies during the Napoleonic Wars', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 38.3 (2015), p. 336.
[22] Gleadle, 'Loyalism', p. 344.
[23] John Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society* (Croom Helm, 1977), p. 71.
[24] John Springhall, 'The Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism in Relation to British Youth Movements 1908-1930', *International Review of Social History*, 16.2 (1971), p. 136.
[25] Paul Wilkinson, 'English Youth Movements', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 4.2 (1969), p. 8.
[26] Wilkinson, 'Youth Movements', p. 15.
[27] Springhall, *Coming of Age: Adolescence in Britain 1860-1960* (Gill and Macmillan Ltd., 1986), p. 138.
[28] Tebbutt, *Being Boys*, p. 17; Springhall, *Coming of Age*, p. 155; Selina Todd, 'Flappers and Factory Lads: Youth and Youth Culture in Interwar Britain', *History Compass*, 4.4 (2006), p. 716.

society.[29] Entering the twentieth century, youth was clearly defined as a unique section of life and, most significantly, the young were perceived as having some intrinsic value to society based on their moral fibre and their physical condition; essentially, their ability to defend Britain and the race.

Developing Ideas into Organisation in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

As an understanding of youth developed, interest began to increase in how young people could be organised for politics. The Young England movement founded in the 1840s by a group of mostly aristocratic Tories is an early example of younger generations of politicians believing that their relative youth gave them a unique perspective which could be applied to politics.[30] Young England was not a youth organisation of the form which would come around in the early-twentieth century. While its founding members were relatively young, in their twenties and thirties, it was not seeking to engage as many young people as possible from across social boundaries; instead, it existed mainly to advance the ideology of a certain set of Cambridge educated elites, and to boost the profile of Benjamin Disraeli. Despite these key differences, the movement did contain some of the elements which would later come to characterise political youth organisations; specifically, the idea that the future belonged to the young who were reacting against the mistakes of the older generation.[31]

Young England was a short-lived organisation and what impact it had, if any, on British political development has yet to be adequately examined by historians. Disraeli's ideas may have had some impact on the minds of future Conservatives, however, as one member of the JIL encouraged the party to 'follow Disraeli's noble ideals of "Young England"' rather than look down on the young.[32] Despite the lack of study, it is clear that the movement does fit in with the development of ideas surrounding youth's value to society and their place in politics. These ideas developed further in the early twentieth century when politicians increased their calls to youth and finally founded the first official youth wings

[29] S.N. Eisenstadt, *From Generation to Generation. Age Groups and Social Structure* (The Free Press, 1956), p. 25.
[30] William Arthur Speck, 'Robert Southey, Benjamin Disraeli and Young England', *History*, 95.318 (2010), p. 194.
[31] Richard Faber, *Young England* (Faber and Faber, 1987), p. 45.
[32] *The Imp*, February 1927, p. 5.

of the major parties. In 1907 the Social Democratic Federation (SDF) published a pamphlet titled *An Appeal to the Young*. The pamphlet's author helpfully describes its intended audience in its introduction: 'I assume that you are about eighteen or twenty years of age, that you have finished your apprenticeship or your studies; that you are just entering on life.'[33] This is already an advance on Young England. Although the SDF was not advocating the creation of a youth wing, it clearly acknowledged that young people, although in this instance young professionals, were an important demographic that they needed to reach and which had a unique set of interests.

Formation of Political Youth Organisations

At around the same time the SDF pamphlet was produced, the major political parties began to found their youth wings. These fledgling youth organisations would eventually grow into the youth wings of the inter-war years; however, there was still a small, but important, evolution which needed to occur before they can be considered the final iteration of organised youth: they did not admit women. In 1903, the Liberal Party were the first to recognise that young people could be an electoral asset with the foundation of the NLYL. By 1903, the Liberal Party had lost three General Elections in a row and while there is no explicit statement to this effect, it is reasonable to assume that the party's electoral woes inspired them to seek new methods of mobilising activists and voters. The official history of the NLYL does imply this, stating that it was following 'gloomy' prospects for the Liberal Party that the NLYL was formed.[34] The organisation found quick success, reaching 300 branches by 1906.[35] The party considered the years following 1910 to be the organisation's 'highest point', and their journal, *The Young Liberal* launched the same year.[36]

[33] P. Kropotkin, *An Appeal to the Young* (Social Democratic Federation, 1907), p. 1.
[34] Audrey Downs and Evan Richards, *Fifty Years Young. The Story of the National League of Young Liberals 1903-1953* (Liberal Publication Department, 1953), p. 3, LSE Archive, JOSEPHY 14/4.
[35] Peter Barberis, John McHugh and Mike Tyldesley with Helen Pendry, *Encyclopedia of British and Irish Political Organizations* (Pinter, 2000), p. 310.
[36] Downs and Richards*, Fifty Years Young*, pp. 6-7.

Like the NLYL, the Conservative Party's JIL had its origins in the first decade of the twentieth century. Also like the NLYL, the organisation's creation was preceded by electoral trouble for its parent party. The 1906 General Election was a turnaround in the fortunes of the Liberal Party, at the expense of the Conservatives. The defeat saw the Conservatives drop from 287 seats in 1900 to just 106.[37] Adding further to the humiliation, the Conservative's then-leader, Arthur Balfour, lost his own seat in Manchester East.[38] The inaugural meeting of the JIL was held six months later, on 3rd July 1906, with the object to 'create a practical interest in political work and organisation among the younger members of the Conservative and Unionist Party.'[39] Given this aim, it is highly probable that a significant motivation of the JIL was the training of its activists, partly intended to aid recovery after their defeat. The JIL initially got off to a slow start, not becoming fully established until Henry Imbert-Terry became chairman in 1909. From there growth was significant, but not quite as rapid as the NLYL: the JIL reached 300 branches in 1914.[40] For most of its early years, however, the organisation was mostly controlled from London and dominated by wealthy individuals.[41]

Compared to the Liberal and Conservative Parties, the Labour Party were slower to integrate young people into their organisational structure. Michelle Webb identifies some of the early pressure for youth sections coming from the women's sections of the party with discussion of the importance of educating children against militarism appearing in *Labour Woman* as early as 1918,[42] and the first mention of the formation of a Junior Section appears in 1919 when the Wood Green Labour Party held a social evening at which 179 children were present.[43] Still this was not an official, nationally organised section for young members. Labour's relative delay in organising young people was most likely down

[37] These figures do not include Liberal Unionists which brings the totals to 402 and 246; F.W.S. Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results 1885-1918* (Macmillan, 1974), pp. 580-581.
[38] Craig, *Election Results,* p. 148.
[39] Inaugural Meeting of the Junior Imperial and Constitutional League pamphlet, Conservative Party Archive, CCO 506/1/1.
[40] Barberis, McHugh, Tyldesley and Pendry, *Encyclopedia*, p. 57.
[41] Neal R. McCrillis, *The British Conservative Party in the Age of Universal Suffrage. Popular Conservatism, 1918-1929* (Ohio State University Press, 1998), p. 84.
[42] Michelle Webb, *The Labour League of Youth. An Account of the Failure of the Labour Party to Sustain a Successful Youth Movement* (The Edwin Mellen Press Ltd., 2010), p. 42.
[43] *Labour Woman,* April 1919, p. 41.

to its own organisational structure which, prior to 1918 did not allow for individual membership, only trade union or affiliated organisation membership.[44] It may also have been that Labour was simply in no position to set up a youth organisation as the party was still struggling to make substantial electoral breakthroughs.[45]

Clearly, the early twentieth century was a turning point when it came to the organisation of youth. For the first time, major parties recognised that young people were an important part of the political process and that rather than simply making disconnected appeals for their votes, they needed to directly involve them in their party organisation. That both the Liberal and Conservative parties founded their youth wings after historic defeats suggests a recognition that a change in their approach to electioneering was required.[46]

Ideas Developed: The Inter-War Years

The First World War proved to be a decisive moment in the history of youth. While much of the pre-war rhetoric surrounding organised youth had been focused on the moral fibre of the nation, with organisations such as the Boys' Brigade or the Boy Scouts placing emphasis on military drill to counter this, the First World War changed many of these assumptions. Young people became increasingly associated with modernity, progress, and the future. After the First World War the idea of youth as a 'metaphor for the future of the nation' took on a profound emotional charge after the death and destruction the war had brought about.[47] Meanwhile, fears over the stability of the nation, disruptive behaviour by youths, and youth unemployment after the First World War all prompted interventions into young people's lives.[48] Indeed, Melanie Tebbutt argues that following the First World War the

[44] Duncan Tanner, 'Labour and its Membership', in Duncan Tanner, Pat Thane and Nick Tiratsoo (eds.), *Labour's First Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 250.
[45] Andrew Thorpe, *A History of the British Labour Party, Second Edition* (Palgrave, 2001), p. 27.
[46] As we saw in the introduction, this was part of a pattern of reorganisation following defeats which was also in evidence in the nineteenth century.
[47] Melanie Tebbutt, *Making Youth. A History of Youth in Modern Britain* (Palgave, 2016), p. 135.
[48] Penny Tinkler, 'Youth', in Francesa Carnevali and Julie Marie Strange (eds.), *Twentieth-Century Britain. Economic, Cultural and Social Change. Second Edition* (Pearson Education Limited, 2007), p. 218.

idea of youth not just as a matter of chronological age but as a state of mind was solidified in the public imagination.[49] Laura King argues along the same lines, suggesting that children came to represent a hopeful future, answering calls for a fresh start following the chaos of the First World War.[50] The editor of the NLYL periodical, *The Forward View,* identified the First World War as a dividing generational moment, arguing that there existed an ideological divide in Liberalism not only between the young and the old, but between pre and post-war Liberals.[51] The First World War also served as a politicising moment for young people themselves. For many on the left, the First World War served as a moment when young people were betrayed by the older generation, with young people paying the consequences for their actions.[52] When the developments of the previous centuries were combined with the catalysts of the First World War and the 1918 and 1928 Franchise Acts it made fertile ground for the organisation of young people for political purposes. We have already established that the idea of youth as a unique stage of life was not something new to the inter-war years, the abolition of child labour and introduction of compulsory primary education had already served to create legal outlines of childhood. What we are beginning to see in the inter-war years the development of a much clearer culture surrounding youth.

National League of Young Liberals

The inter-war years were a difficult time for the NLYL who were affected by the internal struggles which afflicted the adult party.[53] The organisation also struggled to find a place in the broader Liberal organisation more generally. They suffered from a fairly evident problem of much of their leadership, and even membership, simply not being young enough. In addition, in areas where there was no

[49] Tebbutt, *Being Boys*, p. 46.
[50] Laura King, 'Future Citizens: Cultural and Political Conceptions of Children in Britain, 1930s-1950s', *Twentieth Century British History*, 27.3 (2016), p. 395.
[51] *The Forward View*, February 1927, p. 24.
[52] Labour and Communist periodicals frequently positioned younger and older generations in opposition: *The New Nation*, October 1933, p. 33; December 1933, p. 44; January 1934, p. 1; February 1934, p. 13; *Challenge*, February 1936, p. 1; 26 November 1938, p. 4; 11 February 1939, p. 8.
[53] Downs and Richards, *Fifty Years Young*, p. 8; Barberis, McHugh, Tyldesley and Pendry, *Encyclopedia*, p. 310.

Liberal association adults were allowed to attend NLYL meetings as they would otherwise have been lost to the Liberal cause.[54] This resulted in the organisation being somewhat directionless, unsure of their own purpose within the wider party framework.

When the party attempted to revive the NLYL after the First World War, financial constraints prevented them from relaunching *The Young Liberal*.[55] For the majority of their existence, the NLYL was without any form of official periodical. This changed in 1927 when *Forward View* was launched on the initiative of the Yorkshire Federation of the NLYL. When it launched, it did so without the backing of the national party.[56] Although the paper did grow to achieve a national readership, for most of its lifespan it struggled due to its desire to be completely financially independent, and the December 1935 issue was their last.

Like all the youth organisations covered here, the NLYL was structured in a way which allowed young people to take an active role in its governance and operation. At the lowest level was the branch. Every member of the NLYL belonged to a branch and anyone could set up a branch provided there were ten or more people, and they were 'in agreement with the objects of the League.'[57] A level above the branch was the District Council. District councils were formed when six or more branches joined together with the aim of 'strengthening the Young Liberal movement in their respective areas.' In order to prevent overlapping districts, the boundaries of a district needed to be approved by the highest level of NLYL governance: the Executive Committee. The officers and members of the Executive Committee were appointed by members at the NLYL's annual conference and no individual was permitted to sit on the Executive Committee unless they were a member of a branch. The Executive Committee was chosen by a postal ballot sent to members and a form of proportional representation was used. Such a structure both enabled members to take an active role in governing

[54] Minutes of Executive Meetings, 24 July 1925, Wolverhampton City Archives, D/SO-27/31.
[55] *The Forward View*, April 1927, p. 56.
[56] *The Forward View*, January 1927, p. 1.
[57] Objects and Constitution of the National League of Young Liberals, JOSEPHY 14/4.

their own affairs at all levels of the organisation, and simultaneously provided democratic training for members and instilling in them the value of democracy.

Junior Imperial League

The inter-war fortunes of the JIL were markedly different from those of the NLYL. When the First World War was over the JIL were able to quickly re-launch using their existing infrastructure and their membership was boosted by admitting women for the first time.[58] While branches were given the option of keeping the sexes separate, very few chose to do so. From there the JIL grew to dwarf their rivals in the other parties, boasting a branch in every constituency and 250,000 members at their height.[59] The JIL continued strong for the entire duration of the inter-war years, undergoing numerous reorganisations as it grew. McCrillis highlights 1924 as a particularly significant year for the JIL. That year, and the years that followed, saw significant changes in the JIL's leadership with the deaths or retirement of many of the pre-war generation, and a younger, post-war generation taking over. This new leadership, McCrillis argues, reflected changes in the nature of the organisation, reflected their 'youthful vigour', and made them better placed to respond to the passage of the 1928 Franchise Act.[60]

Although the JIL was immediately re-established after the First World War, it was another two years before their first periodical was published. *The Junior Imperial League Gazette* was a small publication, containing only reports of branch activities, and came as an insert in adult-party publication *Popular View*. Doing this enabled young people to access the political content in these periodicals without costing much money to the fledgling organisation or to members.[61] However, none of this content was explicitly aimed at young people. Over time, the *Gazette* developed into its

[58] McCrillis, *Conservative Party,* p. 87; *The Imp*, March 1928, p. 3.
[59] Barberis, McHugh, Tyldesley and Pendry, *Encyclopedia*, p. 57; *The Times*, 21 September 1928; Neal McCrillis puts his estimate even higher at 300,000: Neal R. McCrillis, *Conservative Party,* p. 83.
[60] McCrillis, *Conservative Party*, p. 90.
[61] *Junior Imperial Gazette,* June 1921.

own, independent periodical and had dropped its association with *Popular View* by 1923. In 1925, *Gazette* was discontinued in favour of a new periodical: *The Imp*. *The Imp* derived its name from the nickname given to JIL members: Imps. *The Imp* had something of a turbulent existence. Given that the periodical was run and operated at a loss the organisation's Publications Committee briefly considered relegating *The Imp* back to an insert inside adult publications.[62] As a result of pressure from members to retain the periodical, it was instead reduced in size from 1932 onwards. In response to 'steadily increasing circulation' it was announced, in 1936, that *The Imp* was to be discontinued and replaced with a new, then unnamed, periodical. The following year, *Torchbearer* was released as the final title of the JIL's periodical.

At the lower levels of organisation the JIL were broadly similar to the NLYL. However, at the higher levels the JIL had a significantly more complex structure of organisation and governance. Because the Conservative Party recognised the potential of the organisation, they were keen to integrate it into the party structure.[63] Once again, the lowest level of the organisation was the branch. Internally, branches operated in a similar fashion to adult constituency associations. They had a President, usually a wealthy individual or public figure, whose role was purely ceremonial. Their main function was to provide funding for branches and provide their grounds for activities; the real power in any branch lay with the Chairman.[64] The access to wealthy and powerful individuals afforded the JIL many advantages which the other organisations would not have had. When the JIL was first founded, the branches were subsidiary organisations with most of the JIL's work taking place in and around London – where the JIL's Central Body was based. However, according to *The Imp*, it gradually 'became apparent that the main work of the League was going to be more effectively performed in the branches' and so the importance of the Central Body shrank. In 1929 the JIL was reorganised on a constituency basis. This meant that branches were then organised under a Divisional Council which

[62] Publications Committee Meeting, 8 January 1930; 6 June 1932; 21 July 1932; Central Council Meeting, 22 October 1932, CCO 506/1/4.
[63] McCrillis, *Conservative Party*, p. 89.
[64] Stuart Ball, *Portrait of a Party. The Conservative Party in Britain 1918-1945* (Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 148.

associated all branches with a constituency party. There were some concerns about 'overbearing constituency agents': on an occasion when the Agent was absent from a Sowerby Bridge branch meeting a euphemistically-recorded 'heated discussion' was had concerning him, but the changes were widely accepted.[65] Unlike the NLYL, the JIL had another level of governance: the Federation. Federations organised large geographic regions, covering the entire country by 1934. A Federation, it was believed, could oversee up to fifty branches effectively. The aim of the Federations was to promote ties between local branches, and professional organisers were assigned to them which then enabled better coordination between local branches and the national organisation.[66]

At the highest level, the JIL was governed by a Central Body. The Central Body wielded a significant amount of power. It was the only branch of government with the power to alter the JIL's rules and comprised a mixture of rank-and-file members, elected at the JIL's annual conference, and senior Conservative officials. Its duties were so broad that it was split into three committees: the Executive Committee, the Finance Committee and the Publication Committee each of which was responsible for different things. The Executive Committee comprised representatives from the Central Council and representatives of Divisional and Federations Councils and was responsible for all 'management' affairs. The Finance Committee dealt with all matters related to JIL funding such as deciding if certain activities were financially viable or dealing with the bank accounts of branches which had collapsed. The Finance Committee also had the power to set up sub-committees to investigate specific issues. Finally, the Publications Committee handled any official publication issued such as pamphlets, leaflets, posters or the periodical.[67]

That it was possible for rank-and-file members to take part in these powerful bodies demonstrates the amount of control that the members were given over their organisation. In addition, membership of these governing bodies would have given members the opportunity to have their concerns heard by senior Conservative officials who sat alongside them. How far this worked in

[65] McCrillis, *Conservative Party*, p. 91; Minutes of a Committee Meeting held 27 June 1928, CV/7.
[66] McCrillis, *Conservative Party*, p. 91.
[67] *The Imp*, February 1935, p. 11.

practice, and what the implications were for the class membership of the JIL, will be dealt with later in the thesis in the context of how the movements encouraged political participation.

Labour League of Youth

Labour's youth wing had a much more turbulent history than the other major parties' organisations. Despite some of the early efforts described in the sections above, for a long time the Labour Party resisted the creation of a youth wing. It is understandable that prior to 1918 the Labour Party would not have had a youth wing as its internal structure was not accommodating to one. However, after 1918 the party began a long process of reorganisation after recognising that if they were to find electoral success they needed to look beyond their trade union base – a situation made more acute by the party's membership entering a decline in the 1920s.[68] Labour's 1918 constitution opened Labour up to individual membership for the first time,[69] an act which would have laid the foundations for a mass-membership youth organisation, and Matthew Worley argues that it was not until 1923 that the party had established itself nationally with a broad base of organisation.[70]

It was around this same time when calls for a youth organisation within the party were loudest. Ultimately, it was pressure from Labour's young members which led to a nationwide youth organisation for the party. Long-time editor of the LoY's periodicals, Arthur Peacock, describes in his autobiography the difficulty he and other young members had in convincing the adult party that a young wing was needed. Peacock founded a Young Labour League in Clapham in 1920[71] but it would be another four years before the adult party would take any notice of the calls for a national organisation. Peacock describes discouraging meetings with both Herbert Morrison and Arthur

[68] Matthew Worley, *Labour Inside the Gate. A History of the British Labour Party between the Wars* (IB Tauris, 2005), p. 38
[69] On Labour's 1918 constitution: Worley, *Inside the Gate*, p. 47; Matthew Worley, 'Introduction: Labour's Grass Roots', in Matthew Worley (ed), *Labour's Grass Roots. Essays on the Activities of Local Labour Parties and Members, 1918-45* (Ashgate, 2005), p. 1; Matthew Worley, 'The Fruits on the Tree: Labour's Constituency Parties between the Wars', in Matthew Worley (ed), *the Foundations of the British Labour Party. Identities, Cultures and Perspectives 1900-39* (Ashgate, 2009). P. 193.
[70] Worley, *Inside the Gate*, p. 65.
[71] Zig-Henry, 'Youth', p. 275.

Henderson;[72] however, in 1924 the NEC sent out a questionnaire to local Labour parties investigating if they had any youth sections in existence and if they were in favour of the creation of a national organisation of youth.[73] This then led to the official suggestion that youth sections be formed attached to their local Labour Parties,[74] though it was not until 1926 that it was officially recommended that the LoY be integrated into the national organisation.[75]

The LoY also had multiple periodicals which existed in several forms. The first of these was *Monthly Bulletin* which launched in 1929 and, for the first year of its life, was very basic. It consisted of four sides of type-written paper which frequently contained visible errors that the writer had attempted to correct by typing over. It would contain, at most, a single article followed by pages of branch reports sent in by branch Secretaries. This appears to have been a deliberate choice from the editor, Arthur Peacock,[76] who wrote that *Bulletin* was intended to address the needs for better communication between the branches.[77] What this amounted to was a periodical which was predominantly for organisers. Given the prominence of the branch reports the periodical was mostly Secretaries talking to other Secretaries, which would have left little for the average member to take an interest in. The periodical saw some amount of improvement in July 1930 when a new edition of *Bulletin* was launched with the aim of providing more content of interest to members.[78] However it remained relatively primitive until it was replaced with *The New Nation* in 1933. *The New Nation* was much closer in style and content to a JIL periodical: containing news from the LoY; political education articles; news from Britain and the world; and spaces for the members to write in and take part in discussions.

[72] Arthur Peacock, *Yours Fraternally* (Pendulum Publications, 1945), pp. 19&22.
[73] Committee on the Organisation of Youth, June 1924, People's History Museum.
[74] Organisation of Youth, August 1924.
[75] Report on the Development of Young People's Section, 26 June 1926.
[76] Arthur Peacock was the editor for both *Monthly Bulletin* and *The New Nation* periodicals. As one of the founding members of Clapham Labour Party's Young Labour League in 1920 he played a key role in the formation of the LoY as a national organisation.
[77] *Monthly Bulletin,* July 1929, p. 1.
[78] *Monthly Bulletin,* July 1930, p. 1.

Unlike the other youth wings, the LoY was visibly beset with internal conflicts over the issues of autonomy for the organisation and their attempts to affiliate with the Young Communist League. Conflict between the adult party and the youth organisation would come to characterise the 1926-36 years of the LoY. Webb states that, from the perspective of the adult party, the LoY's sole purpose was to enrol as many young people as possible and for them to give the party unwavering support.[79] However, the LoY sought greater involvement and wanted representation on the party's National Executive Committee (NEC) on the same terms as the women's movement.[80] It was this lack of autonomy as well as a desire to have a greater influence on party policy which led to the numerous attempts by the LoY to affiliate to the YCL and for a portion of its membership to split off to create an alternative periodical: *Advance*. The aim of *Advance* was to create a 'new league' which would unite all the socialist movements in Britain,[81] a policy in line with that of the YCL at the time. These conflicts culminated in the NEC of the Labour Party suspending the LoY's National Advisory Committee (NAC) and halting publication of their periodical, *The New Nation*, effectively shutting the movement down.[82] This did not spell the end of the LoY altogether as *Advance* continued to operate and steps were taken to revive the organisation, including adopting *Advance* as the official periodical.[83] However these attempts were short lived as the outbreak of the Second World War spelled the end of the organisation until it could be revived later as The Young Socialists.

Compared to the JIL, the LoY had a very simple system of governance. As well as the Divisional and Federation Councils, the LoY was governed by their NAC and a London Advisory Committee (LAC); the latter of these being limited in its scope to represent the London area. The position the LoY's NAC occupied in the wider Labour Party is subtly indicated by one word: Advisory. Where the JIL's Executive Committee had real power to influence the organisation, the NAC had relatively little power. They could offer advice, but ultimately power rested in the NEC of the adult party. The original 1924

[79] Webb, *League of Youth,* p. 81.
[80] Webb, *League of Youth,* p. 82.
[81] *Advance*, August 1936, p. 3.
[82] G.D.H. Cole, *A History of the Labour Party from 1914* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1948), p. 343.
[83] Report on the unofficial LOY Paper, "Advance", LP/WG/LOY/20.

recommendation for the formation of Labour's youth organisation indicates that the adult leadership had very little confidence in the young people to solve disputes themselves, suggesting that 'If the young people were to be given voting power and be placed in the same position as these other sections [the Women's Section] they might be used as a field for exploitation by either side whenever disagreement existed in the Party…'[84] Ironically, it was their desire to have more influence over both their own affairs and the affairs of the national party which led to the organisation falling victim to factionalism which the adult party had sought to avoid.

The Young Communist League

The final organisation examined within this thesis is the YCL. Despite the CPGB failing to make a significant impact on British politics, the effect of the YCL on youth politics far outstripped that which would be expected of a relatively small organisation. Founded in 1921, the YCL initially had a very narrow focus. The YCL broadly followed the adult party and Communist International (Comintern) line which emphasised radical politics, adopting strategies emanating from Moscow which were not necessarily specific to young people, and attacking all other Socialist youth movements as being associated with bourgeois parties.[85] For example, in 1927 the Comintern began its 'class against class' policy which signalled a rise in sectarianism and Communist parties branding social democratic parties as 'social fascists.'[86] Many of the YCL's periodicals during this period followed this line, interested only in, as early periodical *The League Organiser* stated, mobilising members to 'ruthlessly struggle' against any deviation from the policy of the Communist International.[87]

In 1933 the Comintern officially dropped its 'class against class' policy which marked a radical change in tactic. In light of the growing threat of Fascism in Europe, Communist parties across the continent sought to work with Democratic Socialist parties in what was known as the Popular Front in

[84] Organisation of Youth, 1924, JSM/YO/3/1.
[85] Joel A. Lewis, *Youth Against Fascism. Young Communists in Britain and the United States, 1919-1939* (VDM Verlag, 2007), pp. 23-29.
[86] Henry Pelling, *The British Communist Party*. *A Historical Perspective* (Adam and Charles Black, 1958), p. 46.
[87] *The League Organiser*, Number One, 14 March c.1930, p. 1.

order to fight Fascism.[88] However, the growing irrelevance of the BUF in Britain led to a marginally different focus – their emphasis was on creating a 'United Front' of British Social Democratic parties. Although the YCL and CPGB were still concerned with Fascism, especially with the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, their focus was much more on domestic politics and fighting the National Government.[89] The launch of YCL periodical *Challenge* in 1935 highlights CPGB's change in tactic. It was during the *Challenge* years that the YCL became a key player in youth politics, advancing the United Front and arguing for a unified youth movement in order to bring about the age-based rights which the organisation thought were crucial for young people.

Other Organisations

As well as the major political parties having youth wings, some of the more fringe parties began to adopt the concept. While these organisations will not be discussed in extensive detail, it is still necessary to draw attention to them as from time to time they will provide useful context on the wider picture of inter-war youth organisations. Oswald Mosley's New Party had an official youth wing named Nupa. The diaries of Harold Nicholson provide some evidence of the thought that went into creating this organisation, especially surrounding the name. Originally conceived under the name Volts in 1931, standing for 'vigour-order-loyalty-triumph', they were mostly referred to as 'The Youth Movement' until 1932 when Nicholson began to refer to them by what was their official name: Nupa.[90] However the successor party, the British Union of Fascists, is believed to have lacked any kind of formal youth wing.[91] In addition to organisations associated with political parties there were several other groups which had a political ideology but were not associated with a party, such as the Order of Woodcraft

[88] Kevin Morgan, *Against Fascism and War. Ruptures and Continuities in British Communist Politics 1935-41* (Manchester University Press, 1989), p. 28.
[89] Morgan, *Against Fascism*, p. 22; p. 27; David Blaazer, *The Popular Front and the Progressive Tradition. Socialists, Liberals and the Quest for Unity* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 173.
[90] Harold Nicholson, *Harold Nicholson Dairies and Letters 1930-39* (William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., 1966), pp. 81 & 109.
[91] John D. Brewer, *Mosley's Men. The British Union of Fascists in the West Midlands* (Gower Publishing, 1984), p. 38.

Chivalry (1916), the Kibbo Kift Kindred (1920), and the Woodcraft Folk (1925). That the Woodcraft Folk were established as a result of an ideological schism with the Kibbo Kift Kindred, itself founded after an ideological schism with the Boy Scouts, indicates the importance of looking at the partisan youth organisations as an interconnected web of activity, rather than in isolation.

Conclusion

The process of organising youth for politics was a long one. The inter-war years brought about the perfect mixture of events which led to the explosion of organised youth groups emerging at this time. Throughout the previous hundred years, youth had been slowly recognised as a distinct phase of life with a unique identity. This gradually brought about a professional interest in the field, with child psychologists coming to recognise that young people had a distinct set of needs. Once we combine these gradual evolutions with the sudden, transformative moments of the First World War and the 1918 and 1928 Franchise Acts we can see much more clearly why the political youth wings appeared at the time they did. The developments in the understanding of youth meant that by the inter-war years it was no longer sufficient to propagandise to young people in the same way as adults, and there was a recognition that young people's unique concerns needed to be addressed. Once the parties began organising youth they had set up a new political battleground where each of the parties' youth wings competed with one another to recruit as many young people as possible in order to turn them into party workers and lifelong supporters.

Section: 2 Identity

Chapter 3: A Sense of Belonging: Creating a Political Identity

Introduction

> When one begins to take an interest in politics, what is it that determines the party one shall support? Is it hero-worship for a particular personality, or group of personalities? Is it an appreciation of the party's past? Is it expectation for the future? Or is it simply approval of the programme which it happens to be putting forward at the moment?[1]

Writing in *The Forward View* in 1927 Guy Dixon, a member of the Executive Committee of the National League of Young Liberals, opened an article by rhetorically questioning what made people decide to support a particular party. With the parties scrambling to win over the newly-enfranchised public, this issue had particular significance in post-1918 Britain. It is the issue Dixon identified, of how the parties created loyal supporters, with which this chapter is concerned.

The expansion of the franchise, and the mass electorate it brought with it, modified the very character of the British political parties and electioneering. Stuart Ball has observed, in the case of the Conservative Party, that prior to 1918, the role of a constituency association was mostly technical: registering voters, challenging the registration of opposition voters, and defending their own registrations. The 1918 Franchise Act removed complex property restrictions on who could vote and placed the job of registering voters in the hands of neutral officials; thus, Ball suggests, the local organisations transformed into mixed-gender, mass-membership organisations with a social, propaganda, and campaigning focus.[2] In a similar fashion, after 1918 the Labour Party recognised that they needed to broaden their support base in order to adapt to mass democracy, hence their new

[1] *The Forward View*, November 1927, p. 174.
[2] Stuart Ball, 'Local Conservatism and the Evolution of the Party Organisation', in Anthony Seldon and Stuart Ball (eds.), *Conservative Century. The Conservative Party since 1900* (Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 264.

constitution in 1918 which opened the party up to individual membership for the first time.[3] The parties therefore sought not only to reinforce their existing support, but to cast their net as wide as possible in order to recruit new voters to their cause. Publicly the major parties would have suggested that the appeal of a party should be entirely on issues: both MacDonald and Baldwin frequently deplored the perceived irrationality of the electorate. In reality, irrational and emotional elements formed a large part of their appeal.

As part of the parties' efforts to sell themselves more widely, they tapped into the emerging industry of advertising. The inter-war years were something of a golden age for Britain's advertising industry. American agencies such as J. Walter Thompson (JWT) were setting up branches in London to sell American products; meanwhile, British advertising pioneer Charles Higham was spearheading the idea of psychology in advertising, and market research was taking off.[4] Contemporary social thinkers drew the link between advertising and social democratic citizenship.[5] Whether this was for good or ill was hotly debated; however, all three of the main political parties replicated branding efforts in the commercial sphere and began to establish the means to 'sell' their parties to the electorate.[6] Despite these changes in how the parties went about their electioneering, their fundamental goal was still to encourage people to get out and vote for their respective party. For their youth wings, however, this was not entirely the case. After all, there was little point in telling young people to get out and vote because they could not, not until the age of twenty-one for men and thirty for women until 1928. Heathorn and Greenspoon suggest, for instance, that the JIL's primary goal was to create a 'conservative worldview' rather than only to win seats in Parliament; and, while we will see later that

[3] Duncan Tanner, 'Labour and its Membership', in Duncan Tanner, Pat Thane and Nick Tiratsoo (eds.), *Labour's First Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 250; Matthew Worley, 'The Fruits on the Tree: Labour's Constituency Party between the Wars', in Matthew Worley (ed.), *The Foundations of the British Labour Party. Identities, Cultures and Perspectives 1900-39* (Ashgate, 2009), p. 193; Matthew Worley, *Labour Inside the Gate. A History of the British Labour Party between the Wars* (IB Tauris, 2005), p. 82.
[4] Charles Higham, *Advertising. Its Use and Abuse* (Williams & Northgate Ltd., 1925), pp. 43-58.
[5] Richard Hornsey, ''The Penguins are Coming': Brand Mascots and Utopian Mass Consumption in Interwar Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, 57.4 (2018), p. 817.
[6] Kevin Williams, 'The Devil's Decade and Modern Mass Communication: The Development of the British Media during the Inter-war Years', in Bob Moore and Henk F.K. von Nierop (eds.), *Twentieth-Century Mass Society in Britain and the Netherlands* (Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2006), p. 103.

the youth organisations still encouraged people to engage with the political process and intellectually prepared them to become voters, a much more important function was as Heathorn and Greenspoon describe: the creation of a worldview.[7] Such a worldview would mean that their parties' principles and identities permeated every aspect of their lives and ways of thinking.

At the same time, we can also see these efforts as part of the major parties' endeavours to create a bulwark against radical politics by getting young people enthused by mainstream politics. It has been observed that the BUF were not only creating a political party but a BUF lifestyle which went beyond electoral support.[8] This 'lifestyle' involved creating social networks between their members, organising social events, and even living together in the BUF HQ.[9] The threat of Fascism was felt profoundly by all parties. The Conservatives were most under threat from the BUF with many of the party's MPs expressing sympathy with Fascism; however, the Conservatives generally decided not to address this directly in order to starve Mosley of publicity.[10] The YCL, however, by the late 1930s, came out very strongly as an anti-Fascist organisation. While the organisation did not engage with many of the branding techniques of the mainstream parties, and we shall explore why later, it *did* come out in defence of democracy using the same techniques as the major parties.

This chapter is the first of two which will explore the identity of the organisations. Its aims are twofold. It will demonstrate that the political parties were broadening their aims to not only recruit voters at election time, but to foster a sense of personal affinity towards their party in order to create life-long activists and members. Such activities are reflective of Benedict Anderson's theories of the 'imagined community'.[11] It will also explore how the political parties engaged with the emerging

[7] Stephen Heathorn and David Greenspoon, 'Organizing Youth for Partisan Politics, 1918-c.1932', *The Historian*, 68.1 (2006), p. 94.
[8] Michael A. Spurr, ''Living the Blackshirt Life': Culture, Community and the British Union of Fascists, 1932-1940', *Contemporary European History*, 12.3 (2003), p. 321.
[9] Spurr, 'Blackshirt Life', pp. 313-319.
[10] Martin Pugh, 'The National Government, the British Union of Fascists and the Olympia Debate', *Historical Research,* 78.200 (2005), p. 253; Philip Williamson, 'The Conservative Party, Fascism and Anti-Fascism 1918-1939', in Nigel Copsey and Andrezej Olechnowicz (eds.), *Varieties of Anti-Fascism in Britain in the Inter-War Period* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 75 & 85.
[11] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, 1983).

advertising industry, by creating a brand for themselves; and, how they tapped into a growing celebrity culture facilitated by the mass media to broaden the appeal of their politicians. The first of its three sections will explore how this identity was constructed, arguing that the organisations' use of language, ritual and invocation of their own, and their parent parties', history gave members a sense of belonging to a larger movement; and, helped the parties weather crises of identity which struck them at various points in the period. The second section will explore how this identity was sold to members, and to the public, as a brand. In addition, this section will argue that the use of the expression 'brand identity' is justified in this period. The creation of a brand identity within the youth organisations tied into a broader effort to create brand identities for the adult parties. The third section will argue that mass democracy, and the need to appeal to a mass electorate, also modified the character of politicians themselves, who sought to create an apolitical image. Such an effort was especially pronounced in the JIL, where Baldwin took on a celebrity-like status. Such activities are reflective, I will argue, not necessarily of a de-politicisation of politics, but rather of an effort by politicians to close the gap between politics and people's ordinary lives in order to counter perceived apathy.

Construction of the Identity: History, Language and Ritual

When introducing the new *Imp* in 1925, Stanley Baldwin penned a message to the JIL in which he made the following statement:

> Active membership of the Junior Imperial League affords one of the best possible means of acquiring that combination of knowledge and enthusiasm which is so essential to progress. In addition, the League develops an invaluable sense of comradeship in the pursuit of great ideas.[12]

The idea that Baldwin expressed here underscored the party's aim to create a sense of belonging; or, as Heathorn and Greenspoon call it 'corporate comradeship' within the organisation.[13] All three of the

[12] *The Imp*, May 1925, p. 1.
[13] Heathorn and Greenspoon, 'Organising Youth', p. 99.

major parties, with varying degrees of success, made efforts to this end. Such activities were set against the backdrop of the internal restructuring, and attempts to reinvent themselves for the democratic era.

'Our Inheritance': A Connection to History

To return to the quote which opened this chapter, when addressing what brought people to support a political party, Guy Dixon suggested that none of the considerations which he had put forward were sufficient. Instead, he suggested that it was the 'guiding principles' of a party which formed its history and guided its future. One of the most surprising and interesting elements to come from researching this thesis is the extent to which the parties relied on their established history and principles when talking to young people. It permeated much of the parties' rhetoric, and young people were encouraged to understand their history, and to consider themselves as 'inheritors' of the work of previous generations. This rhetoric was present across all the major political parties and rooted within it was the struggle for democracy and civil rights. 'Our Heritage is Democracy – Unite to Defend It', declared *Challenge*.[14] Similarly, the mainstream parties sought to instil in their young members the importance of defending their democratic inheritance, and remind them that rights were not inherent and were under threat from the far right and left. This should be looked at as part of a broader effort to diffuse inter-generational conflict by emphasising areas of continuity over those of difference. The Conservative Party proved to be more adept at avoiding the pitfall of inter-generation conflict than the other parties, as we see far less of it when compared to the NLYL and the LoY.

The Conservative Party believed strongly in drawing lessons from the past.[15] To this end, Baldwin sought to draw deliberate parallels between the past and the present to provide, as Bill Schwarz argues, 'an inheritance which was presented as common to all Englishmen.'[16] Indeed, in

[14] *Challenge*, 21 April 1938, pp. 6-7.
[15] Stuart Ball, *Portrait of a Party. The Conservative Party in Britain 1918-1945* (Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 21.
[16] Bill Schwarz, 'The Language of Constitutionalism: Baldwinite Conservatism', in Bill Schwarz et al, *Formations of Nation and People* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), p. 15.

Baldwin's first speech as Prime Minister he drew deliberate parallels between himself and Disraeli, discussing the latter's 'three canons of Conservatism': the Constitution, the Empire, and the welfare of the people.[17] The focus on the constitution was deeply important to Conservative ideology, and was closely connected to the idea of inherited wisdom. There is no written constitution in Britain, references to one are entirely rhetorical in nature; however, it was the constitution's uncodified nature which gave it its strength. To many in the Conservative Party, the ever-evolving nature of the constitution gave it an enduring quality and enabled it to gather wisdom from the ages.[18] Leo Amery was one such Conservative and believed that the lack of a written constitution meant that instead of a document which reflected the set views and theories of a particular group of men from a particular age, the Constitution was a 'living structure' and thus better able to adapt to new situations and challenges.[19]

It may be tempting to view such rhetoric as positioning the party in opposition to change in any form; or, as confirmation of Martin Wiener's theories on the opposition to progress in England.[20] However, it would be more accurate to view the intention as forming a bulwark against radical, *revolutionary* change rather than change or modernity itself. Certainly in the case of the youth organisations the members were encouraged to consider themselves as inheritors of great traditions, but, at the same time, there was more work to be done. For the JIL, their inheritance was political rights, Empire, and the tradition of Conservatism which had been defended on the battlefield. The c.1930 revised edition of the JIL's *Handbook for Organisers and Workers* featured several pages of content detailing the organisation's history.[21] The same content was also delivered to the JIL membership via an article in *The Imp* titled 'The Story of the League.' This article detailed the entire history of the JIL from its founding in 1906 up to its contemporary incarnation. The *Imp* article carried

[17] Philip Williamson, 'The Doctrinal Politics of Stanley Baldwin', in Michael Bentley (ed.), *Public and Private Doctrine* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 187.
[18] Ball, *Portrait,* p. 24.
[19] L.S. Amery, *Thoughts on the Constitution* (Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 1.
[20] Weiner specifically cites Baldwin as evidence of his argument: Martin Weiner, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980* (Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 6.
[21] Handbook for Organisers and Workers, Conservative Party Archive, CCO 506/5/2.

the theme of inheritance strongly, describing how contemporary members have 'entered into their inheritance.'[22] This 'inheritance' was granted to members through the sacrifice made by Imps who gave their lives in the First World War: the article describes how six out of ten members joined the army over the course of the war and an estimated ten thousand of them died. The article served to remind Imps of the importance of continuing the work they had inherited from those who died. The article then highlighted rights which those of the previous generations lacked, specifically the right to vote, and uses that to enthuse members to use these hard-won rights to recruit new members to the JIL.

The theme of inheritance is well reflected in the speeches of Stanley Baldwin, placing the JIL firmly in the tradition of Baldwinite Conservatism. Baldwin laced many of his speeches with this theme, enough that the second published collection of his speeches bore the title *Our Inheritance*. This was also a common theme in his speeches to the JIL; for example, on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the JIL, in 1926, Baldwin reminded them that they were 'building on a foundation laid for them by others' and reiterated that their present freedoms were earned on 'the battleground of long, hard struggles in this country many generations ago.'[23] Despite Baldwin's emphasis on inheritance and the past, he also looked to the future. In the preface to *Our Inheritance* Baldwin outlined his desire to 'make our people conscious of their common heritage and destiny.'[24] In this preface, Baldwin refers to both heritage and destiny; to the past, and the future. In much the same way it has been observed that Baldwin sought to strengthen the Unionist credentials of the party by presenting Conservatism as 'inherently part of the cultural inherence *and* future of Scotland.'[25] This emphasis on both the past and the future serves to demonstrate that Baldwinite Conservatism was not inherently backward-looking or opposed to change. The idea of progress from inheritance is

[22] *The Imp*, March 1928, p. 4.
[23] Stanley Baldwin, *Our Inheritance* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1928), p. 7; p. 11.
[24] Baldwin, *Our Inheritance*, p. vi.
[25] G. Ward-Smith, 'Baldwin and Scotland: More than Englishness', *Contemporary British History*, 15.1 (2001), p. 62.

illustrated in Baldwin's speech to the JIL's 1928 Albert Hall Rally where he described the 'torch of progress' which had been passed on from generation to generation.

> So every one of you be ready in time to take up the torch from the hand of the generation that drops it and make it a brighter light than we have been able so that the kingdoms of the world may be flooded with the light which we see to-day in our dreams.[26]

Baldwin used the metaphor of a glowing torch to describe the progress of knowledge and political rights. The Imps were not supposed to hide the torch or jealously guard it, they were supposed to carry it forward and make it brighter. When we consider that the 1928 Franchise Act had been introduced to the House the month before this speech, it appears that Baldwin was trying to emphasise the real-world effects which progress from inherited traditions could have for young people. Throughout the JIL's periodicals, occasional references were made to this speech which suggests that it was considered something of a landmark moment in the organisation's history. Indeed, at the time it was referred to as 'The League's Greatest Rally.'[27] It was also the largest event that the JIL had held at that point, making it a watershed moment for the JIL in their post-First World War reconstruction. According to *The Imp* over 8,000 Imps attended the event with many more listening via loudspeaker in Hyde Park, braving blizzards to do so.[28] *The Observer* reported that 30,000 people attended the event in total.[29] Baldwin used the metaphor of the torch in another speech delivered to the JIL at the Albert Hall in 1935, referring to Britain as 'the torchbearer of our ordered freedom in Europe.'[30] It is unlikely to have been a coincidence that Baldwin should use the same metaphor to the same audience in the same venue. This implies that there was a conscious decision to create a link between the two events and to reinforce the theme of generational continuity and inheritance.

---

[26] *The Imp*, April 1928, p. 6.
[27] *The Imp*, April 1928, p. 3.
[28] *The Imp*, April 1928, p. 8; for more discussion on the implication of amplification technology for political culture, see Political Culture and Activism.
[29] *The Observer*, 11 March 1928, p. 19.
[30] *The Imp*, April 1935, p. 7.

For the LoY, too, the theme of inheritance was pronounced. What we have to keep in mind for the entire discussion of the LoY is that the overwhelming majority of the body of evidence about the organisation was created during a time of *profound* identity crisis for the party. *Monthly Bulletin* launched in July 1929, just a few months after MacDonald had taken office as Prime Minister; however, a few years later the 1931 General Election saw MacDonald leading the National Government against Labour leaving the party decimated. Therefore, it became necessary to regroup and revaluate what it meant to be in the Labour Party; thus, we see a great deal of idealisation of the past and of past heroes. This is typical of how Labour saw, and continues to see, their past. Writing in the 1970s Christopher Harvie observed that

> Labour biography, until quite recently, was a sort of *Pilgrim's Progress* in which the Shining Ones who died in the faith were gathered within the city, and the defaulters along the way, MacDonald, Snowden, Burns etc., were consigned to Hell.[31]

This spiritual reverence is typical of how the LoY perceived their past. Just as with the JIL, the LoY were represented as being inheritors of rights and traditions, but, that more work needed to be done. For the LoY, their rights and privileges were won by the trade unions; they were encouraged to think of themselves as the recipients of 'Trade Unionism's Great Traditions.'[32] This is best illustrated by the treatment of the Tolpuddle Martyrs, whose story became a touchstone for trade unionism and who took on a sort of 'secular canonisation' in trade union tradition.[33] *Challenge* saw the Tolpuddle Martyrs as representing 'Britain's democratic heritage'[34] while in *The New Nation*, LoY members were told the story of the six labourers who formed a trade union and were sentenced to transportation to penal colonies for seven years.[35] The story was told to members to coincide with the centenary of the martyrdom, and as part of a series of ambitious commemorative events held by the TUC. This was all

[31] Christopher Harvie, 'Book Review of Kenneth O. Morgan, *Keir Hardie Radical and Socialist*', *Welsh History Review*, 8 (1976), p. 118.
[32] *The New Nation,* December 1934, p. 135.
[33] Clare Griffiths, 'Remembering Tolpuddle: Rural History and Commemoration in the Inter-war Labour Movement', *History Workshop Journal*, 44 (1997), p. 146.
[34] *Challenge*, 21 April 1938, p. 7.
[35] *The New Nation*, July 1934, p. 77.

set against the backdrop of a rising number of threats to trade unionism and the Labour movement as a whole. The *New Nation* article cites the rising threat of Fascism as seeking to take away the gains made by trade unionists in the past; and, former party leader John Clynes recognised the need to reinvigorate the party following MacDonald's perceived betrayal in 1931, an election in which Clynes had lost his own seat.[36] Like the Conservatives, then, the Labour Party were seeking to reinvent and reinvigorate themselves when faced with new challenges.

The LoY also looked back to individual heroes for inspiration such as Keir Hardie, who was perceived as having 'laid the foundations for British Socialism.'[37] Hardie was also presented as a figure for members to imitate with an article titled 'Keir Hardie's Advice' in which Hardie's tactics for maximising attendance at meetings were outlined, and suggested that members follow them.[38] Perhaps the most informative representation of the LoY's relationship with Hardie came after their first conference where a 'portrait bust' of Hardie was positioned near the stage. Party Secretary James Middleton perceived in its features 'a glow of pride… as they looked down on those confident young disciples of his old gospel.'[39] Just as with the Tolpuddle Martyrs, Hardie took on a spiritual character: a secular canonisation. Portraying Hardie as having been mocked in his own lifetime and having his gospel spread by followers after his death portrays him as a Christ-like figure. Certainly, there were some in the Labour movement who saw him that way with activist Agnes Hughes converting her house into a shrine to Hardie after he died, and regularly attempting to contact him via spiritualists.[40]

If the Labour Party could be described as experiencing an identity crisis, the Liberal Party was in a far worse state. As the party pulled itself apart with internal divisions, its youth organisation looked to its past for guidance. While Labour looked to heroes who helped grow their party, the Liberals celebrated giants from a more successful era. These efforts were designed to renew and

[36] Griffiths, 'Tolpuddle', p. 151.
[37] *The New Nation*, August 1935, p. 81.
[38] *Monthly Bulletin*, September 1931, p. 3.
[39] Memo from JSM describing the first LoY conference, People's History Museum, LP/JSM/YO/10.
[40] Duncan Tanner, 'Socialist Pioneers and the Art of Political Biography', *Twentieth Century British History*, 4 (1993), p. 288.

revitalise Liberalism, arguing that there was still a place for Liberalism in British society and that while the Conservative and Labour parties were scrambling to claim to be the true inheritors of Liberal achievements, their legacy was not safe in the hands of those parties.[41] In 1927 a satirist writing in *The Forward View* quipped that 'The Liberal is recognised by the fact that he wears a Gladstone collar… It is the ambition of every Liberal to look like Mr. Gladstone.'[42] Much was made of the Wolverhampton Branch's 'Gladstone Night' held every year on the anniversary of the Liberal giant's birth. It was a sure sign that the branch was in trouble when, in 1929, the minutes recorded that 'It was decided not to hold a Gladstone Celebration this year.'[43] It would be a slight mischaracterisation to suggest that this was entirely a product of their inter-war languishing: *The Young Liberal* was selling Gladstone's writings in 1912.[44] However, after the First World War the NLYL much more frequently invoked figures from the party's past. The organisation's aim in this endeavour was to keep its members looking forward by using past figures to inspire them. 'Young Liberals do not live in the past,' *Forward View* argued, 'but they ought to be acquainted with it if they are to be equipped to deal with the problems of the present and future.'[45] Indeed, the paper's own title enshrines this idea. Sir Herbert Samuel wrote of it: 'It is a good title… That is where our eyes must look. An American writer has well said, "No one can walk backwards into the future."'[46] To this end, for the duration of 1930 *Forward View* ran a series of articles titled 'Great Liberals of the Past' which presented Liberal giants of the past and explained how their achievements in the past shaped contemporary Britain. All the parties, therefore, were using the same rhetoric: painting achievements of the past as belonging to them, casting youth as the inheritors of those traditions, then arguing that these achievements were only safe in their party's hands.[47] At the same time, the emphasis placed on continuity served as a device for diffusing

[41] *The Forward View*, February 1927, pp. 24-5.
[42] *The Forward View*, January 1927, p. 10.
[43] Minutes of Combined Central and Entertainment Committees, 21 August 1929, Wolverhampton City Archives, D/SO/27/31.
[44] *The Young Liberal*, October 1912, p. 2.
[45] *The Forward View,* January 1930, p. 5.
[46] *The Forward View*, March 1927, p. 37.
[47] This is the same campaigning rhetoric which has become so common in the modern day, for example Labour referring to themselves as the 'party of the NHS' and arguing that it is not safe in the hands of other parties.

generational tensions within the parties. That this rhetoric was so frequently utilised in the inter-war years to appeal to young people reflects the parties' anxieties about the future of Britain, and the risk of radical politics undoing what they had achieved.

Language and Rituals

Alongside the connection to history, the youth organisations also utilised language and rituals to create a culture. Thomas Linehan argues that the Communist Party made use of rituals to weather times of 'crisis and stress' but it is undoubtedly true of the other parties as well.[48] It is in this area where the JIL are marked out as truly unique: the JIL practised rituals and utilised language in a way unlike any of the other organisations. The best example of this is the name of the members: Imps. While this name would later cause contention amongst members, for most of the organisation's existence it was a successful marker of identity amongst members. The name 'Imp' was a shorthand for Junior Imperialist, providing members with a label to identify with and enshrining the ideology of Empire into that identity.

As the organisation grew, so too did use of the nickname 'Imp', in a way which suggests a growing culture around it. In 1925 *The Imp* replaced *The Junior Imperial League Gazette* as the paper of the JIL. The name of the paper communicated a lot of information with only a few words: this was a paper by and for Imps. Indeed, this expectation was reflected in the first editorial in the new periodical where the hope was expressed that 'every Imp can lend a hand, not only by circulating the journal, but by realising that it is his or her own journal.'[49] An interesting example of how this culture was embraced was in the numerous Imp-based puns which appeared in the periodical. One such example is 'Impocracy' which is defined as 'government from the Imps, by the Imps, for the Imps.'[50] The concept of the Impocracy is laced with political meaning, linking the Imp not only to the system

[48] Thomas Linehan, 'Communist Culture and Anti-Fascism in Inter-War Britain', in Nigel Copsey and Andrezej Olechnowicz (eds.), *Varieties of Anti-Fascism in Britain in the Inter-War Period* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 43.
[49] *The Imp*, May 1925, p. 2.
[50] *The Imp*, May 1925, p. 2.

of governance for the organisation, but indicates the Imps' support for democracy in Britain as a whole. In addition, it also alludes to the 'great ideals' from Baldwin's earlier-cited quote and provides the JIL with the moral superiority which is common when forming group identities.[51] Other similar instances of Imp puns, or Imp-themed content, were poems about various party personalities, titled 'Imp-ersonalities'; a song written as an 'Anthem of the Imps', in the form of a parody of *The Old Brigade*; crossword puzzles whose black squares formed the letters 'JIL'; a section covering perceived grievances titled 'IMPertinences'; and many more, similar puns appearing in articles and letters.[52]

Creating a culture and identity within the LoY was far less successful. There was no nickname comparable to 'Imps' for members of the LoY. Most commonly, the members were referred to as 'Leaguers' but that term was far too generic and was not used enough to constitute a nickname for members.[53] Another potential nickname would be one that the party as a whole gave to its individual members: **L**abour **I**ndividual **M**em**B**ers became 'Limbs.'[54] This can tell us a little about how Labour saw its independent members, as appendages or tools for doing party work; however, to call it a 'nickname' would be stretching the concept to its absolute limit. It evokes no special connection to the Labour movement and a LoY member might not necessarily be an independent member if their party membership was granted via a trade union.

The organisations could also foster a sense of belonging by creating a set of shared rituals. Such rituals, repeated often enough, evolved into traditions. The most significant of such rituals can be found in the JIL through the concept of the 'Imps' Whisper.' The Imps' Whisper is essentially the opposite of what it sounds like: it is described by *The Times* as 'a prolonged cheer.' [55] Giving it a special name transformed what would have otherwise been a mundane activity, cheering, into something which was unique to the JIL. We can get an idea of the procedure of an Imps' Whisper from how it

[51] Marilyn B. Brewer, 'The Psychology of Prejudice: Ingroup Love and Outgroup Hate?', *Journal of Social Issues*, 55.3 (1999), p. 435.
[52] Poems: *The Imp*, August 1934, p. 4; October 1934, p. 4. Anthem: *The Imp*, October 1925, p. 11. Crosswords: *The Imp*, January 1926, p. 6. Impertinences: *The Imp*, July 1930, p. 4.
[53] *The New Nation,* August 1935, p. 94.
[54] *Labour Organiser,* February 1931, p. 38.
[55] *The Times*, 12 March 1928, p. 16.

was depicted in cartoons. For example, one cartoon featured a group of Imps giving an Imps' Whisper at a meeting. One Imp counts down from three and all the others at the meeting shout 'HI' so loudly that the roof is blown off the building.[56] In another cartoon a branch Secretary attempts to take a holiday from the Imps but no matter where he goes around the world he encounters a group of Imps giving an Imps' Whisper. In each of these Imps' Whispers the group of Imps count down from three before shouting 'HI.'[57] These cartoons imply that there was a set of coherent traditions being formed in the JIL and these traditions would have helped solidify a group identity within the organisation.

The ultimate aim of the described endeavours was the creation of a self-perpetuating community, one which fulfilled some of the roles of a member's family and their friends. This was both literal and metaphorical. On both the left and the right there were moves towards recruiting even the youngest children in the hope that they would make their way through the party system, marry, then send their children through the same system. For Labour, there were the Socialist Sunday Schools (SSS). These organisations were not directly affiliated with the Labour Party, but rather had arisen as an offshoot of the Labour Churches in the 1890s and of Keir Hardie's 'Crusaders' youth club created out of his children's column in *Labour Leader*.[58] Some local Liberal parties, too, ran groups for younger children, but ran into the self-created problem of a two year age gap between leaving these groups at fourteen and being allowed to join the NLYL at sixteen.[59] Finally, the Conservative Party ran the Young Britons which was set up in direct response to the growth of the SSSs and Stuart Ball considers the organisation a 'nursery' for the JIL.[60] The organisation was intended to be free from party politics, but in reality this was never the case and the stated objects of the organisation were to teach children the principles of Conservatism, while it was ruled that all organisers must belong to a recognised Conservative and Unionist Association.[61]

---

[56] *The Imp*, April 1927, p. 5.
[57] *The Imp,* September 1928, p. 9.
[58] F. Reid, 'Socialist Sunday Schools in Britain, 1892-1939', *International Review of Social History*, 11.1 (1966), pp. 22-23.
[59] *The Forward View*, February 1937, p. 31.
[60] Ball, *Portrait*, p. 157.
[61] *Handbook on Young Briton*, 1932, CCO/506/7/1.

The editors of the periodicals played a substantial part in reinforcing the idea of the organisations as a family, and in this regard the parties took cues from the sales tactics of commercial periodicals. The editors of boys' story papers often filled the role of a friend to the readers, or a 'chum' in the case of *The Magnet*.[62] SSS periodical *The Young Socialist* featured a regular character who referred to himself as the readers' 'Uncle' and also referred to his readers as 'chums.' In 1931 'Uncle Mac' attempted, unsuccessfully, to start a club within a club which he called a 'Chum Club.'[63] At the same time, the editor of *The Young Briton* referred to themselves as 'your affectionate friend.' These activities also highlight the difficulty, for the adult parties, of operating organisations which spanned significant age ranges: content in the JIL and LoY periodicals had to appeal to members aged between fourteen and, potentially, thirty; therefore, some of the content for younger children made its way into these periodicals. The JIL and LoY each had characters who delivered light-hearted content with a humorous, informal tone as well as delivering serious politics: 'Rover' for the JIL and 'Galerius' for the LoY.

Ultimately, the ideal end of this system was for members to marry and for their children to join these organisations. Such success stories were rare, but they did happen; and when they did much was made of them. Photographs from the wedding of two Imps were published in *The Imp*,[64] while *Forward View* published an article on members being engaged and married.[65] Meanwhile, long-time committee members of the Leicester LoY, Dorothy Blewett and Ken Shilcock, married in later life.[66] In addition, it is possible to trace political dynasties through the youth wings such as Anthony Greenwood, son of Labour politician Arthur Greenwood in the LoY, while Walter Runciman's eldest son was a member of Cambridge University Liberal Club.[67] Such instances were the ultimate

[62] Helen A. Fairlie, *Revaluing British Boys' Story Papers, 1918-1939* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 159.
[63] *The Young Socialist*, July 1931, p. 76.
[64] *The Imp*, September 1928, p. 4.
[65] *The Forward View*, May 1931, p. 70;
[66] J. Carswell, Interview with Dorothy Shilcock, 2 July 1987, East Midlands Oral History Archive, LO/389/340, http://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/digital/collection/p15407coll1/id/270.
[67] Cambridge University Liberal Club minute book, private collection of Dr. Seth Thévoz kindly made available to author.

expression of the attempts to turn the political parties into self-sustaining movements with a solid base of supporters which was crucial for surviving in mass democracy and for protecting against the insurgent Communist and Fascist parties, especially in the case of the BUF for whom creating an internal community was an end in itself.[68]

The Distinguishing Mark: Material Culture and Political Branding

American advertising pioneer Edward Bernays wrote in 1928 that it was 'incomprehensible that politicians do not make use of the elaborate business methods that industry built up.'[69] In the early twentieth century the advertising industry advanced in leaps and bounds. In 1911, JWT produced a booklet explaining to companies how to create an effective brand. A brand identity was about creating a mark of distinction, fostering goodwill with the consumer, and building a good reputation.[70] A brand is distinct from a trademark in a legalistic sense: a trademark is intellectual property and protected by law; whereas, a brand is a trademark which has become imbued with cultural and social meaning.[71] Some of the most successful firms in the inter-war years engaged in brand development and mass marketing campaigns. Schwarzkopf points to JWT's handling of Lux Soap Flakes who ran an 'integrated marketing' campaign in which 'all aspects of the marketing of the brand, the product development itself, the packaging, the advertising communications, the distribution methods and pricing, were integrated to establish Lux as an innovative, high-price, and high-value product.'[72] We must be careful not to overstate the extent to which political parties were mirroring these techniques, no party ran an integrated marketing campaign to the extent of that described by Schwarzkopf; however, there are important parallels to be drawn between innovations in commercial and political marketing.

[68] Spurr, 'Blackshirt Life', p. 316.
[69] Edward Bernays, *Propaganda* (Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1928), p. 112.
[70] Stefan Schwarzkopf, 'Turning Trademarks into Brands: How Advertising Agencies Practiced and Conceptualized Branding, 1890-1930', in Teresa da Silva Lopes and Paul Duguid (eds.), *Trademarks, Brands, and Competition* (Routledge, 2010), p. 173.
[71] Schwarzkopf, 'Trademarks', p. 165.
[72] Schwarzkopf, 'Trademarks', pp. 177-8.

In British politics, Bernays' desire to see politicians use industry techniques was realised. The Conservative Party have especially been noted for their use of modern propaganda techniques and their employment of commercial advertising agencies, something which David Jarvis argues reflected the party's belief that in order to succeed in mass democracy all they needed to do was present the party as a competitive product in the marketplace.[73] Party Chairman, J.C.C. Davidson expressed his belief that 'winning elections is really a question of salesmanship, no different from selling any branded article.'[74] More recently, Laura Beers has corrected the record to demonstrate that the Labour Party were just as effective at propagandising as the Conservative Party.[75] The Labour Party firmly acknowledged the necessity of engaging with advertising, and understood the link between this new medium and political propaganda. *Labour Organiser* clearly drew this link, asking:

> Does not the peacock *advertise* its finery on the nobleman's lawn, while at the same time it subtly advertises, as mere possession often does, the class or society to which the owner of that lawn, and of that bird, belong? And are not a lover's protestations but an advertisement of his own worth and presented charms? Where does advertisement end and propaganda begin? It might even be claimed that all propaganda is advertisement.[76]

For Labour, marketing the party and creating a brand identity was a key component of their propaganda aims. This was a time when the idea of having a brand identity for a political party was very much in its infancy; however, both Labour and the Conservatives were engaged in the process of creating one. Despite the Conservative Party being noted for their use of advertising agencies, employing both Holford-Bottomley and S.H. Benson advertising agencies over the period,[77] Labour may actually have been slightly ahead of the curve. For most of the twentieth century, the Conservative Party lacked any kind of unifying symbol or logo until adopting the torch logo in the

[73] David Jarvis, 'The Shaping of the Conservative Electoral Hegemony 1918-39', in Jon Lawrence and Miles Taylor, *Party, Stage and Society. British Electoral Behaviour in Britain since 1820* (Scolar Press, 1997), p. 142.
[74] Quoted in Dominic Wring, *The Politics of Marketing the Labour Party* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 20.
[75] Laura Beers, *Your Britain. Media and the Making of the Labour Party* (Harvard University Press, 2010).
[76] *Labour Organiser*, February 1936, p. 26.
[77] Dominic Wring, 'Political marketing and party development in Britain. A "secret" history', *European Journal of Marketing,* 30.10/11 (1996), p. 103.

1980s; certainly, a survey of Conservative election posters does not display any kind of identifying mark during the inter-war years.[78] By comparison, Labour were highly brand conscious and, like their opponents, understood the need to advertise and create a brand identity. From the earliest days of the party it utilised trade union insignia during campaigns;[79] and some of their early election posters featured a small, circular icon in the bottom corner in which 'Published by the Labour Party' was written.[80] In 1924, Labour organised a competition amongst members to design a logo for the party. The winning design featured a torch with a quill and shovel crossed in front of it, beneath which the word 'Liberty' was written.[81] While this logo did not make many appearances in print propaganda, it found much popularity in badges which were produced in 1925 with the aim to give members 'a keener sense of belonging to a united national movement.'[82] Note also the inclusion of both the shovel *and* the quill to represent Labour's attempts to appeal beyond their traditional base and promote the idea that 'Labour' referred both to those who laboured manually, and to those who laboured with their brain.[83] At the same time, despite having high-profile advertising agents at their disposal, the Conservative Party appeared to languish in regard to their brand identity. The party lacked any associated tagline, outside of the much-maligned 'Safety First' slogan of 1929; and no colour was associated with the party: they used red, white and blue as patriotic colours.[84] This caused much confusion as, in some areas, none of the parties used standardised colours.[85]

The confusion over a lack of standardised colours was expressed by one Imp who wrote to *The Imp* to request that a standard colour be introduced as 'we hardy Northerners have red as our

[78] Conservative Poster Archive, https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/cpa/collections/posters-collection, [accessed 24 May 2019].
[79] Dominic Wring, '"Selling Socialism" – The Marketing of the "very old" Labour Party', *European Journal of Marketing*, 35.9/10 (2001), p. 1039.
[80] Labour Clears the Way, 1910, is one such example: http://www.advertisingarchives.co.uk/index.php?service=search&action=do_quick_search&language=en&q=labour+clears+the+way, [accessed 24 May 2019].
[81] Wring, *Marketing*, p. 28.
[82] Quoted in Worley, *Inside the Gate*, p. 94.
[83] Matthew Worley, 'The Fruits on the Tree', p. 193; Laura Beers, 'Counter-Toryism: Labour's Response to Anti-Socialist Propaganda, 1918-39', in Worley (ed.), *Foundations*, p. 248.
[84] Ball, *Portrait*, p. 100.
[85] Wring, *Marketing*, p. 28.

Conservative colour' while the Liberals used blue. When a guest speaker from the south visited with a blue rosette, he was booed by Conservative activists who 'took him for a lost lamb.' The editor replied to this letter explaining that 'no solution is possible without the consent of each Party headquarters, and also of the constituency associations, many of which adhere tenaciously to their special colours… Our Party has therefore adopted a British Lion design as a distinguishing mark.'[86] The British Lion does appear on other Conservative party products, for example a postcard featuring Baldwin's likeness features the lion on the reverse.[87] The editor's response highlights one of the difficulties which the Conservative Party needed to overcome in order to create a brand identity: the autonomy of the local parties. Local party autonomy was sovereign to the Conservative Party and any attempt to impose the national party's will upon a constituency organisation would not have been well received.[88] This tension between the national party and the constituency organisations helps explain why it should be that the youth wings were more successful at marketing than the adult party. Most constituency organisations had their own sets of traditions, colours, and symbols; therefore, they were unwilling to adopt one dictated by the central party. By contrast, the youth organisations allowed the national parties to create a movement from scratch and thus enabled them to experiment with branding. At the same time, the desire by the youth organisations to be considered distinct from their adult organisations may have led them to unwittingly pursue what proved to be highly innovative marketing techniques.

Communicating Meaning, Creating Identity: The Membership Badge

Symbols, regalia, or membership badges produced by an organisation can be an interesting way for the historian to attempt to unpick its identity, and the relationship of the membership to said identity. In fact, a recent article on material culture has argued that it brings a new approach to writing histories

[86] *The Imp*, April 1927, p. 7.
[87] Postcard published by the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations, year unknown, card in possession of author.
[88] Ball, *Portrait*, p. 146.

from below, and suggests that it might be impossible to separate social from material history.[89] Historians have long acknowledged the important role that material culture played in people's relationship to parties and politicians, with Simon Morgan arguing that objects played a 'vital role in mediating between popular politicians and their followers in the era preceding the development of mass parties.'[90] The creation of political messaging in such objects, Morgan argues, is a two-way process. The owners of these objects imbued them with their own sense of significance, but at the same time the symbolism inherent in political objects had the power to shape the thinking of those around them.[91] This phenomenon, of members coming to identify closely with their badges and these badges being gradually incorporated into the organisations' products and propaganda, is something we see reflected in these organisations.

An interesting contrast between adult parties and those of the youth organisations is that, despite engaging closely with new advertising and propaganda techniques the adult organisations largely lacked a logo, distinguishing mark, or brand. By comparison, the youth organisations were more adept at marketing themselves by creating an identity which was imbued with cultural and social meaning. The Labour, Conservative, and Liberal youth organisations all produced badges which members could wear in order to distinguish themselves as members, both to other members and the larger public. In some regards, they served as a gesture towards uniform. While none of the organisations had uniforms, and political uniforms were banned under the 1936 Public Order Act, the membership badge served the same purpose: to provide a visual identifier of belonging to the organisation. Heathorn and Greenspoon have observed in passing that the JIL utilised regalia and symbols to aid the creation of a community; but, there is much more to be done to connect these efforts to the wider transformations in British political culture.[92]

[89] G. Pentland, M. Roberts, & M. Nixon, 'The Material Culture of Scottish Reform Politics, c. 1820 – c. 1884' *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 32.1 (2012), pp. 30-32.
[90] Simon Morgan, 'Material Culture and the Politics of Personality in Victorian England', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 17.2 (2012), p. 127.
[91] Morgan, 'Material Culture', p. 133.
[92] Heathorn and Greenspoon, 'Organising Youth', p. 99.

Despite having a long history in British politics and voluntary organisations, the membership badge has received little study compared to other forms of regalia such as the banner or emblem.[93] Paul Martin traces some of the earliest examples of the use of symbols to denote membership of an organisation back to 1757 when the Freemasons began producing printed certificates featuring their symbols.[94] Trade unions in particular made effective use of membership badges both as an 'outward sign of the owner's trade union faith' and in order to encapsulate elaborate symbolism.[95] It has also been suggested that it was through material culture that many who had previously been outside the franchise demonstrated support for causes or ideas.[96] Such badges, Martin argues, could be so rich in symbolism that they need not contain any text at all: their meaning would simply be understood by those who saw it.[97] The membership badges of the political youth organisations followed similar trends: they were rich with symbolism which announced the ideology and identity of the organisation. That these badges are so laced with symbolism is important in shaping the world view of organisation members, as just as much as projecting a message material objects had the power to shape the thinking of people around them.[98] The additional function of membership badges as a status symbol has been observed in the Chartist movement, where badges worn on the lapel took 'the aspect of medals.'[99] The youth organisations' badges could also serve this purpose, not only as a signifier of membership but as a status symbol. The JIL produced special badges for their Committee members which not only took on the figurative status of a medal, but were designed to literally look like one.

[93] Paul Martin, *The Trade Union Badge. Material Culture in Action* (Ashgate, 2002), p. xxi.
[94] Martin, *Trade Union Badge*, p. 1.
[95] Arthur Pugh, *Men of Steel* (Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, 1951), p. 340; Martin, *Trade Union Badge*, p. 5.
[96] Pentland, Roberts, & Nixon, 'Material Culture', p. 36.
[97] Martin, *Trade Union Badge*, p. 8.
[98] Morgan, 'Material Culture', p. 133; Igor Kapytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commondification as a Process', in Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspectives* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 64.
[99] Nixon, Pentland, and Roberts, 'Material Culture', p. 43.

Figures 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 show the JIL, LoY, and NLYL badges respectively. Taking them in turn, the JIL badge, depicted in Figure 3.1, contains many elements to interpret. The most prominent elements of the badge are those at the top: the red enamel crown and the representations of a fluttering St. George's Cross and Union Flag. Below that, a golden lion is encircled by the words 'For Empire'. Only at the bottom of the badge does the full name of the organisation appear: 'The Junior Imperial & Constitutional League'. When examining a material object, it is necessary not only to look, but to feel it, to consider its shape and size and what it can tell us about how it would have been used and interpreted by those around it.[100] The badge itself is small, no bigger than a modern two pence coin, which would mean that it would have to stand out a distance to have any chance of being recognised for what it was. Since the lettering at the bottom is very small, and could vary in clarity between badges, the badge would have relied on the larger visual elements to communicate what it represented. The crown dominates the badge in almost every respect: it is the largest single element, it is at the top and centre, it has the brightest colours, and has the most detailed design work. This reflects the importance placed on the monarchy within the JIL: the very first of their ten principles was 'to maintain our constitutional Monarchy and democratic form of Government…'[101] The crown sits atop depictions of the flags of England and the United Kingdom. These flags cast the JIL as a patriotic organisation. It may be possible to infer that the presence of the England flag on the badge would have alienated members from other parts of the

Figure 3.1 – Junior Imperial and Constitutional League membership badge; JIL membership badge with committee ribbon, badges in possession of author.

[100] Adrienne D. Hood, 'Material Culture: the Object', in Sarah Barber and Corinna M. Penniston-Bird (eds.), *History Beyond the Text* (Routledge, 2009), pp. 178-181.
[101] Handbook for Organisers and Workers, CCO 506/5/2.

United Kingdom; however, this does not seem to have been entirely the case. While it is true that Baldwin was known for his appeals to 'England', with the first published collection of his speeches titled *On England*, and that in many of these speeches he lays out his vision of England and English values, he remained popular in Scotland and made much of his Scottish heritage through his mother.[102] Branch reports from *The Imp* also demonstrate that, while fewer in number, there were many highly active branches of the JIL both in Scotland and Wales. The penultimate element of the badge is its text. The first band includes the JIL's motto: 'For Empire.' Empire was a significant element of the JIL, a fact which will be discussed in more depth in the following chapter, and for the adult party as a whole: Stuart Ball argues Empire was central to Conservative thought at this time.[103] The final band of text contains the JIL's full name: 'Junior Imperial & Constitutional League'. It is relatively uncommon, especially in later years, to see the full title appear and its inclusion serves to emphasise the 'Constitutional' part of the name. As we saw above, the Constitution was a crucial element of the Conservative ideology.

Figure 3.2 –
LoY Membership badge, badge in possession of author.

Figure 3.2 depicts the LoY's membership badge. There are fewer elements than the JIL badge, but it still communicates a great deal of meaning. Unlike the JIL, the name of the organisation is given much more prominence in the badge, but is still dwarfed by the other elements. Atop a green hill young male and female figures are erecting an enormous red flag. The waving flag dominates the image and almost seems to be engulfing the figures, as if to symbolise that by becoming a part of the LoY you became part of something bigger than yourself: a metaphor for a Socialist Republic. That a male and female figure are each represented is also significant, and not a one-off in LoY imagery. A poster advertising the LoY depicts a globe being held in the hands of two young people, one set of

[102] Ward-Smith, 'Baldwin and Scotland', pp. 69-71. For more on conflation of England, Britain, and Scotland and what that meant for the organisations see Chapter 4.
[103] Ball, *Portrait,* p. 32.

arms is clearly a young man's and the other a young woman's.[104] The inclusion of the male and female figures on equal terms is indicative of the LoY's attempts to appeal to a broad gender demographic, as opposed to the male-dominated trade unions. Finally, the two figures are planting their flag on a green hill. This is evocative of debates, which will be discussed in further detail in the final chapter, of rural versus urban images of the nation; of campaigns for countryside access; and of a backlash against the industrialisation of the nation which was seen to have contributed to the destruction and devastation of the First World War.

These ideas are reflected less clearly in the LoY's objects, which instead focused on the adult party's belief that the organisation existed to 'promote the policy and programme of the National Labour Party.'[105] By late 1936 this had changed somewhat. Although not the official organ of the LoY at this stage, *Advance* articulated a set of principles which were much closer to those reflected in the membership badge. They had five objects and most of these clustered around the building of a Socialist state; for example, 'To assist the Labour Movement in its fundamental purpose of Socialism… to educate Youth in the spirt of the struggle for Socialism and freedom, in the principles of Trade Unionism and Co-operation.'[106] 'Struggle', 'co-operation' and 'Socialism' are all depicted in the membership badge. The two figures struggle to raise the red flag of Socialism, but, co-operate to do so.

Finally, Figure 3.3 depicts the NLYL membership badge along with a representation of the organisation's monogram as it appeared on a conference programme. The badge features the initials of the organisation, NLYL, and the words 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity' written around the outside. This badge is somewhat less distinctive than the others and the name of the organisation is not obvious; however, this is of lesser importance to the ideological meaning behind the badge. The words on its outer rim hold profound significance for Liberalism and find their origins in the French Revolution, an event considered to represent a watershed moment in the history of Liberalism and closely associated

[104] LSE Archives, COLL MISC 0714/714/6.
[105] *Monthly Bulletin*, February 1931, p. 2.
[106] *Advance*, August 1936, p. 9.

with the 'triumph of Liberalism.'[107] This roots the NLYL in a more radical liberal tradition and reflects the fact that the NLYL appeared especially conscious of the fact that liberty was hard won. Finally, the stylisation of the letters is also significant. The Y in the centre has the appearance of a tree bearing fruit. This may represent young people as being fruit grown from the Liberal tree; certainly, Matthew Worley has observed Hugh Dalton using this expression to describe Labour members and so it is not unreasonable to draw the same meaning here.[108] Nevertheless the party's attempts at creating a unified brand fell short of its competitors. Rather than adopting a unified colour or symbol, badges were available in red, blue, yellow or silver and, as Figure 3.3 shows, the badge was not represented faithfully in the monogram.[109]

Figure 3.3 – National League of Young Liberals crest. JOSEPHY/14/4.
And NLYL Membership badge, badge in possession of author.

Even the inverse of the badges can offer insight to the historian. For instance, all the badges came in two forms: with either a buttonhole or pin fixture. Martin points out that when trade unions began expanding their membership to include women, they began to introduce badges with pin fixtures which could be worn on female clothing.[110] That the political youth organisations followed this trend suggests that deliberate moves were being made to make all facets of membership open to all members. These badges were a popular element of the youth organisations and provided a symbol for the members to build their group identity around. As soon as a badge was proposed for the LoY, there was 'widespread' demand for them and *Monthly Bulletin* reported that 'request after request' had been made for them.[111] On

[107] Pierre Manet, *An Intellectual History of Liberalism*, translation by Rebecca Balinski (Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 80; Agustin Ros, *Profits for All?: The Cost and Benefits of Employee Ownership* (Nova Publishers, 2001), p. 11; So significant are these principles to Liberalism that the Liberal Democrats in Britain today still carry a variation in the preamble to their constitution which commits the party to 'seek to balance the fundamental values of liberty, equality and community.'
[108] Matthew Worley, 'The Fruits on the Tree', p. 193.
[109] LSE Archives, General Information Re Badges, Pencils, etc., JOSEPHY 14/4.
[110] Martin, *Trade Union Badge,* p. 40.
[111] *Monthly Bulletin*, August 1929, p. 4.

two separate occasions, the Leicester branch of the LoY bought dozens of badges for their members.[112] The same is true of the JIL. Branch reports regularly describe high demand for badges and 45,000 were sold in 1927.[113] Most photographs in the periodical depict Imps wearing their badges. At the same time, local branches adopted the image of the badge into their own imagery. For example, the local magazines of the Hendon Divisional Council and the Wallington, Beddington, and Carshalton Branch of the JIL featured representations of the JIL badge.[114] In addition, when arranging a dance the Bristol East branch ensured that tickets for the event were royal blue and featured the JIL crest while also arranging for a replica of the crest to be displayed at the event.[115] This suggests that the efforts to link the membership badge to the organisations' identity was making its way down to the membership. In addition, it is indicative of the creation of a unified brand identity throughout local JIL branches which the adult party had so far lacked due to the difficulties in changing local party habits.

From Badge to Logo

As we have seen above, the membership badge of an organisation could be a powerful communicator of identity, whether this was of the organisation itself or of a broader national identity.[116] It is also possible, to some extent, to expand this theory to include the creation of a brand identity. Both the Labour and Conservative youth organisations sought to integrate their badge into the periodicals as a logo, in order to establish their brand in the minds of their readers. At the same time, an established brand would have enabled the periodicals to compete with an expanding number of commercial periodicals available for young people at the time. The increased availability of print media and the influence of press barons meant that the public were then getting their information from mostly the

[112] Executive Committee Meeting, 11 January 1937; Business Meeting, 7 September 1937, Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, DE/8167.
[113] Ball, *Portrait*, p. 155; Martin offers similar findings in trade unions, which struggled to keep up with demand: Martin, *Trade Union Badge*, p. 8.
[114] *The Hendon Imp*, October 1936, p. 1; *The Three Tons*, June 1927, p. i.
[115] Minutes of Committee Meeting, 30 August 1932, Bristol Record Office, 38036/J/2(a).
[116] Pentland, Roberts, & Nixon, 'Material Culture', p. 37.

same, very few, sources; thus, providing entrenched competition.[117] Alongside the growth of printed news media came an increasing number of popular periodicals aimed at school-aged children. We will discuss in the final chapter the implication of the content of such periodicals for the youth organisations, and how they dealt with commercial periodicals competing for the time and money of their own potential readers. This section is more interested in the *design* of the periodicals and how their masthead image and use of imagery communicated meaning to the members. In some regards, the design of the youth organisation periodicals straddles the line between the more basic appearance of many adult party publications, such as *Labour Organiser* which used a basic block-capital headline, and some of the commercial periodicals available on the mass market. The ability to print in colour and reproduce complex cover designs had been in existence long before the political parties introduced periodicals to their youth organisations; and yet, they scarcely utilised them.[118] Their appearance was more akin to the layout of the cheaper, one or two pence, weekly publications.[119] Within commercial periodicals, the ability for non-textual elements to communicate meaning was important to selling the product. While some elements, such as a border, served merely as decoration, a cover image operated as a signifier of what would be inside.[120] Where the youth organisations' periodicals lacked the grand illustrations of some of the more ambitious commercial periodicals, their mastheads were usually highly stylised and communicative.

Figure 3.4 depicts two *New Nation* mastheads which ran during the paper's lifetime. Where *Monthly Bulletin* was incredibly basic, the *New Nation* masthead image represents the first attempt

[117] Laura Beers, 'Education or Manipulation? Labour, Democracy, and the Popular Press in Interwar Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, 48.1 (2009), pp. 129-30.
[118] Anthony Quinn reproduces many examples of colourful and more ambitious magazine covers: Anthony Quinn, *A History of British Magazine Design* (V&A Publishing, 2016).
[119] Quinn, *Magazine Design*, p. 84.
[120] Fairlie, *Story Papers*, p. 156.

by the paper to create a stylised brand; and, one which was connected to wider Labour imagery: the image of the rising sun earlier appeared in the 'Labour Greet the Dawn' poster produced for the 1923 General Election.[121] Such imagery implies newness, a new day; and a hopeful, optimistic future: a new nation. In September 1933 *The New Nation* underwent a revamp which saw an attempt to better integrate the membership badge into the periodical, turning it into a logo, and the Labour movement more widely. The masthead then contained a representation of the LoY badge. In addition to appearing in the masthead, the image of the badge would occasionally appear in the dividing lines between columns of text. The LoY branding was also present in the adult party publication *Labour Organiser*. At around the same time the LoY were granted pages in *Labour Organiser* which enabled them to better communicate with the adult party regarding any issues which affected them, and this simultaneously enabled them to better integrate their brand identity within the party as a whole. The first few of these articles featured a representation of the LoY's badge in the top corner.[122] In addition to this, the LoY's formation was advertised in *Labour Organiser* which featured an image of the badge.[123] The image of the badge stuck with its members enough that the rebellious *Advance* faction carried a modified version on the masthead of their periodical, viewable in Figure 3.5. In this image, the figures bestride the world with

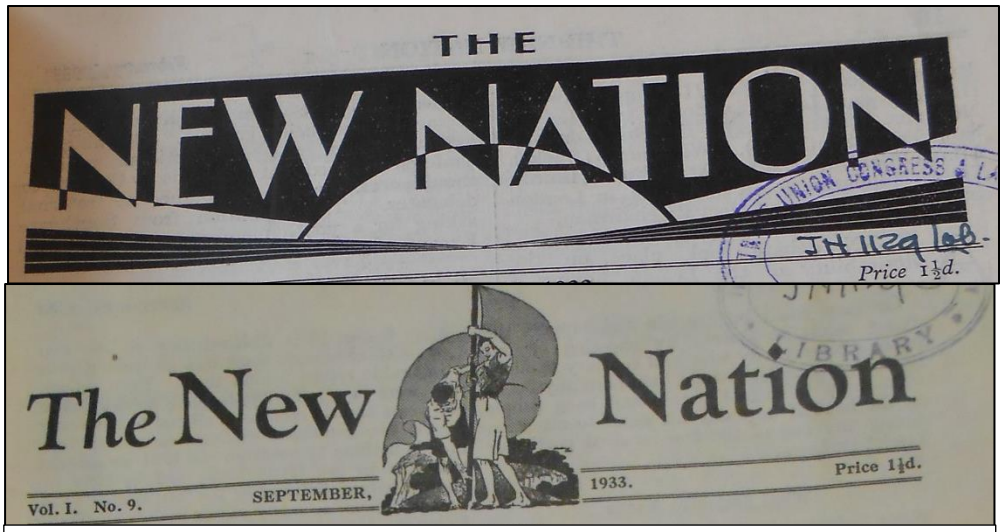

Figure 3.4 – *The New Nation* masthead image, February 1933, p. 1; September 1933, p. 1.

[121] Worley, *Inside the Gate*, Cover.
[122] *Labour Organiser,* March 1930, p. p. 40; April 1930, p. 62; May 1930, p. 82.
[123] *Labour Organiser,* October 1929.

beams of light emanating from behind them. This amalgamation of LoY imagery indicates that even those who were unhappy with the direction of the adult party still felt affinity to the LoY, enough affinity to carry over their imagery to their protest movement.

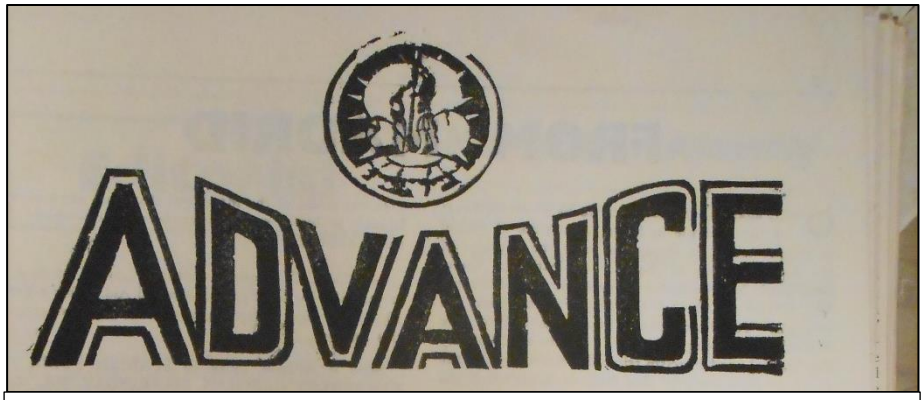

Figure 3.5 – *Advance* masthead image, November 1936, p. 1.

The Conservative Party have been noted for their ability to produce periodicals in the 'latest "popular" style.'[124] Figure 3.6 depicts masthead images from *The Junior Imperial League Gazette* and *The Imp* from different periods. The first masthead featured an image of Britannia sat beside a globe above the open sea. The use of these images carries Imperial connotations. From the renaissance onwards the

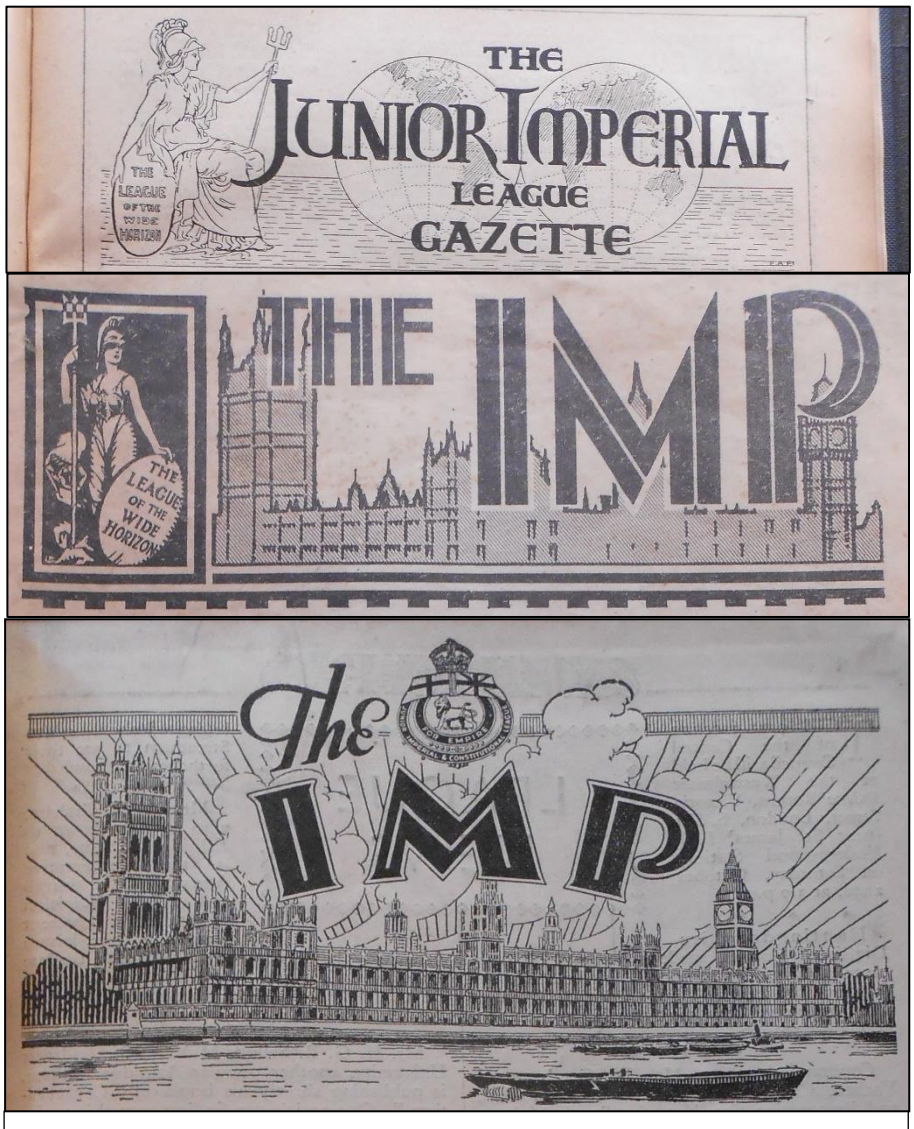

Figure 3.6 – *Junior Imperial League Gazette* masthead image, February 1922, p. 1; The *Imp* masthead image, February 1927, p. 1; October 1932, p. 1.

[124] Geraint Thomas, 'Political Modernity and "Government" in the Construction of Inter-war Democracy and National Encounters', in Laura Beers and Geraint Thomas (eds.), *Brave New World. Imperial and Democratic Nation-Building between the Wars* (Institute of Historical Research, 2011), p. 40.

personification of Britannia had, as she does in this image, carried Neptune's trident and had been used to symbolise Britain's dominion over the waves.[125] The use of the globe and open water further reinforces this symbolism. All these images are linked to the JIL by the words she carries on her shield 'The League of the Wide Horizon.' This phrase was another nickname given to the JIL, though it eventually fell out of usage, to symbolise how widespread the organisation was in both geography and social appeal.[126] The Palace of Westminster in *The Imp* reflects further traditional British imagery and reinforces the JIL's constitutional and democratic credentials. The third image includes the JIL crest above the Palace of Westminster, combining these images to provide the viewer with a representation of the ideology of this target audience: a belief in Empire, and in Parliamentary democracy. The branding was further reinforced by the colour of the paper: it was a conscious decision by the Publications Committee to colour the paper blue.[127] Although it is not explicitly stated, this may be the first step towards adopting blue as the official colour of the party.

The membership badges were not intended to be private things, to be seen by members only; they were also intended to be used publicly. As such, the organisations' imagery was not restricted to their periodicals: it appeared on campaign posters and on merchandise. Although few of these posters survive in the archives, they are depicted in the periodicals either directly reproduced or in the background of photographs. Often, the membership badge would appear on these posters. In the case of the JIL, in an image from Colchester, Imps can be seen forming a band with 'Join the Imps' banners and carrying a large, almost person-sized, cardboard cut-out of the membership badge.[128] At the North Croydon Divisional rally, a Union Flag with a JIL membership badge in the centre was hung above the stage.[129] In addition, there are examples of reproduced posters which include the JIL badge along with the organisation's name and associated slogans.[130] Similarly, the LoY's membership badge can

[125] Virginia Hewett, Britannia, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/68196, [accessed 21 March 2018].
[126] *The Imp*, April 1927, p. 2.
[127] Publications Committee Minutes, 19 October 1934, CCO 506/1/4.
[128] *The Imp*, November 1934, p. 4.
[129] *The Imp,* January 1934, p. 8.
[130] *The Imp*, April 1930, p. 16.

occasionally be seen in the background of photos; for example, in an image of members of the Miles Platting branch holding an outdoor meeting, a poster featuring the badge can be seen behind the speaker.[131]

By contrast, the Liberal and Communist Parties lacked much in the way of a brand identity. For the Liberal Party, this was indicative of the larger decline of the party as a whole but came down to one key factor: money. As we have already seen, *Forward View* received no financial support from the Liberal Party. Throughout its brief life the periodical experimented with a few stylised mastheads, such as italicising the font or making it appear hand-written, but these were always abandoned after a few months in favour of a return to simply writing the title in block capitals. Despite lacking a stylised masthead, *Forward View* was unique amongst organisation periodicals in their attempts to create a mascot. By the 1920s brand mascots had come to dominate British retail and while figures representing the nation, such as Britannia and John Bull, were in common use by politicians and newspaper cartoonists there had yet to be a character such as this created and adopted by a political party.[132] Mr. and Mrs. Young Liberal, depicted in Figure 3.7, were the archetype of what every Young Liberal should want to be: they were young, trendy, modern and guiding a new path for Liberalism. The short-lived characters, appearing for only a few months in 1930, also highlighted the generational divide which existed in the Liberal Party, with young people seeking to clear 'old fogey' Liberals out of the way for a new generation. This striking image sets the NLYL apart from other youth organisations in regards to their relationship with their adult wing. While the LoY may have had disagreements with Labour regarding the party's direction, the NLYL cartoon reflects a real sense of anger at the perception of a stagnating adult party blocking the way to progress.

[131] *The New Nation,* October 1933, p. 22.
[132] Hornsey, 'Penguins', p. 816.

Figure 3.7 – A selection Mr and Mrs. Young Liberal cartoons, *The Forward View,* April 1930, p. 1; May 1930, p. 1; June 1930, p. 1.

Only in 1939 did the organisation begin to acknowledge the importance of branding with a report from the Youth Policy Sub-Committee recommending:

> …that a party symbol and uniform colour should be adopted for use throughout Britain. The publicity value of such a step would be considerable. Some symbol to be used on all stationery, on every Liberal publication, on posters and handbills, and in fact, on every possible occasion in every part of the country, would materially assist the revival of the party.

The organisation, finally, looked to be putting an end to the inconsistencies in colour when 'an attractive "Rust" shade' was recommended.[133] However, such a realisation came far too late to save the ailing organisation with the outbreak of the Second World War putting an end to their activities.

For the YCL, the decision to eschew the branding techniques of the major parties was a deliberate tactic. As we know, for much of its life the organisation had no interest in operating within the established norms of British political culture. The organisation followed the 'class against class' policy of its adult party and thus had no interest in winning a mass membership in order to take power by parliamentary means. Most early periodicals carried Communist regalia adorned with the hammer and sickle, and did not attempt to create an identity distinct from the adult Communists. By contrast, when *Challenge* launched in March 1935 it marked a significant change in tactic. The periodical may not have had a logo, or carried a distinctive masthead image, but it *was* carving out its own distinct identity: the paper sought to be the paper of all youth. Although its aim was 'to show what Communism really is', it also sought to 'give news concerning all the Youth movements'; therefore, it dropped any party-political branding.[134] Even though their methods and ultimate goals were different, they still shared the aim of staving off the rise of Fascism and saw their attempts to create a unique culture as a way of achieving that aim.[135]

[133] National League of Young Liberals Report of the Youth Policy Sub-Committee, c.1939, JOSEPHY 14/4.
[134] *Challenge,* 1 March 1935, p. 2.
[135] Linehan, 'Communist Culture', p. 40.

Commodification of Politics

We have already seen the popularity of membership badges in the youth organisations, and for the adult Labour Party; however, the youth organisations took this one step further through the production of vast amounts of branded ephemera. The selling of such products should be viewed in the wider context of the commercialisation of politics in the inter-war years. Helen Pussard observes this phenomenon within the BUF and Dominic Wring has explored it within the Labour Party: referring to 'gimmicks and ephemera', such as selling lottery tickets and organising games, as playing a significant role in marketing the party.[136] In addition, we have already seen that the Conservative Party acknowledged the need to sell their party as one would any other product; in this case, the party was selling physical products.

The LoY's attitude towards commodification was an inconsistent one, and from Wring's work it appears that the adult party were more willing to accept it than the youth wing. While some branches offered their own blazers and ties,[137] the idea of selling an official necktie was met with a poor reception at the LoY's national conference.[138] The initial proposal to adopt a necktie and blazer as a uniform, in 1933, was met with great suspicion due to what is euphemistically referred to as 'difficulties in rural areas.' Given this discussion, the most likely reason for members not wanting these commodities was fear that identifying themselves may lead to recriminations from employers given that, as one member warned, 'the days of the tied cottage were not over'; this being a cottage which is owned by an employer and rented to employees. Suspicion of uniforms was also deeply ingrained in Labour activists who believed that uniformed groups indoctrinated people into militarism and anti-Socialism.[139]

[136] Helen Pussard, 'The Blackshirts at Belle Vue: Fascist Theatre at a North-West Pleasure Ground', in Julie Gottlieb and Thomas P. Linehan (eds.), *The Culture of Fascism. Visions of the Far Right in Britain* (IB Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2004), p. 119; Wring, *Marketing*, p. 27.
[137] *New Nation*, February 1933, p. 10;
[138] *New Nation*, May 1936, p. 3.
[139] Helen McCarthy, 'Parties, Voluntary Association, and Democratic Polities in Interwar Britain', *Historical Journal*, 50.4 (2007), p. 902.

The Conservatives had no such qualms about commodifying their brand and vast amounts of Imp-branded ephemera were produced and sold, with Figure 3.8 depicting just a selection. The character in the image is described as a 'Complete Imp', implying that an Imp who does not buy these products is in some way lesser or not a true Imp. This image encouraged members to see themselves in the products which were being sold.[140] The advert encouraged the consumer to construct their personal identity around the products they buy.[141] The Complete Imp is surrounded by only a fraction of the items which were available for Imps to buy. A range of weird and wonderful items was available such as pencils, puzzle folders, booklet matches, a blotter, a 'facsimile Railway Ticket',[142] lanterns slides, window cards, gramophone records,[143] an ashtray,[144] and a huge amount of Imp-branded recruitment material.[145] Although there are no direct records of what members did with their purchased merchandise, the popularity and quantity of these items suggests that the organisation was a big part of its members' lives. Even external advertisers began to recognise the potency of the brand with Kodak, regular advertisers in *The Imp*, selling their camera with the tagline 'The "Imps" Own

Figure 3.8 – The Complete Imp, *The Imp*, April 1931, p. 16.

[140] James Taylor discusses this phenomenon in regards to brand mascots in the inter-war years: James Taylor, '"A Fascinating Show for John Citizen and his Wife": Advertising Exhibitions in Early Twentieth-Century London', *Journal of Social History*, 51.4 (2017), p. 908.
[141] Judith Williamson addresses the phenomenon in advertising: Judith Williamson, *Decoding Advertisements. Ideology and Meaning in Advertising* (Marion Boyars, 1978), p. 70.
[142] Publications Committee Minutes, 28 September 1928, CCO 506/1/3.
[143] Publications Committee Minutes, 29 November 1932, CCO 506/1/4.
[144] *The Imp*, August 1926, p. 16.
[145] *The Imp*, November 1928, p. 20.

Camera.'[146] Becoming a 'Complete Imp' had a total cost of £1.13s10d. With an average weekly wage of £3.10s.0d,[147] an Imp would have had to have accumulate their collection over time implying a personal investment in the products.

Politics of Personality: The Politician and the Role Model

It is a popularly held belief that the 'politics of personality' is a phenomenon of the late-twentieth century period, facilitated by television; indeed, in 1963 Alec Douglas-Home vocalised his fear that the advent of television meant that 'the best actor' would become leader of the country, and expressed a desire for a return to 'the old days' where the best policies and ideas won.[148] The golden age to which Home referred, where politics was completely rational and decided entirely on issues, may never have really existed; certainly, it was not the case for the inter-war years when Home was a younger man.[149] We have already seen how the Labour and Liberal Parties looked to figures from their past to inspire them, and treated such figures with reverence; however, this section deals with an entirely distinct phenomenon. Coinciding with the creation of political brands, some politicians sought to create a carefully-crafted public, popular image for themselves. For a politician to have a public image, or to be known for a particular personal characteristic or quirk, was not entirely new to the inter-war years; for example, Joseph Chamberlain was known for his monocle and buttonhole orchids.[150] In addition, Keir Hardie used his sartorial choices as a form of political communication: choosing to dress in a tweed suit and cloth cap in order to distance himself from other working-class MPs who had conformed to the expectations of the House.[151] However, new communication technology worked

[146] *The Imp*, February 1933, p. 4.
[147] Martin Pugh, '*We Danced All Night' A Social History of Britain between the Wars* (The Bodley Head, 2008), p. 86.
[148] *How to Win an Election: A Panorama Guide*, Broadcast 29 March 2010, BBC 4.
[149] Jon Lawrence also warns against romanticising a 'golden age' of the hustings: Jon Lawrence, 'The Culture of Elections in Modern Britain', *History*, 96.324 (2011), p. 462.
[150] Peter T. Marsh, Joseph Chamberlain, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/32350, [accessed 21 May 2019].
[151] Marcus Morris, '"The most Respectable Looking Revolutionaries". Sartorial Identities, Class and Politics of Appearance in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 12.3 (2015), pp. 323-327.

alongside new propaganda techniques to enhance this phenomenon, leading to deliberate exploitation by politicians.[152] An expanding print media, and the growth of the cinema and newsreel, led to the rise of the 'human interest story' and a desire by those in the media to get to the 'true self' of the celebrity.[153]

Outside of the party-political sphere a number of such figures existed, the most famous of which was founder of the Boy Scout movement Baden-Powell. The Boy Scouts were a politicised movement, Baden-Powell had a political agenda to put forward, but he took on a personal fame beyond that. Baden-Powell had become a household name following the siege of Mafeking during the Boer War. In his biography of Baden-Powell, Tim Jeal describes the 'astounding outburst' of public adoration on his return to England.[154] *The Times* describes the 'enthusiasm' of the public and that 'Flags [were] displayed everywhere' as part of an official celebration in Baden-Powell's honour. In the evening, a torch-lit rally in which '30,000 people promenaded the streets' was held.[155] Lord Kitchener had received similar treatment prior to the First World War with the press describing him in 'romantic, nearly legendary terms.'[156]

When such a culture was combined with mass democracy, seeing politicians seeking new ways to connect with the electorate, the crossover between celebrity and politician became more pronounced than it ever had been. Such a phenomenon was ripe for exploitation by politicians and Laura Beers has shown it in action in the case of Labour MP Ellen Wilkinson, while David Lloyd George was filmed gardening to make him appear down to earth.[157] It may be tempting to view this as part of a wider process of de-politicising politics; however, Adrian Bingham's recent article on political culture and the popular press offers an illuminating view of this process which adds much more depth to the

[152] Lawrence, 'Culture of Elections', p. 473.
[153] Kevin Williams, 'Devil's Decade', p. 100; Edward Owens, 'The Changing Media Representation of T.E. Lawrence and Celebrity Culture in Britain, 1919-1935', *Cultural and Social History,* 12.4 (2015), p. 446.
[154] Tim Jeal, *Baden-Powell* (Hutchinson, 1986), pp. 302-3.
[155] *The Times,* 14 September, 1900, p. 3.
[156] Carlo Ginzburg, '"Your Country Needs You": A Case Study in Political Iconography', *History Workshop Journal*, 52.1 (2001), p. 2.
[157] Laura Beers, 'A Model MP? Ellen Wilkinson, Gender, Politics and Celebrity Culture in Interwar Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 10.2 (2013), pp. 231-250; Lawrence, 'Culture of Elections', p. 470.

discussion. He argues that rather than encouraging de-politicisation of politics such papers were simply making politics more accessible to those who may otherwise have been disengaged, attempting to close the gap between politics and people's ordinary lives.[158] Given that these youth organisations did not attempt to completely shed their politics, it is more likely that their engagement with personality politics was intended to make politics more accessible. More than that, however, by doing this via their own youth organisations it allowed politicians to better control their message. This would have been especially true for Baldwin, who experienced a hostile relationship with press barons Beaverbrook and Rothermere whose United Empire Party (UEP) stood candidates against Conservatives culminating in the St. George's by-election where Conservative candidate Duff Cooper believed his defeat by the UEP would spell the end of Baldwin's leadership.[159] Further to this, the promotion of Baldwin's personality also served as a counter to extreme politics, with the BUF being especially adept at marketing Mosley.[160]

Baldwin was particularly noteworthy for his cultivation of a popular persona. David Jarvis believes that the politics of personality was one way of preserving the manliness of the party in the world of female suffrage, with party literature portraying Baldwin as St. George slaying the dragon while MacDonald was portrayed as an unattractive female with a 'difficult brood of children.'[161] This, however, seems an unlikely interpretation, especially considering Baldwin sometimes described himself in feminine terms; for example, referring to himself as 'the housewife of the nation.'[162] It would be more accurate to say that Baldwin sought to create an image for himself which was apolitical and which transcended class and gender. This is akin to what Matthew Hilton refers to as 'lowest

[158] Adrian Bingham, '"An Organ of Uplift?" The Popular Press and Political Culture in Interwar Britain', *Journalism Studies*, 14.5 (2013), p. 654.
[159] C.G. Webber, *The Ideology of the British Right* (Croom Helm, 1986), pp. 33-36.
[160] Julie Gottlieb, 'The Marketing of Megalomania: Celebrity, Consumption and the Development of Political Technology in the British Union of Fascists', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 41.1 (2006), pp. 35-55.
[161] David Jarvis, 'The Conservative Party and the Politics of Gender, 1900-1939', in Martin Francis and Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska (eds.), *The Conservatives and British Society, 1880-1990* (University of Wales Press, 1996), p. 184.
[162] Quoted in David Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age* (Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 171.

common denominator' advertising, whereby advertisers sought to use imagery by which no one could possibly be offended, and to which anyone could relate.[163]

Baldwin promoted himself to party members as much as he did to the public, and was an ever-present figure in the JIL. From the moment he took office as Prime Minister there was a concerted effort to present him as an everyman figure. *The Junior Imperial League Gazette* wrote of him: 'Always he has kept his good humour and impressed the Commons with his ability, charm and courage… The new Prime Minister went in a taxi-cab to Buckingham Palace, just as the man on the street takes the first on the rank, to fulfil his appointment.'[164] The message to the reader is simple: Baldwin is just like you. Baldwin was being set up as an aspirational and relatable figure for the JIL and there is plenty of evidence that they were receptive to it. For example, a visit to the Philip Stott College saw Baldwin 'chaired' by a group of students. *Gazette* described how 'their ardour may have been rather demonstrative at times for the personal comfort of the Premier, but cheering and chairing betokened genuine enthusiasm and loyalty' and is accompanied by an image of an uncomfortable-looking Baldwin, pipe in hand, sitting on the shoulders of a cheering group of young men.[165] It appears as though young people displayed an exceptional level of enthusiasm towards the Prime Minister, which he would not have experienced when addressing adults. In almost any speech he delivered as party leader he certainly received a warm response: a polite clap, a modest cheer, or a chorus of 'hear hear'; but nothing of the magnitude which he received from the JIL. The reception Baldwin received at the 1928 Albert Hall Rally in particular is notable. Observers at the time noted the enthusiasm in the room with *The Observer* noting that 'judged by the audience in the hall that day, their party's life was eternal'[166] and *The Times* describing the atmosphere when Baldwin took to the stage: 'The audience stood up and waved their programmes… and gave their "Imp's Whisper" which is a prolonged cheer.'[167] *The Western Daily Press* provides an even more vivid description of the waving of

[163] Matthew Hilton, *Smoking in British Popular Culture 1800-2000* (Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 95.
[164] *Junior Imperial League Gazette*, June 1923, p. 5.
[165] *Junior Imperial League Gazette*, November 1923, p. 10.
[166] *The Observer*, 11 March 1928, p. 19.
[167] *The Times*, 12 March 1928, p. 16.

programmes: 'They stood up and waved their programmes – which were red, white and blue, each section with a different colour – and gave the "Imps' Whisper" – a prolonged cheer.'[168] *The Imp* recorded as many as 8,000 people as having attended the rally, the maximum capacity of the Main Auditorium at the time. Surviving gramophone records featuring Imps' Whispers suggest that, when performed by a large group of Imps the Whisper could be quite an imposing sound.[169] A cheer for Baldwin of this length and magnitude does not appear in any other newsreel footage of his speeches, suggesting that the JIL's culture and habits were developing distinctly from those of their parent party.

Baldwin also became something of a commodity for the organisation to use to sell products. As part of the effort to promote Baldwin, *Gazette* advertised Baldwin portraits for members to buy and add to 'your range of Conservative and Unionist Prime Ministers.'[170] On several occasions JIL periodicals offered recordings of speeches Baldwin had made. For example, after the JIL's 1928 Albert Hall Rally. We have already established the significance of the rally in the JIL's history and how it was used to create a sense of connection to history for the members. Baldwin's role in this rally was to deliver a speech to the attendees in the hall, and a few months after the rally gramophone records of his speech were made available for Imps to order.[171] The implication of such products is that politicians were becoming commodified and had value as products which could be sold. However, there were limits to this commodification; for example, a 1933 Publications Committee meeting noted that having recently circulated a stock of Baldwin photos around the Divisional Councils, only seventeen had been sold.[172] Although Imps may have been enthused by Baldwin and cheered him when he was present, having a photo of him in their house was a step too far.

In addition to Baldwin, there were other figures who served as celebrity-like role models for the Imps who were noted more for their personal achievements rather than their politics. The most

[168] *The Western Daily Press,* 12 March 1928, p. 7.
[169] "Community Singing" Junior Inperial[sic] League Albert Hall 1928, https://youtu.be/dRmhzvKye20?t=249, [accessed 10 December 2018].
[170] *The Junior Imperial League Gazette,* October 1923, p. 2.
[171] *The Imp*, August 1928, p. 2.
[172] Publications Committee Minutes, 14 March 1933, CCO 506/1/4.

prominent of such figures was the (relatively) youthful Lord Burghley. Burghley took over the Chairmanship of the JIL in 1933, when Lord Stanley stepped down due to his belief that the JIL should be run '*for* Juniors *by* Juniors.'[173] Burghley was, unlike Stanley, 'well on the sunny side of thirty' when he took over; at age twenty eight he was more than ten years younger than Stanley. As well as being closer in age to the Imps, Burghley had the added appeal of already being something of a celebrity. A profile produced of him by *The Imp* drew attention to his athletic prowess: he had represented Britain in the 1924 and 1928 Olympics, in the latter of which he had won a gold medal in the 400m hurdles; he captained the Olympic team in 1932; and, had even set an Olympic hurdling record.[174] In addition, Burghley held a long-standing record for running around the Great Court of Trinity College, Cambridge.[175] From within the ranks of the Imps, prolific swimmer Sunny Lowry was celebrated for her feat of swimming the English Channel. 'Everybody knows Miss Sunny Lowry', *The Imp* proudly declared. She was held up as being an example to which all Imps should aspire, and her story was given an almost legendary status as a 'fireside story' for Imps to tell one another.[176] Her swimming prowess brought her much recognition within the JIL and the organisation paid her to give a demonstration at their first National Swimming Gala.[177] Lowry and Burghley were noted for their athletic achievements, linking the organisation to the significant physical fitness trend of the time.[178]

All three of these figures, Baldwin, Burghley and Lowry, had one thing in common: their apolitical appeal. As discussed at the start of this section, the British media became increasingly interested in the human-interest story and in the personal lives of public figures. It is this phenomenon which Beers highlights in her previously-cited work on Ellen Wilkinson. Beers argues that it was Wilkinson's human-interest appeal which catapulted her to national fame and created press

[173] *The Imp*, December 1932, p. 1.
[174] *The Imp*, February 1933, p. 1.
[175] Norris McWhirter, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, David George Brownlow Cecil, sixth marquess of Exeter, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/30910, [accessed 16 May 2019]; The described feat would later inspire a scene in the film *Chariots of Fire*.
[176] *The Imp*, October 1933, p. 5.
[177] *The Imp*, December 1933, p. 6.
[178] For more detail on this, see Chapter 6.

interest.[179] While the Labour Party had other figures with a media profile, Herbert Morrison was also noteworthy for his utilisation of new media,[180] both the party and its youth wing lacked a single, unifying popular figure such as Baldwin. MacDonald did come close to realising this status in the 1920s: he was portrayed as a 'conquering hero' who had overcome years of public and press vilification to become Labour's first Prime Minister; and, it was believed his writings had transformed people's attitudes towards Labour in Britain.[181] After the 1929 General Election victory he found himself 'swept… off his feet' by 12,000 supporters at King's Cross.[182] So popular was MacDonald amongst Labour supporters that badges were sold depicting his likeness.[183] We see no evidence of this in LoY periodicals because not long after *Bulletin* was launched MacDonald went from hero to villain by forming the National Government. *Monthly Bulletin*'s initial iteration was, as we have seen, predominantly for organising Secretaries and had little content of interest to the rank-and-file members. By the time *Bulletin* began to include more general-interest content MacDonald had been completely vilified. He was described as being one of the 'opponents' of Labour, that 'Mr. MacDonald and his friends have nothing in common now with the Labour movement', and accused of 'bolstering the Capitalist system.'[184] From there, Labour languished with an inconsistent programme and a series of ineffectual leaders and suffered a serious decline in membership.[185] The LoY did make attempts to humanise their politicians, as an interview in *The New Nation* with then-party secretary James Middleton demonstrates. As with Baldwin and Wilkinson, Middleton's politics are not the focus; instead, readers are treated to a brief biography followed by exposition of his personal values. Described as a 'man of the people', Middleton was held up as a decent, honest, and genuine person:

[179] Beers, 'Model MP?', p. 232.
[180] Beers, *Your Britain*, p. 13
[181] Jon Lawrence, 'Labour and the Myths it has Lived By', in Tanner, Thane, and Tiratsoo (eds.), *Labour's First Century*, p. 347.
[182] Worley, *Inside the Gate*, p. 122.
[183] Wring, '"Selling Socialism"', p. 1040.
[184] *Monthly Bulletin,* October 1931, p. 1.
[185] Andrew Thorpe, *A History of the Labour Party. Second Edition* (Palgrave, 2001), p. 68; Worley, *Inside the Gate*, p. 135.

'There is no affectation about Jim Middleton. Posing has obviously never occurred to him' the interviewer wrote.[186]

Like Labour, the NLYL struggled to find a unifying, popular figure. Again, this was a result of the fractures within the party which saw the NLYL caught in the middle. For example, long-time President of the NLYL, Walter Runciman, was a strong supporter of Asquith and opponent of Lloyd George; the men's relationship only grew worse as time went on.[187] Shortly after the collapse of the coalition government Lloyd George was invited to an event on free trade hosted by the NLYL where he appeared to acknowledge the problems of the party by describing how pleased he was to be at a Liberal meeting 'without distinction of group or section.'[188] That was certainly the goal of the organisations' leadership, too, with *Forward View* repeatedly refusing to engage with questions of party leadership. Despite Lloyd George's belief that the NLYL was above the party divisions this was not the case, as demonstrated by a discussion at their 1928 conference. It was reported that the question was raised of adding Lloyd George's name to the list of Vice-Presidents of the NLYL. One member argued that the NLYL 'must not take sides' and, while the delegates expressed admiration for Lloyd George, the motion was defeated for the fear that existing VPs might resign their positions over the appointment.[189] Clearly, Lloyd George was a divisive figure in the NLYL. These splits were only further compounded following the formation of the National Government which led the NLYL to condemn Liberals who crossed the floor and joined.[190] Such splits, combined with the fact that Runciman was considered a 'cold' man by his colleagues,[191] meant that the NLYL lacked any single figure that they could look up to as a leader or role model. The inability to find an aspirational figure was compounded by the (relatively) advanced age of the organisation's leadership. The editor of *The Forward View*, Elliott Dodds was aged thirty-eight when the periodical launched and as a well-

[186] *The New Nation*, January 1935, p. 3.
[187] David Dutton, 'Walter Runciman and the Decline of the Liberal Party', *Journal of Liberal History*, 84 (2014), pp. 30-32.
[188] *The Times*, 30 April 1923, p. 17.
[189] *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 9 April 1928, p. 8.
[190] *Thanet Advertiser,* 18 April 1933, p. 5.
[191] David Dutton, 'Walter Runciman', p. 28.

established Liberal thinker included little content in the periodical which was not entirely serious politics. The difference between the Liberal and Conservative approaches to role models suggests a difference in ideas of what best appealed to young people. That we see Baldwin taking such a central role in the JIL as a personality suggests that the party believed this was what young people wanted. This seems especially likely in the context of the BUF's marketing of Mosley with the selling of images of his likeness, as the Conservatives did with Baldwin; and, as Julie Gottlieb argues, attempts to project the mass and sexualised appeal of Hollywood's leading men onto Mosley.[192]

Conclusion

David Jarvis observes that historians of the Conservative Party have typically focused on its structure, which implies a belief that the party 'had merely to mobilise, not to construct, a majority constituency within the electorate' which he believes has caused historians to neglect the substance of the Conservative message.[193] Jarvis' assessment of the state of play in the field is now over two decades old and, at the time, could be applied to the histories of any party. Looking at specifically *how* the parties sought to instil their message in voters, as we have done, makes far easier to answer Guy Dixon's question referenced in the introduction to this chapter: 'what is it that determines the party one shall support?'

In many ways, emotional appeals would have been more effective at engaging people in politics than rational ones would have been, serving to counter the kind of voter disengagement and apathy which Ross McKibbin and Dan LeMahieu observe; and the gulf between people and politicians highlighted by Jon Lawrence.[194] In addition, such activities had the effect of assisting the parties in their attempts to broaden their appeal beyond their typical support base. For example, Stuart Ball

[192] Gottlieb, 'Megalomania', pp. 41-43.
[193] Jarvis, 'Hegemony', pp. 133-5.
[194] Ross McKibbin, *Parties and People: England 1914-1951* (Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 179; D.L. LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy. Mass Communication and the Cultivated Mind in Britain between the Wars* (Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 9; Lawrence, 'Culture of Elections', p. 460.

remarks that the Conservative Party's references to past achievements gave the party a cross-class appeal.[195]

In the case of the youth organisations, the parties placed significant emphasis on the assumption that, in Dixon's words, 'hero-worship for a particular personality, or group of personalities' or an 'appreciation of the party's past' played a large role in deciding which party an individual would support. In addition, the decision to fully embrace branding and commodification in the youth wings suggests a belief that in order to draw in young people to the organisations it would not be sufficient to simply present them with, as Dixon suggested, 'the programme which it happens to be putting forward at the moment' and hope that they approved of it. As such, they began to more readily deploy new techniques of propaganda developed first in the advertising industry. Ultimately, the goal in their advertising efforts was to cast the net as wide as possible and broaden their appeal; then, hold those members which they had recruited. Each party was advancing an agenda which was not inherently class or gender based. For example, the JIL's imagery predominantly focused on Empire and patriotism which were ideas believed to be supported by the working-class and women.[196] Meanwhile, Labour's idea that one could labour with body and brain, and their belief that they needed to expand support beyond the male-dominated trade unions, reflects a similar set of ideas. Once they had pulled these members in, they wanted to keep them there by creating organisations which had their own independent culture and set of practices. Helping members to feel part of the larger history of their respective movements, and giving them role models to emulate, helped in this regard. The youth wings sought to turn young people into life-long party members, election workers; and, in their later lives, voters. In the future, rather than needing to encourage such people to vote for their party at

[195] Ball, *Portrait*, p. 84.

[196] Mark Hayman observes that during and after the war many in the working class subscribed to a conservative, 'king and country' patriotism: Mark Hayman, 'Labour and the Monarchy: Patriotism and Republicanism during the Great War', *First World War Studies*, 5.2 (2014), p. 167; and, David Jarvis suggests that women were believed to be keen on the idea of the Empire as a family: David Jarvis, 'The Conservative Party and the Politics of Gender, 1900-1939', in Francis and Zweiniger-Bargielowska (eds.), *Conservatives*, p. 173.

every election, they could be relied upon to turn out every time because they felt a personal affinity with their party; it was part of their identity.

Chapter 4: 'Making Democracy Safe for the World': Constructing and Educating the Young Citizen

When addressing the JIL in 1928, Baldwin adapted Woodrow Wilson's 'make the world safe for democracy' quote to outline what the party needed to do to survive in the era of mass democracy:

> Now there is a catchword that has been running around the world since the war… "We must make the world safe for democracy." I will give you a much truer catchword than that, which means a more difficult task. We have got to "make democracy safe for the world".[1]

As we know, the inter-war years saw the foundation of a great number of youth organisations and youth clubs. One of the key concerns of the founders of many of these clubs was whether the 'aimless energies' of young people, especially working-class males, could be directed into 'useful citizenship and service to the state.'[2] Politicians shared these concerns, and one of the crucial tasks of the parties in the inter-war years was to make people understand the responsibility which came with the right to vote.

Entering the 1930s with countries in Europe falling to Fascism, a growing fascist movement in Britain, and Labour struggling against its far-left and Communist elements it certainly looked as though the fledgling British democracy was under threat. 'Democracy has arrived at a gallop in England, and I feel all the time that it is a race for life.' Baldwin warned. 'Can we educate them before the crash comes?'[3] Clarisse Berthezène points out that once property requirements were completely removed as a qualification for voting it became necessary to create a new definition of citizenship.[4] Furthermore, Laura King argues that the Franchise Acts, when combined with education and welfare reforms of the previous decades, strengthened the case for seeing all children as future citizens.[5] With

[1] *The Imp*, April 1928, p. 4.
[2] Melanie Tebbutt, *Being Boys. Youth, Leisure and Identity in the Inter-War Years* (Manchester University Press, 2012), p. 55.
[3] Quoted in Andrew Taylor, 'Speaking to Democracy: The Conservative Party and Mass Opinion from the 1920s to the 1950s', in Stuart Ball and Ian Holliday (eds.), *Mass Conservatism: The Conservatives and Public since the Wars 1800s* (Routledge, 2002), p. 79
[4] Clarisse Berthezène, *Training Minds for the War of Ideas. Ashridge College, the Conservative Party and the Cultural Politics of Britain* (Manchester University Press, 2015), p. 148.
[5] Laura King, 'Future Citizens: Cultural and Political Conceptions of Children in Britain, 1930s-1950s', *Twentieth Century British History*, 27.3 (2016), p. 394.

these fears shared across the political spectrum, all parties set out to mitigate these anticipated problems through programmes of political and civic education, and by encouraging new voters to understand the duties and responsibilities which came with citizenship.

When utilising terms such as 'citizenship', 'political education' or 'civic education' we are faced with the problem of coming up with adequate definitions. When referring to 'political education' or 'civic education', Brad Beaven and John Griffiths offer a concise and convincing definition: education in the 'mechanics of the civic and parliamentary system' i.e., how society works.[6] Broadly speaking, 'citizenship' has two different meanings. Firstly, to be a citizen of a place: to legally belong to a nation state, possessing the right to live and work there and to be subject to its laws and taxation. Secondly, citizenship can refer to engagements with the acts and duties of belonging to a society.[7] Most historians use the term rather uncritically with an unstated assumption that they and the reader understand the terms in the same way. Those who have sought to define the concept have done so in broadly similar ways. Lucy Noakes points to an implication of 'common privileges, rights and duties embedded in membership of a state.'[8] Andreas Fahrmeil writes on what he calls 'formal citizenship', that being the relationship between the people and the state, and the rights that state affords people.[9] Meanwhile, Brad Beaven and John Griffiths consider citizenship an attempt to create a link between individuals and the authorities, and consider that it defines 'desirable patterns of behaviour in both public and private life.'[10] Historians seem to agree that citizenship should be understood as referring to the reciprocal relationship between an individual and a state: the duties which the individual must perform for that state, behaving in an acceptable manner and partaking in the democratic process; then, the rights given to that citizen by the state. It

[6] Brad Beaven & John Griffiths, 'Creating the Exemplary Citizen: The Changing Notion of Citizenship in Britain 1870-1939', *Contemporary British History*, 22.2 (2008), p. 216.
[7] Citizenship, Oxford English Dictionary, https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/33521, [accessed 17 July 2019].
[8] Lucy Noakes, '"Serve to Save": Gender, Citizenship and Civil Defence in Britain 1937-41', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 47.4 (2012), p. 736.
[9] Andreas Fahrmeir, *Citizenship: The Rise and Fall of the Modern Concept* (Yale University Press, 2007), p. 2.
[10] Beaven & Griffiths, 'Exemplary Citizen', p. 204; Beaven and Griffiths also offer an excellent long-view of citizenship development.

is this definition that this chapter will accept, and will explore how the ideal citizen was imagined by each of the parties, and created via education programmes, in order to try and ensure that people took their democratic duties seriously. While this serves an adequate theoretical definition, it is important to remember that in reality not everyone experienced citizenship in the same way. Most definitions of citizenship have been criticised by feminist scholars for being 'gender blind.'[11] Citizenship, Lucy Noakes argues, despite being an 'equalising word… is experienced in profoundly different ways by members of different groups within the state or community.'[12] Despite having been granted the vote women still lacked some rights afforded to men, facing restrictions on their employment and pay, and not having control over their own fertility. It is important to recognise, therefore, that while women's voting rights may have been equal to men's after 1928, the realities of how women experienced politics often differed from those of men.[13]

This chapter will be split into four sections. The first section will deal with the structured political education which young people received, either by attending education colleges, reading their periodicals, or by teaching and learning together. This section will not only provide insight into how young people were being educated, but on what subjects. This will grant us a greater understanding of what characteristics politicians deemed to be important to citizens, and offer insight into how politicians engaged with the people to communicate ideas. The second section will cover the Labour, Liberal, and Communist parties' conception of citizenship. Due to the surprising similarities between the activities of the parties, I have opted to explore them together under the umbrella of 'progressive' parties. It will argue that these parties had a more practical conception of citizenship, focusing more on the rights of citizens as a reflection of the desire for social renewal brought about by the First World War.[14] The third section will turn to the Conservative Party, whose conception of citizenship differed

[11] Sylvia Walby, 'Is Citizenship Gendered?', *Sociology*, 28.2 (1994), p. 380-1; Catriona Beaumont, *Housewives and Citizens. Domesticity and the Woman's Movement in England, 1928-64* (Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 41.
[12] Noakes, '"Serve to Save"', p. 736.
[13] Beaumont, *Housewives and Citizens*, pp. 41-2.
[14] Beaven & Griffiths, 'Exemplary Citizen', p. 213.

from the left in that it was less focused on rights and made more emotional appeals to duty to the Empire and nation. It will explore how the English national character was invoked to form a bulwark against extremist politics, and how young people were encouraged to think of themselves as citizens both of Britain and the Empire. The final section will explore areas in which the left and right broadly overlapped; specifically, exploring how women were integrated into the political system. This section will take a special interest in how the domestic expectations of women were reconciled with their new roles as citizens, and in what ways the expectations placed on women were different to those of men. It will argue that while there continued to be an assumption of 'separate spheres' for women in politics, women were able to use their domestic roles as a catalyst for active citizenship, and the private sphere of the home increasingly became a matter of public discussion.

Political Education

The previous occasion that the franchise had been extended was the Third Reform Act of 1884, which extended the same voting rights of those in the town to those in the country and established the modern one member constituency system. Peter Yeandle argues that this Act meant that most working-class children then grew up with the expectation of the right to vote, and thus it became 'essential that they were made aware of their duties as citizens' through the by-then compulsory elementary education system.[15] With the 1918 Franchise Act introducing universal manhood suffrage, enfranchising large numbers of women, and tripling the electorate, fears of whether these new voters could cast their ballot responsibly were manifested once again and the provision of citizenship training became essential.[16] Despite this widely-acknowledged notion, throughout the inter-war period Britain largely lacked any form of coherent citizenship education in its public education system. There were some attempts to rectify this in the 1930s, spurred by the Nazis taking power in Germany, with the

[15] Peter Yeandle, 'Englishness in Retrospect: Rewriting the National Past for the Children of the English Working Classes, c. 1880-1919', *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 6.2 (2006), p. 18.
[16] Tom Hulme, 'Putting the City in Citizenship: Civics Education and Local Government in Britain, 1918-1945', *Twentieth Century British History*, 26.1 (2015), p. 32; Pete Brett, 'Citizenship Education in the Shadow of the Great War', *Citizenship Teaching and Learning*, 8.1 (2012), p. 56.

foundation of the Association for Education in Citizenship in 1934. The organisation sought official recognition of the importance of providing citizenship education to adolescents, however this recognition never came.[17] It is this lack of formal training which has led Brad Beaven and John Griffiths to conclude that between 1870 and 1939 the British government adopted a 'laissez-faire' attitude to citizenship education, leaving early initiatives to local authorities and philanthropists.[18]

Despite there being no official government strategy on citizenship training for young people, privately the individual parties recognised the need to provide it. The fear of the irresponsible voter was compounded by the introduction of the female franchise and the belief that women needed more education than their male counterparts. The Conservative Party especially feared women between the ages of twenty-one and thirty who were believed to be more vulnerable to Socialist propaganda.[19] These fears were reflected in Conservative publications: the Mrs. Maggs and Betty stories from *Home and Politics* were intended to illustrate the dangers of political ignorance with the character of Betty representing 'the dangers of immature femininity.'[20] Such fears were also present in the Labour Party with MacDonald remarking of female members: 'if we had one member of each branch who thought critically we should be perfectly safe. But our people feel and do not think.'[21]

These fears of an irrational electorate were not only confined to female or working-class voters: where political education existed young people were its main target.[22] In his thirtieth anniversary speech to the JIL, Baldwin warned Imps that 'You will find the greatest enemy you have to combat is ignorance' and that the greatest service young people could give the party was to combat that ignorance.[23] While in this instance Baldwin was encouraging Imps to educate others, the

[17] Derek Heater, 'The History of Citizenship Education in England', *Curriculum Journal*, 12.1 (2001), pp. 106-7.
[18] Beaven and Griffiths, 'Exemplarity Citizen', p. 102.
[19] Stuart Ball, *Portrait of a Party. The Conservative Party in Britain 1918-1945* (Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 118.
[20] David Jarvis, 'Mrs. Maggs and Betty. The Conservative Appeal to Women Voters in the 1920s', *Twentieth Century British History*, 5.2 (1994), p. 133.
[21] Quoted in Laura Beers, '"A timid belief in the equality to which lip-service is paid": Gender, Politics and the Press between the Wars', in Laura Beers and Geraint Thomas (eds.), *Brave New World. Imperial and Democratic Nation-Building in Britain between the Wars* (Institute of Historical Research, 2011), p. 134.
[22] Beaven and Griffiths, 'Exemplary Citizen', p. 210.
[23] Stanley Baldwin, *Our Inheritance* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1928), p. 8.

Conservative Party also operated a sophisticated campaign of political education for their members. The broad aim of this was to prevent young people from voting on the fringe of politics, whether that was Communism or Fascism, and, as we know, young people were believed to be especially vulnerable to these influences.

While all parties between the wars were interested in political education, with all of them running some form of summer school, it was the Conservative Party who seemed to be chronically afraid of mass democracy, lacked confidence in their chances of success,[24] and thus focused the most intensely on educating citizens. Stuart Ball points out the plethora of fears that the Conservative Party carried with them in the inter-war years: fears of the decline of the Empire and of the moral fibre of the people; fears of the Labour Party; and fears of being overturned by the working class.[25] These fears were all motivated by the belief that the electorate were inherently irrational and that if they were not educated then it would bring about a 'crash'; or, a revolutionary government.

Political education was so important to the LoY and the NLYL that it appeared in the organisations' stated objects. In the case of the NLYL it appeared twice, as their first and third: '(a) To promote the systematic study of politics and the problems of Government… (c) These objects shall be promoted by Debates, Lectures, Public Meetings, Reading Circles, Publications, Formation of Libraries and such other means as from time to time may be necessary.'[26] The LoY stated one of their objects to be: 'To provide study circles, classes, debates, to give an understanding of the conduct of the public work in association with the Labour Party.' The provision of education was framed in the context of competition with the other parties. For example one *Bulletin* article described how the Conservative and Liberal Parties were held up by three 'pillars' which were 'the wealth of their financiers, the prestige of the so-called Aristocracy, and the ignorance of the masses.' The third of these pillars, it was said, could only be torn down through education and that that education should be targeted at

[24] David Jarvis, 'The Shaping of the Conservative Electoral Hegemony 1918-39', in Jon Lawrence and Miles Taylor, *Party, Stage and Society. British Electoral Behaviour in Britain since 1820* (Scolar Press, 1997), p. 131.
[25] Ball, *Portrait*, pp. 53-7.
[26] Objects and Constitution of the National League of Young Liberals, LSE Archives, JOSEPHY 14/4.

the young since 'the minds of the young men and women are more pliable than those of their elders.'[27] In a later article, political education was set up as way to overcome the inherent anti-Labour bias in the press, and in society as a whole, but was still framed in competition with the JIL: 'Not only must bold and vigorous endeavours be made to overcome the prejudice against Labour that bodies like the Primrose League and the Junior Imperial League create, but a continuous educational propaganda needs to be conducted among the younger members of the Labour Party.'[28] Like the Conservative Party, the political education campaign within the youth organisation took two forms: creation and attendance of specialised education colleges, and encouraging self-learning within branches and by delivering educational content through the periodicals.

Education Colleges

To some extent, the parties sought to tightly control the message which was put out to their young people. To that end, all three of the major parties operated political education colleges in the inter-war years. In this regard, the Labour Party led the way and were credited with pioneering the political summer school in Britain.[29] One of the earliest education facilities was the Central Labour College (CLC) which was founded in 1909 and operated under the auspices of the South Wales Miners' Federation.[30] The college mainly had an adult focus, when James Griffiths[31] attended he was twenty-nine years old and married,[32] and it mainly focused on Marxist economics and history.[33] Ultimately, the college closed down in 1929 due in part to CPGB entryism seeking to turn members against what it saw as a watered-down, non-combative form of Marxism.[34] The existence of the college and the LoY only

[27] *Monthly Bulletin*, August 1929, p. 3.
[28] *Monthly Bulletin*, November 1931, p. 1.
[29] Joseph R. Starr, 'Foreign Governments and Politics: The Summer Schools and the Other Educational Activities of the British Socialist Groups', *The American Political Science Review,* 30.5 (1936), p. 958.
[30] John McIlroy, 'Two Tales about Crisis and Corruption at the Central Labour College', *Labour History Review*, 72.1 (2009), p. 69; R. Lewis, 'The Central Labour College: Its Decline and Fall', *Welsh History Review,* 12 (1984), p. 225.
[31] Trade union leader, politician, and first Secretary of State for Wales.
[32] Lewis, 'Central Labour College', p. 229.
[33] Lewis, 'Central Labour College', p. 228.
[34] Lewis, 'Central Labour College', pp. 231-2.

overlapped by a few years; thus, the majority of their interaction was with the CLC's successor, and more successful, organisation: the National Council of Labour Colleges (NCLC). The colleges focused on the social sciences and attending one of their courses was presented as being simple common sense:

> No one… would employ a doctor who had not studied medical science. No one would employ an electrician who did not know something about the characteristics of electricity, and yet there are still many people even in our own movement who feel they can be effective members without having studied the social sciences.[35]

These courses were very accessible to LoY members. For example, it was possible for individual branches to affiliate to the NCLC at a cost of 2d per member which would allow members of the affiliated branch to attend any NCLC course free of charge. Further to this, if members were not able to attend a certain course, the NCLC also offered 'education by correspondence' course which, in exchange for a 3d per member per year fee, would mean that the NCLC would offer one free correspondence course for a branch with fewer than 240 members and two free courses for larger branches. Although no official figures on uptake exist, Ken Shilcock of the Leicester branch of the LoY later fondly remembered attending several of the NCLC's classes whereby a lecture would be held followed by a discussion.[36]

The Labour Party also had a venue which its members could attend for political education courses. Unlike the Conservative Party who, as we will see later, had access to the stately homes of wealthy supporters, the Labour Party needed to look elsewhere. The party operated a hostel in conjunction with the Youth Hostel Association (YHA).[37] Located in Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, the hostel was billed as offering 'recreation, education and fellowship.'[38] For the purposes of this discussion, the emphasis will be placed on the education remit of the hostel. In addition to its

[35] *Monthly Bulletin,* August 1930, p. 1.
[36] J. Carswell, Interview with Ken Shilcock, 2 July 1987, LO/388/339, East Midlands Oral History Archive, http://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/digital/collection/p15407coll1/id/269/
[37] For more detail on the LoY and the YHA see Chapter 6.
[38] *New Nation,* April 1934, p. 39.

recreational activities, it hosted guest speakers on a variety of topics such as 'Old Parties: New Ideas', 'London's Housing Problem',[39] 'House of Commons, its History and Procedure', 'Impressions of India', and 'Youth's Responsibility to the Community.'[40] From the reports of talks delivered at Hoddesdon it appears that the emphasis was on civic matters and civil responsibility; young people were being taught their role in the community and in the political system. Also noteworthy is the inclusion of the 'House of Commons' talk: the title of this talk carries an unambiguously constitutional overtone. Given what we have already seen about Labour's dilemma as to the extent to which they should operate within existing systems,[41] this talk is a clear indication that the party was trying to steer its activists towards the constitutional route.

The Labour Party's education efforts were a cause for concern within the Conservative Party. Clarisse Berthezène, the only historian to pay attention to the Conservative colleges, highlights how Labour's perceived intellectualism drove the Conservative Party's education activities. In particular, Berthezène identifies the Fabian Society[42] as causing anxiety to the party, and their belief that the society had a pivotal role in the advancement of Socialism.[43] To counter what they saw as Socialist propaganda, the Conservative Party founded their own college in 1923. The Phillip Stott College, also known as Overstone after the hall where it was held, ran until 1929 when it was replaced by the Bonar Law Memorial College, also known as Ashridge College, which ran until 1959 when it became a management college.[44] The aim of the colleges was to create an intellectual legacy for the Conservative Party, an area in which they believed they were losing out to Labour.[45] Berthezène has studied Ashridge College extensively and has highlighted the important role that the college played in

[39] *New Nation,* May 1934, p. 50.
[40] *New Nation,* September 1934, p. 100.
[41] See Chapter 3 for more detail.
[42] For the society and its relationship to the Labour Party see: F.J. Milburn, 'The Fabian Society and the British Labour Party', *Western Political Quarterly*, 11.2 (1958), pp. 319-339.
[43] Clarisse Berthezène, 'Creating the Conservative Fabians: The Conservative Party, Political Education and the Founding of the Ashridge College', *Past and Present*, 182 (2004), p. 213.
[44] Clarisse Berthezène, 'Archives: Ashridge College, 1929-54: A Glimpse at the Archive of a Conservative Intellectual Project', *Contemporary British History*, 19.1 (2005), p. 80.
[45] Berthezène, *Training Minds,* pp. 1-4.

citizenship training. She highlights the number of courses covering citizenship, placing it in the top three topics taught, and reveals that the college became colloquially known as the 'college of citizenship'.[46] What Berthezène does not cover in her work, although she does nod to it, is the college's role in educating young people.[47] The colleges, in fact, frequently ran special courses aimed at the JIL and were regularly advertised in JIL periodicals. When the Philip Stott College was first launched, the modest success of its first course was lauded in the *Junior Imperial League Gazette*.[48] The aims of the Conservative colleges was to promote what they saw as a rational and intellectual form of political discourse with *The Ashridge Journal* warning that 'of the thirty millions of electors only a mere fraction appreciate the real meaning of politics' and that politics which appeals to 'passions' was the art of the 'mob orator' and would lead to Socialism.[49] The *Journal* also took a long view of their objective, mirroring the imagery of inheritance we have seen repeatedly mobilised by the Conservatives, by stating that the effort of political education

> is not one which will come to fruition in our time, but we do not live simply for ourselves, but in the hope that through our effort, however humble it may be, we have contributed something which may be found of service to those who follow after us.[50]

We can see how seriously this objective was taken by Ashridge by looking at the ways in which it described its students. *The Ashridge Journal* was highly scathing of the idea that people might go there to have fun. Students were looked upon as an investment, deriving their value only based on what they could give back to the Conservative Party after they had been trained: 'No person should be sent to Ashridge except she or he be regarded as a deposit from which some return can be expected',[51] the *Journal* stated. In addition, the cited editorial made special mention of making sure that young people, in this instance aged eighteen and upwards, were encouraged to attend.[52] To this end, the JIL made

[46] Berthezène, 'Archives', p. 86; Berthezène, 'Conservative Fabians', p. 224.
[47] Berthezène makes brief reference to courses for the JIL and Young Britons: Berthezène, *Training Minds*, p. 89.
[48] *Junior Imperial League Gazette*, June 1925, p. 10.
[49] *The Ashridge Journal*, February 1931, p. 13.
[50] *The Ashridge Journal*, February 1931, p. 18.
[51] *The Ashridge Journal*, February 1931, p. 16.
[52] *The Ashridge Journal,* February 1931, p. 14.

frequent efforts to persuade its members to attend the training colleges. The number of references made to the colleges are substantial; this fact alone is indicative as to how seriously the Conservative Party took their political education efforts. JIL publications took a slightly softer line on political education than *The Ashridge Journal*, presumably to appeal to a younger audience. Attending either Ashridge or Overstone was presented as good bit of fun and on one occasion a course was described in terms which border on the fanciful and magical: 'It is something deeper than mathematics, something indefinite, more spiritual than the material hand is able to touch. It is perhaps a re-awakening of the desire for learning which arises periodically in British history.'[53] Later, articles advertising the college focused on the entertainment available in addition to the education value, describing tennis, rambling, dancing and other social activities an attendee could partake in.[54]

Empire			Europe		
Trade	History	Contemporary	Politics	History	Economics
1	2	4	5	0	3
7			3		
Forms of Government			Social Issues		
Democracy	Dictatorship	Local	Housing	Unemployment	Education
2	1	3	3	2	1
5			6		
Infrastructure			Economics		
Transport	Industry	Agriculture	Taxation	Trade & Tariffs	Other
1	7	7	3	8	6
			17		
British History		Constitution		JIL	
People	Economic	USA	Europe	History	Party Work
3	2	1	1	2	1
5		2		3	
Political Work			Other		
Public Speaking	Citizenship	Organisation	Other		
5	3	4	3		
12			3		

Figure 4.1: Table of Ashridge Courses by category, February 1931 – June 1935.

[53] *Junior Imperial League Gazette*, August 1923, p. 10.

[54] Articles and photographs depicting leisure at Ashridge: *The Imp*, August 1933, p. 7; September 1933, p. 6; October 1933, p. 8; September 1936, p. 4.

What is of most interest here is exactly *how* young members were educated, and on what topics they were educated. By closely investigating what JIL members were taught in their Ashridge courses we can get a good idea of the Conservative ideology at the time, what issues they thought were important, and what values they sought to instil in future generations. Figure 4.1 depicts a breakdown by topic of the lectures delivered in special JIL courses which appeared in *The Ashridge Journal*. This table was created by searching copies of the *Journal* held by the Conservative Party Archive, finding courses advertised as being for the JIL specifically, and assigning them categories. First and foremost, we can see there was an enormous breadth of subjects being taught. It is interesting that subjects which tended to dominate the periodicals, such as the Empire, the constitution, or how government works took a backseat at Ashridge in favour of those falling under the heading of "infrastructure" and "economics." This suggests that the colleges had different educational objectives, with the periodicals aiming to prepare members for political work while the college's education programmes were part of a wider Conservative effort to create an intellectual legacy and further develop their ideology.[55] The emphasis on industry and economics also serves as further refutation to Martin Wiener's suggestion that Britain had constructed a history for itself which denied the role of industrialisation and industry.[56] With lectures such as 'The Effects of Taxation on Industry" and 'The Future Organisation of Agriculture' Imps were being given a broad education in the intricacies of British industry and the effects of government policy.[57]

It is also important to consider the extent to which these colleges sought to propagate a Conservative worldview just as much as they aimed to educate. Berthezène outlines debates between the Conservative Party and those who managed the college as to whether the college was a sincere effort to educate the public or simply a propaganda tool.[58] The party, therefore, were very aware of the potential accusations of bias and thus their courses featured a huge variety in the number of

[55] Berthezène, 'Conservative Fabians', p. 213.
[56] Martin Weiner, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1950-1980* (Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 5.
[57] *The Ashridge Journal,* June 1932, p. 44; June 1934, p. 45.
[58] Berthezène, *Training Minds*, pp. 85-9.

lecturers ranging from Stanley Baldwin or his cabinet ministers to National Liberal and Labour members, and even members of the far right.[59] The reality is, though, that the Party did predominantly see the colleges as a tool for spreading propaganda; this was especially true for members of the working class. They recognised the importance of Ashridge for creating 'missionaries' amongst the working class and offered bursaries for trade unionists to attend.[60] The mixed social class of those who attended the courses was stressed to the Imps. Writing for the *Gazette*, one Imp attendee of the Philip Stott College marvelled at the variety of students on his course:

> Students go to the College from all parts of Great Britain and follow many callings. For instance, during my course, one was a farm labourer from East Anglia, another a bricklayer from Peterborough. There were also miners from Durham, a doctor from Glasgow, and an ex-Socialist, who was at one time an official of the South Wales Miners' Federation.[61]

This was more than a one off as Berthezène estimates that working-class students made up at least half of those who attended citizenship courses.[62] That so much effort was put into recruiting members of the working class, and that it was so highly publicised when successful, suggests that the Conservative Party saw their colleges as an opportunity not just to provide education but to convert people to conservatism.

Independent Learning

While the colleges provided top-down, guided education, all the youth organisations also encouraged independent learning. Independent learning had one fairly substantial benefit: it enabled workers who would have otherwise been unable to attend colleges, due to time or money restraints, to receive some kind of education or training. With courses at Ashridge, for example, costing in the region of £7 and lasting for up to a fortnight they could be potentially prohibitive to workers.[63] For LoY members,

[59] Berthezène, *Training Minds*, p. 110; Berthezène, 'Conservative Fabians', p. 227.
[60] Berthezène, *Training Minds*, pp. 82-4.
[61] *Junior Imperial League Gazette*, July 1923, p. 5.
[62] Berthezène, *Training Minds*, p. 85.
[63] *The Imp*, August 1933, p. 9.

a litany of educational materials were available, such as the Fabian Society's travelling library scheme whereby branches could pay 10s as an affiliation fee and in return could borrow ten books to be loaned to their members.[64] The JIL also sold educational materials produced by the party. In addition to purchased materials, members also received education through the pages of the periodical. The most straightforward way this occurred was through a series of articles which ran in a similar form in LoY, JIL, and NLYL periodicals; these were articles which reported on and explained political events, and offered various statistics which could be used in debates. Such sections were one of the few consistencies between all iterations of the respective periodicals. For the LoY it went by three different titles, 'Facts, Figures and Comments', 'Points for Propagandists', or 'As a Matter of Fact', but the content was always broadly the same. Similarly, both the NLYL and the JIL had a 'Powder and Shot' series which served the same function: providing facts and statistics in an easily accessible way and presenting them, as the name suggests, as weapons to be used in debates with opponents. The combative title of the NLYL and JIL's educational articles is indicative of the adversarial nature of inter-war political culture, a notion which will be explored in more depth in the following chapter. The tone of these articles indicates that the parties were considering the potentially-complex makeup of their audiences: that they may be dealing with younger or less politically experienced people. The articles were presented in a clear, easily understandable, and sometimes light-hearted format. The LoY's Gallerius wrote informative articles in an informal tone and merged statistics with light-hearted quipping. For example, Gallerius offers statistics on how wages have decreased on average over the last ten years, before remarking 'Great stuff this Capitalism!'[65] Education activities such as these enabled the party to offer the same controlled message as the colleges, but enabled members to engage with it in their own time and at their own pace.

It may appear from this, therefore, that the parties lacked trust in their members and sought to systematically indoctrinate them into one viewpoint. However, at the same time all parties actively

[64] *Monthly Bulletin,* April 1930, p. 1.
[65] *New Nation*, September 1933, p. 9.

promoted activities which gave young people free rein over the topics they discussed and the conclusions they came to. Study circles and debates are the best examples of such activities. A study circle meant groups of members meeting in their own time, usually in a member's home, and discussing issues of their choosing. Study circles were believed by the JIL to promote freer, more intimate, and more detailed discussion.[66] The NLYL's objects promoted study circles, and this diffused into the branches; one of the first acts of the newly-formed Wolverhampton branch was to form a sub-committee with the role of organising study circles.[67] Similar to the NLYL, the study circle was considered significant enough that providing them was enshrined in the LoY's objects.[68] Just as MacDonald believed that political education was the only route to Socialism, study circles were presented to young people as a way to achieve the organisation's aims. An article on trade unionism makes a connection between the trade unions, the study circle, and the importance of 'educating the masses for the cause of Peace.'[69] Meanwhile, study circles in the JIL were considered to be a fundamental part of a young person's political education. Imps were advised that 'as a means of mutual political education, the Study Circle is undoubtedly the simplest and most delicate instrument.'[70] The operative word here was mutual, meaning that Imps were encouraged, and trusted, to teach one another. While at their core study circles were serious activities, they could also be presented as enjoyable ones: a *Torchbearer* cartoon depicted a group of young men and women sitting around on the beach in the sun, wearing only swimwear, and studying.[71] Giving branches the freedom to discuss and debate whatever topics they wanted did allow for a broader range of discussion, with JIL branches occasionally hosting debates which would not have been endorsed by the adult party. In July 1925 two branches held debates on gender issues: one debating 'girls join the League for frivolity' and another debating whether 'the part of the R.P Act, 1918, conferring votes on women should be

[66] *The Imp*, July 1935, p. 9
[67] Minutes of Committee Meeting, 16 April 1923, Wolverhampton City Archives, D/SO/27/30.
[68] *Monthly Bulletin*, February 1931, p. 2.
[69] *The New Nation*, December 1935, p. 136.
[70] *The Imp*, July 1935, p. 9.
[71] *Torchbearer*, July 1939, p. 6.

repealed.'[72] Such debates also offer us a tantalising window into the experience of the organisation's female membership. Regardless of the intent or outcome of these debates, women were having their very right to be present debated. In scenarios such as these, women found their voices silenced and relegated to a more passive role. More often than not, however, the results of these discussions was that the controversial motion was defeated. However, this was not always the case when, in the Islington East branch, a debate on 'the Fascist movement in Britain is not an effective method of opposing extreme Socialism' was lost by a large margin.[73] The combination of guided and unguided education suggests a belief by the parties that, given a little direction, young people would eventually come to the 'right' conclusion independently.

The 'Progressive' Citizen: Peace, Internationalism, and Rights

What is perhaps most surprising, and most interesting, about the citizenship rhetoric in the inter-war years is the extent to which the Labour, Liberal and Communist parties overlapped in what they were teaching their young members. If young people were to become citizens, with the duties that entailed, they were also entitled to a certain set of rights. Amongst these rights was the right *not* to have to fight in a war, as the previous generation, and some of their own, had done. Therefore, these parties were especially concerned with young people's international duties as well. Many in the Labour Party had serious misgivings about Empire, whether or not they vocalised them publicly, and simply could not understand why so many people identified with a system which offered little tangible benefit to the public at large.[74] With this in mind, much of their rhetoric to young people was not focused on Empire. Rather, both Labour and the Communists focused on casting young people as peacemakers who had a duty to one another to help avert another war. Given the focus that these parties had, their

[72] *The Imp*, July 1925, p. 14.
[73] *The Imp*, September 1925, p. 13.
[74] Miles Taylor, 'Patriotism, History and the Left in Twentieth-Century Britain', *The Historical Journal,* 33.4 (1990), pp. 975-6.

conception of citizenship was an active one, one which focused on getting people involved in their local, national, and international communities.

Economic, Social, and Labour Rights

Christopher Moores points out that 'the necessity of combining socioeconomic rights with civil and political rights was well recognised' in leftist circles. In addition, Moores identifies how the civil liberties movement sought to bring together different notions of citizenship, merging economic and social rights with political ones, pointing to the works of Peter Ritchie-Calder and H.G. Wells who saw their ideas as a half-way point between those of the *French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen,* 1789, which was focused on political rights; and the *Soviet Declaration of the Rights of the Toiling and Exploited Peoples*, 1918, which was more concerned with economic rights.[75] Most of Moores' work focuses on the transformation of the civil liberties movement from an emphasis on individual rights to human rights after the Second World War. However, he does acknowledge that much of this movement had its origins in the inter-war years and earlier. Janet Clarke draws the same conclusion, rooting the preoccupation of left-wing thinkers with civil liberties in the centuries of mistreatment suffered by working-class campaigners at the hands of the police.[76] What historians have missed, however, is the significant contribution made by British political youth organisations to the cause of civil liberties and individual rights.

Reflecting the theories and interests of their adult counterparts, the Liberal, Labour and Communist youth organisations were concerned with using the new political rights that the Franchise Acts provided them to campaign for the social and economic rights that they believed they should have. 'Charters' aiming to enshrine young people's right in law were some of the most significant outcomes of cross-party campaigning to come out of the youth organisations. The earliest example of

[75] Christopher Moores, 'From Civil Liberties to Human Rights? British Civil Liberties Activism and Universal Human Rights', *Contemporary European History,* 21.1 (2012), pp. 172-4.
[76] Janet Clark, 'Sincere and Reasonable Men? The Origins of the National Council for Civil Liberties', *Twentieth Century British History*, 24.4 (2009), pp. 514-15.

the youth organisations adopting a legalistic framework for their conception of citizenship was the NLYL's 'Liberal Charter for the Under-Thirties.' Although undated, its references to National Government policies places it in the early 1930s. The Charter outlined a list of basic rights that the NLYL believed young people should have, including the right to peace, prosperity, leisure, increased school leaving age, and better working conditions.[77]

It was the YCL, however, which really led the way in campaigning for young people's rights. Typically, the YCL has been associated with industrial issues,[78] anti-militarism, and international solidarity.[79] These campaigns formed the backbone of much of the organisation's work throughout their lifespan, and into the *Challenge* years; however, it was in the campaign for their Charter of Youth Rights where the organisation really stood out. The YCL sought to involve young people at every stage of the process. When the concept first appeared in *Challenge*, in 1935 as 'Youth's Charter of Life', it was announced that it had been created out of a series of interviews with young people seeking to find out their biggest issues.[80] That the YCL were listening to their members and seeking their input on the Charter is perhaps indicative that politicians were beginning to tap into wider trends in the commercial sector of directly listening to the needs of consumers. For example, Melanie Tebbutt points to the BBC who began to actively canvass listeners to find out what kind of programmes they wanted, and ran special programmes which gave young people the opportunity to have their voices heard.[81] The existence of these Charters places the organisations firmly in the context of a growing awareness of civil liberties in the inter-war years. During this period protection of, and advocacy for, civil liberties and individual freedom became a defining characteristic of the British state; usually, this

[77] Liberal Charter for the Under-Thirties, c. 1931, JOSEPHY 14/4.
[78] Andrew Thorpe, 'The Membership of the Communist Party of Great Britain, 1920-1945', *The Historical Journal*, 43.4 (2000), p. 785.
[79] James Klugmann, *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Volume One: Formation and Early Years, 1919-1924* (Lawrence and Witshart Ltd., 1968), p. 224.
[80] *Challenge*, November 1935, p. 1.
[81] Melanie Tebbutt, 'Listening to Youth? BBC Youth Broadcasts during the 1930s and the Second World War', *History Workshop Journal*, 84, (2017), pp. 219-20.

also served to define the state against Fascist, European states.[82] In addition to the litany of non-party, voluntary organisations which were active during the inter-war years,[83] 1931 saw the foundation of the National Council of Civil Liberties (NCCL).[84] The stated aims of the NCCL were not too dissimilar from those of the Liberal and Communist parties: 'to assist in the maintenance of the hard-won rights of citizens… from all infringement by executive or judicial authority contrary to the due process of the law.'[85]

The Liberal and Communist parties were concerned with more than just preservation of rights, however. They were interested in expanding them. The month after the original mention of the Charter, in an issue published shortly after the 1935 General Election, *Challenge* ran the headline '"Challenge" Proposes a Youth Charter for Parliament.'[86] In the article, *Challenge* expresses its frustration that young people are the recipients of 'empty promises, which are turned out two a penny before all elections' and then not followed up on. 'Youth demands its rights and heritage…', it continues, 'the new Parliament must be confronted with the burning demands of the youth, Westminster must know the needs of the younger generation.' What we are seeing here is a clear attempt by the YCL to capture the language of citizenship and mobilise it for their own cause. Such techniques were common for the YCL during the *Challenge* years: rather than refusing to engage with the rhetoric of their opponents, they instead made it their own.

The YCL's Charter quickly began to amass significant cross-party support, which was typical of much of the civil liberties movement in Britain at the time.[87] When the YCL hosted one of their many consultations on the Charter, 'From all parts of Britain they came', *Challenge* boasted.

---

[82] Chris Moores, *Civil Liberties and Human Rights in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 28.
[83] Helen McCarthy discusses many such organisation: Helen McCarthy, 'Parties, Voluntary Association, and Democratic Policies in Interwar Britain', *Historical Journal*, 50.4 (2007), pp. 891-912; Helen McCarthy and Pat Thane, 'The Politics of Association in British Society', *Twentieth Century British History,* 22.2 (2011), pp. 217-229;
[84] Moores, *Civil Liberties*, p. 29.
[85] Quoted in Clark, 'National Council of Civil Liberties', p. 521.
[86] *Challenge*, December 1935, p. 1.
[87] Moores, 'Civil Liberties', p. 172; Clark, 'National Council of Civil Liberties', p. 515.

> From the Labour, Communist and Co-operative Youth Movements, Young Liberals and trade unionists were there, Universities, Socialist societies and Labour clubs sent representatives. The Congressional Union, the Christian Social Council and the Student Christian Movement, and many other organisations sent delegates or observers.[88]

From thereon, the concept of the Youth Charter only gained more support. In 1938, a motion was put forward at the NLYL's annual conference to show support for the Youth Charter.[89] A significant victory was the Charter's adoption by the TUC, signalling that young workers' rights were finally making their way onto the union agenda.[90]

There have been many assumptions made by historians about the relationship between young people and trade unions. Selina Todd, for instance, argues that young people, and women, often found it hard to get trade unions to take their interests on board because their concerns lay with their more-established adult, male membership.[91] Melanie Tebbutt's case study of her father's diaries shines a light on the difficulties of union membership for young people: mainly, the fluidity of many of their work patterns. Tebbutt highlights that, while young people were relatively easily able to get work even at the height of the depression, young people were also more likely to change jobs after a short amount of time, even entering different industries. She also points to the common practice by employers when they became liable for their health and unemployment contributions, in favour of hiring cheaper fourteen year old workers.[92] The fact that many young people would start out in so-called blind-alley jobs before transferring to apprenticeships later in their working life would likely have delayed their entry into unions. This injustice was observed by contemporary commentators, notably John Gollan of the YCL.[93] Gollan created an in-depth study on the conditions of young workers,

[88] *Challenge*, March 1936, p. 4.
[89] *Challenge*, 14 April 1938, p. 10.
[90] *Challenge,* 24 February 1938, p. 11.
[91] Selina Todd, *The People. The Rise and Fall of the Working Class 1910-2010* (John Murray, 2014), p. 105.
[92] Tebbutt, *Being Boys*, pp. 24-5.
[93] Joining the CPGB in 1932, age 21, Gollan was editor of *Young Worker* and *Challenge* until becoming General Secretary of the YCL in 1935. He served in numerous high-ranking CPGB positions until shortly before his death.

highlighting the tendency for young people to be abruptly sacked at eighteen.[94] This was an experience familiar to many young workers, and was described by LoY member John Shilcock.[95] The same phenomenon was also regularly decried in *Challenge*, and used to demand guarantees of work and adult wages for young workers.[96] It is for this reason that it is significant that the Charter was adopted by the TUC. It demonstrates that young people's concerns were being taken seriously by politicians and unions; that they were being acknowledged as a unique demographic whose experience of citizenship was distinct from that of adults; and that they were being inducted into a new, legalistic framework of citizenship which was emerging.

The Charter signified a transformation in the discourse of British citizenship from one focused on the duties of a citizen to their state, to the rights and privileges provided by that state to its citizens and was framed by the Communists as being uniquely modern. 'Modern times need modern conditions' *Challenge* argued. This was 'The era of big machines, huge factories, [and] mass production', and yet workers operated them under 'conditions put into force when these inventions were barely born.'[97] It is noteworthy here that there is no evidence of mythologizing of a time when workers were not slaves to machines, as Martin Wiener suggests, but rather an acceptance that British workers must adapt to modern technology.[98] Although the outbreak of the Second World War put an end to the momentum the Charter gained, it nevertheless marked a significant moment in the history of British citizenship and civil rights.

Pacifism and Internationalism

While the progressive parties placed a significant focus on the 'rights' element of citizenship, a citizen's duties to their nation were not neglected. In fact, it was placed front of centre and the LoY in their

[94] John Gollan, *Youth in British Industry* (Victor Gollancz ltd., 1937), p. 72; p. 102.
[95] J. Carswell, Interview with John Shilcock, 4 December 1987, LO/441/392, http://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/digital/collection/p15407coll1/id/217/rec/1.
[96] *Challenge*, 20 January 1938, p. 4.
[97] *Challenge*, November 1936, p. 6.
[98] Weiner, *Industrial Spirt*, p. 119.

motto, adapted from Ralph Waldo Emerson's poem *Voluntaries*, in which he paid tribute to Union soldiers who died in the US Civil War: 'When Duty whispers low: "THOU MUST" The Youth reply: "WE CAN!"'[99] There are plenty of ways to interpret the use of Emerson in this context, but one explanation which is particularly compelling is Emerson's belief in national rebirth following war.[100] When discussing the development of attitudes towards young people near the start of this thesis, I alluded to the notion that the First World War had proven to be a transformative moment. Young people came to be seen as a precious resource, as the future of the nation, as something to be protected after the destruction which had been brought about by the First World War and there was a conscious shift away from the militarism which had characterised earlier youth organisations.[101] On the left, this notion spawned a whole host of youth organisations which aimed to instil in young people values of peace and anti-militarism. For example, the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry was founded by the Westlake family in 1916 who believed that young people were the key to the nation's survival and that there needed to be a complete overhaul in what, and how, young people were taught.[102] The First World War also had an effect on how young people perceived themselves, with many on the left becoming more conscious of how war would affect them, and coming to see it as part of their duty to help prevent war. Pacifism, therefore, was a key part of left-wing citizenship. Most notable of the pacifist, internationalist organisations at this time was the League of Nations Union (LNU), formed in 1918 in the United Kingdom to promote the aims of the League of Nations (LoN). Helen McCarthy sees the organisation as an extension of the 'classical-Liberal belief' that education would be the saviour of democracy.[103] In her monograph on the organisation, McCarthy sets out to understand how Britain's

[99] *Labour Organiser,* October 1929.
[100] Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Conduct of Life* (Ticknor and Fields, 1860), p. 230.
[101] Melanie Tebbutt, *Being Boys*, pp. 17, 57-9; Melanie Tebbutt, *Making Youth. A History of Youth in Modern Britain* (Palgave, 2016), p. 135; J.O. Springhall, 'The Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism in Relation to British Youth Movements 1908-1930', *International Review of Social History*, 16.2 (1971), p. 128; King, 'Future Citizens', p. 390.
[102] Derek Edgell, *The Order of Woodcraft Chivalry 1916-1949 as a New Age Alternative to the Boy Scouts* (Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), p. 41.
[103] Helen McCarthy, *The British People and the League of Nations. Democracy, Citizenship and Internationalism, c. 1918-45* (Manchester University Press, 2011), p. 21.

membership of the LoN transformed people's views of Britain's relationship with the rest of the world.[104] The engagement of the LoY and YCL with the wider pacifist movement represents a type of citizenship which was typical from the youth organisations across the political spectrum, albeit with marginally different emphases. This was a type of citizenship which was outward-looking, internationally focused, and which encouraged young people to participate in their community and society.

The peace movement in Britain engaged millions of people in active citizenship, the highpoint of the movement being the LNU's Peace Ballot held between 1934 and 1935. The Peace Ballot was open to all men and women over the age of eighteen, making it more inclusive than General Elections at the time, and saw eleven-and-a-half million people, 32% of the eligible population, take part.[105] This is made all the more impressive, and indicative of the passions the pacifist cause could inspire, by the fact that the Ballot received no official government support, was reliant on volunteers delivering the questionnaire, and the LNU needed to publicise it by itself. Although the LNU, and the peace movement more broadly, was intended to remain free of party politics, Labour and Liberal politicians were closely involved.[106] Young people were inherent in the pacifist cause; as well as being concerned with it themselves, many female pacifists campaigned against war from their position as mothers: arguing that it was a waste of their efforts raising sons for them to die in wars.[107] For young people themselves, pacifism and peace were important issues. For the YCL and the LoY, pacifism was inextricably linked with internationalism; an end to war could not be achieved without it.

Young people, logically, had a vested interest in maintaining peace: if there were to be another war, it would be young people who had to fight and die, and the LoY and YCL were conscious of this. *The New Nation* warned its readers that 'The most important question which members of the League

[104] McCarthy, *League of Nations*, p. 7.
[105] Richard Davies, 'The British Peace Movement in the Inter-war Years', *French Journal of British Studies*, 22.3 (2017), p. 6.
[106] Helen McCarthy, 'Leading from the Centre: The League of Nations Union, Foreign Policy and 'Political Agreement' in the 1930s', *Contemporary British History*, 23.4 (2009), p. 529; Davis, 'Peace Movement', p. 8
[107] Sarah Hallawell, 'Antimilitarism, Citizenship and Motherhood: the Formation and Early Years of the Women's International League (WIL), 1915-1919', *Women's History Review*, 27.4 (2018), pp. 532-3.

of Youth have to face is the problem of the possibility of an outbreak of war in the future'[108] and that it would be 'youth that has to make the greatest sacrifice when war comes.'[109] The logical endpoint to this assumption was that it should be young people who led the charge against war, and that this could be achieved through a form of international citizenship. International citizenship was believed, by those who espoused it, to require an 'international mind', an understanding of, and a focus on the similarities between, the peoples of the world, rather than the differences.[110] This was broadly the approach taken by the LoY who sought cooperation between, and understanding of, young people around the world. One LoY member wrote an article for *Monthly Bulletin* in which she asked:

> How many people who have lived and played in Germany would fight against them again? ...Having once realised young German Socialists are much the same as ourselves, save for a small language difference, no newspaper bombardment however heavy, and no atrocity stories however terrible, would entice us into khaki.[111]

As well as promoting friendship between all nations, many took comfort in the belief that war could be avoided by workers simply refusing to fight; something which would require international cooperation between workers.[112]

The broad nature of the pacifist movement, however, meant that there were inevitable disagreements. There were some who believed in pacifism at all costs, that the most brutal of occupations would be preferable to war of any kind; some who accepted the necessity of war, but believed that its abolition was both desirable and possible; and others who believed in war only as a last resort.[113] The YCL were, initially, committed to pacifism at all costs, even going as far as suggesting that the colonies of the world's empires be redistributed so that Hitler could claim natural resources and space without him having to go to war to get them.[114] Their commitment to pacifism saw them

[108] *The New Nation*, April 1933, p. 27.
[109] *The New Nation*, May 1933, p. 34.
[110] Joyce Goodman, 'International Citizenship and the International Federation of University Women before 1939', *History of Education*, 40.6 (2011), pp. 706-7; McCarthy, *League of Nations*, p. 106.
[111] *Monthly Bulletin*, September 1930, p. 2.
[112] Davies, 'Peace Movement', p. 5.
[113] Davies, 'Peace Movement', pp. 3-4.
[114] *Challenge*, June 1936, p. 4.

managing to draw together young people from twenty-four different organisation for a pro-peace meeting, including the LoY, NLYL, and JIL.[115] The LoY, however, were sharply divided on pacifism. These divides played out in the pages of the periodical. In 1934, author and historian A.L Rowse penned an article entitled 'Socialism and Peace', which derived its name from a statement delivered by Labour's NEC at that year's conference, *For Socialism and Peace*, which outlined the party's opposition to war.[116] Rowse outlined his commitment to the branch of pacifism which saw war as an undesirable last resort:

> Many of the younger comrades feel so passionately the hideousness of war that they say we should oppose any and every war… They could not feel more passionately than I do; but think again. Surely, if a Socialist country is attacked we all agree that every Socialist is right to defend it.[117]

Rowse's article exposed some of the divisions in the pacifist movement, and the LoY, by spawning a series of letters in opposition to this view, prompting further response from Rowse.

The YCL became especially interested in the Spanish Civil War which led to further attempts to create international bonds between young people; for example, *Challenge* lauded a 'friendship pact' which had been signed between British and French youth as being 'a welcome first step towards closer unity of the youth of the two countries' with the aim of providing food and clothing for Spanish refugees.[118] The Spanish Civil War became something of a touchstone in far-left politics, and also highlighted the limits of even the most extreme pacifism in the YCL; the Civil War is considered to have largely ended the link between the far-left and complete pacifism.[119] Across the Communist movement as a whole, those who had fought and died in the fight against Fascism came to be revered.[120] Members of the YCL fought in international brigades in Spain; when a member of the

---

[115] *Challenge*, April 1936, p. 6.
[116] Ben Pimlott, 'The Socialist League: Intellectuals and the Labour Left in the 1930s', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 6.3 (1971), p. 26.
[117] *New Nation*, September 1934, p. 103.
[118] *Challenge*, 20 January 1938, p. 10.
[119] David Blaazer, *The Popular Front and the Progressive Tradition. Socialist, Liberals, and the Quest for Unity, 1884-1939* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 178.
[120] Thomas Linehan, 'Communist Culture and Anti-Fascism in Inter-War Britain', in Nigel Copsey and Andrezej Olechnowicz (eds.), *Varieties of Anti-Fascism in Britain in the Inter-War Period* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 45-8.

organisation died fighting in Spain, letters of tribute poured into *Challenge*.[121] Even when peace failed, therefore, solidarity with youth across Europe was high on the organisations' agenda.

The Conservative Citizen: England, the Englishman, and the Empire

The arrival of mass democracy in Britain, and the necessity for the Conservative Party to adapt their message for the mass audience, has led some historians to conclude that between the wars the Conservative Party began to abandon Empire as an electoral strategy. Indeed, Martin Pugh describes the turning away from Empire as 'an essential characteristic of the Baldwin era.'[122] However, John MacKenzie points out that many of those who held the 'levers of power' continued to ardently believe in the Empire, while Stuart Ball considers Empire to have been central to Conservative thought.[123] The debate over the extent to which Empire permeated public life and political thought is far from over; more recently historians have begun to examine the implications of Britain's possession of an Empire for its new citizens. While the notion of imperial citizenry had existed prior to the First World War, the horrors of the war caused many to question the wisdom of 'embedding an aggressive imperial strand of citizenship amongst the young' and thus the inter-war years saw this 'aggressive strand' disappear entirely.[124]

Working alongside their rational education techniques, the Conservative Party sought to create an emotional and personal connection between the duties of the citizen to partake in politics, and their patriotic duty to their country. Given that the Conservative Party felt under threat from a working-class electorate, it sought to reinvent itself as a party not of one social class but of the entire nation.[125] At the same time, despite Pugh's suggestion that the party engaged in a retreat from Empire

[121] *Challenge*, 11 August 1938, p. 4.
[122] Martin Pugh, *The Tories and the People 1880-1935* (Basil Blackwell, 1985), p. 184.
[123] John MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire. The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 217-18; Ball, *Portrait*, p. 32.
[124] Beaven and Griffiths, 'Exemplary Citizen', p. 212.
[125] Robert Walker, 'Conservative Electoral Support and Social Class', in Antony Selden & Stuart Ball, *Conservative Century. The Conservative Party since 1900* (Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 587; Philip Norton and Arthur Aughey, *Conservatives and Conservatism* (Maurice Temple Smith, 1981), p. 41.

in this period, the party actually redoubled its efforts to present Britain as an Imperial nation.[126] The aims of these efforts were to protect against radical politics by giving young people something other than Fascism to be enthusiastic about. By developing a strong sense of national identity and equating British citizenship with Conservatism, the party hoped to turn people away from Fascism and towards constitutional politics. Such activities provide further evidence that the JIL attempted to cast their net as widely as possible in order to draw in young people and create a Conservative worldview. In this case, that worldview revolved around the protection of a uniquely English way of life, and maintenance of the Empire of which all Britons were citizens.

'A Time of Crisis': England and the Englishman

Tom Hulme points out that often 'citizenship and national identity are seen as "virtually indivisible"' with people being encouraged to feel a sense of belonging to a nation and Empire, and to engage with national culture, institutions or events.[127] In Baldwin's speech to the Royal Society of St. George, he outlined a series of characteristics he believed the Englishman possessed which made him especially suited to weathering times of difficulty.

> The Englishman is made for a time of crisis, and for a time of emergency. He is serene in his difficulties, but may seem to be indifferent when times are easy. He may not look ahead, he may not heed warnings, he may not prepare, but once starts he is persistent to the death, and he is ruthless in action. It is these gifts that have made the Englishman what he is, and have enabled the Englishman to make England and the Empire what it is.[128]

Baldwin was, and is, commonly associated with appeals to England and the English national character. Yet, Siân Nicholas argues that 'Baldwin's political philosophy was much more sophisticated than a

[126] Pugh, *Tories,* p. 184; Martin Pugh, 'Popular Conservatism in Britain: Continuity and Change, 1880-1987', *Journal of British Studies*, 27.3 (1988), p. 274.
[127] Hulme, 'Civics Education', p. 28.
[128] Stanley Baldwin, *On England and other Addresses* (Philip Allan & Co. Ltd., 1926), pp. 3-4.

mere obsession with national stereotypes.'[129] It was common throughout the twentieth century for both Conservative and Liberal thinkers to make references to 'England' and the 'Englishman' as a way of constructing national identity.[130] Peter Mandler argues, however, that Baldwin's efforts to align his party with the national character was a way of moving in on the territory of the Liberals, and cementing the Conservative Party as the natural party of the nation.[131] The party not only began to frame itself as the natural party of England, but also sought to present radical politics, Socialism especially, as something foreign and un-English – Socialism was regularly equated with Bolshevism in Conservative rhetoric.[132] In order to mobilise people against radical politics, the Conservative Party broadly had three strands of thought. Firstly, as we have seen, to make the opposition appear un-English; secondly, to present a certain set of characteristics which were perceived to be unique to the Englishman which made them immune to these radical influences; and, to root these characteristics in a longer history of the English character which had made England powerful.

The terms 'England' and 'Britain' have been used interchangeably by politicians, academics, and writers throughout history.[133] However, the characteristics of the 'Englishman' portrayed England as unique and special among the nations of the world, even amongst the other nations of the Union.[134] In the previously-cited speech to the Society of St. George, Baldwin emphasised the special place he believed England held within the Union: 'I read in your Dinner-book, "When God wants a hard thing done, He tells it" not to His Britons, but "to His Englishmen."'[135] Still, Baldwin was a believer in the Union and did not leave out its constituent parts. Despite famously lamenting that he was unable to

[129] Siân Nicholas, 'The Construction of a National Identity: Stanley Baldwin, 'Englishness' and the Mass Media in Inter-war Britain', in Martin Francis and Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska (eds.), *The Conservatives and British Society* (University of Wales Press, 1996), p. 131.
[130] Peter Mandler, 'The Consciousness of Modernity? Liberalism and the English National Character, 1870-1940', in Bernard Rieger and Martin J. Daunton, *Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the late-Victorian ear to World War II* (Berg, 2001), p. 119.
[131] Peter Mandler, *The English National Character. The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair* (Yale University Press, 2006), p. 152.
[132] G. Ward-Smith, 'Baldwin and Scotland: More than Englishness', *Contemporary British History*, 15.1 (2001), p. 67; Nicholas, 'National Identity', p. 131.
[133] David Lowenthal, 'British National Identity and the English Landscape', *Rural History*, 2.2 (1991), p. 209.
[134] Mandler, *National Character*, pp. 150-1.
[135] Baldwin, *On England*, p. 1.

'use the word "England" without some fellow at the back of the room shouting out "Britain"',[136] he was not completely averse to using the term himself. In a 1926 speech to the Commons he expressed 'confidence in my fellow county-men throughout the whole of Great Britain.'[137] Baldwin understood that England and Britain were not the same thing, and even presided over a period of relative Conservative success in Scotland.[138] Also, he was popular enough in Scotland that, in 1926, he received the freedom of the city of Edinburgh and on that occasion he delivered a speech in which he carefully navigated both his personal association with England, and the need to extol his Unionist credentials. He clearly emphasised that Scotsman and Englishmen were not the same, that a Scotsman should 'be content… to be a Scotsman', but still emphasised that the English and Scottish were of 'common stock that makes up the character of the British race' and that this character was one which was inherently rational and believed in the value of education.[139] He used similar rhetoric to talk of Wales in a speech given on St. David's Day the following year: emphasising the distinctiveness of the Welsh character and his belief that, unlike the nations of Europe, they rejected nationalism.[140]

National identity, then, was used by Baldwin across Great Britain in order to guide people away from radical politics and to express his belief that the fundamental levelheadedness of the Englishman, Scotsmen, and Welshman would win out. These unique traits were presented to the JIL as being of tantamount importance. Imps were warned that:

> Our own country, it is no exaggeration to say, is to-day the keystone in the edifice of civilisation. If England is destroyed and its traditions lost to the world, that edifice, with its material wealth, its culture and its religion, will be brought down in ruins.[141]

It is no surprise to see England's survival painted in such stark terms given that this article was published in 1935 as more countries in Europe were falling to Fascism. The level-headed Englishman was often invoked as the cause of the relative stability of the country. For example, Lord Halifax argued

[136] Baldwin, *On England*, p. 1.
[137] Ward-Smith, 'Baldwin and Scotland', p. 66.
[138] Ward-Smith, 'Baldwin and Scotland', p. 62.
[139] Stanley Baldwin, *Our Inheritance* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1928), pp. 37-40.
[140] Baldwin, *Inheritance*, pp. 44-53.
[141] *The Imp*, February 1935, p. 6.

that there was a 'fundamental conflict between [the methods of dictators] and the whole spirit of English traditions.' He went on to invoke 'the spirit of national co-operation and tolerance, and that broad common sense which made possible that typically English spectacle of strikers playing football with the police.'[142] These level-headed English characteristics were juxtaposed to the Imps against the aggressive, foreign character of Socialism. Many cartoons were produced to this effect, as represented in Figure 4.2. Cartoons of this nature were much more common in the early days of the JIL, before the threat of Fascism in Europe was as apparent, before the formation of the BUF, and before the Conservative Party joined the National Government alongside Labour MPs. In these images we see Socialism portrayed as foreign, with small, weak dog of 'International Socialism' compared to the tough British bulldog of 'Constitutionalism' led by the figure of John Bull; and Socialism compared to the Labour and Socialist International. Socialism is also portrayed as thuggish and violent, seeking to get its way through pure aggression. These things were the antithesis of everything Imps were taught was important about Britain and democratic society. Socialism, therefore, was shown to threaten the very fabric of British society. The Englishman's characteristics were not born overnight; instead, they were portrayed as part of a long history of England and the English people. Tracing an unbroken line of English history and English character traits was typical of children's education in the late-Victorian and early-Edwardian years. Peter Yeandle points out that most literacy textbooks began with a phrase along the lines of 'The English people have lived so long in our island that it seems hard to believe that they have not always been here' and often went on to argue that imperial characteristics were 'innate in the blood of the English.'[143] The turn of the twentieth century, and the horrors of the First World War, brought about a concern among educators that the way history and Empire was being taught in schools was stoking crude nationalism, rather than reasoned patriotism.[144]

[142] *The Imp*, June 1934, p. 6.
[143] Quoted in Yeandle, 'Englishness in Retrospect', p. 16; See also: Peter Yeandle, *Citizenship, Nation, Empire. The Politics of History Teaching in England, 1870-1930* (Manchester University Press, 2015), p. 77.
[144] Yeandle, *History Teaching*, p. 32.

Figure 4.2 – A selection of anti-Socialist cartoons. Top Left: *Junior Imperial League Gazette*, May 1923, p. 9; Middle Left: July 1923, p. 7; Top Right: December 1923, p. 2; Bottom Left: *The Imp* June 1927, p. 4.

With this in mind, the Conservatives' portrayal of England's history did not seem to have evolved much beyond the narrative nature of the late nineteenth century. Take, for example, Baldwin's famous musings on what England meant to him. 'the sounds of England, the tinkle of the hammer on the anvil in the country smithy… the sight of the plough team coming over the brow of the hill, the sight that has been England since England was a land…'[145] In this instance, Baldwin does as literacy book authors before him did: suggest an unending continuity between the England of the past and that of the present. Other Conservatives writing in JIL periodicals followed the same line. 'This England of ours is an ancient and historic country' wrote Leo Amery in an article for *The Imp*.[146] He then goes on to write about the great literary, cultural, and political achievements of the English people. Articles such as this, ones celebrating English history, were common in the JIL. *The Imp* ran a regular column called 'From the Past' in which extracts from political speeches and writings which were deemed to be of significance were reproduced.[147] In addition to this, the *Torchbearer* series on English country homes epitomises the idea of a historic, aristocratic view of English identity when one article stated that: 'such places have become more than mere residences, they have indeed grown into the very fibre of England and epitomize our history in themselves.'[148]

Given what we have seen, we may assume that the Conservative Party had a backwards-looking attitude towards national identity: they were harking back to a past where 'England' was an unrivalled power, where the average 'Englishman' spent his days working in the farms and fields, and where wealthy lords occupied expansive manors. However, to characterise them as such would be unfair. They certainly did invoke images of a historic England and they did seek to preserve this idea; but, at the same time, this technique was utilised to approach uniquely modern problems. Many historians of modernity have noted that modernity and tradition were not mutually exclusive, and indeed worked to reinforce one another. Matthew Hilton makes this observation for advertising

[145] Stanley Baldwin, *On England*, pp. 7-8. For more on the English landscape see Chapter 6.
[146] *The Imp*, May 1926, p. 4.
[147] Further discussion of this column in National Identity column.
[148] *Torchbearer*, *February 1939,* p. 15.

whereby modern imagery was combined with the traditional in order that 'traditional national identity might be laid out according to modernist principles of representation', while Rebecca Harrison sees cinema carriages in trains as spaces 'in which tradition and innovation converged.'[149] Meanwhile, Bernhard Rieger points to a speech by the Australian Prime Minister made after aviation pioneer Alan Cobham completed his 1926 flight between Britain and Australia in which he drew comparisons between explorers of the past and innovators of the present.[150] We have seen in the previous chapter the importance placed by the JIL on learning from history, and we will see in the following section how modernity was mobilised to justify the existence of Empire. In this instance it was not a piece of technology which sat alongside tradition, but democracy. It was believed and espoused by the Conservative Party that any form of tyranny or radical politics was completely alien to the English sensibility, therefore, with the right guidance, the country would be able to adapt to mass democracy. Imps were aware of the need to avoid complacency in this regard with one article warning: 'It is so easy to rest on our laurels… we are inclined to put too much trust in the essential rightmindedness of Englishmen as a whole, to assume we can afford to overlook the revolutionary attempts of the extremists.'[151] However, these worries were tempered by his sincere belief that Imps were the 'trustees of the traditions of our country' and that they must defend those traditions with rigour. It also served to underscore the importance of political education, to educate the general population in what it meant to be a citizen of modern England.

'Your friends in the Dominions': The Imperial Citizen

When discussing citizenship and Empire, Julia Stapleton highlights an issue which has yet to be adequately navigated by historians. There is, in fact, a fundamental conflict between democratic ideals

[149] Matthew Hilton, 'Advertising the Modernist Aesthetic of the Marketplace? The Cultural Relationship between the Tobacco Manufacturer and the 'Mass' of Consumers in Britain, 1870-1940', in Rieger and Daunton (eds.), *Meanings of Modernity*, p. 56; Rebecca Harrison, 'Inside the Cinema Train: Britain, Empire, and Modernity in the Twentieth Century', *Film History*, 26.4 (2014), p. 33.
[150] Quoted in Bernhard Rieger, *Technology and the Culture of Modernity in Britain and Germany 1890-1945* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 43.
[151] *The Imp*, July 1926, p. 3.

and imperial government: Empire necessitates some form of authoritarian government.[152] In much the same way Rebecca Harrison observes that within British society there existed a tension between 'hierarchy and democracy, individualism and egalitarianism.'[153] With the JIL, the Conservative Party had the opportunity to completely reinvent Empire for the new generation. These actions further demonstrate the party's desire to justify imperial control, and to use the imperial ideology as a defence against Fascism and Communism.[154] The idea of imperial citizenry existed in several different forms throughout the interwar years. Daniel Gorman uses the example of author and official Lionel Curtis as offering one of the more influential theories of Imperial citizenship. For Curtis, Imperial citizenship meant the creation of a federal Empire, where the individual belonged to the 'State of Empire' rather than to their home nations.[155] Despite having some supporters in the Conservative Party, most notably Leo Amery, the idea of a literal Imperial citizen who belonged to a nation of Empire never gained traction within the party. Identities however, as Linda Colley argues, 'are not like hats. Human beings can and do put on several at a time.'[156] It was this truth which enabled the Conservative Party to advance an imperial citizenship whereby the individual felt as though they belonged to a wider imperial community, but without having to surrender any of Britain's power to an imperial Parliament. For most of the Conservative Party, the focus on Empire served as part of their aim to reinvent themselves as a party of the entire nation and break down class barriers. According to Heathorn and Greenspoon, Empire was 'so fundamental to British identity' that it was portrayed as above party politics.[157] Therefore, there was a conscious aim to depoliticise the Empire, portraying it as an institution for all.

[152] Julia Stapleton, 'Citizenship versus Patriotism in Twentieth-Century Britain', *Historical Journal*, 48.1 (2005), p. 156.
[153] Harrison, 'Cinema Train', p. 33.
[154] Philip Williamson, 'The Doctrinal Politics of Stanley Baldwin', in Michael Bentley (ed.), *Public and Private Doctrine* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 189.
[155] Daniel Gorman, *Imperial Citizenship. Empire and the Question of Belonging* (Palgrave, 2006), p. 41.
[156] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (Yale University Press, 2005), p. 6.
[157] Stephen Heathorn and David Greenspoon, 'Organizing Youth for Partisan Politics in Britain, 1918-c.1932', *The Historian,* 68.1 (2006), p. 112.

The JIL's conception of Empire can broadly be divided into three, intertwining themes. The first of which is the idea of the Empire as modern, and as a uniquely democratic institution. All other constructions of Empire are in some way connected back to this idea: that the Empire was a modern, growing, technological and democratic institution. Secondly, through the modern technology which drove, and was driven by the Empire, its citizens were brought closer than ever before. Imps were encouraged to think of themselves as Imperial citizens and as part of a big, happy family which was becoming ever more unified. Finally, as the Empire modernised there was a shift away from old conceptions of the Empire as being a military organisation which demanded sacrifice, although we will see that this view gained new traction with the growing threat of Germany in the late 1930s, and towards an idea of the Empire as a producer which created great benefits for all its inhabitants.[158] The Empire was for everyone, and it was through the idea of shared citizenship that the Conservative Party were able to navigate the contradictions between Imperial and democratic government.

Modernity was frequently used to justify the existence of the Empire. Proponents of Empire argued that since Britain was a modern state it was justified in ruling over states which were not yet modern, guiding them into modernity.[159] The most significant facet of these efforts was the way in which the history of the Empire was presented to young people: the party sought to create a distinct break between the Empire of the past and the Empire of the present. The contemporary incarnation of the Empire was referred to as the 'Third British Empire',[160] marking it out as distinctive from Empire of the past. *Torchbearer* proudly declared that the Empire was not the one of Kipling's day, and that 'the post-war generation haven't the slightest use for the nineteenth century vision of Empire.'[161] Creating this distinction between the Empire of the past, and the Empire of the present meant that the Conservative Party were effectively able to reinvent the Empire as whatever they wanted. This modern Empire was one which drove technological innovation as an article on the Empire Marketing

[158] Jeffrey Richards, 'Boy's Own Empire: Feature Films and Imperialism in the 1930s', in John MacKenzie (ed.), *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester University Press, 1986), p. 147.
[159] Bernard Rieger and Martin J. Daunton, 'Introduction', in Rieger and Daunton, *Meanings of Modernity,* p. 12.
[160] *Torchbearer*, April 1937, p. 39.
[161] *Torchbearer,* February 1937, p. 19.

Board (EMB), an important organisation which will receive more discussion later, demonstrates when it describes how investment was going into new agricultural technologies.[162] The Empire was also driven by technological innovations; it was described as 'evolving'[163] and as depending on 'science, engineering, and business enterprise.'[164] Technologies such as the cinema and the wireless were credited with bringing the Empire closer together,[165] while the growth of the telegram was said to have made governing easier.[166] The Conservative Party imagined a grand future for the Empire in which its development surpassed that of the United States.[167]

The Empire was not only modern in a technological sense, but also socially: the Empire was portrayed as a defender and promoter of democracy around the world. 'The Empire of to-day,' it was argued 'is held together by bonds of thought, by agreement amongst all of us upon the supreme value of democratic principles.'[168] Towards the end of the 1930s there was a marginal spike in references to the Empire as a military, defensive institution;[169] however, the overwhelming majority of articles were focused on its democratic values. In casting the Empire in such a role, the JIL directly confronted accusations of atrocities perpetrated in the name of Empire. One article declared that 'ignorance is the bitterest enemy of the British Empire. The man of ignorance cries aloud: 'British Empire! – yes, a blood-thirsty gang of cut-throats enslaving innocent peoples, holding them in terror by the sword, fattening on the robbery of their wealth.'' It then goes on to ask: 'Is that charge true, or is it the biggest lie in history?'[170]

The article's answer to this question is indicative of much of the JIL's discourse on Empire: it focuses on the economic aspects of the Empire. Focusing on such aspects not only further reinforces the idea of a transformed, modern Empire but also simultaneously deflects accusations that the

[162] *The Imp*, February 1927, p. 9.
[163] *The Imp*, December 1926, p. 1.
[164] *The Imp*, November 1926, p. 1.
[165] *Torchbearer*, June 1937, p. 61.
[166] *The Imp,* June 1928, p. 1.
[167] *The Imp*, May 1926, p. 4.
[168] *Torchbearer*, February 1937, p. 15.
[169] *Torchbearer*, December 1937, p. 109; February 1938, p. 15.
[170] *Junior Imperial League Gazette*, October 1923, p. 6.

Empire is an autocratic regime while also promoting Empire unity and providing people with emotional and material investment in the Empire. A 1923 speech by Stanley Baldwin to the JIL emphasised his vision of the Empire as a great economic and political union:

> And some day it may well be that our dream may come true of an Empire whose ways are the great waterways of the world, and in which men shall move for their industry and for their homes from end to end with as little concern as to-day they move from the State of New York to that of California.[171]

Putting this speech into its context, it was delivered only five months after the 1923 General election in which the Conservatives' desire to introduce imperial protection tariffs was a defining issue. The defeat in this election was not the end of the party's desire to push an economic Empire; instead, the idea morphed into an attempt to create an Imperial culture which persuaded people to buy Empire products, rather than economically deter people from buying non-Empire products. In 1926 the EMB was founded to spearhead this effort.[172] Imps were repeatedly encouraged to buy Empire products both before and after the creation of the EMB and were reminded that the Empire was a great producer of goods and economic strength.[173]

This economic strength was portrayed as being the cornerstone of the Empire and the driving force behind its foundation and expansion. So significant to the JIL was the idea of trade for a mutual benefit that it was enshrined in the second of their ten principles: 'To promote the unity and the commercial supremacy of Empire.'[174] The previously-cited article which addresses accusations of Imperial atrocities serves as an excellent example of this idea: 'The simple truth is that we went to India as traders, without a thought of conquest or even control; certainly without once dreaming of Empire – we went in fact for pepper and cinnamon and cloves and nutmegs, as we go to New York to-day for wheat.' Many other articles focused on the trade aspect of Empire: trade competition with

[171] *The Times*, 5 May 1924, p. 8.
[172] Stephen Constantine, ''Bringing the Empire Alive'', in MacKenzie (ed.), *Imperialism*, p. 197.
[173] *Junior Imperial League Gazette,* October 1923, p. 7; November 1923, p. 7; December 1923, p. 12; *The Imp*, August 1925, p. 3; December 1925, p. 6; April 1933, p. 5; February 1936, p. 6; *Torchbearer*, June 1927, p. 63; April 1939, p. 11.
[174] Handbook for Workers and Organisers, c. 1920-30, p. 4, Conservative Party Archive, CCO 506/5/2.

Portugal driving the exploration of India,[175] the formation of the East India Company,[176] the importance of wheat from Canada,[177] mines in Africa,[178] and the connections between Britain's trade and its military security.[179] Emphasis on trade alone is not sufficient evidence to claim the existence of an Imperial culture, or an Imperial citizen. These ideas become more compelling ones when we consider that Empire was presented as providing economic benefits for *all* those who lived under it, not just the British. This is explicitly mentioned when discussing gold mines in South Africa which are described as bringing prosperity to Britain and Africans alike and turning South Africa into one of the richest countries in the world.[180] In a tantalising rare occurrence, on one occasion *The Imp* published a short letter from a farmer in Rhodesia thanking Britain for introducing Imperial Preference on oilseeds, which was used to demonstrate the wealth-creating power of Empire.[181] This letter was a fascinating, but rare occurrence, and it is regrettably unclear the extent to which *The Imp* had an imperial readership.

These small interactions between residents of Britain and its Empire are significant, however, and reflect the final strand of Conservative imperial thought: the Empire as a family. The image presented to the JIL was of one big, happy family which encompassed a quarter of the earth's surface. This phenomenon was not unique to the JIL and was common in Imperial discourse.[182] This is evident in the work of the EMB who frequently used the language of family to refer to the Empire, directly referring to the Empire as a 'family' or 'cousins.'[183] Baldwin used similar language in the previously-cited speech to the JIL in which he urged members to talk to their 'friends' in the Dominions so that they may learn how great the Empire was.[184] Indeed, the Empire as a big family was evident in JIL

[175] *Torchbearer* May 1937, p. 51.
[176] *Torchbearer* June 1937, p. 63.
[177] *Torchbearer,* September 1937, p. 99.
[178] *Torchbearer,* October 1937, p. 155.
[179] *Torchbearer,* December 1937, p. 139; February 1938, p. 15.
[180] *Torchbearer,* October 1937, p. 155.
[181] *The Imp,* April 1933, p. 3.
[182] Stephanie Olson, *Juvenile Nation: Youth, Emotions and the Making of the Modern British Citizen, 1880-1914* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), p. 102.
[183] Nadine Chan, '"Remember the Empire, filled with your Cousins": Poetic Expression in the Documentaries of the Empire Marketing Board', *Studies in Documentary Film*, 7.2 (2013), p. 107.
[184] *The Times*, 5 May 1924, p. 8.

imagery. Take, for example, the nickname 'League of the Wide Horizon' which appears in the masthead of the *Junior Imperial League Gazette* and *The Imp*. At one level, this refers to the broad membership of gender and class that the JIL wanted to achieve. When combined with its imagery, the figure of Britannia looking out across the water, is carries imperial connotations. The suggestion is that the JIL is an organisation which reaches beyond Britain's shores and has connections across the Empire.

This proved to be an incredibly effective technique. The JIL's promotion of Empire and the Empire Day festival became one of the driving forces for the creation of the YCL who believed that Empire was corrupting the minds of young people. Thus, they dedicated a significant amount of time and resources into organising events to counter Empire Day.[185] To the JIL, the Empire was not something which happened far away in which ordinary people had no part, it was a core facet of their culture. Members of the public could participate in the commercial Empire every time they bought a product; while thanks to modern technology they could engage in the same activities as their 'cousins' in the Dominions and enjoy the same entertainment. The Empire was framed in distinctly modern terms: it was always evolving and growing and it was compared to modern countries like the United States. To the Conservative Party, the Empire stretched not only across the horizon, but far off into the future. There was no conception that the Empire might be in its dying decades; instead, the way it was presented to the JIL is indicative of a belief that all that was needed to maintain the cohesion of the Empire was simply to reframe it for the modern era.

Domestic Citizenship and the New Female Voter

It was recognised by many women political organisers that if women were to gain additional social rights, they needed to involve themselves in politics outside of the home.[186] Membership of voluntary organisations gave women the space to do this, and the youth organisations were no different. After

[185] Heathorn and Greenspoon, 'Organising Youth', p. 115.
[186] Catriona Beaumont, *Housewives and Citizens. Domesticity and the Woman's Movement in England, 1928-64* (Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 42.

the 1918 Franchise Act women comprised 39.6% of the electorate,[187] with this proportion increasing to 53% after the 1928 Franchise Act.[188] Given these numbers it would have been impossible for any party to have ignored female voters and be electorally successful. The new female voter was looked upon with suspicion by politicians, and there was some anxiety over how women could be convinced to take their new roles as citizens seriously, and how they could be integrated into the political system.[189] In broad terms, there are two competing narratives of the experience of women after the First World War. One theory marks the First World War as a watershed event in the female experience, suggesting that the government's reliance on women to take the place of injured or called-up men created a new, politicised woman which could not be undone.[190] By contrast, a competing view draws attention to the calls for a return to normalcy after the First World War, emphasising continuities whereby the expectation persisted that women would enter into domestic work after marriage, and for many working-class women domestic servitude was still a reality.[191] In many ways, each theory has its merits. While the domestic expectations on women did remain – many of those who had worked in industry during the First World War did not remain there afterwards – the entry of women into the franchise did create a new set of expectations by women and necessitate inducting them into the political system on the same terms as men after 1928. Given that much of the literature on this subject focuses exclusively on older women, those who may have already been married with a family, exploring how the political parties presented citizenship to women in the earlier stages of their lives will be especially illuminating. A significant amount of literature on female citizenship argues that

[187] Christopher Wrigley, 'The Labour Party and the Impact of the 1918 Reform Act', *Parliamentary History*, 37.1 (2018), p. 74.
[188] Jon Lovenduski, Pippa Norris, and Catriona Burgess, 'The Party and Women', in Seldon and Ball (eds.), *Conservative Century*, p. 615.
[189] Krista Cowman, '"From the Housewife's Point of View": Female Citizenship and the Gendered Domestic Interior in Post-First World War Britain, 1918-1928', *English Historical Review*, 130.143 (2018), pp. 352-3.
[190] Jane MacKay and Pat Thane, 'The Englishwoman', in Robert Colls and Philip Dodd (eds.), *Englishness. Politics and Culture 1880-1920* (Croom Helm, 1986), pp. 217-223.
[191] Penny Tinkler, 'Girlhood and Growing Up', in Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska (ed.), *Women in the Twentieth Century* (Pearson Education, 2001), pp. 37-45; Catriona Beaumont 'The women's Movement, Politics and Citizenship 1918-1950s', in Zweiniger-Bargielowska (ed.), *Women,* p. 226-7; Pam Taylor, 'Daughters and Mothers – Maids and Mistresses: Domestic Service between the Wars', in John Clarke, Chas Critcher and Richard Johnson (eds.), *Working-Class Culture. Studies in History and Theory*, (Hutchinson & Co., 1979), p. 121.

while expectations remained that the woman's place was in the home, many women, and women's voluntary organisations, utilised 'the rhetoric of citizenship' to legitimise demands that women's social and economic conditions be improved.[192] Such attitudes were consistent with a 'new' brand of feminism which believed that women were equal, but different to men and thus that it was the duty of the state to create special provisions for them to overcome these differences.[193] For many women, therefore, their roles as housewives and mothers enabled them to partake in active citizenship: by campaigning for the drudgery of housework to be reduced, it provided them more free time to actively contribute to the community. Judy Giles argues that while the concept of the housewife was a conservative one, it offered working-class women a term of self-definition which was 'empowering and democratic in terms of class, if not gender', while Caitríona Beaumont takes this argument further by arguing that it *was* democratic for gender too.[194]

All of the youth organisations were fairly successful in drawing in female members; each organisation made a conscious effort to appeal to women, and in no organisation was there a significant gender imbalance. Martin Pugh has made the claim that even after 1918 the JIL remained 'adamantly male'.[195] Pugh's statement has since been dismissed by historians with David Jarvis labelling it 'bizarre' and Claude Scott calling it 'clearly wrong'.[196] McCrillis also emphasises how women were integrated at all levels of the JIL.[197] Indeed, Pugh has tended to underestimate female involvement in the Conservative Party as a whole, suggesting that women tended to occupy a

[192] Caitríona Beaumont, 'Fighting for the "Privileges of Citizenship": the Young Woman's Christian Association (YWCA), Feminism, and the Women's Movement, 1928-1945', *Women's History Review*, 23.3 (2014), p. 465.
[193] Cowman, 'Female Citizenship', p. 363.
[194] Judy Giles, 'A Home of One's Own. Women and Domesticity in England 1918-1950', *Women's Studies Int. Forum*, 16.3 (1993), p. 239; Caitríona Beaumont, '"Where to Park the Pram"? Voluntary Woman's Organisations, Citizenship and the Campaign for Better Housing in England, 1928-1945, *Women's History Review,* 22.1 (2013), p. 78.
[195] Martin Pugh, *Tories,* p. 180.
[196] David Jarvis, 'The Conservative Party and the Politics of Gender, 1900-1939', in Francis and Zweiniger-Bargielowska (eds.), *The Conservatives,* p. 180; Claude Fredrick Scott, 'Caring about the British Empire. British Imperial Activist Groups, 1900-1967, wish Special Reference to the Junior Imperial League and the League of Empire Loyalists', unpublished PhD Thesis, King's College London, 2013, p. 144.
[197] Neal R. McCrillis, *The British Conservative Party in the Age of Universal Suffrage. Popular Conservatism, 1918-1929* (Ohio State University Press, 1998), p. 88.

segregated role across the organisation.[198] My own research on the JIL supports Jarvis and Scott, finding a significant degree of female participation in the organisation. In fact, the Conservative Party had historically excelled at involving female activists with the Primrose League having hundreds of thousands of female members by the end of the nineteenth century, and after 1918 the party implemented a requirement that one third of officers in constituency organisations must be women.[199] While it may be true that in the immediate aftermath of the First World War some branches chose to create separate male and female branches, this was far from the norm and was almost unheard of by the late 1920s. The JIL's official handbook left the matter to the discretion of individual branches, but recommended co-operation between males and females as 'essential.'[200] In fact, contrary to Pugh's suggestion, one member lamented the tendency for *female* membership to outpace male.[201] Despite the franchise having remained unequal until 1928, the JIL prided itself on opening the political arena to boys and girls on equal terms as it admitted young girls from the age of fourteen.[202]

As with other Conservative organisations at the time, within the JIL traditional women's domestic roles were presented alongside services they could provide to their branch, and to their country.[203] One article in *The Imp* aimed at women taught them how to make sandwiches, lemonade, and suggested that 'we girls' can reduce the cost of meetings 'through the medium of a well-run refreshment stall' and cheekily adds: 'A bit of revenue can be made without the boys knowing to what extent they have been exploited.'[204] This was also reflected in activities of individual branches where women were often selected to oversee food-related activities such as serving on the refreshment

[198] Pugh, *Tories*, p. 69.
[199] Lovenduski, Norris, and Burgess, 'Women', pp. 618-19.
[200] *Handbook for Organisers and Workers*, c. 1920-30, p. 34, CCO 506/5/2.
[201] *The Imp*, March 1928, p. 10; Note that the author did not lament the presence of women per se, but rather that a gender imbalance of any kind weakened the 'comradery' of the branch.
[202] *The Imp*, March 1928, p. 8.
[203] David Thackeray, 'Home and Politics: Women and Conservative Activism in Early Twentieth-Century Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, 49.4 (2010), p. 830.
[204] *The Imp*, August 1925, p. 9.

committee or judging a baking competition.[205] However, giving such jobs to women did not mean that they were not also able to engage in practical citizenship. For example, in their domestic roles women could contribute to the commercial supremacy of the Empire. If 'getting up socials, and presiding over refreshments, is not enough for some girl-Imp enthusiasts' she could take on a more important job: making sure her family's Christmas pudding was made with Empire ingredients.[206] The Christmas pudding is just one example of how the political and the domestic spheres overlapped in the youth organisations, a member was able to take part in politics simply through their cooking. Alison Light points out that 'a new commercial culture of home-making' had 'put women, and the house… at the centre of national life.'[207] Indeed, women and imperial supremacy were often conflated: women were seen as guardians of the Empire and of the English 'race'.[208] An interview with Lucy Baldwin, wife to Stanley, published in *The Junior Imperial League Gazette* neatly encapsulates the Conservative attitude towards female citizens, and the intersection of the domestic and political spheres. 'Mrs. Baldwin does not regard herself as a "political" woman. Her foremost interest is the home', the article states. Mrs. Baldwin then went on advise that while there were some questions 'that might certainly be regarded as "women's questions"', women should not ignore the "larger view" of politics.' That housework was such a detail-oriented exercise made women perfectly suited to the minute detail of politics. 'The time has gone by', she concluded 'for asking what men and women are. The thing that matters is what they do, and whether they do it effectively.'[209]

Given the length of time JIL periodicals ran for, it is possible to trace the development of female citizenship through time. The above-cited articles were all published before the 1928 Franchise Act; however, the equalisation of the franchise brought with it a new set of fears surrounding the young, frivolous, female voter; or, the 'flapper'. The equalisation of the franchise brought about

[205] Meeting of the Sowerby Bridge and District, 13 July 1928; 27 June 1928, Calderdale Archive Service, CV/7
[206] *The Imp*, December 1925, p. 6.
[207] Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism between the Wars* (Routledge, 1991), p. 10.
[208] MacKay and Thane, 'Englishwoman', p. 205.
[209] *Junior Imperial League Gazette*, August 1923, pp. 3-4.

intense campaigning against the 'flapper vote' not just as a social but as a partisan issue with the *Daily Mail* believing that Socialists sought to recruit young women.[210] *The Imp* addressed the 'flapper vote' controversy directly in an article discussing the achievements of past Conservative governments. It describes protesters' fears as 'a lot of nonsense' and dismisses the idea that any woman of voting age 'can be correctly described as a "Flapper."'[211] Inextricably linked to the fears of the 'flapper vote' were older criticisms of the 'frivolous young woman.'[212] For instance, the JIL's Rover expressed his concern about an Imp who, at conference, remarked that 'the modern good-time girl makes pleasure her god and the pursuit of pleasure her religion and is doing a grave disservice to mankind.' In response, Rover ran a competition to see who could provide the best rebuttal.[213] That they would do this, however, is perhaps unsurprising as they would be unlikely to engage in insults towards their core demographic. What is more interesting is that while after 1928 the involvement of women in the JIL continued to grow, the tacit assumption that most of women's political involvement would be via the home remained. There remained an assumption by the party that the ultimate goal of women was to become wives and mothers. Their 1929 manifesto's main appeal to women is under the heading 'Welfare of Mothers and Children'[214] and there continued to be an assumption that when a female Imp got married she could cease all activities with the JIL; when describing the engagement of the Yorkshire Area Organiser *The Imp* commented: 'We shall all be sorry to lose Miss Edwards when the time comes.'[215]

For Labour women, too, good citizenship started in the home. The difference being that, as we have come to expect from Labour, this citizenship was focused less on duties and more on rights. Jorgen Rasmussen points out that the introduction of the female franchise created a unique

[210] Adrian Bingham, '"Stop the Flapper Vote Folly": Lord Rothermere, the *Daily Mail*, and the Equalisation of the Franchise 1927-28', *Twentieth Century British History,* 13.1 (2002), pp. 19-23.
[211] *The Imp*, May 1929, p. 6.
[212] Bingham, 'Flapper Vote', p. 23.
[213] *Torchbearer,* February 1924, p. 24.
[214] 1929 Conservative Party General Election Manifesto, http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/1929/1929-conservative-manifesto.shtml, [accessed 17 October 2018].
[215] *The Imp*, May 1934, p. 2.

opportunity for Labour which few, if any, fledgling political parties receive: the opportunity to appeal to an entirely new, uncommitted subset of voters rather than having to convince existing ones to change support away from established parties and put their trust in a new one.[216] And yet, despite the opportunity before them, it is widely considered that Labour squandered their chance to recruit female members. Rasmussen concedes that Labour largely failed to mobilise young, working-class women[217] while Andrew Thorpe describes Labour's Women's Movement as 'consciously marginalised.'[218] This viewpoint is also shared by Karen Hunt who suggests that women's issues had fallen off Labour's agenda almost entirely by the 1930s.[219] It is certainly true that trade unions perceived women workers as a threat, believing that lower-paid, lower-skilled female workers were competition to their male membership; therefore, rather than campaign for women's rights in the workplace they allowed women to be forced out of industrial roles they had held during the First World War.[220] However, the idea that Labour completely missed their opportunity has been challenged in more recent scholarship. Matthew Worley suggests, despite earlier describing the lack of influence of the women's movement,[221] that rather than women's issues falling off the agenda, the boundaries between the spheres which male and female activists operated in increasingly began to blur as social issues grew in importance in local party agendas.[222] Indeed, from the end of the First World War there was a nationwide drive to improve social conditions with women at the forefront.

The LoY made a concerted effort not only to involve women in their organisation, but to make it clear to young women that they could, and should, participate at every level. Politics was presented to women as being an inevitable part of their lives: 'You can't escape from politics whether you want

---

[216] Jorgen S. Rasmussen, 'Women in Labour: The Flapper Vote and the Party System Transformation in Britain', *Electoral Studies*, 3.1 (1984), p. 49.
[217] Rasmussen, 'Women in Labour', p. 60.
[218] Andrew Thorpe*, A History of the British Labour Party, Second Edition* (Palgrave, 2001), p. 56.
[219] Karen Hunt, 'Making Politics in Local Communities: Labour Women in Interwar Manchester', in Matthew Worley (ed.), *Labour's Grass Roots. Essays on the Activities of Local Labour Members* (Ashgate, 2005), p. 96.
[220] Caroline Rowman, 'Woman in the Labour Party, 1906-1920', *Feminist Review*, 0.12 (1982), p. 82.
[221] Matthew Worley, *Labour Inside the Gate. A History of the British Labour Party between the Wars* (IB Tauris, 2005), pp. 62-3.
[222] Matthew Worley, 'The Fruits on the Tree: Labour's Constituency Parties between the Wars', in Matthew Worley (ed.), *The Foundations of the British Labour Party. Identities, Cultures and Perspectives 1900-39* (Ashgate, 2009), p. 206.

to or not, any more than you can escape from a hole in your stocking. It's just there.'[223] Note also the analogy which compares political involvement not only with a familiar situation, but one which was rooted in a specifically feminine experience. Holes in one's stocking was an inevitable challenge which was not to be ignored, just like politics. Where, in the Imps, domesticity formed an important element in women's political participation, we see no element of this at all in the LoY. Young women were encouraged to act independently of their husbands, with one author lamenting the frequency with which she hears women claim they will vote the same way as their husbands.[224] Further to this, women were warned off Fascism by quoting Hitler as saying 'it is the duty of women to exhaust themselves in the bearing of Children' and warning women that if they sympathise with Fascism then 'you are not Modern Girls at all.'[225] The embracing of the term 'Modern Girl' and the outright rejection of domestic roles suggests a new type of political participation for women germinating in the LoY; neither their members nor their paper's editor saw any reason to so much as pay lip service to traditional female roles or modes of participation. Combine this with the increased female involvement in the trade union movement which we have already seen and we have an indication of far greater female involvement in the Labour movement than previously assumed.

Being a member of one of these youth organisations would have given women opportunities to participate in politics which they would not otherwise have had. Periodicals had pages dedicated to women; their participation in rallies, debates and competitions was celebrated; and in some areas female membership outpaced that of male. However, women had a very different experience of the concepts of citizenship and political participation than men. They were often singled out by male members as being different, sometimes found themselves subject to mockery, and the value they could provide to the organisations occasionally questioned. By and large the expectation remained that even though they were now voters they would one day enter the domestic sphere, and even

[223] *The New Nation,* March 1933, p. 13.
[224] *The New Nation*, November 1935, p. 121.
[225] *The New Nation*, September 1933, p. 22.

when they took a more active interest in politics their understanding would be filtered through a domestic lens.

Conclusion

Throughout the course of this chapter we have seen two distinct ideas of what it meant to be a 'good' citizen; however, both drew on common themes. Firstly there was the idea of duty to the state. While the aggressive nature of Victorian and Edwardian notions of duty, referring to military duty, had been almost entirely removed, inter-war citizens were still expected to partake in some form of duty. For the JIL, this was a duty to promote the Empire by buying imperial products, making sure their family did the same, and talking to their friends to break down 'lies' about the Empire. For the LoY, their duty was to avoid war at all costs by working together within the national and international community. Secondly, both conceptions were international in outlook. For the JIL, this was about strengthening the bonds of Empire; for the 'progressive' parties internationalism was a logical extension of their pacifism. What we can see, therefore, is that while their notions of citizenship were very different, they were all outward-looking organisations. What draws these two ideas together is the common notion of the importance of the rule of law, and democratic institutions. This brings us to the most significant finding of the chapter: the Youth Charter. The Charter demonstrates that young people were not inducted into the political system passively. Young people wanted to see issues which affected them given genuine consideration, rather than used as political tokens during election campaigns, and the Charter indicates that this was taken seriously. The Charter stands out as a landmark moment in how citizenship was constructed, signalling a shift from a citizenship which demanded service to one which conferred rights, and demonstrates that young people were at the forefront of this change.

Section 3: Activity

Chapter 5: 'A Higher Evolution'? The Character of Youth Politics: Political Culture and Party Work

Introduction

With the introduction of mass democracy, much of the debate in Britain shifted away from who should be allowed to vote and on what terms, and towards how these new voters would be integrated into the body politic.[1] Figure 5.1 depicts an Imp performing vital party work. The young Imp goes up against a Socialist orator and is defeated. After an Ashridge training course he is able to knock down scores of opponents with his newfound skills. More than simply suggesting that membership of the JIL prepares a member for political campaigning, it is reflective of training to undertake politics in a specific way. Compare the image of the ragged, irate Socialist with that of the tidy Imp who defeats his opponents with 'eloquence', 'arguments', and 'facts'. The

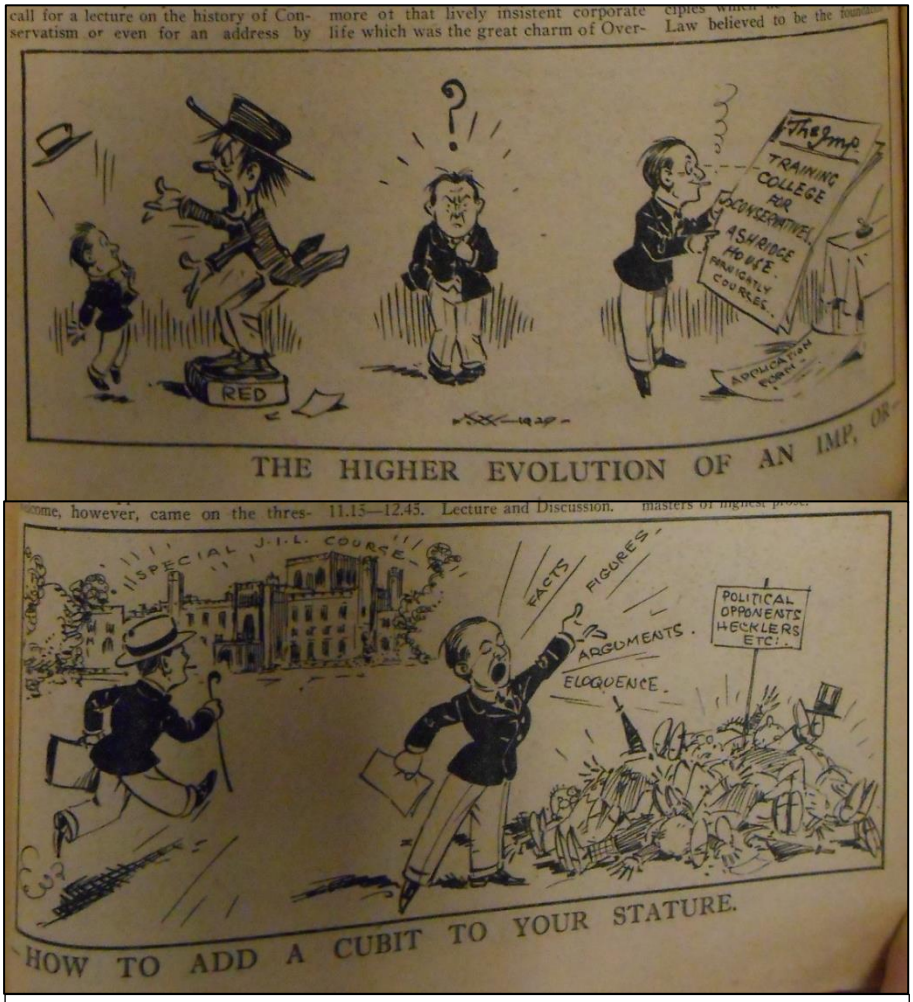

Figure 5.1: The Higher Evolution of an Imp, or – How to add a Cubit to your Stature*, The Imp*, September 1929, pp. 8-9.

[1] Helen McCarthy, 'Parties, Voluntary Associations, and Democratic Politics in Interwar Britain', *Historical Journal*, 50.4 (2007), p. 891-2.

suggestion here is that Imps were trained to practise politics in a calm and rational way. Such an image, along with its caption, was intended to set the JIL aside from other organisations who were portrayed as rowdy, disruptive, and undisciplined. Such groups were the enemies of democracy. In the previous chapter we explored the notion of good citizenship and how politicians feared that the new electorate may not be able to cast their ballot responsibly, a concern they shared with the leadership of many non-partisan organisations. The purpose of the youth organisations was not simply to educate but to mobilise young people, training and preparing them to assist in campaigning and party work.

This chapter will primarily be concerned with the political culture of the United Kingdom, and exploring how the politicisation of young people affected that culture. Prolific writer on the subject, Helen McCarthy, defines political culture as:

> those complex linkages between formal political institutions and affiliations and the forces at work within the wider culture, which might include technological and socio-economic change, shifting class or gender relations, religious identities and intellectual traditions.[2]

The essence of what McCarthy is talking about is how politics is practised both individually and institutionally, and how those individuals and institutions interact. Debates have raged amongst historians as to the exact nature of British political culture following the Franchise Act; for example, the extent to which people took part at all, or absolved themselves of political responsibilities. Ross McKibbin argues in favour of a political culture which failed to enthuse people, and in which many people remained deferential to the old elites.[3] More recently, historians have come to question that assumption, and have looked outside of the party-political sphere to do so. McCarthy's work is part of a more recent wave of historians who have sought to explore the continuing culture of voluntarism in Britain outside of the political sphere, with McCarthy pointing out that the inter-war years saw the foundation of a large number of non-partisan organisations which promoted active citizenry and

[2] Helen McCarthy, *The British People and the League of Nations. Democracy, Citizenship and Internationalism, c. 1918-45* (Manchester University Press, 2011), p. 6.
[3] Ross McKibbin, *Parties and People: England 1914-1951* (Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 179.

indicated that Britain was undergoing a process of mass democratisation.[4] She points out, however, that 'we also know very little about how the relations between MPs and constituents outside of elections were reshaped between the wars.'[5] McCarthy raises an interesting point here about the missing day-to-day experiences of political activists. Thanks to historians such as McCarthy, Pat Thane, and Geraint Thomas we know a great deal about activism outside of the political sphere; meanwhile, more volumes than could be listed have been written on the parties' organisational structure and election activities. On this same issue, Stephanie Ward has argued that while much, valuable work has been done to recover the political work of women, 'experiences of active Labour women in the rank and file and the meanings of such activism for newly enfranchised working-class women remain largely underdeveloped.' Ward argues that accurately recovering such voices requires a shift away from investigating policy, and towards looking closely at women's experiences in local sources.[6] Although Ward is referring specifically to adult women, an identical framework can be applied to reconstructing young people's experiences of political activism. To truly understand how young people constructed their political activities, the 'political self' as Ward calls it, it is necessary to dive into local sources produced by the young people themselves. By exploring young people's experiences in this way, this chapter aims to reconstruct young people's experiences of politics and how they interacted with Britain's changing political culture.

The dichotomy of 'active versus passive' political culture is not so much the interest of this chapter as the exact *character* of that culture, and how young people experienced it. It is inevitable that some in a society, and even those who joined voluntary organisations, would not be fully committed or contribute completely to the cause. Much of the party work of the youth organisations was reserved for a small elite of dedicated and committed members. Duncan Tanner suggests that for many people, joining a political party was symbolic of commitment to a cause, rather than a desire for

[4] McCarthy, 'Voluntary Association', p. 892; Helen McCarthy, 'Whose Democracy? Histories of British Political Culture between the Wars', *The Historical Journal,* 55.1 (2012), p. 229.
[5] McCarthy, 'Whose Democracy?', p. 236.
[6] Stephane Ward, 'Labour Activism and the Political Self in inter-war Working-Class women's Politics', *Twentieth Century British History*, 30.1 (2019), pp. 30-2.

greater personal involvement, which may have been 'impossible or undesirable.'[7] This was also true for a party's youth wing, but that does not negate the important work which was done by the thousands of activists who *did* participate.[8] Therefore, for the purposes of this chapter, the danger of political apathy will take a back seat in favour of exploring how those who *were* invested in party-political work experienced that work, and how the parties sought to encourage a political culture amongst young people which, while boisterous, remained respectable and rooted in established practices.

This chapter will firstly consider the character of youth politics, exploring the terms on which young people were admitted into British political culture, and the way in which they were expected to conduct themselves. In order to better understand how mass democracy changed British political culture it will consider to what extent pre-1918 expectations and practices were passed on to young people, such as rowdy and disruptive behaviour, and then explore how modern technology affected the way people experienced politics. The second section will explore how young people experienced politics on a local level. It will argue that because of the energetic nature of youth politics discussed in the first section, young people enjoyed a more practical form of political engagement which saw them simulating, or 'playing at', politics in order to give them practical training in a safe environment to prepare them for vital party work.

The Character of Youth Politics

Laura Beers argues that mass democracy 'altered not only the content, but also the conduct of British politics.'[9] It is this alteration in conduct which we here turn to: exploring the exact *character* of youth politics; or, the terms on which young people were admitted to the British political system. The nature of youth politics highlights something of an interesting tension between how politicians would have

[7] Duncan Tanner, 'Labour and its Membership, in Duncan Tanner, Pat Thane, and Nick Tiratsoo (eds.), *Labour's First Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 255.
[8] As we discussed in the introduction, if only a fraction of the organisations' members took part this still amounted to a significant number of activists.
[9] Laura Beers, *Your Britain. Media and the Making of the Labour Party* (Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 12.

liked politics to be practised, or at least how they publicly claimed they would like it to be practised, and the realities of British political culture. The scenes depicted in Figure 5.1 are reflective of wider changes to British political culture brought about by mass democracy. Prior to the 1918 Franchise Act political violence and disruption were common amongst those who were outside of the franchise: going to meetings to heckle and disrupt was their way of participating in the political process.[10] Indeed, having rowdies at meetings was an expected risk of the profession: it was the responsibility of the event organiser to make sure it was not disrupted.[11] It was fairly common for politicians to hire prize fighters or navvies to keep order, and, as late as 1909, the Home Office told police that this was the only way to keep order at a public meeting.[12] Additionally, Jon Lawrence has found that in 1910 one in three meetings had some kind of interruption from the floor.[13] Adrian Gregory describes pre-1918 politics in even more dramatic terms as: 'to a certain extent a blood sport'. However, he does qualify this, saying that if it was a blood sport 'it was a sport with rules.'[14]

Following the First World War, Lawrence suggests that the introduction of universal male suffrage brought about a political culture which was 'low-key and homely'[15] which was 'above all unassertive.'[16] Lawrence's argument is predicated on the fact that disruption at a meeting would, before 1918, have been a sign that a politician was unpopular; therefore, while the presence of rowdies was expected, their presence was highly undesirable. After 1918, the opposite was true: while it was no longer expected that there would be violence at meetings, when it did occur it was positive for the candidate as it allowed them to paint their opponents as enemies of free speech. Therefore,

[10] Jon Lawrence, 'Fascist Violence and the Politics of Public Order in Inter-war Britain: the Olympia Debate Revisited', *Historical Research*, 78.192 (2003), p. 243.
[11] Lawrence, 'Fascist Violence', p. 241.
[12] Jon Lawrence, 'The Transformation of British Public Politics after the First World War'. *Past and Present*, 190 (2006), p. 189.
[13] Jon Lawrence, 'Why Olympia Mattered', *Historical Research,* 78.200 (2005), p. 164.
[14] Adrian Gregory, 'Peculiarities of the English? War, Violence and Politics', *Journal of European History,* 1.1 (2003), p. 47.
[15] Jon Lawrence, *Electing our Masters. The Hustings in British Politics from Hogarth to Blair* (Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 96.
[16] Lawrence, 'Fascist Violence', p. 185.

fewer people did it for fear of giving their opponents political ammunition.[17] In addition, Lawrence suggests that many politicians believed it had become necessary to modify the character of electioneering to be less violent in order to appeal to the new electorate; specifically, to women.[18] While it was no longer considered to be an acceptable part of political culture, violence and disruptive behaviour did remain part of the character of British politics. Many of the problems with disruptive behaviour came to be associated with young people, and some local parties went as far as banning them from meetings.[19] More so, problems began to arise with Fascist violence. The conversation surrounding political violence in the 1930s came to be overwhelmingly dominated by the BUF whose membership, especially those who became Mosley's bodyguards, where overwhelmingly young men; the same was true of its precursor New Party.[20] Debates over the role of violence in political discourse came to a head after significant violence at the BUF's Olympia rally in 1934.[21]

In this climate, with young people taking the blame for most violent outbursts, and the BUF's membership being made up of largely young people, we could reasonably assume that the youth organisations would unambiguously discourage rowdyism or violence in any form by their members. This does not seem to be the case, however, and far from seeing it discouraged, disruptive behaviour was actually *encouraged* in young activists. Adrian Gregory rather astutely observes, in the context of Edwardian politics, that 'political elites were remarkably tolerant of violence when they thought they might have the upper hand.'[22] The implication here is they would do it if they thought they could get

[17] Jon Lawrence, 'Transformation', pp. 196-202; Lawrence, 'Olympia', p. 266; Stuart Ball, *Portrait of a Party. The Conservative Party in Britain 1918-1945* (Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 94.
[18] Jon Lawrence, 'The Culture of Elections in Modern Britain', *History*, 96.324 (2011), p. 469.
[19] Lawrence, 'Transformation', p. 208.
[20] Matthew Worley, *Oswald Mosley and the New Party* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 67; John D. Brewer, *Mosley's Men. The British Union Fascists in the West Midlands* (Gower Publishing, 1984), p. 7; Colin Cross, *The Fascists in Britain* (Barrie and Rockcliff, 1961), p. 67; Thomas Linehan, *British Fascism 1918-39. Parties, Ideology and Culture* (Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 163; Martin Pugh, '*Hurrah for the Blackshirts!' Fascists and Fascism in Britain between the Wars* (Pimlico, 2005), p. 139.
[21] Lawrence and Pugh have had some debate over to what extent the Conservative Party accepted this violence: Marin Pugh, 'The British Union of Fascists and the Olympia Debate', *The Historical Journal,* 41.2 (1998), pp. 529-542; Lawrence, 'Fascist Violence'; Martin Pugh, 'The National Government, the British Union of Fascists and the Olympia Debate', *Historical Research*, 78.200 (2005), pp. 253-262; Lawrence, 'Olympia', pp. 263-72.
[22] Gregory, 'Peculiarities of the English?', p. 47.

away with it. This attitude appears to have persisted into the inter-war years, with young people's enjoyment of more physical political activity harnessed to disrupt opponent's meetings. By encouraging this behaviour, older party members, and party officials, could create a degree of distance between themselves and this activity while simultaneously reaping its perceived benefits.

Violent behaviour did continue into the inter-war years, to varying degrees of condemnation. Some newspapers dedicated entire columns to reporting on election rowdyism, offering varying degrees of disdain ranging from outright condemnation to tacit support.[23] Take for example the campaign in Clay Cross where the Conservative candidate, Colonel Sherwood Kelly, V.C., was the victim of persistent heckling:

> Finally one of them called him a liar. Both the speaker and the chairman appealed to the man to withdraw the word, but instead of doing so he repeated it, whereupon the candidate thrashed him, amid the applause of the audience. The man was ejected from the meeting, which then proceeded without further interruption.[24]

The above report from *The Times* offered no condemnation of Kelly's actions, and based on the description of the audience's reaction they were fairly well received; meanwhile, *The Nottingham Post* described Kelly's methods simply as 'effective' and then explained that 'two blows dazed the man' before he was thrown out.[25] Such displays from candidates were admittedly rare, and members of the youth organisations were never encouraged to take part in physical violence. The danger of physical violence, as we have seen, would be the close association with Fascist violence. Indeed, a few JIL branches fall foul of this association. In Nottingham there were 'wild scenes' when a fight broke out at a JIL meeting in which 'Fascist stewards' were present.[26] Later, there were rumours of mass defections to the BUF which the Conservative Party were forced to investigate and subsequently deny.[27]

---

[23] *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 24 October 1924, p. 3.
[24] *The Times,* 24 October 1924, p. 14.
[25] *Nottingham Evening Post*, 23 October 1924, p. 1.
[26] *Nottingham Evening Post,* 10 November 1926, p. 1.
[27] *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 20 July 1934, p. 14; *Western Morning News*, 16 July 1934, Conservative Party Archive, CCO 506/3/1-5.

While physical violence was discouraged, the British political culture of mild disruption and heckling was continued through the youth organisations. This was a pseudo-acceptable violence; a way to maintain the 'rough and tumble' of British politics without spreading into the physical violence which became increasingly unpopular. The fact that practices which had previously been confined to those *outside* the franchise continued to be practised by those now *within* the franchise suggests a two-way relationship between individuals and political culture, and a similar pattern in local politics to that which Richard Toye has observed taking place in the House of Commons. Toye argues that rather than completely adapting to Commons culture, the introduction of working-class and female MPs changed Commons culture.[28] In the same way, rather than the new electorate being expected to conform entirely to the standards of behaviour that politicians demanded of them, they absorbed some of the habits of new voters.

The influence of the older generations, the product of a time when heckling was considered more acceptable, could be felt in the youth organisations. The NLYL were treated to the musings of *Liberal Magazine* editor Harold Storey who attempted to instil in them the importance of heckling to the open-air meeting:

> The most interesting part of an open-air meeting is the heckling – this is the real adventure. I remember the time when I used to hope, as I stood up, that there would be no interruptions. That is long ago, for very soon came the time when I found no pleasure in a meeting where there was no heckling, and indeed could not get on very well without it.[29]

One fascinating distinction between the JIL and the LoY in this case is that the JIL were mostly encouraged to take part in disruption, while the LoY were mostly encouraged to guard against it. This is more a broad pattern than a universal truth, and there were some exceptions. One JIL member wrote to *The Imp* to suggest the formation of a 'Defence Corp' to protect against 'gangs of rowdies' disrupting meetings,[30] a suggestion reminiscent of the pre-war practice of hiring prize fighters to

[28] Richard Toye, 'The Rhetorical Culture of the House of Commons after 1918', *History,* 99.335 (2014), p. 274.
[29] *The Forward View*, October 1927, p. 157.
[30] *The Imp*, March 1935, p. 8.

protect meetings, while the JIL handbook makes a similar suggestion that candidates and speakers who were 'liable to receive rough treatment' should recruit bodyguards.[31] The JIL demonstrated their penchant for disruption with advice given in their organisers' handbook which listed attending opposition meetings to heckle speakers as some of the vital election work Imps could perform.[32] Hecklers were also identified by *The Imp* as being beneficial to one's own meetings: 'It is well known that the most successful way of collecting a crowd at a street corner is to enter into an argument with a willing heckler. The fiercer the argument rages, the quicker the crowd collects.' It was then suggested that 'If a genuine opponent does not come forward, some friend should be obtained who will kindly act in this role. This is an old trick.'[33] The LoY, however, were wise to the JIL's tricks and anticipated rowdyism at their meetings. The Sunderland branch announced that it was to hold a 'hecklers' meeting' with the only conditions being that 'the hecklers must themselves know the answer to the question [they asked] in order that they may enlighten the members in the event of the committee failing to do so.'[34] After the meeting had taken place more details were printed: 'Nothing throws a new speaker out of his stride more than heckling, and this method of accustoming people to it might well be copied by other Leagues. And the heckling need not be too gentle.'[35] We can infer from this that while physical violence was discouraged, there was no upper limit to what could be said in order to disrupt an opponent.

Outside of the political meeting, young people demonstrated their preference for rowdy, practical activity. Individual branches of the organisations enjoyed publicising themselves in active ways which tapped into a long tradition of local politics in which 'a premium had been placed on the physical occupation of a contested space.'[36] The JIL were noteworthy for their spectacular recruitment campaigns. *The Times* reported on the preparations for a fortnight of campaigning in November 1928,

[31] Handbook, c. 1930-33, p. 31, CCO 506/5/5.
[32] Handbook, p. 31, CCO 506/5/5.
[33] *The Imp*, June 1926, p. 8.
[34] *New Nation,* February 1934, p. 23.
[35] *New Nation,* March 1934, p. 35.
[36] Malcolm Robert Petrie, 'Public Politics and Traditions of Popular Protest: Demonstrations of the Unemployed in Dundee and Edinburgh, c. 1921-1939', *Contemporary British History*, 27.4 (2013), p. 491.

saying that there would be 'at least 1,000 meetings, apart from torchlight processions, motor-cycle and motor-car parades, and other demonstrations. Special films will be exhibited at cinema theatres in various parts of the country.'[37] JIL members also incorporated 'rag' culture into their activities. 'Rags' were typically organised by students to raise money for various causes, and often took the form of boisterous or disruptive stunts.[38] On two occasions, the Ramsgate branch held a 'rag' where they caused disruption in the town by dressing as members of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). On the first occasion there was 'a procession through the main street… in the fearsome garb of the Ku Klux Klan'[39] and on the second occasion significant disruption occurred when:

> Two girls were whirled off their feet by a party of youths clad in the terrifying robes of the Ku Klux Klan, bundled into a waiting motor car and driven off at high speed… Prior to this episode masked figures held up a lorry coming down the High-Street… The whole thing was an episode of a 'rag' organised by members of the Junior Imperial League, with the object of drawing attention to the organisation.[40]

This behaviour, taking part in 'rags' while dressed up as the KKK, or dressing up as the KKK purely for fun, was not unheard of amongst inter-war youth which suggests that members were incorporating elements of existing youth culture into political culture.[41] Meanwhile, the Leicester LoY ran a campaign to distribute leaflets in 'conspicuous places' in which it was suggested that they be dropped from cinema balconies, presumably to the chagrin of those enjoying the film below.[42] Sellers of *The New Nation* stood side-by-side with sellers of *The Blackshirt*, each trying to out-sell the other.[43] At the same time, the more zealous sellers of *Challenge* could sometimes find themselves on the receiving end of

[37] *The Times*, 19 November 1928, p. 16.
[38] Rag, Oxford English Dictionary, https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/157421, [accessed 10 September 2019].
[39] *Thanet Advertiser,* 28 November 1927, p. 10.
[40] *Thanet Advertiser,* 30 November 1928, p. 4.
[41] Fancy dress: *Dundee Courier,* 4 January 1926, p. 3; *Rugby Advertiser*, 5 July 1929, p. 12; *Market Harborough Advertiser and Midland Mail*, 15 February 1924, p. 2; *Coventry Herald*, 11 July 1924, p. 8; *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 13 January 1923, p. 7; *Wiltshire Times & Trawbridge Advertiser,* 5 September 1925, p. 4; *Western Daily Press,* 19 November 1926, p. 5; Klan outfit advertised: *Weldon's Fancy Dress Catalogue*, 1927, p. 39. A 'rag' held by Leeds University students where they dressed as Klansmen: *Leeds Mercury,* 2 July 1923, p. 12.
[42] Executive Committee meeting, 28 August 1936, Record office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, DE/8167.
[43] Michelle Webb, *The Labour League of Youth. An Account of the Failure of the Labour Party to Sustain a Successful Youth Movement* (The Edwin Mellen Press Ltd., 2010), p. 86.

the public's ire. One account describes a group of members selling the periodical outside a Woolworth's store when the manager came out and threw a bucket of water over the group, leading to the police being called.[44] The situation escalated to the point where one of the sellers sued the manager for £50, but received only two guineas in compensation.[45]

Some former Communist Party members reflected on the inter-war politics of their youth, recalling that 'any street-corner was liable to be turned into a public forum.'[46] It is evident from the youth organisations that, while certainly an exaggeration, there is some degree of truth to this memory. The implication here is that young people were taking part in politics on slightly different terms to adults, preferring more boisterous behaviour and practical methods of participation. While this type of behaviour may have been exasperating for some adults, as we saw from some local parties banning young people, it was an accepted facet of youth participation with the LoY and JIL expecting and encouraging some levels of disruption amongst their members.

Influence of Technology

Along with new voters transforming British politics, the introduction of new technologies also had a transformative effect on how politics was practised. The explosion of print media, the growth of the cinema and newsreel, and the expansion of radio ownership touched politics at every level. Geraint Thomas considers the inter-war years a 'pivotal episode' where 'plebeian traditions of Victorian and Edwardian popular politics met the modernity of mass-scale political communication.'[47] To ensure their remarks were recorded in the day's papers, leading politicians would have to make sure they delivered their speeches during the day, although some MPs bemoaned having to compete for publicity with 'films stars and cricketers.'[48] Meanwhile, the expanded radio ownership meant that

[44] *Challenge*, 24 February 1938, p. 5.
[45] *Challenge*, 15 October 1938, p. 10.
[46] Quoted in Petrie, 'Public Politics', p. 491.
[47] Geraint Thomas, 'Political Modernity and "Government" in the Construction of Inter-war Democracy: Local and National Encounters', in Laura Beers and Geraint Thomas (eds.), *Brave New World. Imperial and Democratic Nation-Building in Britain between the Wars* (Institute of Historical Research, 2011), p. 39.
[48] Toye, 'Rhetorical Culture', pp. 286-7

politicians could now reach people who might otherwise have not attended meetings.[49] Despite Baldwin's noted use of technology, he privately bemoaned the 'falsity and sterility' of using amplification during public speeches; use of the microphone forced the speaker to stand still on the stage and keep their head facing forwards at all times.[50] In this complaint Baldwin identified an important change which technology brought to politics, and one which was considered negative: a belief that technology made politics much more impersonal. It is for this reason, Lawrence argues, that Labour were slow to adopt amplification technology at their meetings, with leaflets instructing speakers to speak from *within* the crowd to avoid destroying the intimacy between speaker and listener.[51] Despite these complaints technology played a large part in inter-war politics, transforming the way people experienced politics and their politicians. Amplification technology, for example, would have been transformative in people's experiences of outdoor meetings. Before amplification technology, outdoor rallies presented a serious problem for politicians: it could not be relied upon that people would be able to hear what was being said. Politicians had methods they could employ to counter this, such as making their speeches simple and repetitive, to maximise the chances of people hearing and understanding them; or, punctuating their speeches with gestures. At the turn of the twentieth century, amplification technology began to be introduced and mitigated many of these problems; although, there were some complaints from listeners about the low quality of the audio.[52]

When considering how far local activists would have been aware of the advanced technologies and psychological techniques of party leadership, Thomas' answer is 'not fully.'[53] For the boisterous, lively youth organisations, however, modern technology was a perfect fit. The Imps' love of the grand publicity stunt was facilitated by technology in a way which proved to be highly innovative in the field

[49] Thomas, 'Modernity', p. 59.
[50] Andrew Taylor, 'Speaking to Democracy: The Conservative Party and Mass Opinion from the 1920s to the 1950s', in Stuart Ball and Ian Holliday (eds.), *Mass Conservatism: The Conservatives and the Public since the 1800s* (Routledge, 2002), p. 80.
[51] Jon Lawrence, *Electing our Masters,* p. 105.
[52] Huub Wijfjes, 'Spellbinding and Crooning: Sound Amplification, Radio, and Political Rhetoric in International Comparative Perspective, 1900-1945', *Technology and Culture*, 55.1 (2014), pp. 151-159.
[53] Thomas, 'Modernity', p. 61.

of political advertising. *The Imp* reported that Sky Signs Ltd. had been hired to write 'Join the Imps' in smoke over London, and that hundreds of thousands of people may have seen it. Sky-writing itself was not a new phenomenon, James Taylor has recently observed how new technologies opened up the skies as a new medium for advertisers to exploit, and draws attention to the mixture of fascination and revulsion which such technologies elicited.[54] As Taylor points out, it is impossible to make uniform judgements on attitudes to technology within a society;[55] but, it appears that the reaction to politics' foray into the skies was not met with hostility. Broadly, the reaction appears to have been fascination and amusement. Newspapers describe crowds of thousands gathering to watch the aeroplanes create the slogan, an event which some considered to be an innovation in political propaganda.[56] Additionally, the event was considered to be a new development in the medium of sky-writing itself, marking the first occasion when two aeroplanes co-operated to produce a single message.[57] The effect of the stunt was tempered somewhat by poor weather conditions on the day which made the message difficult to read, and the words 'Join the' were quickly blown away by the wind.[58] In addition to the sky-writing, a ten-minute film was produced by Gaumont and was shown in cinemas, which *The Imp* claimed was seen by around one-million people. The campaign was widely considered to be a success, with some branches reporting up to 300 new members in two weeks, and many reporting that their supply of JIL pencils had been especially in demand. Some of the reports should be read with a healthy amount of scepticism, however, due to a small number of branches reporting the unlikely outcome that *all* the young people in their area had been recruited to the JIL.[59]

Sky-writing is an example of an exceptional use of technology by the organisations. For the most part, young activists used amplification, newsreels, and radio as their adult leadership did – suggesting that local activists were more aware of these techniques than Thomas has given credit for.

[54] James Taylor, 'Written in the Skies: Advertising, Technology, and Modernity in Britain since 1885', *Journal of British Studies*, 55 (2016), pp. 750-780.
[55] Taylor, 'Written in the Skies', p. 761.
[56] *Evening Telegraph*, 29 November 1928, p. 5.
[57] *Nottingham Evening Post*, 29 November 1928, p. 6; *Manchester Guardian*, 29 November 1928, p. 3.
[58] *Nottingham Evening Post*, 29 November 1928, p. 6; *Manchester Guardian*, 29 November 1928, p. 3.
[59] *The Imp*, January 1929, p. 2.

For example, Labour activists were prolific users of amplification technology. The cover of the June 1933 edition of *The New Nation* carried an image of LoY member, and regular contributor to the periodicals, Doris Saunders, addressing a meeting at Hyde Park. In the image an amplification system is clearly visible.[60] Technology has been observed by Bernhard Rieger to have assisted in breaking down traditional gender roles;[61] so it was in the political sphere too. Female Imps were warned that the 'unbecoming shriek' of a woman's loud voice was a reason why they should not partake in outdoor speaking.[62] The widespread adoption of amplification for public speakers would largely have mitigated this perceived problem as women would no longer need to raise their voice to speak. By 1937 the frequency with which amplification was used in public meetings may have become a problem in some areas as evidence from *Labour Organiser* suggests: 'I noticed during 1936 that several Boroughs passed bye-laws prohibiting the use of loud-speakers in the streets and the equipment obtained by the Labour Parties in these districts is lying about in cupboards, doing itself no good, with deteriorating batteries, and degenerating components.'[63] The article also urged parties with speaker systems and no local ban to make use of them where possible. The fact that local authorities thought it necessary to ban loud speakers in public suggests an overuse of such systems, and the author's lamentations of amount of equipment going to waste suggests that by this point more than a few local parties were in possession of such systems.

The Imps also made excellent use of broadcasting and amplification technology. One branch rented a loudspeaker mounted to a motor van for the 1929 General Election. The 'novelty' of the speaker was said to have drawn crowds, while the addition of the van meant that meetings could be held 'in places which ordinarily are regarded as difficult.'[64] The LoY did the same thing: using technology to facilitate campaigning in difficult-to-access areas. The Clarion youth campaigns, political

[60] *New Nation,* June 1933, p. 41.
[61] Bernhard Rieger, '"Fast Couples": Technology, Gender and Modernity in Modern Britain and Germany during the Nineteen-Thirties', *Historical Research,* 76.193 (2003), p. 365.
[62] *The Imp,* March 1928, p. 8.
[63] *Labour Organiser,* January 1937, p. 17.
[64] *The Imp*, August 1929, p. 11.

campaigning organised by the Clarion Cycling Club (CCC),[65] utilised loudspeaker vans to drive around the countryside repeating Labour messages in the sort of seats the party acknowledged it could never win power without carrying.[66] At the JIL's 1928 Albert Hall Rally, amplification and broadcasting technology enabled hundreds of Imps to gather in Hyde Park to listen to the Prime Minister's speech and take part in the community singing which was going on in the hall.[67] Recorded speeches by the Prime Minister were also played at meetings, with Imps reacting in amazement at being able to hear his voice before it being revealed they were in fact listening to a gramophone recording.[68] Technology was even used to train Imps in public speaking, with a 'mock broadcast' suggested as a potential activity. This 'increasingly popular feature' in branch programmes was intended to mimic a genuine broadcast as closely as possible, although it did require a fair bit of tech to set up, including 'a radiogram so that the volume of sound is controlled.' The Imps playing the part of the broadcasters would be hidden behind a screen or curtain while the rest of the branch listened. The 'broadcasters' could then deliver speeches, perform sketches, or follow along with BBC programming. The purpose of this exercise was to train members in public speaking. The given advantages of this method was that stage fright was eliminated by the audience being hidden from the speaker, and the lines need not be memorised.[69]

The effect of technology on politics, therefore, was greater than providing new and innovative methods for campaigning, it also served to transform how politics was practised by local activists. It opened up political participation to those who would not ordinarily have been able to take part, whether that was because they could not attend meetings, and thus needed to listen via radio or gramophone recordings; or because they feared they would not be able to speak outdoors, and so were helped by amplification technology. Furthermore, it also served as part of the package of young

[65] For more information about the CCC, see Chapter 6.
[66] *Labour Organiser,* May 1937, p. 28.
[67] *The Imp*, April 1928, p. 8.
[68] *The Imp*, December 1934, p. 9.
[69] *The Imp*, December 1934, p. 9.

people's activism training: young members could use broadcasting technology as a way to practise public speaking while eliminating the fear of the crowd.

Playing at Politics: Activism Practice and Imitation

Young people, we have established, took a practical and more boisterous approach to their political work. This was recognised by the adult leadership of the organisations, who provided them with practical, active training for party work. We should look at activism practise as an extension of the political education that young people had received. The political education was largely theoretical in nature, delivered via books, the periodical, and college courses. The kind of training we are concerned with here is practical in nature. Young people were being trained, as we have seen in Figure 5.1, in a specific kind of politics: one which emphasised rational and reasoned discourse, and the Parliamentary democratic system. The youth organisations offered a litany of opportunities to attend meetings and conferences, participate in competitions, assist in running the organisation at a local and national level, and to interact with other members. What is especially interesting, however, is quite how well young people took to this kind of practical training. The end result was that many branches took to 'playing' or simulating politics. This imitation of politicians within the confines of their own youth organisations gave young people the opportunity to practise politics in a safe environment, where they would be free from the kind of defeat the Imp in Figure 5.1 suffered initially, and ready to take what they had learned out into the public sphere later.

Branch Meetings and Organisation Events

The most direct way through which members received their practical training was by attending branch meetings, and events organised by their branches. Branches offered substantial monthly programmes with a range of available activities, and local branch minute books offer a window into how these activities operated. The Leicester branch of the LoY held its 'business meetings', where general branch

business was discussed and debates held, weekly.[70] In addition to these meetings, it hosted regular supplementary events: its programme for the first quarter of 1937 held weekly events including a discussion on the League of Nations; open air meetings; distributing circulars; socials; and, debates.[71] The Wolverhampton NLYL were also prolific debaters, regularly debating their local Liberal Club and other NLYL branches, and NLYL members were actively encouraged to debate with other local political organisations such as the JIL.[72] The types of topics debated suggest training for tackling the political questions of the day, and broadening their understanding of British political culture; for example a debate on nationalisation, and 'should local government bodies be worked on the party system?'[73] While the majority of the debates in the JIL were on serious political matters, debates could occasionally be held on more light-hearted topics such as whether ghosts were real, or if bachelors should be taxed.[74] The light-hearted nature of these debates enabled Imps to sharpen their debating skills without needing to have specialist knowledge of a subject, therefore making the activity more accessible.

In making political activity light-hearted and acceptable, the organisations promoted 'mock' events, such as the 'mock Parliament' and 'mock trial'. The Lancashire, Cheshire and North Western Young Liberal Federation conducted their conference in the form of a mock Parliament which saw local Young Liberals occupy the government benches and Liberals from other areas take on the role of the opposition. They used this as an opportunity to debate Liberal policy in a forum which simulated taking part in politics. Such events were practised by all parties and draw our attention sharply to the fact that they were trying to instil in their members an understanding of, and enthusiasm for, the rule

[70] Inaugural meeting of the Leicester League of Youth, 29 September 1933, Record Office for Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland, DE/8169.
[71] The Leicester Labour Party League of Youth Programme for 1st Quarter 1937, DE/8169.
[72] Minutes of combined executive, general and entertainment committee, 26 June 1925; Minutes of executive meetings, 24 July 1925; General meeting, 21 August 1925; General meeting, 15 December 1925; Annual General Meeting, 12 January 1926; Minutes of combined executive, general and entertainment committees, 31 March 1926; Minutes of Executive committee 14 November 1926; Minutes of general meeting, 7 December 1926, Wolverhampton City Archives, D/SO/31; Suggestions for Branch Activities, LSE Archives, JOSEPHY 14/4.
[73] General Meeting, 15 December 1925; Combined Executive, General And Entertainment Committees, 31 March 1926, D/SO/31.
[74] *The Imp*, September 1925, p. 14; December 1925, p. 14.

of law and British institutions. This is a critical point to recognise because it is an element shared across the organisations of the major parties, and strikes at the heart of one of the purposes of their existence. At the same time, the 'mock election' was promoted by *Forward View* as being 'not only amusing but also instructive.' When conducting these activities, members could learn about the intricacies of running an election while simultaneously giving them practice if they should ever wish to become a candidate themselves.[75]

The JIL were especially prolific practitioners of such activities, as the rule of law and the constitution were cornerstones of much of the Conservative ideology.[76] Such activities are yet another product of the numerous fears which plagued the Conservative Party in the age of mass democracy; in this instance, the fear of radical politics spurred by the belief that young people would be especially susceptible to such ideas. The 'Mock Trial' and 'Mock Parliament' were favoured activities in the branches. The mock trial, the NLYL were told, 'should be conducted on the lines of an actual Trial.' This activity was used to try and interest members in current events, as they were encouraged to base their trial on 'matters of topical and general interest.'[77] However, members did not always go along with this notion and mock trials merged serious court simulation with entertainment. In the Sowerby Bridge Branch of the JIL, one Mr. Longbottom was charged with 'conspiracy against the Imps', while a Miss Waddington was cheekily charged with 'being in possession of a latch key.'[78] Some branches chose to dress up, give their characters satirical names such as teacher 'Hugh Slacker' and surgeon 'Dr. Cut-'em-up', or give joke sentences such as forcing the defendant to marry one of the witnesses. These examples are also indicative of some of the gender dynamics at play within the organisation; it highlights the trend, similar to that which we saw Rover rebuke in the previous chapter, of women often finding themselves at the butt of jokes, comments, or subtle needling from male Imps.

[75] How to Conduct a Mock Election, Reprinted from *The Forward View*, November 1929, JOSEPHY 14/4.
[76] Ball, *Portrait*, p. 68-9.
[77] Suggestions for Branch Activities, JOSEPHY 14/4.
[78] Minutes of a Committee Meeting, 16 May 1928, Calderdale Archive Service, CV/7.

In addition, Sowerby Bridge regularly arranged mock parliaments whereby members would be elected to act the roles of senior positions, such as Prime Minister, Chancellor, and Speaker.[79] Participants would split into government and opposition sides and debate 'motions' brought forward by the opposition.[80] Teaching the function of Parliament was a common feature of JIL periodicals and it is interesting that it should find its way into the practical activities of the organisation. There was a fascinating trend of simulating Parliament which pre-dated the Franchise Acts. Such societies are woefully under-studied, with seemingly only a single article covering them in any great detail. Such parliaments were 'conducted by those who were not yet enfranchised' and 'followed a parliamentary form that respectfully mimicked the genuine article.'[81] Despite the cited article referring to the parliaments as a pre-universal-franchise phenomenon, they continued into the inter-war years and are represented in literature. In Norman Collins' novel, *London Belongs to Me*, some of the characters attend the South London Parliament and Debating Society. The characters in the story take their roles very seriously, eschewing traditional debating societies in favour of mock parliaments, where 'real burning questions' were settled. Members are elected to seats based on whether the political views of that member really reflected those of the constituency they were pretending to represent. Cabinet ministers, including the Prime Minister, are swapped out yearly in order to give members a chance of progressing to higher and more interesting positions. All in all, it was designed, as the characters observe, to be 'just like the real thing.'[82] Of course, we must be wary of drawing conclusions about the real world from that of fiction; however, societies such as those depicted by Collins have clear roots in British political culture which saw a great fascination at playing politics. What this implies is that far from seeking to abdicate political responsibilities to elites, people sought to become politically engaged in whatever way they could, on their own terms. The same dynamics were at play in the

[79] Committee Meeting, 5 March 1930, CV/7.
[80] *The Imp*, May 1925, p. 11.
[81] John W. Davis, 'Working Class Make-believe: The South Lambert Parliament, 1887-90', *Parliamentary History*, 12 (1993), p. 229.
[82] Norman Collins, *London Belongs to Me* (The Reprint Society, 1949), pp. 56-60.

youth organisations: for those who became invested, politics could become a way of life, forming part of their leisure time and their social circles.

As well as activities organised by individual branches, there were national events intended to train young party workers. 'Speakers' Classes' were a common feature of LoY branches, and training speakers was considered 'one of the most important functions of the LoY.'[83] For the JIL, they had their annual speaking competition. This event was for the cream of the membership, only those who were most dedicated would take part. In 1934 the East Bristol Branch were only able to find three of the four required members in order to take part, compared to West Bristol where a member who took part regularly was eligible for a special service award.[84] Beginning in 1932 and running in the first quarter of every year until the JIL was disbanded, the speaking competition was open to Imps between the ages of eighteen and thirty and became a significant annual fixture. As with most of the JIL's activities, the competition served a dual purpose: training members for party work, but also encouraging them to think more broadly about the issues of the day and to develop their ideas (although always within the confines of Conservatism). The topics which have been recorded all follow this pattern: Individualism and the Modern State, Social Services, Empire Trade, Organisation of Civil Defence, Slumps and Booms, The United States of America and World Affairs, and The Duty of a Citizen in a Democracy.[85] The competition was run in phases, with the final receiving coverage in the organisation's periodical. Initially, branches would compete within their local areas with the winner from their Division or Federation going on to the national finals which were usually held in London.[86] These were large, public events where eleven teams of finalists would deliver forty-four[87] speeches between them before a panel of four judges. Given the number of speeches delivered, we can infer

[83] *The New Nation*, October 1934, p. 119.
[84] East Bristol: General Meeting, 8 January 1934, Bristol Record Office, 38036/J/2(a); West Bristol: General Meeting, 10 February 1936, 38036/J/3(a-b).
[85] *The Imp*, April 1935, p. 5; *Torchbearer*, 1938, p. 36.
[86] *Torchbearer,* March 1938, p. 36.
[87] On one occasion, twelve delivering forty-eight.

that they were likely of no more than five minutes in length.[88] There were usually four potential topics for the speeches, which were known to the speakers in advance; but, the topic assigned to individual speakers on the day would be drawn from a hat. The result of this, to the complaint of some attendees, was that the same topic would often come out of the hat repeatedly, leading to speeches which were broadly the same.[89] As well as delivering a short speech, time was allotted to take one or two questions from the public gallery.[90]

The format of these competitions would have required participants to train and prepare so that they would be able to speak, and answer questions, on any of the assigned topics; in doing so, Imps would have been trained in political matters deemed to have been important. Praise was heaped on Imp speakers to a hyperbolic degree, but this is indicative of the way in which the competition was turned into a national event about which Imps were supposed to be enthused. The periodical treated teams as pundits treat sports teams today. In the run-up to the competition, the finalists were announced, the pedigree of each team described, and an assessment of their chances given. The defeat of a previous runner-up by a newly-formed branch to earn them a place in the final was described with some excitement by *Torchbearer*, with the new team dubbed 'giant killers.'[91] One facet of the competition included a planted heckler in the crowd whose job it was to 'not merely to find out if they knew the subject in hand but… to see whether they were able, after the interruptions, to resume the line of argument they were pursuing.'[92] A few years later, contestants in the speaking competition were required to prepare for hecklers, being told to 'conduct the proceedings as though the audience represents a not wholly favourable public meeting.'[93] The following year, entrants were

[88] At five minutes, the event would have lasted only three hours. At fifteen, eleven hours would have been needed to listen to them all.
[89] *Torchbearer,* April 1938, p. 39.
[90] *Torchbearer,* April 1938, p. 39.
[91] *Torchbearer*, March 1938, p. 36.
[92] *The Imp*, May 1935, p. 5.
[93] *Torchbearer,* April 1938, p. 48.

treated to the unexpected occurrence of a Labour official heckling from the public gallery and the speakers were praised for how well they handled him.[94]

Finally, the speaking competitions created an opportunity to interact with MPs and other senior figures in the party and organisation. Then-JIL Chairman Lord Burghley was a regular attendee at the competitions, presenting the trophy to the winner; and the judging panel comprised MPs, Lords and other dignitaries. These judges were also able to provide feedback to the speakers so that they could improve their technique. On one occasion, the speakers were fortunate enough to receive advice from Florence Horsbrugh, a high-profile Conservative MP known for her speaking ability and wit.[95] She reminded Imps of the importance of keeping their hands still while speaking; and, 'amusingly illustrated her advice that when a speaker is nervous, and particularly a woman speaker, it is essential to articulate very slowly and to keep the voice as low-pitched as possible.'[96]

The taking of questions and dealing with hecklers indicates that these competitions were designed to, as closely as possible, simulate public oratory. The focus placed on this competition, and those who partook, shows the importance which was placed on oratory by the Conservative Party. Time and time again cartoons, such as those in Figure 5.1, depict Imps as orators; periodical features such as 'Powder and Shot' provided facts to deploy in oratory; and debates and the speaking competition trained Imps to deploy these facts. 'If Mr. Chamberlain had visited the hall, I am sure he would have felt that democracy was safe in the hands of those who had spoken', one judge observed.[97]

The speaking contests also allow tantalising glimpses into the gender dynamics of the organisations. Considering the advice given about women's shrieking voices, this may make it sound as though women were deterred from participating in JIL activities; however, it was quite the opposite. If women's voices were often silenced in branch activities, the speaking contests gave them an opportunity to be heard. The number of women speakers in the 1935 competition was praised in

[94] *Torchbearer*, April 1939, p. 1.
[95] Martin Pugh, Horsbrugh, Florence Gertrude, Baroness Horsbrugh, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/33997, [accessed 18 April 2019].
[96] *The Imp*, April 1934, p. 5.
[97] *Torchbearer*, April 1939, p. 1.

reports, as was the fact that two of the teams were comprised entirely of women.[98] This was more than an isolated remark. The composition of the teams is not always recorded, but for 1938 there were 39 men and 28 women, with one team comprised entirely of women.[99] This highlights inconsistencies in women's experiences of the JIL. As we saw above, when facing comments from fellow members women often found themselves at the butt of jokes. By comparison, official JIL publications, and comments from leading party figures, went out of their way to highlight women's work and bring them into the party structure. We have seen this at play not only in the speaking competitions, but in articles discussing the 'Flapper vote', and in Rover's criticism of members who belittled women. What this suggests is a broader disconnect between party leadership and rank-and-file. While centralised attempts to recruit more women into the party structure may have been sincere, this did not always filter down to the membership who were sometimes less willing to accept women on the same terms.

Adversarial Interactions

We have seen that youth politics took on a more boisterous character than that of adult activists. Going alongside this was the adversarial tone that politics took when the organisations interacted. Many of the youth organisations were set up in direct opposition to each other, with the JIL promoted as a way to counter the perceived Communist influence on youth, and the YCL working to counter right-wing narratives of groups such as the Boy Scouts.[100] However, while they were out to defeat their opponents electorally, their aim was not to destroy them completely. In fact, just as much as they competed, young people were encouraged to work with their opponents. It is important to understand that while youth politics could be active, energetic, and even disruptive, young people were being taught that while politics was adversarial it was not hostile. This was very much democracy

[98] *The Imp*, April 1935, p. 5.
[99] *Torchbearer*, March 1938, p. 29.
[100] Stephen Heathorn and David Greenspoon, 'Organizing Youth for Partisan Politics in Britain, 1918-c.1932', *The Historian,* 68.1 (2006), p. 90.

by loser's consent. What is also clear is that while some members of the Conservative Party saw Fascism as a potential antidote to Socialism, this view was not the dominant one in the JIL.[101]

In 1927 *The Imp* paid tribute to Labour grandee John Clynes for the spirit of comradeship he inspired within the Commons. 'Parliamentary work would indeed be intolerable if there were not a real comradeship within the walls of the House of Commons.' Clynes was quoted as having said. *The Imp* then went on to describe how, even if the Commons could sometimes become rowdy, once the debates were over all inside were friends. A lack of humour and comradery between opponents 'accounts for the stupidity and the unpopularity… of men like Mr. Oswald Mosley', *The Imp* argued. Finally, it called Clynes' sentiment 'the secret which contributes to the success of our Parliamentary system.'[102] While we now know that Fascism and other forms of radical politics failed to make any electoral breakthroughs, at the time the potential for violent revolution was present. While politicians such as Mosley remained *officially* committed to reaching his goals by legal means, he called for 'nothing less than a revolution in the system of government' and warned opponents that revolutionary change did not always come peacefully.[103] With many in the Conservative Party, and press barons such as Lord Rothermere, having sympathies with Fascism, the threat was very real. The threat of radical politics also loomed large for the Labour Party who, as we know, were regularly at odds with their youth organisation over their desire to align more closely to the Communists. Even the accusation of radicalism was potentially harmful to the fledgling Labour Party, something the Conservative Party exploited by seizing on some of the more extreme statements made by party officials and members and using them to frighten the public.[104] Recognising the need to win power by legal, constitutional means the Labour Party's manifestos played down their more radical aims, its leadership distanced

[101] Martin Blinkhorn, 'Allies, Rivals or Antagonists? Fascists and Conservatives in Europe', in Martin Blinkhorn (ed.), *Fascists and Conservatives. The Radical Right and the Establishment in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Unwin Hyman, 1990), pp. 3-4; Philip Williamson, 'The Conservative Party, Fascism and Anti-Fascism 1918-1939', in Nigel Copsey and Andrezej Olechnowicz (eds.), *Varieties of Anti-Fascism in Britain in the Inter-War Period* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 79.
[102] *The Imp*, June 1927, p. 11.
[103] Quoted in Daniel Tilles, 'Bullies or Victims? A Study of British Union of Fascist Violence', *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 7.3 (2006), pp. 328-9.
[104] Ball, *Portrait*, p. 91.

itself from more radical figures, and debates over direct action dominated much of the party's discussion in the early 1920s.[105] Interestingly, despite the LoY and the YCL being characterised as more radical, in terms of their commitment to winning power by Parliamentary means they were not. On no occasion does the suggestion come from *Challenge* or *Advance* that power should be wrested forcefully from the National Government. The organisation's objectives were to be achieved by working alongside other youth organisations, public campaigning, and getting the Youth Charter passed into law through Parliament.

When the organisations did interact with one another, it was done in a way which aimed to promote good-natured competition; adversarial, but not necessarily hostile. Debates were a good way of facilitating this kind of interaction. Debates between organisations were commonplace, although the impetus often seemed to come from the LoY. One of the first actions of the Leicester LoY branch was to organise a debate with their local JIL, the Sowerby Bridge branch debated their local LoY only after being invited, and the Bexhill branch reported regularly receiving debate requests from their local LoY.[106] Similarly, the London Advisory Committee of the LoY formed their own debating team and arranged to debate with the Central Committee of the JIL.[107] The organisations also appeared to enjoy reporting on one another's activities in their periodicals. On some occasions the LoY included gentle mockery of the JIL in their papers. For example a letter written to *The Imp* was cited because they found it amusing that the Imp believed that women would be interested in 'cookery, dress, and coiffure.'[108] Also, in the regular 'Facts, Figures and Comments' feature the following observation was made:

---

[105] A selection on Labour's political thought: Mark Hayman, 'Labour and the Monarchy: Patriotism and Republicanism during the Great War', *First World War Studies*, 5.2 (2014), p. 172; Maurice Cowling, *The Impact of Labour* (Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 290-91; Matthew Worley, *Labour Inside the Gate. A History of the British Labour Party between the Wars* (IB Tauris, 2005), p. 35; Worley, *Inside the Gate*, p. 68; Andrew Thorpe, *A History of the British Labour Party.* Second Edition (Palgrave, 2001), p. 55; Jose Harris, 'Labour's Political and Social Thought', in Tanner et al. (eds.), *Labour's First Century*, p. 9.
[106] Committee Meeting, 15 February 1934, DE/8167; Committee Meeting 13 November 1929, CV/7; *Hastings and St. Leonards Observer*, 22 April 1939, p. 2.
[107] *Monthly Bulletin*, February 1930, p. 2.
[108] *New Nation,* January 1935, p. 9; The original letter: *The Imp*, December 1934, p. 8.

Young Imps' Great Thought

Lord Burghley, chairman of the Junior Imps, said recently at Exeter: -

"Socialism would never succeed because it was based on setting man against man and class against class."

This is a curious argument. Man against man is usually defined as competition, and we are frequently told that Socialism is impracticable because it is based on co-operation and would eliminate competition. Which brand of criticism are we to listen to? Our opponents cannot have it both ways.[109]

Similarly, the JIL took great pleasure in mocking the misfortunes of the LoY. One Imp's letter comments on the poor attendance of a local LoY branch[110] and after the LoY's NAC was disbanded *The Imp* reported on this 'drastic step' with apparent glee.[111] These passing references that the organisations made to one another can also be illuminating as to how the organisations drove one another to develop and change, how the action of one organisation could force a reaction from another. We will see further examples of this in the following chapter, but in this context a letter in *The Imp* on a LoY recruitment campaign is especially enlightening. The letter describes the upcoming campaign and the writer warns their fellow Imps that 'we should not just wink at this Labour Youth Campaign but should meet it by being first in the field and so stop their progress.'[112]

'Playing at Parliament': The Youth Parliament

Where the organisations' activities came closest to simulating those of the adults was through youth parliaments. The idea of a Youth Parliament was mooted several times across the organisations' periodicals, the idea being along the lines of the 'mock parliament' on a national scale.[113] Looking into

[109] *New Nation,* March 1930, p. 2.
[110] *The Imp*, November 1932, p. 5.
[111] *The Imp*, October 1936, p. 1.
[112] *The Imp*, October 1933, p. 8.
[113] Usually these were local exercises, but the later *Challenge* articles refer to 'The Youth Parliament': *Monthly Bulletin,* July 1929, p. 2; October 1929, p. 4; *Junior Imperial League Gazette*, October 1923, p. 10; *Challenge,* February 1936, p. 6; 24 February 1938, p. 11; 5 May 1938, p. 9; 21 July 1938, p. 8; 21 February 1939, p. 11; 11 February 1939, p. 12.

the minutes of the JIL's National Executive Committee, we can see the process of negotiation between the organisations while attempting to create the parliament. In 1929, the Committee chose to ignore correspondence from the LoY suggesting that a Youth Parliament be formed with the JIL, justifying their decision on the grounds that mock parliaments already took place in individual branches.[114] Then-Chairman Lord Stanley briefed that many members were simply too invested in their own local Parliaments to participate in one on a national scale.[115] The matter appeared resolved until late in 1932 when the Finance Committee received further correspondence from the LoY suggesting the formation of a Youth Parliament, which was then referred to the Executive Committee.[116] On this occasion, the decision was taken to wait and see if the Liberals got involved; if the Liberals took up the offer, then so would they. After some amount of waiting,[117] it was revealed that the NLYL had appointed a representative to discuss the Youth Parliament and thus the JIL decided to do the same.[118] Eventually representatives of the JIL, LoY and NLYL all met to discuss the formation of a Youth Parliament.[119] The *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* referred to this process in their headline as 'Playing at Parliament'.[120]

Ultimately, this Youth Parliament does not appear to have been formed. This provides an interesting case study on the limits of the party-political system for organising youth; despite multiple efforts by the parties to organise such a Parliament none of them were willing to be the first to commit. Thus, it fell to outside organisations to set them up, with the youth wings then attaching themselves. A National Parliament of Youth was later formed under the auspices of an organisation called the British Youth Peace Assembly (BYPA). Little or no research has been done on the activities or organisation of the BYPA, but in its own words it was a 'co-ordinating body' which was supported by

[114] Executive Committee Meeting, 9 October 1929, CCO 506/1/4.
[115] *Lancashire Evening Post*, 25 October 1929, p. 6.
[116] Finance Committee Meeting, 19 October 1932, CCO 506/1/4.
[117] Executive Committee Meeting, 26 January 1933, CCO 506/1/4.
[118] Executive Committee Meeting, 8 March 1933, CCO 506/1/4.
[119] Executive Committee Meeting, 8 April 1933, CCO 506/1/4.
[120] *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 17 March 1933, p. 8.

'thirty national youth organisations.'[121] The call for a youth Parliament was published in newspapers across the country. The announcement of the Parliament came alongside the BYPA's adoption of the Communist-initiated Charter of Youth, and coincided with the twenty-third anniversary of Britain's entry into the First World War to reflect the organisation's aims of promoting peace.[122] The Parliament itself was launched the following year and aimed to 'focus the attention of young people throughout the country on the duties of citizenship and the importance of their preparing themselves to be responsible citizens.'[123] It also received endorsements from numerous prominent figures such as the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Chief Rabbi, and Lord Robert Cecil of the LNU. In the first, three-day long session, in addition to the JIL, the National Union of Students, Girls' Friendly Society, University Labour Federation, Central Youth Council of the Church of England, League of Nations Union Groups, were confirmed to have taken part. 40 groups attended in total, although not all were listed in reports.[124] The Parliament was intended to simulate the real Parliament as closely as possible, with a cabinet and Speaker being elected from the members. It also had a strict age limit, with no one over the age of twenty-five being permitted to take part.[125] The Parliament had lofty aims, such as seeking to turn the Youth Charter into a bill to put before the Houses of Parliament; however, the outbreak of the Second World War put a swift end to the Youth Parliament. Still, the Parliament was able to draw together a huge number of youth organisations with focuses ranging from political, charitable, and religious.

Similarly to what we saw in the previous chapter in the case of the Youth Charter, the Youth Parliament is indicative of the seriousness with which young people's rights and opinions were being treated by politicians and other activists. Other non-political organisations also sought to create youth parliaments such as the YMCA which created a youth parliament for young boys aged under eighteen from around the world which would meet regularly to answer questions about various facets of their

[121] *Taunton Courier, and Western Advertiser*, 4 June 1938, p. 3.
[122] *The Times*, 4 August 1937, p. 9.
[123] *The Times*, 19 October 1938, p. 9.
[124] *Western Morning News*, 12 January 1939, p. 12.
[125] *Birmingham Mail*, 24 February 1939, p. 7.

lives such as whether they enjoyed school.[126] However, such parliaments differ from those organised by the political youth wings in that they are not aiming to simulate the political process, but rather to enable young people to voice their opinions on important topics. Such a parliament likely derives its name from the historical use of the term 'parliament' to mean a conference or council assembled to discuss matters of general importance, rather than from a desire to simulate the legislature.[127]

While the Youth Parliament came to an unceremonious end it was still an important landmark in the history of politicised youth. Firstly, it stands as an exemplar of the ideals on which young people were inducted into the British political system: through a respect and understanding of the rule of law and British institutions. Secondly, it indicates that efforts to involve young people in politics were sincere. Both the Parliament was a moment where young people were given genuine agency, and a say over things which affected them.

Conclusion

While there was debate throughout society as to the terms on which the new electorate were to be brought into the British political culture, there appears to have been a broad consensus on what that meant for young people. First and foremost, all political parties understood the threat that radical politics posed and believed that young people were more susceptible to revolutionary tendencies; the Conservative and Labour parties saw this in action when some of their members defected to the BUF and Communist Party respectively. Therefore it became necessary for them to instil in young people the values of the constitution and the rule of law. Even once we begin to layer the boisterous and disruptive practices of the youth organisation on top of this, this fact still remains. While it was understood and accepted that young people enjoyed energetic and disruptive displays, this was not a politics which set out to destroy their opponents or overthrow them in violent revolution. It was a form of politics which was intended to win over supporters through rational debate and well-founded

[126] *Daily Mail*, 14 June 1926, p. 9; *The Evening Telegraph and Post*, 14 June 1926, p. 2; 2 August 1926, p. 8; *Western Daily Press*, 18 July 1929, p. 4

[127] Parliament, Oxford English Dictionary, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/137992, [accessed 9 May 2019].

arguments; even when heckling, as the LoY demonstrated, it was important that the heckler know the answer to their own question rather than simply be there for the sake of disruption.

In order to train young people to think and behave in these ways, the parties sought to harness their energy by encouraging them to play at politics. Since so many of the 'mock' events appear in branch reports and minute books it appears that this messaging got through. It is also telling that, while the members were given free rein to run their activities however they wanted, we never see any examples of branches deviating from the established pattern of electing members to Great Offices of State and then using that format to debate the political issues of the day. It is rather striking how well young people appear to have taken to these types of activity which suggests that the technique of training young people in this way was effective. There were limitations to this, as we saw in the Youth Parliament, which necessitated a non-party organisation to step in to facilitate. However, this appears to have been more down to mutual mistrust between the adult parties than to young people's unwillingness to take part.

What I believe this tells us about youth politics is that young people were trying to participate in any way they could, and that sometimes they were participating in unexpected and not immediately obvious ways. Even if a member was unwilling to publicly campaign for the party, they may have still harboured an interest in politics and may have been more inclined to debate political matters amongst their friends while playing the role of their favourite politician. As the JIL's use of 'mock broadcasts' suggests, this may also have served to boost their confidence and make them more willing to engage in party work later. Participation, therefore, took many forms which reflected varying degrees of engagement. There were ways for people of all levels of interest and ability to take part, whether that was the hobbyist playing politics with their friends, or the politician-in-waiting attending debates and speaking competitions.

Chapter 6: 'Dishing up Disguised Politics': Leisure Activity, Youth Culture, and the Politicisation of Leisure

Introduction

One of the most consistent accusations levelled at the youth organisations by those who have studied them is that they were little more than social clubs, and that schisms opened up between those who joined for politics and those who joined for fun. In the case of Labour, the LoY's focus on leisure is said to have pushed some of its more radical members over to the Communists.[1] It would be, frankly, misleading to suggest that there was not some degree of truth to these suggestions: all of the youth organisations offered leisure activity to their members and there was some tension between those whose interest was more focused on politics, and those who joined mostly for leisure. It is this instance that comparisons to histories of post-war organisations become more useful, as historians have made similar observations about those groups. However, rather than proceeding to dismiss them out of hand, historians then began to consider what exactly the social dimension can tell us about the organisations' politics. Lawrence Black makes this point most clearly when he argued that 'to dismiss the Young Conservatives as *simply* social is to ignore the purpose and effect of this social dimension.'[2] Black then goes on to suggest that 'the social side of Young Conservative life should not be interpreted as anything other than integral to a well-drilled political machine.'[3] If this was the case from 1945 onwards, then the approach has its roots in the inter-war years when leisure activity was part of a coherent strategy designed to drive political participation on a range of issues. In order to adequately demonstrate the scope of this coherent political strategy this chapter will explore in detail a large number of the potential areas of politicisation which leisure offered. Only by exploring the breadth of

[1] Melanie Tebbutt, *Making Youth. A History of Youth in Modern Britain* (Palgrave, 2016), p. 92; Stephen Heathorn and David Greenspoon, 'Organising Youth for Partisan Politics in Britain, 1918-c.1932', *The Historian*, 68.1 (2006), pp. 90-1; Abrams and Little make the same observation of post-war organisations: Philip Abrams and Alan Little, 'The Young Activist in British Politics', *British Journal of Sociology*, 16.4 (1965), p. 318.
[2] Lawrence Black, 'The Lost World of Young Conservatism', *The Historical Journal,* 51.4 (2008), p. 994.
[3] Black, 'Young Conservatism', p. 1003.

the politicisation of leisure can we get a true understanding of how leisure formed an integral component of the organisations' political activities, and how politics' engagement with leisure and youth culture offered young people genuine agency in their activities. In addition, the sheer number of political causes connected to leisure provide an indication of the extent of the interests of these organisations and demonstrate that while their primary purpose was to recruit party workers this was not the sum total of their activities.

The very same factors which facilitated the growth of partisan youth organisations in the inter-war years also facilitated a growth in young people's commercial leisure. Relatively new activities such as the dancehall, cinema, and public radio listening were very popular with young people. Activities with a longer history such as sports, hiking and rambling, and camping also saw a surge in popularity. In addition, there was an explosion of cheap commercial magazines on which young people could spend their extra income.[4] A rich historiography has arisen around youth: challenging the assumption that adolescence as its own unique stage of life with a separate culture, identity, and set of interests was an exclusively post-Second World War invention; suggesting instead that it was a product of the inter-war years.[5] Organised political youth organisations, therefore, were having to compete for young people's free time with an expanding leisure industry. David Fowler has identified this trend occurring in the Manchester Lads' Clubs which had a problem with casual members: members who would sign up for the club but then never show up for meetings, known as the 'casual member'.[6] This is a point reiterated by Brad Beaven who notes that organisations designed for citizenship training of young

[4] Penny Tinkler, *Constructing Girlhood. Popular Magazines for Girls Growing up in England 1920-1950* (Taylor and Francis, 1995); Charles Ferrel and Anna Jackson, *Juvenile Literature and British Society, 1850-1950, The Age of Adolescence* (Routledge, 2010); Kathryn Castle, *Britannia's Children. Reading Colonialism through Children's Books and Magazines* (Manchester University Press, 1996); Kelly Boyd, *Manliness and the Boys' Story Paper in Britain. A Cultural History, 1855-1940* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Jeffrey Richards (ed.), *Imperialism and Juvenile Literature* (Manchester University Press, 1989).
[5] David Fowler, *The First Teenagers: The Lifestyle of Young Wage-Earners in Inter-War Britain* (The Woburn Press, 1995); David Fowler, *Youth Culture in Modern Britain* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); James Nott, *Going to the Palais: A Social and Cultural History of Dancing and Dance Halls in Britain, 1918-1960* (Oxford University Press, 2015); Melanie Tebbutt, *Being Boys: Youth, Leisure and Identity in the Inter-War Years* (Manchester University Press, 2012); Tebbutt, *Making Youth*; Selina Todd, 'Flappers and Fancy Lads: Youth and Youth Culture in Interwar Britain', *History Compass*, 4.4 (2006), pp. 715-730.
[6] Fowler, *Teenagers,* p. 139.

people faced an 'uphill battle' for members,[7] and by Melanie Tebbutt who points to the declining popularity of the Boy Scouts and Boys' Brigade brought about by the cinema and dancehall.[8] However, leisure was not entirely bad news for youth organisations as it could also provide an opportunity to attract more members and an opportunity, as a note by NLYL President Frances Josephy put it, for 'dishing up disguised politics.'[9]

Although John Springhall suggests that, in many cases, youth groups served as a way for the concerned middle class to attract young people *away* from new forms of entertainment this is not necessarily reflected in the political youth wings active between the wars.[10] In fact, across British society there was a tendency for leisure activity and political activity to overlap in a phenomenon which had been occurring as early as the 1860s amongst the Victorian middle classes.[11] Best described as the politicisation of leisure, the phenomenon has most commonly been observed in the left-wing parties.[12] Historians have examined how leisure could be used to make a direct political statement; for example, Stephen Jones argues that in the CPGB a 'coherent ideological and political approach to sport can be observed.'[13] Outside of party politics, too, it was common for leisure to be politicised. For instance it has long been accepted that certain sporting activities were predominantly the domain of certain classes. There were several reasons why this would be the case: that the activity carried social or cultural connotations; that the activity was overtly class-segregated by official bodies; or that the activity may have been some way prohibitive, either due to the cost of the activity or that one's environment lacked the conditions or facilities for a specific activity. Ross McKibbin makes these

[7] Brad Beaven, *Leisure, Citizenship and Working-Class men in Britain, 1850-1945* (Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 166.
[8] Tebbutt, *Being Boys*, p. 72.
[9] NLYL Memo, LSE Archives, JOSEPHY 14/1.
[10] John Springhall, *Coming of Age: Adolescence in Britain 1860-1960* (Gill and Macmillan Ltd., 1986), p. 151.
[11] Peter Cecil Bailey, '"Rational Recreation": The Social Control of Leisure and Popular Culture in Victorian England, 1830-1885', unpublished PhD thesis, The University of British Columbia, 1974, p. 110.
[12] John Walton, 'The Northern Rambler: Recreational Walking and Popular Politics of Industrial England, from Peterloo to the 1930s', *Labour History Review*, 78.3 (2013), pp. 243-268; Daryl Lee Worthy, 'Partisan Players: Sport, Working-Class Culture, and the Labour Movement in South Wales 1920-1939', *Labour History*, 55.5 (2014), pp. 580-593; David Dee, ''Wandering Jews'? British Jewry, Outdoor Recreation and the Far-Left, 1900-1939', *Labour History*, 55.5 (2014), pp. 563-579; Beaven, *Leisure*; Stephen Jones, *Sport, Politics and the Working Class* (Manchester University Press, 1988).
[13] Jones, *Sport,* p. 78.

observations and discusses how, generally, cricket was considered a national sport whereas football saw a fairly uneven distribution in popularity.[14] McKibbin's focus is much more on class-identity politics than party politics, highlighted in his description of 'the rush for rugby' as 'an overt statement of deliberate class-differentiation and part of a much wider social phenomenon.'[15] McKibbin also suggests, though this chapter will call this point into question, that working-class hobbies became far more individualistic during the inter-war years.[16] Although not a strong focus of this chapter, leisure has also been connected to identity formation, as David Dee describes how young Jews disillusioned with the lifestyle of their parents sought a 'space of their own' to carve out their own identity through outdoor activity associated with the CCC.[17]

One thing all these works have in common is that they focus predominantly on adult leisure. This wide-ranging chapter will investigate the politicisation of leisure through the lens of the political youth organisations and in doing so will explore how the political parties utilised the emerging youth culture to combat potential apathy and the casual member. Each section will explore a different area of politics and examine what this can tell us about how the organisations utilised leisure to encourage young people to engage with these issues. On a deeper level than this, however, it will demonstrate that through leisure politics became a lifestyle for members and that the vast range of politics touched upon by leisure suggests that these were not narrow, or single-issue organisations. In addition to this, the freedom given to members to decide to what extent they engaged in any of these political areas indicates that members were offered a high degree of agency in their activities.

The first section will explore how leisure was used for its own sake to draw in and retain members, but also demonstrate that this leisure was not a distraction from politics but rather a gateway into deeper political involvement. Section two will demonstrate this idea in action, discussing the politics of the outdoors. It will touch on issues of national identity, the rural versus the urban, and

[14] Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures, England 1918-1951* (Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 332-340.
[15] McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures,* p. 351.
[16] Ross McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class. Social Relations in Britain 1880-1950* (Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 163.
[17] David Dee, 'Jews?', p. 564.

of countryside access versus preservation. Section three will investigate the politics of health, focusing on the physical training trend and demonstrating how attitudes towards physical fitness varied dramatically across the political spectrum despite the organisations partaking in the same activities. The fourth section deals with the politics of the community. It will explore the ways in which a spirit of community was developed in the youth organisations via leisure activities and how this linked closely with the politics of health. This section will also examine leisure and class, using the organisations' leisure activity to explore the class makeup of their membership. Section five will investigate the politics of the personal. It will also expand on themes from the first chapter by exploring the importance placed on the potential for members to meet romantic partners through the organisations, beginning to turn the organisations into a form of family which members need never look beyond. The final section will explore the crossover between the political and commercial sphere. It will investigate the ways in which the organisations' periodicals were able to mimic the content of commercial periodicals, demonstrating how the political and commercial spheres were overlapping; as young people were getting used to more choice in their lives, politics needed to adapt to compete with this choice.

Sweetening the Pill

Leisure activity could be a powerful recruiting tool for the parties, and the Liberals recognised this. When advertising a Liberal drama group, *The Forward View* advised that it was 'a scheme which will attract many voters who would otherwise remain outside the political world.'[18] The Conservatives made a similar observation: that while some could be attracted to the organisation by politics alone 'there will remain others, however, with no distinct political inclinations, to reach whom different lines of approach would be necessary.'[19] Therein lies the purpose of these sweetener activities: it was better to have people inside the tent and engaged with leisure, which could then be politicised, than outside

[18] *The Forward View*, January 1930, p. 12.
[19] Robert Topping to the Frazer Committee, 1937, Conservative Party Archive, CCO 506/4/1.

and not engaging with politics at all. Therefore, even when leisure activity within the organisations did not have an explicit political aim, it still had an indirect one: they served to sweeten the pill of belonging to a political youth wing, keep the membership of the branch active, and the practical aim of funding individual branches. Looking through the reports of JIL branches published in *The Imp*, for example, reveals that most branches had an active social life. However, both the reports and local minute books reveal the tendency to combine social evenings with political talks or activities. For instance, one JIL branch conducted 'tactful and discreet canvassing' during a dance.[20] It did not matter *how* members were drawn into the organisations, but once they were there the adults could make sure they received the political education it was believed they needed.

All three of the major parties' youth organisations acknowledged the need to maintain a good balance of social and political activities in order to maintain a healthy branch membership. Both the 1920s and 1930s editions of the JIL's Handbook for Organisers and Workers indicate the importance of having a healthy social life in a branch, each urging organisers to 'draw out and utilise the full talent of existing members' in order to do so.[21] The LoY had the importance of leisure activities enshrined right from their foundation. The reports which recommended the formation of the LoY recommended that 'the work of the Young People's Sections should be mainly recreational and educational and care should be taken not to over-emphasize their political side.' It also suggested that 'opportunity should be found for sports, music, dramatic societies and social intercourse.'[22] This clause was adopted almost verbatim in the LoY's official objects[23] and in their Handbook it was stated that for a branch to be successful 'the arrangement of regular and various activity of colour and interesting character' was essential and that 'The recreational and social side is invaluable in establishing contact with many young people who might not otherwise be reached by a political party.'[24] The NLYL, too, as we have

[20] *The Imp*, August 1925, p. 11.
[21] Junior Imperial and Constitutional League Handbook for Organisers and Workers, c.1920-30, p. 31, CCO 506/5/2; c.1930-1933, p. 35, CCO 506/5/5.
[22] Organisation of Youth*,* August 1924, People's History Museum, LP/JSM/YO/3.
[23] *Monthly Bulletin,* February 1931, p. 2.
[24] Youth for Socialism! Handbook of the Organisation of the Labour Party League of Youth, pp. 7-8, CP/CENT/YOUTH/3/1.

seen, acknowledged this need and one of the objectives of the organisation's Charter for the Under-Thirties was to 'make INCREASED LEISURE a source of greater national well-being…'[25] That all three of the political parties adopted measures such as these represents an overt acknowledgement that without engaging with youth leisure culture they would be unable to succeed, meaning that sweetener activities are just as important for our understanding of the organisations as those which were directly politicised.

Pure Leisure

The necessity for balance between social and political activities was recognised by members, and could sometimes be a source of tension. One Imp wrote to *The Imp* to warn that branches were 'freezing out' those who do not wish to make politics 'an absorbing hobby' while another wrote to disparage 'intellectual snobs… who profess to sneer at dances and other social functions.'[26] While such social functions could, and often did, have an overtly political dimension, their ability to draw in members and maintain active branches was just as important.

The cinema was one such activity, though it needed to be carefully navigated by political parties due to the controversy surrounding it as a new form of leisure. The cinema was part of inter-war courting, especially amongst the working class, where some would go to the cinema not primarily to watch films but to meet other young people.[27] Cinema's detractors believed that that it was having a negative influence on people's values, how they behaved, and even how they spoke when they were exposed to the violent plots and the glamorous American movie stars.[28] One interview conducted by Stephen Humphries highlights the sexualised element of the cinema with one female respondent describing getting boys to pay for them to go to the cinema and in return 'We'd give 'em a kiss an' let

[25] Liberal Charter for the Under-Thirties, JOSEPHY 14/4.
[26] *The Imp*, June 1934, p. 5; March 1933, p. 4.
[27] Beaven, *Leisure*, p. 193-4.
[28] Fowler, *Teenagers*, p. 106; Springhall, *Coming of Age*, p. 137; David Fowler, 'Teenage Consumers? Young Wage Earners and Leisure in Manchester, 1919-1939', in Andrew Davies and Steven Fielding (eds.), *Workers' Worlds. Cultures and Communities in Manchester and Salford, 1880-1939* (Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 138; Tebbut, *Making Youth*, p. 119; Beaven, *Leisure*, p. 189.

'em do a bit of smooching.'[29] As well as the sexualised element, moral panic surrounding cinema focused on the American influence and the general corruption of the moral fibre of the younger generation. Other critics, for example *The Times* and those who subscribed to more traditional cultural norms, feared that both the cinema and then dancehall would 'effeminize' boys and that they were 'soft' activities.[30] The fact that courting was so often combined with these new forms of leisure activities gave them an added allure over politics which the organisations would have to overcome. With this in mind we might expect to see the youth organisations avoid the cinema for fears of attracting controversy, or perhaps to attack it, and to some extent this did occur. The cinema occasionally came under fire from LoY members. One contributor to *New Nation* wrote of the cinema that 'All that is potential in it for the enrichment of the race was strangled at birth and so it gives us a grotesquely childish phantasy of sex, crime and high society, and this is supposed to pass as a reflection of life.'[31] When writing about street-corner oratory one writer blamed new forms of leisure for its decline: 'To whom will he speak to on his street corners? Keir Hardie, Tom Mann, and the rest of their brave comrades did not have to compete with the cinema, the greyhound tracks, and the radio…'[32]

Despite these criticisms, though, cinema was widely used as a recruiting tool by the organisations. Later in its life, *Challenge* began to host classified adverts from branches where they could publicise their activities; these were split into groups based on what activity was on offer. A common section was 'Film Shows' accompanied by a little image of a projector. In this section branches would invite any *Challenge* reader to attend their film screening.[33] On several occasions, *Challenge* carried reviews of whatever was popular in the cinema. Once it was a Charlie Chaplin film, another time it was Bible-based film *The Green Pastures*.[34] It also featured references to the films *Something to Sing About*, *The Stuff of Heroes*, three Spanish films, and even a breakdown of the best

[29] Stephen Humphries, *Hooligans or Rebels? An Oral History of Working-Class Childhood and Youth 1889-1939* (Basil Blackwell, 1981), p. 140.
[30] Tebbutt, *Being Boys*, p. 160; Beaven, *Leisure,* p. 158.
[31] *New Nation,* April 1933, p. 27.
[32] *New Nation,* November 1935, p. 107.
[33] *Challenge,* 11 February 1939, p. 10; 18 February 1939, p. 10; 25 February 1939, p. 6; 1 April 1939, p. 6.
[34] *Challenge,* March 1936, p. 3; December 1936, p. 11.

and worst films of 1938.[35] The JIL made use of the cinema both as a way of appealing to members and as a way to advertise to them. When discussing how to advertise your branch, the JIL's handbook states that 'The publicity that can be afforded to the League by the local cinema must not be overlooked.'[36] The JIL were encouraged to take advantage of the popularity of the cinema and hold a 'League night' at their local cinemas, encouraging the cinemas to show JIL films.[37] These films could be ones provided by the national party or in some cases Imps created their own propaganda films.[38] Here, we see the JIL using cinema in a broadly similar way to their adult party which suggests a unified propaganda strategy throughout all wings of the party.[39]

As well as being a recruiting tool, leisure activities were used to sustain branches either financially, via ticket sales, or socially, by keeping branches active. The LoY indicate the importance of hiking and rambling as 'a means of keeping members interested and entertained.'[40] For the JIL, too, rambling was used as a way to keep branches together through social activity, for example the Anfield branch found that 'rambling or hiking, tennis and swimming were most in demand.'[41] Dancing was a core aspect of inter-war youth culture and also featured prominently in the leisure lives of the partisan youth organisations. James Nott argues that the dance and dance hall were instrumental in creating peer-group specific identities which assisted in the development of a youth culture separate from that of their elders,[42] thus dancing occupied a significant place in youth culture. Similarly, dancing was used to create socially-cohesive branches. By attempting to engage with this culture it would have been another way for the organisations to develop their own culture and identity and thus capture and retain members. The LoY recognised the value of the dance as a way to bring in both members and

[35] *Challenge,* 24 February 1938, p. 1; 4 February 1939, p. 10; 5 May 1938, p. 10; 24 December 1938, p. 14.
[36] Handbook for Organisers and Workers, c. 1930-1933, p. 43, CCO 506/5/5.
[37] Heathorn and Greenspoon, 'Organizing Youth', p. 100.
[38] *The Imp*, October 1932, p. 5.
[39] T.J. Hollins, 'The Conservative Party and film propaganda', *English Historical Review*, Vol. 99 (1981), pp. 359-369; Luke McKernan (ed.)*, Yesterday's News the British Cinema Newsreel Reader* (British Universities Film and Video Council, 2002); Nicholas Pronay, and D.W. Spring (eds.)*, Propaganda, Politics and film, 1918-45* (Macmillan Press, 1982); Paul Smith (ed.), *The Historian and Film* (Cambridge University Press, 1976).
[40] *Monthly Bulletin,* September 1929, p. 3.
[41] *Torchbearer,* May 1938, p. 53.
[42] Nott, *Dance Halls,* p. 149.

revenue with Maurice Webb[43] writing that 'dances are probably still the most attractive social event for our members, and can, if properly handled, be a good source of revenue.'[44] The idea that dances can serve the movement by raising funds was later underscored by the LoY's LAC hosting a dance to raise funds for the London branches, and in a branch report which remarked how dances had been 'financially successful' and had worked to keep the branch together in the winter.[45]

Keeping branches together under certain seasonal conditions was an attractive idea in the organisations. Hiking, rambling and other outdoor activities played a key role in this. One article in *The Imp* warned that in the summertime 'indoor gatherings will naturally lose their attraction' [46] and suggested holding outdoor meetings; another article in *Torchbearer* was dedicated entirely to keeping the branch together in the summer. It suggested swimming, tennis and rambling.[47] These quotes are suggestive that the leisure activity was carefully planned and coordinated in order to maximise its draw to members; there was a strategy behind their leisure. The NLYL also demonstrated explicit strategy in how they organised their leisure. A document for those trying to maintain a branch advised that:

> If you are having difficulty in keeping your members interested in discussions on serious politics, try to arrange a particularly lively programme for part of the session with an occasional evening of progressive games, whist drives, socials and dances.
>
> If you run a small concert party, dramatic club, or a physical training class you will probably attract some new members. A competition for enrolling new members is a good device for increasing your numbers.[48]

This underscores the importance of social activity for keeping young people engaged with the organisations. Officially-endorsed and recommended social activities for NLYL branches included an

[43] At the time of this article, Webb was Chairman of the NAC and would later go on to become National Organiser of the LoY making him Labour's youngest agent.
[44] *Monthly Bulletin,* September 1929, p. 3.
[45] *Monthly Bulletin*, February 1930, p. 3; April 1931, p. 4.
[46] *The Imp*, May 1935, p. 2.
[47] *Torchbearer,* May 1937, p. 56.
[48] Suggestions for Branch Activities, JOSEPHY, 14/4.

object-remembering game; Chinese Whispers, though here called 'Russian Scandal'; 'sense test' games, involving eating an unknown substance and guessing what it was; and many others.[49] All these activities, even though not directly politicised, are reflective of the ways in which leisure activity and youth culture was harnessed for the benefits of the organisations themselves. They served as a draw to convince members to join, and then to keep them invested once they had done. These activities also provided structure and support to the organisations, giving them activities to look forward to throughout the year and topping up branch funding.

Gateway into Politics

Where leisure went beyond a sweetener, it became a tool to facilitate political campaigning. This meant making leisure into a gateway to political activity by encouraging members to think about politics during their leisure time, either consciously or unconsciously. Secondly, the leisure activity could itself be the political activity and it is in activities falling into this category where we mostly clearly see the politicisation of leisure in action. As Dee's work with the Jewish labour movement shows, many young Jews initially became involved with cycling simply for the love of outdoor activities before gradually becoming more involved in political campaigning facilitated by cycling.[50] The same principle applies to the youth organisations. Much of the LoY's political cycling activity was conducted in conjunction with the CCC: *The New Nation* contains no shortage of examples of LoY members partaking in Clarion-linked political activities.[51] These kinds of activities not only helped retain members but also to recruit new ones as LoY members would often conduct recruitment drives alongside the CCC. This also helped them to recruit members in areas which were not typically Labour-supporting. They mainly conducted these activities in the countryside where Andrew Thorpe describes support for Labour as 'pitifully weak',[52] and in areas such as Isle of Ely and North Bucks which were

[49] Suggestions for Games etc., for socials, JOSEPHY 14/4.
[50] Dee, 'Jews?', p. 569.
[51] *The New Nation*, April 1933, p. 30; September 1933, p. 10; June 1934, p. 71; August 1934, p. 95; September 1934, p. 106; November 1934, p. 125.
[52] Andrew Thorpe, *A History of the British Labour Party* (Palgrave, 2001), p. 45.

Liberal and Conservative strongholds respectively.[53] Combining political activity with cycling would have also been one way to retain members: if a young person wanted to cycle then they could do so with the LoY and take part in political campaigning at the same time. The examples used so far make it sound as though cycling was the only method of achieving these aims, but cinema was used by the YCL in the same way. The YCL may have used films as social activities, but it did not make them passive consumers of the medium. Many of the films discussed had propaganda messages. The films were being used as a way to push a political agenda through young people's leisure time. The Chaplin film received high praise from *Challenge* for the negative reaction it provoked from Hitler and another film review, '*The Citadel*', dealt with a young doctor who dedicated his life to helping poor miners.[54] It was these types of activities which formed the cornerstone of the organisations' leisure strategy. Once they had attracted people into their ranks with leisure activity they could then be exposed to politics.

Politics of the Outdoors

The politics of the outdoors was an especially prevalent facet of youth organisations both political and apolitical.[55] Activities such as cycling, rambling, and camping offered opportunities for young people to explore issues such as countryside access versus preservation, and the effects of industrialisation, and can provide a window into how these activities reflect the class composition and attitudes within the organisations. The outdoors and the countryside have also been closely associated with good citizenship, and Sian Edwards argues that by encouraging their members to explore the landscape, they were 'responding to, and formed part of, a prominent national discourse.'[56] Outdoor activities, therefore, provided a gateway through which young people could participate in debates which had national prominence.

[53] *The New Nation,* June 1934, p. 71.
[54] *Challenge,* 28 January 1939, p. 10.
[55] Sian Edwards, *Youth Movements, Citizenship and the English Countryside: Creating Good Citizens, 1930-1960* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p. 45.
[56] Edwards, *Youth Movements,* p. 45-6.

Typically, preservation has been associated with the right in Britain, with organisations like the National Trust attracting more conservative board members.[57] By contrast countryside access was more associated with the left, with movements such as the Clarion Scouts organising numerous mass trespasses in the 1930s,[58] but showing less interest in preservation. In addition, working-class interest in countryside access was increased by the economic circumstances of the 1930s, when those who were made unemployed during the depression needed cheaper forms of leisure activity.[59] More recently, Paul Readman has complicated this picture, arguing that even amongst those who supported greater countryside access there was a desire to preserve the scenic value, while those whose primary goal was preservation still believed in the importance of allowing access.[60] Readman also points out the importance of the landscape in constructing national identity and how the landscape attained its value by association with historical figures or objects.[61]

It is into Readman's more complicated picture that the youth organisations fitted: rather than being interested in one facet of outdoor politics, they were connected to a whole range of political debates. Figure 6.1 provides an excellent example of this, whereby the YCL demonstrate their ability to use leisure to link two seemingly unrelated political causes. The image, taken from the cover of *Challenge*, depicts a large girl in hiking apparel kicking over a small tank being driven by a surprised Stanley Baldwin.[62] The accompanying text discusses two themes: access to private areas of the Peak

[57] Jeremy Burchardt, *Paradise Lost. Rural Idyll and Social Change since 1800* (I.B. Tauris, 2002), p. 103.
[58] David Prynn, 'The Clarion Clubs, Rambling and the Holiday Associations in Britain since the 1890s', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 11, (1976), p. 70.
[59] David Prynn, 'The Woodcraft Folk and the Labour Movement 1925-70', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 18.1 (1983), p. 70.
[60] Paul Readman, 'Preserving the English Landscape, c.1870-1914', *Cultural and Social History*, 5.2 (2008), pp. 197-218.
[61] Readman, 'English Landscape', p. 203.
[62] *Challenge,* May 1936, p. 1.

CHALLENGE

MAY 1936. Vol. 2, No. 5 — THE PAPER FOR BRITAIN'S YOUTH. — ONE PENNY

It was great to be alive at such moments writes P. J. POOLE in an account of a midnight walk on

FORBIDDEN TERRITORY

in the beautiful Peak District

IT was a cold winter's evening in early February when we left the inn at Crowden. The moon was almost full, but dark masses of clouds scurrying across the sky made visibility poor and weather uncertain. We swung along the road which divides the lake, the echo of boots and nails on the hard surface making the stillness of the night all the more acute. Soon we reached our first tough climb, and while other folks were settling down to rest, we started clambering up the rocks of Wild Boar Clough.

Thoroughly warmed up by now, we crossed the wide plateau to Bleaklow Head and stopped to quench our thirst from the flask and admire the beauty of the rolling moors at night. By now the last of the ominous clouds had disappeared, leaving a wonderful star-sprinkled sky with a moon which silhouetted the folds of the hills and made the winding river in the distant valley look like some silvery snake.

Yes, it was great to be alive at such moments. You could feel a sense of superiority over the guys who owned the moors. Goodness knows who they were and where they were—and who cared, anyway?

And yet somehow it all seemed positively ridiculous as we gazed at the beauty of the scene: all these moors were private—entirely private—37 square miles and not a single public footpath. Probably one man owned the whole lot and could tell ten million others to keep off.

One soon gets cold on a winter's night on Bleaklow, so away we went—clambering over goughs, wading streams, striding through the heather to the peak called White Stones.

How weird it looked in the moonlight! Vast lumps of rock carved by the elements into all sorts of shapes. Look at that one! Eight feet high and like some giant mushroom. Well, it had taken old Mother Nature some thousands of years to fashion that monstrosity and she had certainly taken her time about it!

Off again; feeling a little weary now, we made our way to the old shooting cabin that stood so solitary on the landscape over the River Derwent. Here we were glad to rest, and in less than five minutes sleeping bags were unrolled and we had dropped off into a deep sleep.

Early morn—a wash in a stream—and in the fresh, invigorating air we picked our way downstream, jumping from bank to bank, until at last we met the path. Soon the path became a track, the track a road, and whilst the world was going about its morning tasks we entered Derwent.

Relaxing in an easy chair before the blazing fire, we talked over our night's adventure. Yes, the Peak District is beautiful, we all agreed; Bleaklow one of the best. Pity we have to trespass to see its beauty and admire its peculiar stones.

BRITAIN'S GREEN AND PLEASANT LANDS ARE MENACED.

Menaced by British war-preparers.

The war ministry is taking control of large stretches of the country.

Soon, unless the Government is checked, our land will be plunged in war and its sons' lives spent while poison gas destroys our homes.

The Government must be stopped.

Britain's Youth on June 7 will show their desire for Peace.

(See page 5.)

Defend our land against the war policy of the National Govt.

Buchan.

Figure 6.1 – *Challenge,* May 1936, p. 1.

District, and government war preparations taking control of stretches of land in the country. The article begins with a detailed account of a hike before describing the experience of encountering an area where access was prohibited. What this article does is demonstrate how leisure was used as a facilitator to talk about a range of political issues: the full article deals with issues of countryside access, and with fears of increasing militarisation which, as we saw in Chapter 4, was an especially emotive issue for young people. The issue of countryside access was deeply rooted in left-wing politics, Labour MP Ellen Wilkinson had supported bills appealing for moorland access and in 1929 Ramsay MacDonald set up the National Parks Committee,[63] and the YCL were especially active in this area. The YCL was involved in the most famous of such campaigns: the Kinder Scout Trespass. The Trespass has taken on something of a legendary status in rambling circles but at the time was largely seen as a futile exercise which was actually damaging to the cause of countryside access.[64] The organiser of the Trespass, Benny Rothman, had himself been a member of the YCL and secretary of the British Workers' Sports Federation (BWSF).[65]

Coming alongside this is the implication that the YCL were just as interested in countryside preservation as they were in access: an implicit concern with the military's use of the countryside is that the beautiful vistas the article describes will be damaged or destroyed. The theme of preservation is also present in the YCL's treatment of cycling. As we know, cycling was another activity with deep roots in left-wing politics, and *Challenge* featured the activity so prominently that it required a separate 'cycling editor', a man named Ted Ward. In some of his articles he successfully drew a link between cycling, countryside preservation, and the importance of the countryside to British national identity. For Ward, the countryside served as an escape from the drudgery of urban life. He wrote of the Forest of Dean that 'Although this is a mining district the scars of industrialism are not obvious and

[63] Harvey Taylor, *A Claim on the Countryside. A History of the British Outdoor Movement* (Keele University Press, 1997), pp. 230 & 245.
[64] David Hey, 'Kinder Scout and the Legend of the Mass Trespass', *Agricultural History Review,* 59.2 (2011), p. 119.
[65] Hey, 'Kinder Scout', p. 208.

only the very observant can see them at all.'[66] Escaping the urban landscape was to be closer to the true Britain: Ward wrote that 'To know Britain is to learn something of that story, of the hopes and endeavours of generations of the common people,' and that 'Britain means the land and the people. They have grown up together, and the contours of one are inextricably interwoven in the life of the other.' Here Ward draws together the themes of preservation and access, suggesting that it was important that the countryside be preserved for future generations to access.

Drawing this link between preservation and access meant that the YCL was unexpectedly close to the JIL on this issue. We have already seen the importance of inheritance in Conservative and JIL rhetoric, and on the issue of countryside access it was overt. The *Torchbearer* articles on country homes which we saw in Chapter 4 provide excellent examples of Readman's suggestion that the countryside derived its value from associations with historical individuals.[67] As we recall from the same chapter, Baldwin is well known for making allusions to the English landscape in his speeches. While this is often used to associate Baldwin with romanticised view of the English countryside, bringing what we have learned about the JIL into this picture can complicate it somewhat. As well as romanticising the countryside, Baldwin also added that the countryside 'ought to be the inheritance of every child born into this country.'[68] Implicit in this statement is that the countryside should be preserved so that it could be passed down to future generations, so that they would be able to access it. Indeed, ensuring countryside access for all was on the JIL's agenda, and in a way which can give us further hints of the class dynamics at play in leisure. While camping was not as popular in the JIL as in the LoY, Executive Committee minutes suggest that profit was not the primary motive for this activity.[69] Instead of trying to engage the maximum possible number of participants, JIL camping was targeted for political purposes. A free holiday camp was hosted specifically aimed at the unemployed working class which aimed to 'brighten the lot of members who still experience the hardships of

[66] *Challenge*, 14 April 1938, p. 6.
[67] *Torchbearer,* January 1937, p. 3; February 1937, p. 15; March 1937, p. 27.
[68] Stanley Baldwin, *On England and other Addresses* (Philip Allan & Co. Ltd., 1926), pp. 7-8.
[69] Executive Committee Minutes, 11 January 1928, CCO 506/1/3; Finance Committee Minutes, 20 September 1935, CCO 506/1/5.

prolonged unemployment.' This is reflective of pre-existing assumptions of which activities would be enjoyed by whom. Certainly camping, and the outdoors more broadly, had been rendered more accessible to those in employment through better wages, cheap rail fares, and paid holidays.[70] The JIL aimed to 'demonstrate that the Junior Imperial League can disinterestedly contribute to the solution of modern problems.'[71] However, in reality it is impossible to divorce this action from politics when considered in the context of the above discussion. As well as demonstrating class assumptions, the camp implicitly takes a stand in the debates surrounding the rural versus urban landscape by suggesting that a break need be taken from urban life. At the same time it suggests a paternalistic attitude towards the working-class that the Conservative Party decided to step in to provide this much-needed break and simultaneously provided the propaganda value of enabling the party to claim to be a compassionate one for the entire nation.

Politics of Health

The organisations' leisure activities were frequently politicised to focus on health, primarily via a focus on physical activity. This reflected broader trends across inter-war Britain with, from 1918 onwards, the government beginning to develop a special interest in the physical condition of its citizens. Across the political spectrum there was growing interest in physical training and physical activity, especially after the passing of the Physical Training and Recreation Bill in 1937, which was 'An Act to provide for the development of facilities for, and the encouragement of, physical training and recreation, and to facilitate the establishment of centres for social activities'.[72] Much of the government's early activity in this regard was focused on young people as compulsory medical checks were introduced for school children as part of the 1907 Education Act. The interest in physical fitness then began to expand beyond the school sphere partly due to the work of George Newman in his role as Chief Medical Officer

[70] Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Managing the Body: Beauty, Health and Fitness in Britain 1880-1939* (Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 294-303; Cunningham *Leisure,* p. 111-12.
[71] *Torchbearer,* October 1937, p. 118.
[72] Physical Training and Recreation Act 1937, Introduction, https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Edw8and1Geo6/1/46/introduction, [accessed 18 April 2018].

of Health.[73] Support for the government's physical training programme varied across the political spectrum. The JIL wholeheartedly embraced the idea of physical training both for the betterment of the individual, in terms of improving one's own health, and for the nation, with accusations of militarism often following the physical training craze. On the other hand while the left-wing organisations actively opposed any hint of militarism, they did not oppose physical training *per se*. Instead it was used, especially in the case of the YCL, to push for greater rights for young workers, more free time, and better sports facilities to use in that free time. This demonstrates that physical training went beyond nations or national defence, though it remained so for the Conservatives, and that it also became associated with personal health and individual self-fulfilment.

Health and Militarism

The militaristic tone of physical training was often quite publicly debated; several letters on the topic appeared in *The Times* on the issue with one writer accusing physical training of being a 'camouflaged military scheme.'[74] The thinking went that should there be a war it would be young people who would be pressed to serve, a view shared by the YCL and LoY, thus the government's involvement in providing physical training for its citizens gave the appearance of attempting to train a potential army. These concerns were certainly not without merit: as the state began to take more of an interest in the health of its citizens, young people often found themselves at the forefront of these campaigns.

There was a strong connection between physical training and patriotism towards the state and the monarchy. Following the Physical Training and Recreation Bill, the state sponsorship of physical training was at its most overt. George VI became closely involved in the running of camps aimed at improving the physical fitness of young boys from all sections of society, and Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska argues that he did this as more than just a figurehead and that he took a genuine interest

[73] Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Managing the Body*, pp. 159-160.
[74] *The Times*, 30 November 1934, p. 12.

in spearheading the movement.[75] The first Festival of Youth, held in July 1937 at Wembley in conjunction with the George V Jubilee Trust,[76] carried undertones of militarism. Although newspapers denied militarism,[77] broadcasted images show unmistakable hallmarks. Footage from *British Pathé* shows the 11,000 participants stood surrounding a thirty-foot tall statue of a boy carrying a torch aloft, the statue is called 'The Figure of Youth.' The young people marched past the King in groups representing their respective organisations and then took part in a five-hour regimented display of training drills.[78] It is difficult to watch this footage and not to see parallels with fascist imagery and similar events in Nazi Germany; in fact *Pathé* footage of German youth from the same year shows similar footage of children taking part in mass fitness displays while the narrator describes how 'the [German] State regards physical training as their number one duty.'[79]

Although none of the political youth organisations appear in the list of attendees for the Festival of Youth,[80] physical training still made up an important part of their activities. They all practised physical training, though did so in different ways. In the case of the JIL the militaristic, bordering on nationalistic, influence was front and centre. *Torchbearer* carried on its cover a similar character to the 'Figure of Youth' seen at the Festival of Youth: a muscular young man holding aloft a torch. This 'Figure of Youth' was also the symbol of the King George V Jubilee Trust which further cements the connections between the JIL, the monarchy and nationalism, and physical training; further highlighting that their physical recreation carried an inherent political component. So overt was the militarism that in some areas the JIL actually had former military personnel working with them. Their annual camp had a 'Commandant' appointed to run the camp, the post being filled by a

[75] Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Keep Fit and Play the Game, George VI, Outdoor Recreation and Social Cohesion in Interwar Britain', *Cultural and Social History,* 11.1 (2014), p. 123.
[76] *The Times,* 5 July 1937, p. 11.
[77] Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Keep Fit', p. 121.
[78] British Pathé, King and Queen at Festival of Youth (1937), https://youtu.be/Ba4PlOOuolc, [accessed 6 October 2017].
[79] British Pathé, German Youth – Physical Training and Sports Meeting (1937), https://youtu.be/IzjaUsIjsN4, [accessed 6 October 2017]; British Pathé, German Youth Camp Scenes (1937), https://youtu.be/vveMFEUCSbI, [accessed 6 October 2017].
[80] *The Times,* 28 June 1937, p. 10.

retired army captain.[81] An article by then-President of the JIL, Lord Burghley, suggested that the link between physical training and the military was not something to be resisted: 'it is only common-sense for Britain to make herself strong enough to resist aggression' he argued.[82] Indeed, as Figure 6.2 demonstrates, Imps of both genders were encouraged to take part in military service. Looked at alongside the JIL's object to defend empire at land and sea this kind of rhetoric strays precariously close to the ideologies of right-wing imperial isolationists in Britain at the time who believed that war was, while not desirable, a likely consequence of tensions between nations.[83] The first cartoon was also accompanied by an article written by Lord Dunglass, then Chairman of the JIL, titled 'National Service and You' in which he outlined his expectation that 'the response of the members of the J.I.L. will be prompt and full' to the call of National Service.[84] Given the historic association of physical training and the military, it is no surprise to find such rhetoric here. In the aftermath of the Boer War Baden-Powell intended the Scouts to counter what he saw as a decline in the character of the nation and in enthusiasm for Empire.[85] After the First World War David Lloyd George lamented the numbers of soldiers who had been declared unfit to fight. His language was couched in military terms stating that 'C1' citizens could not build an 'A1'

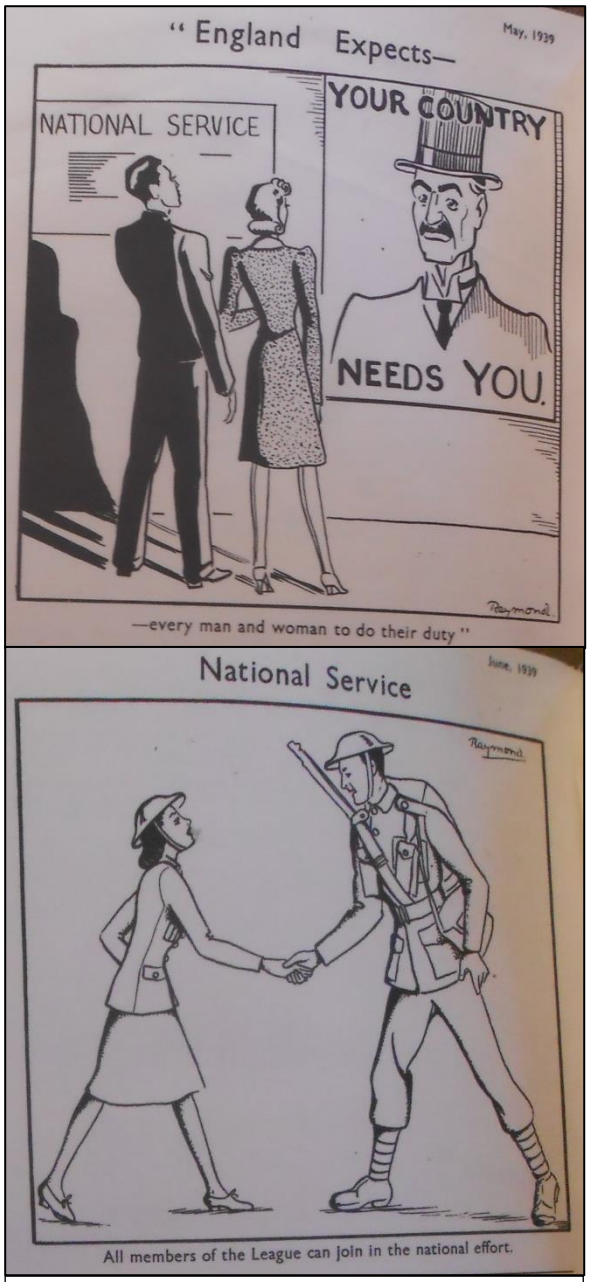

Figure 6.2 – *Torchbearer,* May 1939, p. 6; June 1939, p. 6.

[81] *The Imp*, July 1933, p. 6.
[82] *Torchbearer*, January 1937, p. 9.
[83] C.G. Webber, *The Ideology of the British Right* (Croom Helm, 1986), p. 115.
[84] *Torchbearer,* May 1939, p. 4.
[85] John Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society* (Croom Helm, 1977), p. 57.

nation, military terms for 'unfit to serve' and 'fully fit' respectively.[86] We can see this kind of rhetoric, especially in the light of the by-then deteriorating situation in Europe, as the continuation of a long history of state intervention in public health for the purposes of military training. The JIL's activities prompted accusations of militarism to be directed towards it: there were allegations they were being trained on 'semi-military lines',[87] that one branch had attended a fascist meeting,[88] and that another had a military splinter group who were receiving firearms training. [89]

The way the JIL engaged with physical training is indicative of a strongly collectivist ideology: that the primary utility of the individual's health was for service to the state. Stuart Ball points out that the society envisioned by the Conservatives was not one made entirely of individuals but of smaller groups with individual, interlocking interests.[90] The nation and Empire were also important ideological touchstones in which the individual could sometimes be lost. Philip Norton and Arthur Aughey argue that patriotism 'provided an ideology beyond that of the individual'[91] and certainly this is what we are seeing in the JIL, demonstrating that the individual and the communal ideologies are not mutually exclusive. This is also reflected in the thinking of an initially-obscure conservative thinker, Arthur Boutwood, who believed that the individual life could not be achieved in solitude. He argued that all individuals 'come into the world as citizens of a nation' and that the individual's interests and the nation's interests were inseparably intertwined.[92] Boutwood was not alone in his thoughts with a number of economists making similar arguments that there was no conflict between the interests of the individual and that of the state.[93] Further to this, in the latter decades of the nineteenth century Oxford University was home to a strand of conservative collectivist thinking during the time that

[86] Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Managing the Body,* p. 151.
[87] *New Chronicle,* 23 October 1934, CCO 506/3/3.
[88] *Newcastle Journal,* 13 June 1935; 14 June 1935, CCO 506/3/3.
[89] *The Daily Worker*, 25 October 1934, CCO 506/3/3.
[90] Stuart Ball, *Portrait of a Party. The Conservative Party in Britain 1918-1945* (Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 15.
[91] Philip Norton and Arthur Aughey, *Conservatives and Conservatism* (Maurice Temple Smith Ltd., 1981), p. 42.
[92] E.H.H. Green, *Ideologies of Conservatism. Conservative Political Ideas in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 47-51.
[93] Green, *Ideologies of Conservatism*, p. 59.

several Conservative politicians, such as Leo Amery, graduated.[94] From the evidence we have seen of the JIL thus far, they are firmly a part of this tradition. That this is the way in which the adult party sought to train their young members suggests its importance to the ideology of the party as a whole during this time.

Individual Betterment

For the left-wing organisations the militaristic element of physical training was completely absent; for the LoY militarism was something to be actively opposed.[95] While, like the JIL, the LoY and YCL were interested in the health of their members, they were less concerned about the impact on the nation and more so on maintaining one's own personal health. The relationship between the individual and community in this case is very complex: on one hand many of the periodical articles encourage improving one's own health; however, the organisations' engagement with the physical fitness campaign was often used to push for better rights for the entirety of the working class.

Within the YCL certain activities were encouraged for the personal health benefits they would provide. One of *Challenge*'s 'Hike for Health' articles suggested that 'Camping and hiking offers young people a pastime that will help them to live a healthy and pleasant life, a pastime second to none.' Another series of articles, targeted at female members, explained how one could maintain a healthy lifestyle as an individual. The articles advocated individual fitness activities such as walking, swimming, and stretches; they also advocated maintaining the appearance of being healthy in order to appear beautiful.[96] The push for individual health, however, was part of a wider campaign to achieve better working conditions, leisure facilities, and nutrition for workers. It may be that the focus on health for individual benefit was because of the perceived lack of resources and facilities provided by the government. One satirical article sarcastically instructs members on how to 'keep fit without food!'

[94] Green, *Ideologies of Conservatism*, pp. 42-46.
[95] *New Nation,* September 1934, p. 103.
[96] *Challenge*, 14 January 1939, p. 9; 21 January 1939, p. 9.

and takes aim at the poor availability of nutritional foods, necessary to keep fit, for young workers.[97] A core component of the YCL's Youth Charter was the Health Plan for the Nation's Youth which demanded provision for more physical activity for young people as a response to the government's push for healthier citizens. The YCL argued that the 'health of the subject is already undermined by the bad environment and feeding, for which the State is responsible.'[98] Almost the entirety of their £5,000,000 plan for youth health involved providing leisure facilities. They demanded more swimming and cycling facilities, more playgrounds in schools, public gymnasiums, and community centres.[99] Therefore, the YCL were able to use leisure activities to push for a political agenda; there was no point in the government trying to get people to keep fit if there were no facilities. Even if there were ample facilities young people were not getting the nutrition they needed, the YCL argued. This is indicative of the ways in which the left-wing organisations were able to take the politics of health and make it their own. While the government, and the JIL, sought to build up the health of the nation the left-wing movements were able to use some of their own rhetoric against them in order to pursue their own political objectives.

Politics of the Community

We have already seen, in Chapter 3, how the organisations aimed to promote a 'sense of belonging' for their members within the organisations. While this helped with identity construction within the organisations as a whole, leisure activity could be used to promote friendship and comradery within branches, and encouraged members to connect with other groups whose aim was similar to theirs. This latter objective was most common in the left-wing groups, for whom leisure activity was a powerful tool for encouraging members to engage with the wider Socialist movement.

[97] *Challenge*, 27 January 1939, p. 3.
[98] *Challenge,* April 1936, p. 2.
[99] *Challenge,* December 1936, p. 4.

Building Comradery

Hiking and rambling were common activities for building comradeship within branches. The terms 'hiking' and 'rambling' were largely used interchangeably in the inter-war years to refer to the activity of walking through the countryside. Rambling as an activity has a long history potentially dating as far back as the fifteenth century.[100] While rambling was not a contemporary creation, taking part in organised, group rambling was a product of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; typically rambling was associated with unorganised 'wandering.'[101] Prior to the twentieth century it had been a highly individualistic pursuit and Jeremy Burchardt links this to the popularity of the natural sciences: wealthy aristocrats would go to the countryside to observe nature and collect specimens.[102] Nicola Bishop also traces the concept of the individual rambler through 'clerkly' fiction: fiction in which a clerk leaves his work to travel the countryside and on his return attempts to convey what he has experienced to others so that he may act as a guide.[103] Bishop's work roots rambling firmly in the lower-middle-class, individualistic tradition. However, by the inter-war years it had become a classless and collective pursuit with rambling clubs made up of people from a broad social spectrum.[104] Rambling in the youth organisations tended to feature most heavily in their summer programmes, and some branches chose to create dedicated rambling clubs.[105] The fact that these kinds of clubs were being formed, and that rambling was being engaged in by organised groups, reflects the changing nature of the activity. Within left-wing politics the idea of comradery was strong and embedded in their language, commonly referring to one another as 'comrade.' For the LoY, hiking and rambling were cast firmly in the tradition of comradery which came to characterise inter-war rambling. A *Monthly Bulletin* article discusses how the activities of one branch's rambling club would be impossible

[100] Burchardt, *Paradise Lost,* p. 121.
[101] Oxford English Dictionary, Rambling, https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/rambling, [accessed 18 June 2018].
[102] Burchardt, *Paradise Lost*, p. 122.
[103] Nicola Bishop, 'Ruralism, Masculinity, and National Identity: The Rambling Clerk in Fiction, 1900-1940', *Journal of British Studies,* 54 (2015), p. 660.
[104] Burchardt, *Paradise Lost,* p. 125; Taylor, *Countryside*, p. 245.
[105] *Junior Imperial League Gazette,* June 1921, p. 3; August 1921, p. 3; November 1921, p. 16.

without the spirit of comradery as each member contributes some of the equipment they need. 'We have one comrade's map, another comrade's compass, a third comrade's torch, the secretary's hat, somebody else's stick – all contribute something to the success of the day. It is a case of "from each according to his need."'[106]

The tradition of comradery in the LoY was also propagated through its camps; so dedicated were they that a 'Camping Bureau' was set up in 1930 to serve as a 'coordinating body.' [107] For the most part, these camps would be organised by individual branches or Federations. For example, branches in Greater London organised an annual camp to coincide with the August bank holiday at a cost of 15s for the weekend or 30s for the full week.[108] The communal nature of the LoY camps is emphasised by the purchase of the Hoddesdon site which we saw in Chapter 4, which they owned in conjunction with the YHA.[109] This connection with the YHA is especially interesting given that Michael Cunningham has recently highlighted the potential for comparative studies of the YHA, either by investigating its connection to the wider hiking and rambling movement or to investigate other organisations which worked with it.[110] Though he does not suggest the LoY as one of them, their joint ownership of a hostel suggests they worked in close cooperation. The JIL also promoted the spirit of comradery within the branches via their camps, *The Imp* carried photos showing crowds of happy, camping Imps engaged in communal activities such as playing games or peeling potatoes.[111]

Leisure and Class

Community building through leisure often went much further than simply creating comradery within the branches. In the left-wing organisations it served to create bonds with the wider Socialist movement and reinforce class solidarity. Using leisure to build community was, by the inter-war years,

[106] *Monthly Bulletin,* January 1930, p. 2.
[107] *Monthly Bulletin,* June 1931, p. 1.
[108] *Monthly Bulletin,* July 1929, p. 2.
[109] *New Nation,* April 1934, p. 39.
[110] Michael Cunningham, 'Ethos and Politics in the Youth Hostels Association (YHA) in the 1930s', *Contemporary British History,* 30.2 (2016), p. 177.
[111] *The Imp*, August 1933, p. 6; October 1934, p. 9.

a tried and tested feature of the Socialist movement. Working-class cycling clubs had existed as early as the 1890s, many of these started as social clubs but organisations such as the CCC also developed into political movements and would engage in campaigning in rural areas. The intention behind many of these movements was to bring leisure and fellowship into working people's lives through cycling.[112] The LoY continued this tradition, forging bonds between themselves and other organisations through the medium of cycling. The Leicester branch of the LoY, for instance, worked closed with the CCC in order to campaign for pacifism and aid for the Spanish Civil War. In doing so, members of the branch attended, and donated to, a meeting attended by *Challenge*'s cycling editor Ted Ward, himself a member of the CCC, in support of his bid to cycle from Glasgow to Barcelona.[113] The CCC, therefore, served as a conduit to link the YCL and LoY together in campaigning for causes which each considered to be important.

Sport was another common medium through which connections with wider social groups were made. This can be seen in the LoY's interactions with the National Workers' Sports Association (NWSA). The NWSA was a successor organisation to the BWSF which had by then fallen under Communist Party control. Founded in 1923 under the auspices of the CCC, the BWSF was intended to be a medium through which workers could find community through sport. However, compared to similar foreign organisations such as the Germany-based Continental Workers' Sports Association it failed to find significant support. Over time it fell victim to CPGB entryism until Social Democratic parties pulled support and founded the NWSA.[114] Straight away we can see sport being politicised here as part of the conflict between the moderate and extreme branches of the political left. From the Communists' desire to take over the BWSF and the Social Democratic parties' desire to continue to try and create a workers' sports movement even after their initial failure we can see the important position that sport held in working-class culture and politics. The LoY was no different. An article on

[112] Sean Creighton, 'Organised Cycling and Politics: the 1890s & 1900s in Battersea', *The Sports Historian,* 15 (1995), pp. 65-79.
[113] Business Meeting, 3 May 1938, DE8176; *Challenge*, 14 April 1938, p. 5.
[114] Jones, *Sport*, pp. 75-79.

Socialism and Sport argued that 'The organisation of leisure will be one of the most important and most difficult functions of a Socialist State' and argued that LoY members should be making sure to take part in sport in their spare time. Unfortunately, most of the specifics of what the LoY did with the NWSA have not been recorded, but what is clear is that the LoY was in contact with the NWSA from early on and they cooperated in helping organise sports, as 'not only are sports clubs the means or providing members with healthy recreation and social intercourse but they also further the object of keeping their interest in the League.' They also lauded the benefit of sports as enabling members to meet new people and to build Socialist networks.[115] LoY members also had the opportunity to partake in the Workers' Olympiad which would have given them the opportunity to travel to foreign countries and meet international Socialists.[116]

The nature of the sport played by the youth organisations can provide us with hints as to the class makeup of the membership. Branch reports once again provide a valuable insight into local branch activities. These reports for the LoY show that a variety of sports were played such as cricket, football, and tennis.[117] Cricket, for example, was considered a national sport which often encouraged cross-class comradery[118] but was also widely enjoyed in the labour movement with the Parliamentary Labour Party having their own cricket team.[119] By contrast, football and tennis were considered working and middle-class domains respectively.[120] This would suggest that the LoY were able to recruit from a broad range of class backgrounds, though it is worth noting that instances of tennis were rare compared to cricket or football. Contrast this with the sort of sports played by the JIL and we can see that sports considered middle-class were far more common. Sport was used by some branches as a way to recruit members and in some cases it was used to recruit a specific type of member, as one branch put it: 'The Cricket Club has been the means of recruiting many new members of the type that

[115] *Monthly Bulletin,* May 1931, p. 1.
[116] *Monthly Bulletin,* August 1932, p. 3.
[117] *Monthly Bulletin,* August 1929, p. 2; March 1932, p. 2; August 1929, pp. 1-2; *The New Nation*, June 1935, p. 71.
[118] McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures,* pp. 332-334.
[119] Jones, *Sport*, p. 76.
[120] McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures,* pp. 340 & 361.

is desired.'[121] What this means specifically is unclear, but it is most likely a statement about character: that the members attracted were of a 'sporting' character. Considering Stuart Ball's observation on the frequency of sporting metaphors in Conservative language, most often team games such as cricket, this seems especially likely.[122] The metaphor of cricket was used on other occasions by the JIL, for instance the cartoon we saw back in Figure 4.2 titled 'a team without the smallest notion of cricket' which portrayed leading figures in Labour as unsporting thugs.[123] There were also some sports played in the JIL which were *never* played by the LoY. Rowing, for example, was encouraged by the JIL and suggests that they had in mind a middle-class membership as rowing was a highly class-segregated activity with some rowing clubs excluding the working class altogether.[124] Further evidence that JIL sport was aimed towards the middle class comes from an article titled 'Why not a Horse Gymkhana?' in which the author describes how their branch hosts a horse gymkhana every year in conjunction with Cambridge undergraduates. The author then offers branches advice on how to host a horse gymkhana of their own.[125] Horse *racing* may have had an appeal to a working-class audience in so far as betting on racing was a popular activity, but it is highly unlikely that working-class youth would have had a great interest in horse displays; or that they would have had the horses to organise their own.[126] On the whole, it seems to be through leisure activities that the class divides within the organisations were most clearly visible. While the JIL emphasised their classless nature, it was difficult to hide the reality that the organisation attracted middle-class members who had middle-class interests. Meanwhile, the LoY and YCL's leisure activity seemed less concerned on broadening their class base than with strengthening the bonds between their working-class members.

[121] *Junior Imperial League Gazette,* August 1921, p. 3.
[122] Ball, *Portrait*, p. 70.
[123] *The Imp*, June 1927, p. 4.
[124] McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures,* p. 357.
[125] *The Imp*, October 1933, p. 7.
[126] McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures,* p. 353.

Politics of the Personal

The politicisation of leisure also represented an incursion of politics into the personal lives of young members. This was done through a mixture of providing the organisation with romantic appeal; through encouraging political activity outside of the movements, even within the home; and through adopting content more common in commercial periodicals which provided, especially female, members with instruction on how to appear and how to behave. It is through this latter point that we can also get a sense of some of the attitudes these movements held towards their female members, whether that took the form of encouraging them to take part in certain activities over others; including gendered content, such as cosmetic advice; or, in the case of the YCL, pushing for greater sexual liberation for young women.

Femininity and Beauty

Instances where leisure was explicitly gendered were rare, however the inter-war years were a time of change for the female appearance and thus where leisure was gendered the focus tended to be on appearance.[127] Diet and exercise were touted as a way to achieve the ideal body and in the JIL rowing was advised for all its female members in order to achieve this aim.[128] Described as 'an ideal sport for women' its benefits were advertised as being that 'All muscles are equally exercised and there is no risk of certain parts of the body becoming over-developed.' In addition, their advocating the use of rowing machines gave the sport a uniquely modern flavour.[129] The most explicitly gendered element of leisure, however, was cosmetics. With an explosion of periodicals catering to women and girls in the 1920s and 30s, political parties meant that they were explicitly setting themselves up in competition with commercial periodicals.[130] As part of their broader campaign to mimic commercial periodicals and to provide women with greater freedoms, as we will see later in this section, the YCL

[127] Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'The Body and Consumer Culture', in Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska (ed.), *Women in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Pearson Education, 2001), p. 186-7.
[128] Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'Consumer Culture', p. 188.
[129] *Torchbearer,* February 1938, p. 17.
[130] Martin Pugh, *Women and the Women's Movement in Britain 1914-1959* (Macmillan 1992), p. 209.

had an unambiguously positive relationship to cosmetics. Having pages purposefully set out for girls,[131] *Challenge* included beauty tips and cosmetic advice. One article describes how 'not every woman has the gift of beauty' and therefore must make use of cosmetics while another suggests that 'Women of the highest intellect are now realising not only the commercial value of good looks, but also their aesthetic value.'[132] Another article discussed how to keep your hair in the latest styles, even suggesting to readers what brand of hairbrush they should buy to achieve the best effect.[133] It seems an especially stark contrast to see such an article appearing in the same periodical which discusses the plight of those caught up in the Spanish Civil War. It suggests that the YCL had fully embraced the idea that in order to win over youth, they would have to appeal to youth culture.

These beauty tips not only reflect the intersection of the commercial and the political, but the political and the private: these were periodicals produced by political parties instructing young women on how they should appear. Such articles are demonstrative of the ability of the political activity of the organisations to cross the political boundary and into the personal lives of their members. One such article encouraged women to 'Make a Business of your Bath' and seamlessly blended political activity with beauty regimes. At the same time as encouraging members to 'Make a business of your bath, follow a routine, and beauty of the skin and good health will be yours, girls', the author also wrote how they 'dream of the future when the world will be a happier place to live in, and dishonesty and corruption will be diseases we read about in history books.'[134] The fact that members were encouraged to think about politics even while bathing is demonstrative of the ways in which politics could reach even the most intimate areas of members' personal lives.

Romance

[131] In having a dedicated, regular section for women *Challenge* marked themselves out as unique: *Challenge,* 13 January 1938, p. 2.
[132] *Challenge*, 13 January 1938, p. 2; 14 January 1939, p. 9.
[133] *Challenge,* 18 February 1939, p. 11.
[134] *Challenge,* 11 February 1939, p. 11.

It was something of an open secret that the youth organisations were good places to go to meet romantic partners. For the purposes of this work I will focus only on heterosexual relationships simply because homosexuality was not discussed or recorded; although there was at least one known instance of homosexuality within the Kibbo Kift Kindred.[135] The post-war Young Conservatives had something of a reputation for being closer to social clubs than to political movements, being described as 'the best marriage bureau in the country.'[136] In fact, the Young Conservatives' social activities could sometimes border on the erotic when one member 'infamously strip-teased in 1965.'[137] While there is no evidence of their inter-war counterpart straying into the overtly sexual, their reputation for romance was well known. One of Michelle Webb's interviewees said of the inter-war LoY almost exactly the same thing which was said of the Young Conservatives, describing it as an 'excellent marriage bureau.'[138] The JIL was no different. One Imp, writing retrospectively of her experience in the JIL, described her motivation for joining as being that a friend had told her 'it was the best social club in the district and, more importantly, all the best looking boys belonged.' She then offered her advice to the newly formed Young Socialists that 'to get the girls [they] must rope in all the best looking boys in the district – and vice versa.'[139] This was not a piece of advice that the JIL needed to be given: they were already aware of it. At the JIL's 1927 conference, during the discussion of how to increase male membership, a prospective parliamentary candidate stated that he was 'quite sure that every girl had at least three admirers, and therefore, the task of increasing the male membership of the League should not be so difficult as it appeared to be.'[140] This opinion was reiterated by the Vice-Chair of the East Midlands Federation of the JIL when writing in *The Imp* that 'Any pretty girl ought to be able to bring at least three young men into her branch, while, in these times, it should not be difficult

[135] Cathy Ross with Oliver Bennett, *Designing Utopia. John Hargrave and the Kibbo Kift* (Philip Wilson Publishers, 2015), p. 85.
[136] Z. Layton-Henry, 'The Young Conservatives 1945-70', *Journal of Contemporary History,* 8.2 (1973), p. 147.
[137] Black, 'Lost World', p. 1006.
[138] Michelle Webb, *The Labour League of Youth. An Account of the Failure of the Labour Party to Sustain a Successful Youth Movement* (The Edwin Mellen Press Ltd., 2010), p. 55.
[139] *News Chronicle,* 23 January 1960, p. 3, CCO 506/3/3.
[140] *The Imp*, June 1927, p. 8.

for a decent-looking lad to persuade the same number of charming ladies to become Imps.'[141] As we saw in Chapter 3, the organisations also advertised when members married each other. That the JIL were so open about the fact that members could meet romantic partners through the organisation suggests that instead of trying to ignore this element of youth culture they embraced it fully. Attending the JIL would allow young people the opportunity to be able to go to a place and meet potential romantic partners independently, meaning that it had a similar social appeal as the cinema and dancehall. This would have especially benefited middle-class members for whom the most common way of meeting partners was by being introduced by their parents.[142] This is yet another way through which the organisations became self-perpetuating communities: if one can marry inside the movement then one has no need to look beyond it.

Sex and Sexuality

One highly personal, and overtly-gendered, issue dealt with in the periodicals was sex. Although romance was an element of the JIL and the LoY, there was no suggestion that romance would lead to sex. This was completely different for the YCL where there was a far more open attitude towards sex: specifically in regards to the provision of sex education and sexual liberation of women.

The refusal to acknowledge sex by the JIL and LoY may be down to the Labour and Conservative Parties being the governing parties in the inter-war years. When it came to the state provision of sex education the situation was woeful and the subject a major taboo. Prior to 1918 the official government line was that the provision of sex education should be a job for parents.[143] However, this did not translate well into practice as oral interviews by Angela Davies show that in the home sex education remained a taboo subject all the way through the 1920s and '30s.[144] Her

[141] *The Imp*, March 1928, p. 10.
[142] Humphries, *Hooligans,* p.137.
[143] Jane Pilcher, 'School Sex Education: Policy and Practice in England 1870 to 2000', *Sex Education*, 5.2 (2005), p. 155.
[144] Angela Davies, '"Oh no, nothing, we didn't learn anything": Sex Education and the Preparation of Girls for Motherhood, c.1930-1970', *History of Education*, 37.5 (2008), p. 667-8.

respondents display an almost complete ignorance of reproductive matters which reflects the quality of sex education which appeared in schools post-1918. The majority of sex education between the wars was focused on sexual hygiene as part of a desire to improve 'national efficiency' and formed part of the biology curriculum.[145] Sexual health was promoted at the expense of reproductive education with a series of handbooks published in the 1930s covering almost every human bodily function except reproduction.[146]

It was the absence of sex education that the YCL sought to fix, and their efforts focused entirely on female sexuality. They ran an article titled 'Let's be Sane about Sex' in which they stated a desire to 'bring sex into the open. Let's change this system which drives sex underground to become vice and perversion and filthy scrawlings upon walls.'[147] The article also dealt with some serious subjects such as rape and the morality of abortion in the case of pregnancy via rape. In another article a young woman writes about an early, and unpleasant, sexual experience which left her pregnant. She used this experience to call for better sex education for woman and to help them understand their own bodies in the belief that this would leave them less vulnerable to the advances of predatory men.[148]

The inclusion marks a stark departure of *Challenge* from the types of content which appeared in commercial girls' periodicals at the time, which mostly presented marriage as the ultimate goal of young girls, and from the content of other youth wings' periodicals, which ignored sex altogether.[149] By contrast, *Challenge* sought to provide young girls with the kinds of essential instruction which they might not get from school, home, or books. This type of departure from the norm has proved to be typical of the YCL who regularly either borrowed or adapted accepted rhetoric to fit their own aims, or had entirely different concerns than their competitors.

[145] Pilcher, 'Sex Education', pp. 155-6.
[146] Pilcher, 'Sex Education', p. 156.
[147] *Challenge,* 21 July 1938, p. 3.
[148] *Challenge,* 28 July 1938, p. 9.
[149] Tinkler, *Constructing Girlhood*, p. 152.

Politics of the Periodical

In the inter-war years what has been described as a 'plethora' of commercial periodicals had become available for young people.[150] Moving into the 1930s, the periodical market became even more saturated and diverse.[151] This meant that the youth organisations were competing with commercial leisure for members and with commercial periodicals for the eyes of those members, creating even more competition for the youth wings who had to adapt their own periodical to compete or risk losing out. As the inter-war years progressed, each organisation's periodical went through evolutions in design and content, gradually professionalising their designs, standardising their layout, and introducing more general-interest content. Further to this, in order to grow their periodicals' circulation it became necessary to supplement the income earned through sales with income earned through advertisement. All of these actions can be seen as an intentional effort by the youth organisations to mimic commercial periodicals in order to compete with them. This section will deal with the intersection of the political and commercial spheres and how their interactions can be seen through the periodicals.

General-Interest Content

It is in *Challenge* where this process of incorporating general-interest content is most overt and the quantity of such content in these periodicals makes it easy to argue that reading the periodical itself is a leisure activity. This is a trend reflected more widely in Communist periodicals such as the *Daily Worker* which suggests a unified attitude towards leisure within the party: following initial failures, the paper began to become less explicitly Communist and instead featured more general-interest content such as racing tips, stories, and advertisements.[152] At a glance, an observer might be forgiven for not realising that *Challenge* was a Communist periodical until they read it more closely. Figure 6.3

[150] Fowler, *Teenagers*, p. 102.
[151] Tebbutt, *Making Youth*, p. 135.
[152] Lewis Young, 'Internal Party Bulletin or Paper of the Working Class Movement? The Communist Party of Great Britain and the Role of the Daily Worker, 1930-1949', *Media History,* 22.1 (2016), p. 127.

compares an earlier YCL periodical's cover to one from *Challenge* and the differences are immediately obvious. The first image, from around 1930, is covered with Communist regalia and is also very crudely designed. The second image, from 1936, is much more professional in appearance and any Communist imagery is completely absent outside of a brief mention of Communism within the list of contents. In addition, the photograph chosen for the cover, depicting a group of young girls in a field on a sunny day, projects the image of a much less severe magazine than the one covered with Hammer and Sickle drawings. Only occasionally would *Challenge* carry a more politicised cover. On two occasions, when discussing the Spanish Civil War, *Challenge*'s cover carried images of soldiers and distressed-looking civilians but these can be considered outliers to the general rule that *Challenge* had softened in tone. This further highlights the trend we have seen in the YCL whereby the organisation broadly went in line with the actions of the adult movement, softening their tone as 'class against class' moved towards a United Front.

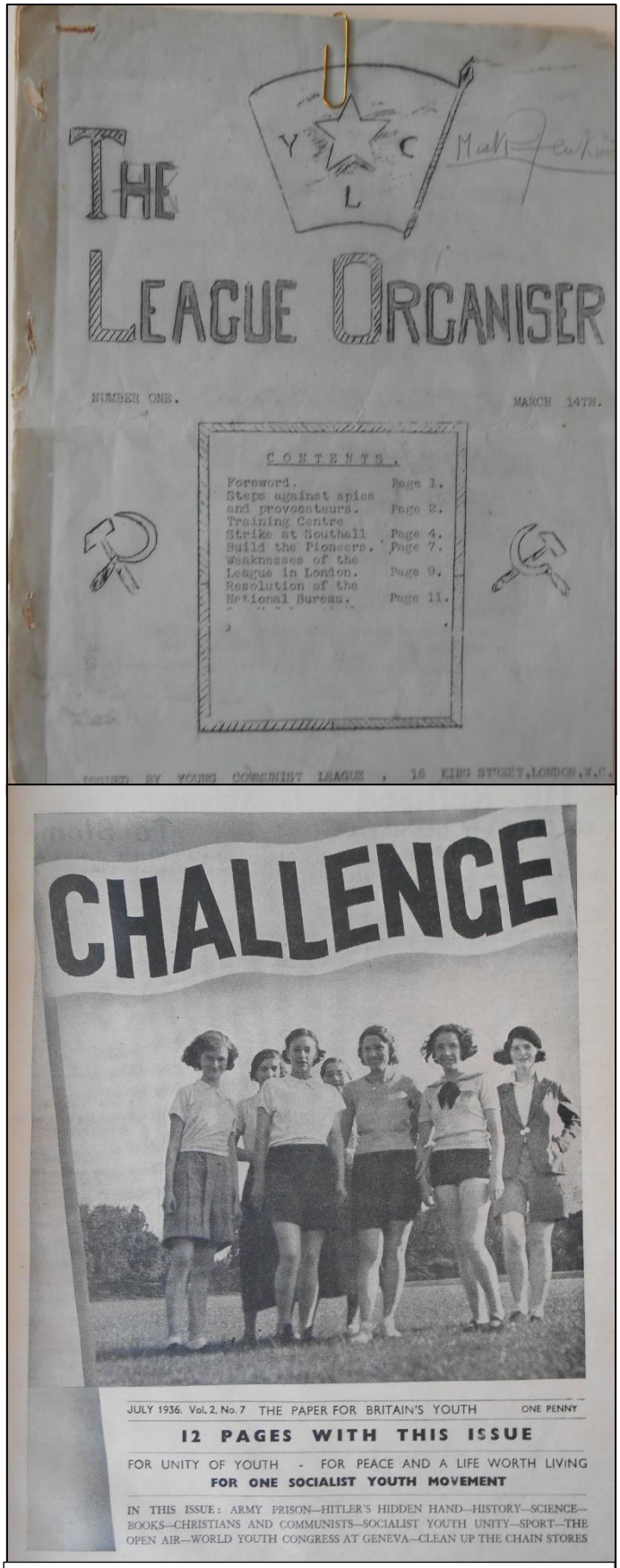

Figure 6.3 - *League Organiser,* c.1930, CP/YCL/20/1 and *Challenge,* July 1936.

Sport and cycling formed the backbone of *Challenge*'s general-interest content. *Challenge*

carried articles about cycling history; news; commentary on controversy in the professional cycling world; tips on where to go for the best cycling routes; and even carried interviews with famous cyclists.[153] As cycling editor, Ted Ward dealt with all matters related to cycling. Ward conducted interviews with professional cyclists and wrote advice on good cycling routes. *Challenge* would also carry reports of Ward's own cycling exploits in several series such as 'Know Your Britain', 'Tour Britain with Ted Ward' and 'Cycle with Ted Ward.'[154] Football and cricket also received general-interest coverage. Articles about the history of Celtic and Arsenal football clubs appeared in *Challenge*[155] and others outlined county cricket and offered predictions on who would win the County Championship.[156]

Advertising

We have already seen in Chapter 3 that the Conservative Party were far more comfortable with the commodification of politics. Not only were they more comfortable with creating their own products and advertisements, they also fully embraced commercial advertisement as an avenue of funding. There were concerns among the Publication Committee in 1932 that *The Imp* was not self-sustaining and that it was operating at a loss.[157] In the end it was decided that they would need to directly seek out advertisers for the paper, set at a price of 3d per word with a minimum charge of 2s6d.[158] Considering *The Imp* was being sold to members at a price of 2d per copy this would have meant a single advert had at least the value of fifteen periodical sales, making them an excellent supplement to sales revenue. The advertising was at its most prominent when the JIL's publication was changed to *Torchbearer* in 1937. Every month the cover of *Torchbearer* carried an advert which almost always related to physical activity. From January 1937 it carried an advert for Spalding sports equipment which boasted that its equipment would 'help everyone **TO KEEP FIT**.' This continued until June 1937

[153] *Challenge,* February 1936, p. 3; 3 February 1938, p. 12; 10 February 1938, p. 12; 16 June 1938, pp. 6-7.
[154] *Challenge,* 16 June 1938, pp. 6-7; 30 June 1938, p. 11; 7 July 1938, p. 11.
[155] *Challenge,* January 1936, p. 3; April 1936, p. 3.
[156] *Challenge,* May 1936, p. 7.
[157] Publications Committee, 6 June 1932, CCO 506/1/4.
[158] Publications Committee, 14 June 1933, CCO 506/1/4.

when Elliman Athletic Rub replaced Spalding, and in October 1937 Ovaltine was advertised under the banner of 'The National Fitness Campaign' and billed as 'The National Beverage for Health.' The decision to advertise sporting products was a deliberate choice by the Publications Committee when Lord Burghley, himself a sportsman, suggested that 'With regard to advertisements… sports shops should be approached, such as Spaldings, Lilleywhite's[sic] and Hamley's.'[159] These advertisements fitted perfectly with the government's drive to create healthy citizens, going as far as to make use of government slogans such as 'keep fit' and outwardly mentioning the 'National Fitness Campaign' and demonstrating how commercial advertisements could be used to disseminate political messages. However, there were limits to this approach and the periodical was faced with member pushback: *Torchbearer* carried so many adverts that a member suggested the magazine should change its name to 'The Advertisers' Monthly' and adopt the slogan 'Advertisers large or small send us your ads., we print them all'[160] and in 1938 the Publication Committee conceded that 'some readers felt the advertisements were too prominent.'[161] This does suggest that despite efforts to mimic commercial periodicals, there were different expectations from their readership; readers of commercial periodicals would not have objected to advertisements in the same way. Looking to the LoY we can see again how the choice of advertisements reflects the political ideology of the parties. There were plenty of adverts placed in *The New Nation* but all of them were in some way related to the labour movement. One set of adverts advertised the LoY's own holiday camp, the new issue of *The New Clarion*, and Co-Operative Wholesale Society products.[162] Others advertised holidays organised by the Workers' Travel Association,[163] or *The Daily Herald* newspaper.[164] As well as being reflections of political statements the inclusion of advertisements also suggests a conscious effort to imitate the style of commercial magazines, especially in the JIL where many of the advertisements did not contain

[159] Publications Committee, 14 May 1933, CCO 506/1/4.
[160] *Torchbearer,* January 1937, p. 12.
[161] *Torchbearer,* August 1938, p. 85.
[162] *The New Nation*, June 1933, p. 48.
[163] *The New Nation*, April 1933, p. 32.
[164] *The New Nation*, September 1933, p. 17.

political messages. For example, some adverts featured English film stars Adele Dixon and Roy Royston advertising cigarettes.[165]

The NLYL's *Forward View* is noteworthy for how few advertisements it carried, especially when considering what we know about the paper's financial difficulties. We can see through the few products they did advertise that, despite how much they wished to do so, the organisation struggled to shake off the party's historic associations with puritanism and drinking chocolate. One article bemoaned the party's association with temperance, which was said to put off voters,[166] and a few years previous, a satirist had written in *The Forward View* that a Liberal was known for his love of cocoa, and that the party motto was 'The price of Cocoa is eternal Cadbury.'[167] Still, the overwhelming majority of adverts which appeared in the periodical were for cocoa; in particular, Cadbury's although Rowntree's also made an appearance.[168] This continued until the periodical began to sell its own brand of tea in order to raise funds, and the numbers of commercial adverts decreased.[169] Where most commercial advertisements appeared was in the organisation's conference programmes. One conference programme carried an advert for *Liberal Magazine* and *Liberal News* periodicals[170] though the majority of the adverts in the programmes were for commercial products such as motor cars and confectionery.[171] This suggests that for the NLYL advertising was predominately a form of revenue, rather than something being politicised, and is also indicative of a party struggling for funds as it entered decline.

[165] *Torchbearer*, April 1937, p. 45; July 1937, p. 81.
[166] *The Forward View*, January 1930, p. 6.
[167] *The Forward View*, January 1927, p. 10.
[168] Cadbury's appears on a number of occasions: *The Forward View*, June 1927, p. 82; January 1930, p. 12; May 1930, p. 75; July 1930, p. 108; September 1930, p. 133; Rowntree's: *The Forward View*, May 1930, p. 76.
[169] 'Loyal Tea' makes its first appearance in *Forward View*, August 1931, p. 113.
[170] National League of Young Liberals Souvenir Programme, April 8 & 10 1939, JOSEPHY 14/4.
[171] Souvenir Programme, April 8 & 10 1939; Souvenir Programme, April 15 & 17 1933, JOSEPHY 14/4.

Conclusion

In the introduction to this chapter I discussed John Springhall's suggestion that youth organisations represented a middle-class method of keeping young people away from undesirable leisure activities.[172] The evidence consulted in this chapter suggests that this was not a primary motivation for the political youth organisations, though it contains a grain of truth. The fact that leisure activity was embraced as a recruitment tool across the political spectrum clearly demonstrates that they were not attempting to divert young people away from it completely. The use of modern, and even controversial, activities such as dancing and the cinema suggests that there was a recognition by the political parties that including leisure activity was a necessity to maintain active membership. Excluding them was known to lead to dissatisfaction; for example Stephen Jones describes the shock of a YCL member when *The Daily Worker* removed racing tips.[173] The truth in Springhall's sentiment comes from the fact that the organisations did not simply copy commercial leisure, there was an attempt to make it their own and to politicise it. We can see this in the JIL's 'League nights' at cinemas and their production of their own propaganda films.[174] It can be seen in the JIL's use of sports to drive for a fitter nation.[175] It can also be seen in the YCL's use of sport, cycling, and hiking and rambling to constantly push for better nutrition and working conditions for the working class.[176] The politicisation of leisure in the youth organisations suggests that far from trying to shield young people from the influence of commercial leisure activity, they were attempting to harness these activities and turn the time young people would have spent on them into time that could be used to further their own agendas. It is also indicative that the politicisation of leisure was going on to a far greater extent than has previously been assumed. In addition, the activities of the youth wings suggest that leisure was becoming a far more communal activity. If McKibbin's suggestion that working-class hobbies became

[172] Springhall, *Coming of Age*, p. 151.
[173] Jones, *Sport,* p. 89.
[174] Heathorn and Greenspoon, 'Organizing Youth', p. 100; *The Imp,* October 1932, p. 5.
[175] *Torchbearer,* January 1937, p. 9.
[176] *Challenge,* April 1936, p. 2; December 1936, p. 4; 28 July 1938, p. 9.

far more individualistic during the inter-war years[177] was true for working-class adults, it certainly was not the case for young people for whom hiking, rambling, and cycling all appear to have derived their value from the sense of community they created.[178]

The politicisation of leisure was just one indicator of how leisure and youth culture represented an intersection of the political, private, and commercial spheres. It is also represented in the design and content of periodicals. Using the example of the rising cost of producing *The Imp*, the Conservative Party were forced to investigate more commercial approaches to funding. Each organisation's periodical underwent radical re-designs over its lifetime resulting in the gradual creation of a more professional-looking periodical which could have sat comfortably next to a commercially published one. The relatively-innocuous covers of the *Challenge* periodicals are prime examples of this. As well as visual clues that the periodicals attempted to fall in line with commercial ones, the content did so too. The suggestion by the JIL that women could be used to attract men and vice versa, combined with the inclusion of images and descriptions of Imps who had got married, carries echoes of the content of girls' magazines from the period.[179] Furthermore, the tacit endorsement of romantic relationships between members represents a movement of the political into the private lives of its members. Combined with evidence of the culture developed within the movements, the highlighting of members' marriages begins to suggest that these groups could have become an almost-family for their members.

[177] McKibbin, *Ideologies of Class,* p. 163.
[178] *Monthly Bulletin,* January 1930, p. 2.
[179] Tinkler, *Constructing Girlhood*, pp. 151-2.

Section 4: Conclusion

Chapter 7: Conclusion

On 11th September 1939, William. A. Porter and Lewis C. Lambert, Chairman and Secretary of the Bristol West Divisional Council of the JIL, sent a letter out to all their members. It informed them that in light of the 'state of emergency now existing' it had been decided that all activities of every branch of the JIL were to be suspended for the duration of that emergency. 'We should like to take this opportunity of sincerely thanking you for the splendid work you have done on behalf of the Junior Imperial League, and to wish you the best of luck', the pair closed.[1] At the same time, the LoY were going through a period of attempted reconciliation with the Labour Party. Serial protestor and leader of the *Advance* faction, Ted Willis, decided it was simply easier to abandon the LoY altogether and join the Communist Party.[2] Attempts by Labour to revive the youth organisation, with tighter oversight by the adult party, were cut short by the outbreak of the Second World War. Unlike their counterparts, the NLYL did not shut down all activities with the outbreak of war. *Forward View*, for instance, saw a brief resuscitation in December 1939 under the stewardship of Francis Josephy. Still, branch reports reflected an organisation struggling to adapt to the reduced funds and membership brought about by the war.[3] However, the fairly unceremonious suspension of the activities of the youth wings did not spell the end of organised youth.

The post-war world brought about entirely new political challenge for Britain, but youth still had a part to play. The most important legacy of these organisations was that they established the precedent in the minds of politicians that young people belonged within the ranks of the parties; as Dunglass observed in 1943 'it would be quite unconstitutional and wrong… to disband or supersede the J.I.L.'[4] Not long after the end of the war the political parties went about rebuilding their youth

[1] Wm. A. Porter and Lewis C. Lambert to JIL members, 11 September 1939, Bristol Record Office, 38036/J/3(a).
[2] Michelle Webb, *The Labour League of Youth. An Account of the Failure of the Labour Party to Sustain a Successful Youth Organisation* (The Edwin Mellen Press Ltd, 2010), p. 99.
[3] *The Forward View*, December 1939, pp. 2-3.
[4] Notes by Lord Dunglass, 29 January 1943, Conservative Party Archive, CCO 506/4/4.

organisations. Philip Abrams and Alan Little observe the well-structured nature of the Young Conservatives and credit this with the organisation's ability to take an active role in policy and for their concerns to reach as high as the party leader.[5] This structure was only possible because of the foundations laid by the JIL, and writing in 1943 Lord Dunglass expressed his belief that it would be easy to revive the organisation and 'foolish to waste the framework' which they had before them.[6] It was with this mandate that the Palmer Committee, led by Gerald Palmer M.P., was formed in 1943 in order to 'consider and report as to what action should be taken to re-establish the Junior Movement of the Conservative and Unionist Party.'[7] Taking evidence from JIL members and officials, the committee published its recommendations the following year: that the JIL should be revived, but with some modification. The inclusion of the word 'Imperial' was no longer considered viable, with the nickname 'Imps' thought to be actively harmful to recruiting; and it was decided that the organisation would operate with less autonomy than before the war in order that there could be equality in status between the younger and older members of the party.[8]

Like the JIL, the Labour Party also recognised the need to quickly reorganise youth in the aftermath of the Second World War. On polling day 1945 Herbert Morrison made a direct appeal to the youth of the country to support his party.[9] Michelle Webb suggests that after 1945 the party saw an opportunity to 'bury its grievances and mistakes' with young people and that the formation of a second LoY began almost immediately following their General Election victory.[10] Unlike the JIL, the impetus for this reformation appears to have come from the grassroots with Webb highlighting the spontaneous creation of branches across the country to which the party later responded by providing the support network these groups needed, such as a journal and a national infrastructure.[11]

---

[5] Philip Abrams and Alan Little, 'The Young Activist in British Politics', *British Journal of Sociology*, 16.4 (1965), p. 317.
[6] Notes by Lord Dunglass, 29 January 1943, CCO 506/4/4; Extract from letter from Lord Dunglass to Major T.L. Dugdale, 23 January 1943, CCO 506/4/4.
[7] Palmer Committee – minutes and evidence presented to, 1943, CCO 506/4/8.
[8] Palmer Committee – final report, 1944, CCO 506/4/8.
[9] Webb, *League of Youth,* p. 111.
[10] Webb, *League of Youth*, p. 112.
[11] Webb, *League of Youth*, p. 114.

The new LoY suffered from some of the same problems as its pre-war counterpart, most notably the adult party's continued insistence that the sole purpose of the organisation was to draw members to the Labour Party and to espouse Labour principles.[12] In addition, while the experience of the JIL had bolstered the Young Conservatives, the spectre of the LoY's difficulties before the war served to hamper its growth afterwards. Remembering the conflict between the adult and youth wings, Labour sought to exert more control over their youth by restricting the age limit to twenty-one.[13] The NLYL, too, were quick to reorganise with their official history expressing the long-time belief of the Liberal Party that a revival was just around the corner, and argued that Young Liberals would play a key part.[14]

What Have we Learned?

This main contribution this thesis has made is to our understanding of the organisations themselves. Where previously very little was known about them at all, the historiographical interest having been predominantly post-1945, this thesis has shed new light on their operation and activities. In doing so it has filled in a vital piece of the story of youth politics, helping to further our understanding of developments which took place after the Second World War, just as understanding pre-war development informed this thesis. Clearly, given the scrambling by all parties to rebuild their youth wings after the war, by 1945 young people had earned themselves a place in Britain's political system and politicians understood the importance of mobilising and engaging them. It was thanks to the experience of 1918-1939 that this was possible at all. On one level, the organisational and structural experience made reforming the organisations much easier, as did the party loyalties the groups helped establish. On another, the experience of organising youth had demonstrated the value and importance of politically engaged young people to the political culture.

[12] Webb, *League of Youth*, p. 119.
[13] Webb, *League of Youth,* pp. 119-20.
[14] Audrey Downs and Evan Richards, *Fifty Years Young. The Story of the National League of Young Liberals 1903-1953* (Liberal Publication Department, 1953), p. 12. JOSEPHY 14/4.

At the heart of this final point is perhaps the thesis' most significant contribution to the historiography. Running through each chapter has been the theme of the relationship between people and their politicians; how politicians understood and imagined the people, how they communicated political messages, and how the public responded. Clearly, the existence of these youth wings shows that politicians realised that to engage the newly enfranchised they needed to have direct, and sometimes personal, involvement. The extent to which this was done varied party to party. The Conservatives proved to be highly skilled at navigating the fine line between tightly controlling their members, and allowing them too much autonomy. They preferred to use a more subtle, guiding hand. They had a clear, tight structure with ideas and suggestions for activities filtered through the many periodicals. However, individual branches largely controlled their own affairs and had the freedom to engage with topics of most relevance or interest to them. The party rarely stepped in and interfered directly in a branch's affairs, barring a few exceptions.[15] Labour, on the other hand, largely saw their youth as a resource to be used, and while on the surface their structure was very similar to the JIL their members lacked the conformist tendencies of the Conservative group and the party's leadership lacked either the confidence or the political wisdom to guide their youth down the path they desired. Despite Labour being visibly at odds with their youth, it seems that it was in fact the Liberal Party where the gulf between politician and member was widest. The Liberal Party took very little interest in its youth organisation, despite having been the first to create one. Instead, its members were largely left to run their own affairs and ended up with an organisation whose interests were much narrower than their counterparts', and which largely failed to attract younger people into its ranks.

One thing all the organisations had in common was the degree of agency members displayed, regardless of whether or not this was endorsed by the party. The JIL were granted a great deal of agency by the Conservative Party, but it is in the parties where agency was denied that it was most on display. Time and time again the LoY defied orders by the adult party to avoid mixing with the YCL. In

[15] Both Stanley Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain personally investigated accusations of a militarised splinter group forming in one branch: *News Chronicle,* 24 October 1934.

fact, branches such as Leicester, which initially hunted down and removed would-be Communist infiltrators, eventually turned to the YCL in response to the adult party's attempts at control.[16] The fact that, when the party shut down the LoY's NAC and cancelled *New Nation*, the group's activities did not cease but rather began to operate independently under the *Advance* banner, indicates that young people were both willing and able to organise outside the structure of a major party. The same can be said of the NLYL whose members, while older, operated with very little party support and produced *Forward View* entirely of their own volition.

How the NLYL and LoY practised their agency is demonstrative of the character of youth politics more broadly. While not a universal truth, events in the LoY and NLYL suggest a very stark generational divide in British politics. For the Liberals, this was over internal party matters. A common complaint in *Forward View* was that the Liberal Party was perceived as old, stuffy, and boring. As Mr. and Mrs. Young Liberal demonstrated, it was believed by some that the old party needed to be reinvented for a younger generation if the party was to survive. For the LoY and YCL, this conflict had a broader scope. Many young people blamed the older generation for the First World War, and feared being dragged into another conflict of their making. For many young people, including those who became members of the Woodcraft Folk or Kibbo Kift Kindred, the First World War was a politicising moment. The conflict cast a long shadow, with allusions to the war appearing regularly in periodicals throughout the period.

The war also proved to be a politicising influence in young people's conception of their role as citizens. In all the organisations young people were cast as part of an unbroken chain of British history. The past was used regularly to add weight and significance to the present and future. For the JIL, maintaining this long chain of freedom was paramount; the sacrifice made in the First World War made this endeavour even more important. On the left, sacrifice both of working-class youth in the

[16] The Executive Committee responded to, and interviewed, a members suspected of being a Communist: Executive Committee Meeting, 19 October 1934, Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, DE/8167; Executive Committee Meeting, 26 October 1934. When Labour's NEC vote on the LoY's future loomed, the branch drew up a circular inviting its members to a YCL meeting: Business Meeting, 9 July 1936, DE/8167.

First World War, and of trade unionists of the past, made the 1918 Franchise Act a landmark moment whose reforms needed to be protected. Through the youth organisations we can also see how the very conception of what citizenship meant was beginning to change. Youth, spurred by their now guaranteed voting rights, were at the forefront of the shift away from a duty-bound conception of citizenship to a legalistic framework based on rights and privileges. The first generation brought up with universal suffrage understood the importance of guaranteeing citizenship through legislation.

This thesis has made smaller, but nonetheless noteworthy, contributions to a number of other fields. Studying the youth organisations develops our understanding class and gender between the wars. Despite the classless rhetoric of the JIL, working-class voices are largely absent. While the organisation certainly had working-class members, about whom they loved to boast, they were rarely given the space to express their own thoughts and ideas. As we might expect, the LoY gave its working-class members far more representation and championed causes important to them such as workplace rights, and benefits. It also served as a vehicle to build bonds of community between working-class people throughout Britain and Europe. Both the LoY and the JIL found great success in recruiting and mobilising women. The organisations each included women at all levels, and gave them the space and agency to have their voices heard. While this thesis' main contribution has been to histories of politics, it has also touched on other, related areas. As the state began to take a more active interest in the health of its citizens it signified a shift in ideas of what the role of the state should be, and the youth wings provide a window into how the political sphere could cross the boundaries of the personal. We have also seen how quickly the parties were able to adopt innovation from the commercial sphere in order to promote themselves and generate revenue. Furthermore, the youth wings embraced these ideas enthusiastically and rather than simply copying these techniques they demonstrated their ability to be genuinely innovative and creative in the formation of brand identities for themselves. Moving outside of politics, this thesis has developed our understanding of youth culture in Britain, contributing to the growing belief that adolescence was not a post-war invention but had its roots in the inter-war years. The contribution made by political youth wings to this understanding of youth means that they

are worthy of sitting alongside other groups such as the Boys' Brigade or the Boy Scouts in the history of organised youth.

Areas for Further Research

Inevitably, the scope of this thesis was limited by time which still leaves the field of study of these organisations open for future contributions. Some of the organisations which have stayed at the peripheries of this work are certainly worthy of their own studies. For example, where I outlined that historians have preferred to explore non-partisan, adult voluntary organisations, as contrasted with my focus on political youth organisations, the non-partisan youth organisations have slipped through the gaps. *Challenge* indicates that twenty-four youth organisations attended a pro-peace rally in 1936 and very little is known about some; for instance the No More War Movement, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, or the Girls' Diocesan Association.[17] These groups are just a fraction of the number of non-partisan youth groups which were active in the inter-war years, and which have appeared on the peripheries of the political youth wings' activities, but have yet to be adequately explored. Even in the party-political sphere the book is far from closed; the children's organisations are a good example of this. There is plenty of material regarding the Young Britons and Socialist Sunday Schools which I was simply unable to make use of. In addition to these, there are the university groups affiliated to the parties and a comparison between student-specific activities and those which needed to cater to a wider demographic of young people could be potentially illuminating. Finally, there are the outside organisations which occasionally worked with the youth wings. One angle which may be of future interest is the role which religion played in politics. Christian groups associated themselves with the Youth Charter, and the YCL made several allusions to the role which Christianity should play in the pacifist movement. At the opposite end of the political spectrum, young Fascists still await their own historian as very little is known about the New Party or the BUF's youth wings.

[17] *Challenge*, April 1936, p. 6.

A second, and perhaps more substantial, area for further research is a deeper dive into the international perspective. While I have indicated that the LoY and YCL took part in international peace movements, and the JIL occasionally had contact with conservative groups across the Empire, international relations was never intended to be a key focus of my research. There is plenty of room for future historians to explore these connections in further detail, and even to look beyond Europe. Given that much of the psychological theory behind children and childhood came from the United States it would be especially fascinating to see how these theories were translated into organised youth in this country. Given the differing journey through democracy the country took – for example individual states granting women voting rights prior to the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 – It would be interesting to compare the Democrats' and Republicans' approach to politicised youth to that of Labour's and the Conservatives'. Taking on this international outlook would better enable us to understand whether Britain led the way on organised youth, and to what extent it borrowed ideas from foreign neighbours.

Final Thoughts

The youth organisations largely failed to produce MPs, the most famous former Imp being disgraced former-minister John Profumo.[18] However, as *The Imp* observed, 'any Imp with a mathematical turn of mind can calculate the odds against any one of the 150,000 Imps becoming one of the gallant six hundred.'[19] Instead, by far the most important outcome of these organisations was the lessons they taught the parties about the importance of organising youth for politics, the frameworks they created and improved on after the war, and the propaganda techniques they developed. However, over time, much of the work which was done to integrate people into mass democracy has been taken for granted; politicians have assumed the work to have been completed and parties take very little action to educate people on their roles as citizens. Many of these lessons now seem to have been forgotten

[18] Profumo's name appears in reports of the 1939 conference: *Torchbearer*, June 1939, p. 4.
[19] *The Imp*, August 1925, p. 2.

as none of the major parties currently have youth organisations with identities, cultures, or activities distinct of those of their parent bodies; a situation which I have recently argued must be rectified.[20] However, understanding how young people were incorporated into the political culture of Britain's fledgling democracy can provide important lessons for politicians in a time when issues such as the role of Parliament, the relationships between the people and their MPs, and the scale and nature of young people's involvement in politics have once again become matters for debate.

[20] Matthew Seddon, 'Five lessons from history that could help the Conservatives win back young voters', *The Conversation,* https://theconversation.com/five-lessons-from-history-that-could-help-the-conservatives-win-back-young-voters-95898, [accessed 7 May 2020].

Bibliography

Primary Sources – Unpublished

Conservative Party Archive, Bodleian Library, Oxford

Balance Sheets and accounts of Junior Imperial League, 1938-9, CCO 506/6/3.

Cannel, H.H. – Junior Imperial League staff member, 1921, CCO 4/1/28.

Conservative and Unionist Films Association, 1935-9, CCO 4/1/38.

Correspondence relating to dormant Junior Imperial League bank balances, 1938-9, CCO 506/6/2.

Junior Imperial League Annual Reports and Annual General Meeting Agendas, 1921-1939, CCO 506/2/1-18.

Junior Imperial League General Administration, c.1920-1944, CCO 506/5/1-10.

Junior Imperial League Policy and Re-organisation, 1937-44, 506/4/1-12.

Junior Imperial League Press cuttings and Photographs, 1921-1946, CCO 506/3/1-5

Junior Imperial League, Central Council, Executive Committee and Finance Committee Minutes, 1905-1944, CCO 506/1/1-6.

Political Education – correspondence courses, 1938, CCO 4/1/85.

Young Britons – Inter-war, 1931-1939, CCO 506/7/1-6.

People's History Museum, Salford

CPGB Children's/Youth Publications, 1918-1953, CP/CENT/YOUTH/2/14.

Early YCL Journals, 1922-1934, CP/YCL/21/9.

ILP Guild of Youth. Includes 'Youth Unity' (Brighton GOY, March 1934) & 2 GOY Leaflets, CP/CENT/YOUTH/3/2, 1930s.

J.S. Middleton Papers, Youth Organisation, 1924-43, LP/JSM/YO/1-24.

Labour Party League of Youth Report of the Annual Conference, March 5 and 6 1938.

Labour Youth Organisations – Publications, 1930s-1980s, CP/CENT/YOUTH/3/1.

Leaflets and Circulars, 1922-37, CP/YCL/17/1.

School & Children's Organisations. SSS & Socialist Fellowship, 1910s-1970s, CP/CENT/YOUTH/4/9.

The William Giles Papers, Labour Party League of Youth, 1932-9, LP/WG/LOY/1-34.

YCI & the ILP, 1930s, CP/CENT/YOUTH/5/7.

YCI EC, Plenums & World Congress Material, 1921-1934, CP/CENT/YOUTH/5/4.

YCI miscellaneous publications, 1920-1930, CP/CENT/YOUTH/5/6.

YCI World Congress, 1928-1935, CP/CENT/YOUTH/5/5.

YCL and ILP Guild of Youth, 1926-1936, CP/YCL/18/1-14.

YCL Congress, 1926-1936, CP/YCL/1/1-6.

YCL Documents and Papers, 1932-1936, CP/YCL/19/1-13.

YCL internal bulletins and journals, 1930-1940, CP/YCL/20/1-3.

Young Communist Internacional (YCI), 1924-1935, CP/CENT/YOUTH/5/3.

Youth – misc party papers. Miscellaneous file of correspondence, cuttings, documents & hand written notes relating to youth issues. Belonging to John Gollan (?), 1930s-1940s, CP/CENT/YOUTH/2/13.

Youth – Miscellaneous Party Statements, 1930-1970s, CP/CENT/YOUTH/2/12.

Youth Peace Movements. Youth Charter and Youth Pilgrimage, 1936-1939, CP/CENT/YOUTH/4/2.

Youth Peace Movements. Youth Charter and Youth Pilgrimage, 1936-1940, CP/CENT/YOUTH/4/3.

London School of Economics, London

Hendon Young Liberals, TITMUSS/8/2.

League of Youth Posters, COLL MISC 0714/714/6-7.

National League of Young Liberals, JOSEPHY/14/4.

National Liberal Club, London

Liberalism's Call to Youth pamphlet

The Liberal Magazine

You are Young, You will be Interested, 1928 pamphlet

Young Women, what will you do with your votes? 1927 Pamphlet

Youth Calling, 1928 pamphlet

Youth Calling, c.1920s pamphlet

Lancaster University, Lancaster

An Appeal to the Young, 1907 pamphlet

Bristol Record Office, Bristol

Minute book of Bristol East Division Junior Imperial League, 38036/BE/1(b).

Minute Book of Bristol City Group Council Junior Imperial League, 38036/J/1.

Minute Book of East Bristol Branch Junior Imperial League, 38036/J/2(a).

Minute Book of Bristol West Divisional Council Junior Imperial League, 38036/J/3(a-b).

Minute Book of Redland Branch, Junior Imperial League, 38036/J/4.

Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, Leicester

Minute book of Leicester Branch Labour League of Youth, DE/8167.

Calderdale Archive Service, Halifax

Minute book of Sowrby Bridge and District Branch Junior Imperial League, CV/7.

Wolverhampton City Archives, Wolverhampton

Minute book of Wolverhampton Branch National League of Young Liberals, D/SO/27/30-31.

East Midlands Oral History Archive, online

Carswell, J., Interview with Dorothy Shilcock, 2 July 1987,
http://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/digital/collection/p15407coll1/id/270

J. Carswell, Interview with John Shilcock, 4 December 1987, LO/441/392, http://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/digital/collection/p15407coll1/id/217/rec/1.

Carswell, J., Interview with Ken Shilcock, 2 July 1987, LO/388/339, http://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/digital/collection/p15407coll1/id/269/

Other

Minute book of Cambridge University Young Liberals, private collection of Dr. Seth Thévoz kindly made available to author.

Primary Sources – Published

Books and Articles

Amery, L.S., *Thoughts on the Constitution* (Oxford University Press, 1947).

Baldwin, Stanley, *On England and Other Addresses* (Philip Allan & Co. Ltd., 1926).

Baldwin, Stanley, *Our Inheritance* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1928).

Bernays, Edward, *Propaganda* (Horace Liveright, 1928).

Collins, Norman, *London Belongs to Me* (The Reprint Society, 1949).

Cooper, Duff, *Old Men Forget. The Autobiography of Duff Cooper* (Rupert Hart-Davis, 1957).

Emerson, Ralph Waldo, *The Conduct of Life* (Ticknor and Fields, 1860).

Gollan, John, *Youth in British Industry* (Victor Gollancz, 1937).

Higham, Charles, *Advertising. Its Use and Abuse* (Williams & Northgate Ltd., 1925).

Nicolson, Nigel (ed.), *Harold Nicolson Diaries and Letters. 1930-39* (William Collins Sons and Co. Ltd., 1966).

Paul, Leslie, *Angry Young Man* (Faber and Faber Ltd, 1951).

Peacock, Arthur, *Yours Fraternally* (Pendulum Publications, 1945).

Starr, Joseph R., 'Foreign Governments and Politics: The Summer Schools and Other Educational Activities of the British Liberal Party', *The American Political Science Quarterly,* 31.4 (1937), pp. 703-719.

Starr, R. Joseph, 'Foreign Governments and Politics: The Summer Schools and Other Educational Activities of the British Socialist Groups', *The American Political Science Review,* 30.5 (1936), pp. 956-974.

Newspapers and Periodicals

Aberdeen Press and Journal

Advance

Birmingham Daily Gazette

Birmingham Mail

Bucks Herald

Challenge

Coventry Herald

Derby Daily Telegraph

Dundee Evening Telegraph

Evening Telegraph

Falkirk Herald

Gloucester Journal

Grimsby Daily Telegraph

Hastings and St. Leonards Observer

Labour Organiser

Labour Woman

Lancashire Evening Post

Lancaster Guardian

Leeds Mercury

Liberal Year Book

Lincolnshire Echo

Linlithgowshire Gazette

Liverpool Echo

Manchester Guardian

Monthly Bulletin

North Devon Journal

Nottingham Evening Post

Nottingham Journal

Our Youth

Rugby Advertiser

Sheffield Independent

Student Vanguard

Taunton Courier, and Western Advertiser

Thanet Advertiser

The Ashridge Journal

The Citizen

The Communist Youth

The Daily Mail

The Forward View

The Imp

The Junior Imperial League Gazette

The New Leader

The New Nation

The Three Tons

The Times

The Young Briton

The Young Liberal

The Young Socialist

Torchbearer

Warwick and Warwickshire Observer

Western Times

Worthing Herald

Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer

Digitised Sources

British Election Study Team, 'The myth of the 2017 youthquake election', *British Election Study,* https://www.britishelectionstudy.com/bes-impact/the-myth-of-the-2017-youthquake-election/#.XYyGUn97mUl.

British Pathé, German Youth – Physical Training and Sports Meeting (1937), https://youtu.be/IzjaUsIjsN4.

British Pathé, German Youth Camp Scenes (1937), https://youtu.be/vveMFEUCSbI https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Edw8and1Geo6/1/6/section/1.

"Community Singing" Junior Inperial[sic] League Albert Hall 1928, https://youtu.be/dRmhzvKye20?t=249, [accessed 10 December 2018].

Evans, Lloyd, 'Why are our MPs fawning over Greta Thunberg?', *The Spectator*, https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2019/04/why-are-our-mps-fawning-over-greta-thunberg/.

How to Win an Election: A Panorama Guide, Broadcast 29 March 2010, BBC 4.

Kellner, Peter, Peter Kellner, 'The British Election Study claims there was no "youthquake" last June. It's wrong', https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/blogs/peter-kellner/the-british-election-study-claims-there-was-no-youthquake-last-june-its-wrong.

Ogorodnev, Igor, '"We don't have a future": Greta Thunberg used to offer salvation, now she prepares us for doomsday', *RT*, https://www.rt.com/op-ed/457455-greta-thunberg-cult-british-parliament-doomsday/.

Oxford Dictionaries, 'Word of the Year 2017 is…', https://languages.oup.com/word-of-the-year/word-of-the-year-2017.

Seddon, Matthew, 'Five lessons from history that could help the Conservatives win back young voters', *The Conversation,* https://theconversation.com/five-lessons-from-history-that-could-help-the-conservatives-win-back-young-voters-95898.

Speare-Core, Rebecca, 'Jeremy Corbyn's brother Piers labels teen climate activist Greta Thunberg an "ignorant brainwashed child"', *Evening Standard,* https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/jeremy-corbyn-s-brother-labels-teen-climate-activist-greta-thunberg-an-ignorant-brainwashed-child-a4125046.html.

Travis, Alan, '"Youthquake" behind Labour election surge divides generations', *The Guardian*, https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/jun/20/youthquake-behind-labour-election-surge-divides-generations?CMP=twt_gu.

Wattz, Joe, 'Theresa May criticises schoolchildren protesting against looming climate disaster for wasting lesson time', *The Independent,* https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/theresa-may-climate-change-school-pupils-protest-lesson-time-teachers-a8781046.html.

Secondary Sources

Books

Aldrich, Richard (ed.), *Public or Private Education? Lessons from History* (Woburn Press, 2004).

Appadurai, Arjun (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in cultural Perspectives* (Cambridge University Press, 1986).

Ball, Stuart, *Portrait of a Party. The Conservative Party in Britain 1918-1945* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

Barber, Sarah and Corinna M. Peniston-Bird, *History Beyond the Text* (Routledge, 2009).

Beaumont, Caitríona, *Housewives and Citizens. Domesticity and the Women's Movement in England, 1928-64* (Manchester University Press, 2013).

Beaven, Brad, *Leisure, Citizenship and Working-Class Men in Britain, 1850-1945* (Manchester University Press, 2005).

Beers, Laura and Geraint Thomas (eds.), *Brave New World. Imperial and Democratic Nation-Building in Britain between the Wars* (Institute of Historical Research, 2011).

Beers, Laura, *Your Britain. Media and the Making of the Labour Party* (Harvard University Press, 2010).

Bentley, Michael (ed.), *Public and Private Doctrine* (Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Berger, Stefan, *The British Labour Party and the German Social Democrats. A Comparative Study* (Oxford University Press, 1994).

Berthezène, Clarisse, *Training Minds for the War of Ideas. Ashridge College, the Conservative Party and the Cultural Politics of Britain* (Manchester University Press, 2015).

Bill Schwarz et al., *Formations of Nation and People* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984).

Blaazer, David, *The Popular Front and the Progressive Tradition. Socialists, Liberals, and the Quest for Unity, 1884-1939* (Cambridge University Press, 1992).

Boyd, Kelly, *Manliness and the Boys' Story Paper in Britain: A Cultural History, 1855-1940* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

Brassley, Paul, Jeremy Burchardt, Lynne Thompson, *The English Countryside between the Wars. Regeneration or Decline?* (The Boydell Press, 2006).

Brewer, John D., *Mosley's Men. The British Union of Fascists in the West Midlands* (Gower Publishing, 1984).

Burchardt, Jeremy, *Paradise Lost. Rural Idyll and Social Change since 1800* (I.B. Tauris, 2002).

Campbell, Beatrix, *The Iron Ladies. Why do Women Vote Tory?* (Virago Press Limited, 1987).

Castle, Kathryn, *Britannia's Children. Reading Colonialism through Children's Books and Magazines* (Manchester University Press, 1996).

Clarke, John, Chas Critcher and Richard Johnson (eds.), *Working Class Culture. Studies in History and Theory* (Hutchinson and Co., 1979).

Cole, G.D.H., *A History of the Labour Party from 1914* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1948).

Colley, Linda, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (Yale University Press, 2005).

Colls, Robert and Philip Dodd (eds.), *Englishness. Politics and Culture 1880-1920* (Croom Helm, 1986).

Colls, Robert, *Identity of England* (Oxford University Press, 2002).

Cook, Chris, *A Short History of the Liberal Party. The Road back to Power* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1976).

Copsey, Nigel, and Andrezij Olechnowicz (eds.), *Varieties of Anti-Fascism. Britain in the Inter-War Period* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

Cowling, Maurice, *The Impact of Labour 1920-1924* (Cambridge University Press, 1971).

Cross, Colin, *The Fascists in Britain* (Barrie and Rockcliff, 1961).

Cunningham, Hugh, *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500* (Longman, 1995).

Cunningham, Hugh, *The Children of the Poor. Representations of Childhood Since the Seventeenth Century* (Blackwell, 1991).

Cunningham, Hugh, *Time, Work and Leisure. Life Changes in England since 1700* (Manchester University Press, 2014).

Da Silva Lopes, Teresa and Paul Duguid (eds.), *Trademarks, Brands, and Competitiveness* (Routledge, 2010).

Dabydeen, David (ed.), *The Black Presence in English Literature* (Manchester University Press, 1985).

Davies, Andrew and Steven Fielding (eds.), *Workers' Worlds. Cultures and Communities in Manchester and Salford, 1880-1939* (Manchester University Press, 1992).

Davies, Andrew, *Leisure, Gender and Poverty. Working-Class Culture in Salford and Manchester, 1900-1939* (Open University Press, 1992).

Edgell, Derek, *The Order of Woodcraft Chivalry 1916-1949 as a New Age Alternative to the Boy Scouts* (Edwin Mellen Press, 1992).

Edwards, Sian, *Youth Movements, Citizenship and the English Countryside: Creating Good Citizens, 1930-1960* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

Eisenstadt, S.N., *From Generation to Generation. Age Groups and Social Structure* (The Free Press, 1956).

Eisenstaldt, S.N., *Max Weber On Charisma and Institution Building. Selected Papers* (University of Chicago Press, 1968).

Faber, Richard, *Young England* (Faber and Faber, 1987).

Fahrmeir, Andreas, *Citizenship: The Rise and Fall of the Modern Concept* (Yale University Press, 2007).

Fairlie, Helen A., *Revaluing British Boys' Story Papers, 1918-1939* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

Ferrall, Charles and Anna Jackson, *Juvenile Literature and British Society, 1850-1950. The Age of Adolescence* (Routledge, 2010).

Fowler, David, *The First Teenagers: The Lifestyle of Young Wage-Earners in Inter-War Britain* (The Woburn Press, 1995).

Fowler, David, *Youth Culture in Modern Britain, c.1920-c.1970* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

Francis, Martin and Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska (eds.), *The Conservatives and British Society, 1880-1990* (University of Wales Press, 1996).

Freeden, Michael, *Liberalism Divided. A Study in British Political Thought 1914-1939* (Clarendon Press, 1986).

Freeden, Michael, *The New Liberalism. An Ideology of Social Reform* (Clarendon Press, 1978).

Gerrard, John, *Democratisation in Britain: Elites, Civil Society, and Reform since 1800* (Palgrave Macmillan Limited, 2001).

Gorman, Daniel, *Imperial Citizenship. Empire and the Question of Belonging* (Palgrave, 2006).

Gottlieb, Julie and Richard Toye (eds.), *The Aftermath of Suffrage: Women, Gender, and Politics in Britain 1918-1945* (Macmillan, 2013).

Gottlieb, Julie V. and Thomas P. Linehan (eds.), *The Culture of Fascism. Visions of the Far Right in Britain* (I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2004).

Gottlieb, Julie V., *Feminine Fascism. Women in Britain's Fascist Movements 1923-1945* (I.B. Tauris, 2000).

Grant, Mariel, *Propaganda and the Role of the State in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford University Press, 1994).

Green, E.H.H., *Ideologies of Conservatism. Conservative Political Ideas in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford University Press, 2002).

Gregson, Nicky and Louise Crewe, *Second Hand Cultures* (Berg, 2003).

Hendley, Matthew, *Organised Patriotism and the Crucible of War: Popular Imperialism in Britian, 1914-1932* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012).

Heywood, Colin, *A History of Childhood. Children in the West from Medieval to Modern Times* (Polity Press, 2001).

Hilton, Matthew and James McKay (eds.), *The Ages of Voluntarism. How we got to the Big Society* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

Hilton, Matthew, *Smoking in British Popular Culture 1800-2000* (Manchester University Press, 2000).

Holman, Bob, *Keir Hardie. Labour's Greatest Hero?* (Lion Hudson, 2010).

Humphries, Stephan, *Hooligans or Rebels? An Oral History of Working-Class Childhood and Youth, 1889-1939* (Basil Blackwell, 1981).

Ingham, Robert and Duncan Brack (eds.), *Peace, Reform and Liberation. A History of Liberal Politics in Britain 1679-2011* (Biteback Publishing, 2011).

Jeal Tim, *Baden-Powell* (Hutchinson, 1986).

Jones, Stephen, *Sport, Politics and the Working Class* (Manchester University Press, 1988).

Klugmann, James, *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Volume One: Formation and Early Years, 1919-1924* (Lawrence and Wishart Ltd. 1968).

Klugmann, James, *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Volume Two: 1925-1927 General Strike* (Lawrence and Wishart Ltd, 1969).

Koss, Stephen, *The Rise and Fall of the Political press in Britain. Volume 2: The Twentieth Century* (Hamish Hamilton, 1984).

Larsen, Stein Ugelvik, Bert Hagtvet, Jan Petter Myklebust (eds.), *Who were the Fascists? Social Roots of European Fascism* (Universitetsfortaget, 1980).

Lawrence, Jon and Miles Taylor (eds.), *Party, State and Society. Electoral Behaviour in Britain since 1820* (Scolar Press, 1997).

Lawrence, Jon, *Electing Our Masters. The Hustings in British Politics from Hogarth to Blair* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

Lawrence, Jon, *Speaking for the People: Party, Language, and Popular Politics in England, 1867-1914* (Cambridge University Press, 1998).

LeMahieu, D.L., *A Culture for Democracy. Mass Communication and the Cultivated Mind in Britain between the Wars* (Clarendon Press, 1988).

Lewis, Joel A., *Youth Against Fascism. Young Communists in Britain and the United States, 1919-1939* (VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2007).

Light, Alison, *Forever England. Femininity, Literature and Conservatism between the Wars* (Routledge, 1991).

Lindsay, T.F, and Michael Harrington, *The Conservative Party 1918-1970* (Macmillan, 1974).

Linehan, Thomas, *British Fascism 1918-39. Parties, Ideology and Culture* (Manchester University Press, 2000).

Macdonald, Charlotte, *Strong, Beautiful and Modern: National Fitness in Britain, New Zealand, Australia and Canada, 1935-1960* (UBC Press, 2013).

MacKenzie, John M. (ed.), *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester University Press, 1986).

MacKenzie, John, *Propaganda and Empire. The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester University Press, 1984).

Mandler, Peter, *The English National Character. The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair* (Yale University Press, 2006).

Manet, Pierre, *An Intellectual History of Liberalism*, translation by Rebecca Balinski (Princeton University Press, 1994).

Mangan, J.A. (ed.), *The Imperial Curriculum. Racial Images and education in the British Colonial Experience* (Routledge 1993).

Marshall, P. David, *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

Martin, David E. and David Rubinstein (eds.), *Ideology and the Labour Movement* (Croom Helm, 1979).

Martin, Paul, *The Trade Union Badge. Material Culture in Action* (Ashgate, 2002).

Mates, Lewis H., *The Spanish Civil War and the British Left. Political Activism and the Popular Front* (Tauris Academic Studies, 2007).

McCarthy, Helen, *The British People and the League of Nations. Democracy, Citizenship and Internationalism, c. 1918-45* (Manchester University Press, 2011).

McCrillis, Neal R., *The British Conservative Party in the Age of Universal Suffrage. Popular Conservatism, 1918-1929* (Ohio State University Press, 1998).

McKernan Luke, (ed.)*, Yesterday's News: The British Cinema Newsreel Reader* (British Universities Film and Video Council, 2002).

McKibbin, Ross, *Classes and Cultures. England 1918-1951* (Oxford University Press, 1998).

McKibbin, Ross, *Ideologies of Class. Social Relations in Britain 1880-1950* (Clarendon Press, 1990).

McKibbin, Ross, *Parties and People: England 1914-1951* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

Moore, Bob and Henk F.K. von Nierop (eds.), *Twentieth-Century Mass Society in Britain and the Netherlands* (Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2006).

Moores, Chris, *Civil Liberties and Human Rights in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2017).

Morgan, Kevin, *Against Fascism and War. Ruptures and Continuities in British Communist Politics 1935-41* (Manchester University Press, 1989).

Nevett, T.R, *Advertising in Britain. A History* (Heinemann, 1982).

Norton, Philip and Arthur Aughey, *Conservatives and Conservatism* (Maurice Temple Smith Ltd., 1981).

Nott, James, *Going to the Palais: A Social and Cultural History of Dancing and the Dance Halls in Britain, 1918-1960* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

Olson, Stephanie, *Juvenile Nation: Youth, Emotions and the Making of the Modern British Citizen, 1880-1914* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2014).

Pearson, Geoffrey, *Hooligan. A History of Respectable Fears* (The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1983).

Pelling, Henry, *A Short History of the Labour Party* (Macmillan Press, 1978).

Pelling, Henry, *The British Communist Party. A Historical Profile* (Adam and Charles Black, 1958).

Pimlott, Ben, *Labour and the Left in the 1930s* (Cambridge University Press, 1977).

Porter, Bernard, *The Absent Minded Imperialists* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

Pronay, Nicholas, and D.W. Spring (eds.)*, Propaganda, Politics and film, 1918-45* (Macmillan Press, 1982).

Pugh, Arthur, *Men of Steel* (Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, 1951).

Pugh, Martin, *'Hurrah for the Blackshirts!' Fascists and Fascism in Britain between the Wars* (Pimlico, 2005).

Pugh, Martin, *'We Danced all Night' A Social History of Britain between the Wars* (The Bodley Head, 2008).

Pugh, Martin, *The Tories and the People* (Basil Blackwell, 1985).

Pulzer, Peter G.J., *Political Representation and Elections in Britain* (George Allen and Urwin Ltd., 1975).

Pye, Denis, *Fellowship is Life. The National Clarion Cycling Club 1895-1995* (Clarion Publishing, 1995).

Quinn, Anthony, *A History of British Magazine Design* (V&A Publishing, 2016).

Rappaport, Erika D., Sandra Trugden Dawson, and Mark J. Crowley (eds.), *Consuming Behaviours: Identity, Politics and Pleasure in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015).

Reed, David, *The Popular Magazine in Britain and the United States 1880-1960* (The British Library, 1997).

Richards, Jeffrey (ed.), *Imperialism and Juvenile Literature* (Manchester University Press, 1989).

Riddell, Neil, *Labour in Crisis. The Second Labour Government, 1929-31* (Manchester University Press, 1999).

Rieger, Bernhard, and Martin J. Daunton, *Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the Late-Victorian era to World War Two* (Berg, 2001).

Rieger, Bernhard, *Technology and the Culture of Modernity in Britain and Germany 1890-1945* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Ros, Agustin, *Profits for All?: The Cost and Benefits of Employee Ownership* (Nova Publishers, 2001).

Ross, Cathy with Oliver Bennett, *Designing Utopia. John Hargrave and the Kibbo Kift* (Philip Wilson Publishers, 2015).

Saverteig, D.H., and Roger Dawson (eds.), *Shaping Sexual Knowledge. A Cultural History of Sex Education in Twentieth Century Europe* (Routledge, 2009).

Scruton, Roger, *The Meaning of Conservatism* (Penguin Books 1980).

Seldon, Anthony, and Stuart Ball (eds.), *Conservative Century. The Conservative Party since 1900* (Oxford University Press, 1994).

Seyd, Patrick and Paul Whiteley, *Labour's Grass Roots. The Politics of Party Membership* (Clarendon Paperbacks, 1992).

Skoumond, Michael, and Kim Christian Schrøder (eds.), *Media Cultures. Reappraising Transnational Media* (Routledge, 1992).

Smith, Paul (ed.), *The Historian and Film* (Cambridge University Press, 1976).

Springhall, John, *Coming of Age: Adolescence in Britain 1860-1960* (Gill and Macmillan Ltd., 1986).

Springhall, John, *Youth, Empire and Society. British Youth Movements, 1883-1940* (Croom Helm, 1977).

Tanner, Duncan, Pat Thane, Nick Tiratsoo (eds.), *Labour's First Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Tebbutt, Melanie, *Being Boys: Youth, Leisure and Identity in the Inter-War Years* (Manchester University Press, 2012).

Tebbutt, Melanie, *Making Youth. A History of Youth in Modern Britain* (Palgrave, 2016).

Thackeray, David, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age* (Manchester University Press, 2013).

Thorpe, Andrew, *A History of the Labour Party Second Edition* (Palgrave, 2001).

Tinkler, Penny, *Constructing Girlhood. Popular Magazines for Girls Growing Up in England 1920-1950* (Taylor and Francis, 1995).

Todd, Selina, *The People. The Rise and Fall of the Working Class 1910-2010* (John Murray, 2014).

Webb, Michelle, *The Labour League of Youth. An Account of the Failure of the Labour Party to Sustain a Successful Youth Organisation* (The Edwin Mellen Press, Ltd., 2010).

Webber, C.G., *The Ideology of the British Right* (Croom Helm, 1986).

Weiner, Martin J., *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980* (Cambridge University Press, 1981).

Williamson, Judith, *Decoding Advertisements. Ideology and Meaning in Advertising* (Marion Boyars, 1978).

Wilson, John, Anthony Webster and Rachael Vorberg-Rugh, *Building Co-Operation. A Business History of the Co-Operative Group, 1863-2013* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

Worley, Matthew (ed.), *Labour's Grass Roots. Essays on the Activities of Local Labour Parties and Members, 1918-45* (Ashgate, 2005).

Worley, Matthew (ed.), *The Foundations of the British Labour Party. Identities, Cultures and Perspectives 1900-39* (Ashgate, 2009).

Worley, Matthew, *Labour Inside the Gate. A History of the British Labour Party between the Wars* (I.B. Tauris, 2005).

Worley, Matthew, *Oswald Mosley and the New Party* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

Wring, Dominic, *The Politics of Marketing the Labour Party* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

Yeandle, Peter, *Citizenship, Nation, Empire. The Politics of History Teaching in England, 1870-1930* (Manchester University Press, 2015).

Young, G.M., *Stanley Baldwin* (Rupert Hart-Davis, 1952).

Zweiniger-Bargielowska, Ina, *Managing the Body: Beauty, Health, and Fitness in Britain 1880-1939* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

Zweiniger-Bargielowska, Ina, *Women in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Pearson Education, 2001).

Journal Articles

Abrams, Philip and Alan Little, 'The Young Activist in British Politics', *British Journal of Sociology,* 16.4 (1965), pp. 315-333.

Bastos, Wilson and Sidney J. Levy, 'A History of the Concept of Branding: Practice and Theory', *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing,* 4.3 (2012), pp. 347-368.

Beaumont, Caitríona, ''Fighting for the 'Privileges of Citizenship': The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), Feminism and the Women's Movement, 1928-1945', *Women's History Review,* 23.3 (2014), pp. 463-479.

Beaumont, Caitríona, ''Where to Park the Pram'? Voluntary Women's Organisations, Citizenship and the Campaign for Better Housing in England, 1928-1945', *Women's History Review,* 22.1 (2013), pp. 75-96.

Beaven, Brad and John Griffiths, 'Creating the Exemplary Citizen: The Changing Notion of Citizenship in Britain 1870-1939', *Contemporary British History*, 22.2 (2008), pp. 203-225.

Beers, Laura, 'A Model MP? Ellen Wilkinson, Gender, Politics and Celebrity Culture in Interwar Britain', *Cultural and Social History,* 10.2 (2013), pp. 231-250.

Beers, Laura, 'Education or Manipulation? Labour, Democracy, and the Popular Press in Interwar Britain', *Journal of British Studies,* 48.1 (2009), pp. 129-152.

Berthezène, Clarisse, 'Creating the Conservative Fabians: The Conservative Party, Political Education and the Founding of the Ashridge College', *Past and Present,* 182 (2004), pp. 211-240.

Berthezène, Clarisse, 'Archives: Ashridge College, 1929-54: A Glimpse at the Archive of a Conservative Intellectual Project', *Contemporary British History,* 19.1 (2005), pp. 79-93.

Bingham, Adrian, ''An Organ of Uplift?' The Popular Press and Political Culture in Interwar Britain', *Journalism Studies*, 14.5 (2013), pp. 651-662.

Bingham, Adrian, 'Ignoring the First Draft of History? Searching the Popular Press in Studies of Twentieth-Century Britain', *Media History,* 18.3-4 (2012), pp. 311-326.

Bingham, Adrian, ''Stop the Flapper Folly': Lord Rothermere, the *Daily Mail*, and the Equalisation of the Franchise 1927-28', *Twentieth Century British History*, 13.1 (2002), pp. 17-37.

Binns, Amy, 'New Heroines for New Causes: How Provincial Women Promoted a Revisionist History through Post-Suffrage Pageants', *Women's History Review,* 27.2 (2017), pp. 1-26.

Bishop, Nicola, 'Ruralism, Masculinity, and National Identity: The Rambling Clerk in Fiction, 1900-1940', *Journal of British Studies,* 54 (2015), pp. 654-678.

Black, Jack, 'The United Kingdom and the British Empire: a Figurational Approach', *Rethinking History*, 22.1 (2018), pp. 3-24.

Black, Lawrence, 'The Lost World of Young Conservatism', *The Historical Journal,* 51.2 (2008), pp. 991-1024.

Brett, Pete, 'Citizenship Education in the Shadow of the Great War', *Citizenship Teaching and Learning*, 8.1 (2012), pp. 55-74.

Brewer, Marilyn B., 'The Psychology of Prejudice: Ingroup Love and Outgroup Hate?', *Journal of Social Issues*, 55.3 (1999), pp. 429-444.

Burchardt, Jeremy, 'Rethinking the Rural Idyll', *Cultural and Social History,* 8.1 (2011), pp. 73-94.

Burchardt, Jeremy, 'State and Society in the English Countryside: the Rural Community Movement 1918-39', *Rural History*, 31.1 (2012), pp. 81-106.

Burrows, Jon, '' 'Certificated Operators' versus 'Handle-Turners': The British Film Industry's First Trade Union', *Journal of British Cinema and Television,* 15.1 (2018), pp. 73-93.

Chan, Nadine, ''Remember the empire, filled with your cousins': Poetic exposition in the documentaries of the Empire Marketing Board', *Studies in Documentary Film*, 7.2 (2013), pp. 105-118.

Chen, Yan and Sherry Xin Li, 'Group Identity and Social Preferences', *The American Economic Review,* 99.1 (2009), pp. 431-457.

Clark, Janet, 'Sincere and Reasonable Men? The Origins of the National Council for Civil Liberties', *Twentieth Century British History*, 20.4 (2009), pp. 513-537.

Correll, Josuah, and Bernadette Park, 'A Model of the Ingroup as a Social Resource', *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 9.4 (2005), pp. 341-359.

Cowman, Krista, ''From the Housewife's Point of View': Female Citizenship and the Gendered Domestic Interior in Post-First World War Britain, 1918-1928', *English Historical Review*, 130.543 (2018), pp. 352-383.

Creighton, Sean, 'Organised Cycling and Politics: the 1890s and 1990s in Battersea', *The Sports Historian,* 15 (1995), pp. 65-79.

Cunningham, Michael, 'Ethos and Politics in the Youth Hostels Association (YHA) in the 1930s', *Contemporary British History,* 30.2 (2016), pp. 177-202.

Cunningham, Peter, 'Progressivism, Decentralisation and Recentralisation: Local Education Authorities and the Primary Curriculum 1902-2002', *Oxford Review of Education,* 28.2/3 (2002), pp. 217-233.

Davies, Angela, ''Oh no, nothing, we didn't learn anything': Sex Education and the Preparation of Girls for Motherhood, c.1930-1970', *History of Education*, 37.7 (2008), pp. 661-677.

Davies, Richard, 'The British Peace Movement in the Inter-war Years', *French Journal of British Studies*, 22.3 (2017).

Davis, John W., 'Working Class Make-believe: The South Lambert Parliament, 1887-90', *Parliamentary History*, 12 (1993), pp. 249-258.

Dee, David, ''Wandering Jews'? British Jewry, Outdoor Recreation and the Far-Left, 1900-1939', *Labour History*, 55.5 (2014), pp. 563-579.

Ditz, Gerhard W., 'Utopian Symbols in the History of the British Labour Party', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 17.2 (1996), pp. 145-150.

Dutton, David and Martin Pugh, 'Liberals in 1906: Flourishing or Doomed?', *Journal of Liberal History,* 54 (2007), pp. 53-58.

Dyer, Serena, 'Buying British', *History Today*, 67.8 (2017), pp. 56-67.

English, Jim, 'Empire Day in Britain, 1904-1958', *The Historical Journal*, 49.1 (2006), pp. 247-276.

Finlay, J.L., 'John Hargrave, the Green Shirts, and Social Credit', *Journal of Contemporary History,* 5.1 (1970), pp. 55-71.

Fisher, Pamela & Roy Fisher, 'The "Autodidact", the Pursuit of Subversive Knowledge and the Politics of Change', *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 28.4 (2007), pp. 515-529.

Gerrard, Jessica, 'Gender, Community and Education: Cultures of Resistance in Socialist Sunday Schools and Black Supplementary Schools', *Gender and Education,* 23.6 (2011), pp. 711-726.

Gillis, John R., 'Conformity and Rebellion: Contrasting Styles of English and German Youth 1900-33', *History of Education Quarterly,* 13.3 (1973), pp. 249-260.

Giles, Judy, 'A Home of One's Own. Women and Domesticity in England 1918-1950', *Women's Studies Int. Forum*, 16.3 (1993), pp. 293-253.

Ginzburg, Carlo, ''Your Country Needs You': A Case Study in Political Iconography', *History Workshop Journal*, 55.1 (2001), pp. 1-22.

Gleadle, Kathryn, 'Playing at Soldiers: British Loyalism and Juvenile Identities during the Napoleonic Wars', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies,* 38.3 (2015), pp. 335-348.

Gleadle, Kathryn, 'The Juvenile Enlightenment: The British Children and Youth During the French Revolution', *Past and Present,* 233.1 (2016), pp. 143-181.

Goodman, Joyce, 'International Citizenship and the International Federation of University Women before 1939', *History of Education*, 40.6 (2011), pp. 701-721.

Goodwin, Mary, 'The Garden and the Jungle: Burnett, Kipling and the Nature of Imperial Childhood', *Children's Literature in Education,* 42 (2011), pp. 105-117.

Gottlieb, Julie, 'The Marketing of Megalomania: Celebrity, Consumption and the Development of Technology in the British Union of Fascists', *Journal of Contemporary History,* 41.1 (2006), pp. 35-55.

Gregory, Adrian, 'Peculiarities of the English? War, Violence, and Politics', *Journal of European History*, 1.1 (2003), pp. 44-59.

Griffiths, Clare, 'Remembering Tolpuddle: Rural History and Commemoration in the Inter-war Labour Movement', *History Workshop Jorunal*, 44 (1997), pp. 144-169.

Hallawell, Sarah, 'Antimilitarism, Citizenship and Motherhood: the Formation and Early Years of the Women's International League (WIL), 1915-1919', *Women's History Review,* 27.4 (2018), pp. 551-564.

Hannam, June, ''A Victory of Ideals Must be Organized': Labour Party Women Organizers in the Inter-War Years', *Management and Organizational History,* 5.3-4 (2010), pp. 331-348.

Harrison, Rebecca, 'Inside the Cinema Train: Britain, Empire, and Modernity in the Twentieth Century', *Film History*, 26.4 (2014), pp. 32-57.

Harvie, Christopher, 'Book Review of Kenneth O. Morgan, *Keir Hardie: Radical and Socialist*', *Welsh History Review*, 8 (1976), pp. 117-119.

Hayman, Mark, 'Labour and the Monarchy: Patriotism and Republicanism during the Great War', *First World War Studies*, 5.2 (2014), pp. 163-179.

Heater, Derek, 'The History of Citizenship Education in England', *Curriculum Journal,* 12.1 (2001), pp. 103-123.

Heathorn, Stephen and David Greenspoon, 'Organizing Youth for Partisan Politics in Britain, 1918-c.1932', *The Historian,* 68.1 (2006), pp. 89-199.

Hey, David, 'Kinder Scout and the Legend of the Mass Trespass', *Agricultural History Review*, 59.2 (2011), pp. 199-216.

Hellyer, Peter, 'The Young Liberals and the Left, 1965-70', *Journal of Liberal History*, 67 (2010), pp. 60-67.

Hellyer, Peter, 'Young Liberals and the "Red Guard" Era', *Journal of Liberal Democrat History*, 17 (1997-98), pp. 14-15.

Hollins, T.J., 'The Conservative Party and film propaganda', *English Historical Review*, Vol. 99 (1981), pp. 359-369.

Hornsey, Richard, ''The Penguins are Coming': Brand Mascots and Utopian Mass Consumption in Inter-war Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, 57.4 (2018), pp. 812-839.

Hulme, Tom, 'Putting the City back into Citizenship: Civics Education and Local Government in Britain, 1918-45', *Twentieth Century British History*, 26.1 (2015), pp. 26-51.

Jarvis, David, 'Mrs. Maggs and Betty. The Conservative Appeal to Women Voters in the 1920s', *Twentieth Century British History*, 5.2 (1994), pp. 129-152.

J. Freeman, Gavin, 'The Decline of the Liberal Party in the Heart of England: the Liberals in Leicestershire, 1914-24', *Historical Research,* 89.245 (2016), pp. 531-549.

Kallis, Aristotle A., 'Fascism, 'Charisma' and 'Charismatisation': Weber's Model of 'Charismatic Domination' and inter-war European Fascism.', *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions,* 7.1 (2006), pp. 25-43.

King, Laura, 'Future Citizens: Cultural and Political Conceptions of Children in Britain, 1930s-1950s', *Twentieth Century British History,* 27.3 (2016), pp. 389-411.

Knox, W.W., 'Religion and Scottish Labour Movement C. 1900-39', *Journal of Contemporary History,* 23.4 (1988), pp. 609-630.

Lawrence, Jon, 'Fascist Violence and the Politics of Public Order in Inter-War Britain: the Olympia Debate Revisited', *Historical Research,* 78.192 (2003), pp. 238-267.

Lawrence, Jon, 'The Culture of Elections in Modern Britain', *History*, 96.324 (2011), pp. 459-324.

Lawrence, Jon, 'The Transformation of British Public Politics after the First World War', *Past and Present,* 190 (2006), pp. 185-216.

Lawrence, Jon, 'Why Olympia Mattered', *Historical Research,* 78.200 (2005), pp. 263-272.

Layton-Henry, Z., 'Labour's Lost Youth', *Journal of Contemporary History,* 11.2/3 (1976), pp. 274-308.

Layton-Henry, Z., 'The Young Conservatives 1945-70', *Journal of Contemporary History,* 8.2 (1973), pp. 143-156.

Lewis, R., 'The Central Labour College: Its Decline and Fall', *Welsh Labour Review*, 12 (1984), pp. 225-245.

Love, Christopher, 'Swimming, Service to the Empire and Baden-Powell's Youth Movements', *The International Journal of the History of Sport,* 24.5 (2007), pp. 682-692.

Love, Garry, 'The Periodical Press and the Intellectual Culture of Conservatism in Interwar Britain', *The Historical Journal*, 57.4 (2014), pp. 1027-1056.

Lowenthal, David, 'British National Identity and the English Countryside', *Rural History*, 2.2 (1991), pp. 205-230.

Loxham, Angela, 'Profiting from War. Bovril Advertising during World War II', *Journal of Macromarketing,* (2015) pp. 1-17.

MacKenzie, John M., 'Empire and National Identities. The Case for Scotland', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society,* 8 (1998), pp. 215-231.

Mandler, Peter, 'What is 'National Identity'? Definitions and Applications in Modern Historiography', *Modern Intellectual History,* 3.2 (2006), pp. 271-297.

Marwick, Arthur, 'Youth in Britain, 1920-1960: Detachment and Commitment', *Journal of Contemporary History,* 5.1 (1970), pp. 37-51.

Maurya, Upendra Kumar and P. Mishra, 'What is a Brand? A Perspective on Brand Meaning', *European Journal of Business Management*, 4.3 (2012), pp. 122-133.

McCarthy, Helen, 'Leading from the Centre: The League of Nations Union, Foreign Policy and 'Political Agreement' in the 1930s', *Contemporary British History*, 23.4 (2009), pp. 527-542.

McCarthy, Helen, 'Parties, Voluntary Association, and Democratic Policies in Interwar Britain', *Historical Journal*, 50.4 (2007), pp. 891-912.

McCarthy, Helen and Pat Thane, 'The Politics of Association in British Society', *Twentieth Century British History,* 22.2 (2011), pp. 217-229.

McCarthy, Helen, 'Whose Democracy? Histories of British Political Culture between the Wars', *The Historical Journal,* 55.1 (2012), pp. 221-238.

McIlroy, John, 'Two Tales about Crisis and Corruption at the Central Labour College', *Labour History Review,* 72.1 (2009), pp. 69-93.

Mercer, John, 'A Mark of Distinction: Branding and Trade Mark Law in the UK from the 1860s', *Business History*, 52.1 (2010), pp, 17-42.

Middlemas, Keith, *Power, Competition and the State* (Palgrave, 1991).

Milburn, J.F., 'The Fabian Society and the British Labour Party', *Western Political Quarterly*, 11.2 (1958), pp. 319-339.

Miller, Simon, 'Urban Dreams and Rural Realities: Land and Landscape in English Culture, 1920-45', *Rural History*, 6.1 (1995), pp. 89-102.

Moores, Christopher, 'From Civil Liberties to Human Rights? British Civil Liberties Activism and Universal Human Rights', *Contemporary European History*, 21.2 (2012), pp. 169-192.

Moran, Joe, 'Crossing the Road in Britain, 1931-1976', *The Historical Journal,* 49.2 (2006), pp. 477-496.

Morgan, Simon, 'Celebrity: Academic 'Pseudo-event' or a Useful Concept for Historians?', *Cultural and Social History*, 8.1 (2011), pp. 95-114.

Morgan, Simon, 'Material Culture and the Politics of Personality in Victorian England', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 17.2 (2012), pp. 127-146.

Morris, Brian, 'Ernest Thompson Seton and the Origins of the Woodcraft Movement', *Journal of Contemporary History,* 5.2 (1970), pp. 183-194.

Morris, Marcus, ''The Most Respectable Looking Revolutionaries'. Sartorial Identities, Class and Politics of Appearance in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Cultural and Social History,* 12.3 (2015), pp. 315-330.

Nicholas Owen, 'MacDonald's Parties: The Labour Party and the 'Aristocratic Embrace', 1922-31', *Twentieth Century British History,* 18.1 (2007), pp. 1-53.

Noakes, Lucy, ''Serve to Save': Gender, Citizenship and Civil Defence in Britain 1937-41', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 47.4 (2012), pp. 734-753.

O Broin, Turlach, 'Mail-Order Demagogues: The NSDAP School for Speakers, 1928-34', *Journal of Contemporary History,* 51.4 (2016), pp. 715-735.

Olsen, Stephanie, 'The History of Childhood and the Emotional', *History Compass,* 10.1111 (2017), pp. 1-10.

Owens, Edward, 'The Changing Media Representation of T.E. Lawrence and Celebrity Culture in Britain, 1919-1935', *Cultural and Social History,* 12.4 (2015), pp. 465-488.

Pentland, G, M. Roberts, & M. Nixon, 'The Material Culture of Scottish Reform Politics, c. 1820 – c. 1884', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 32.1 (2012), pp. 28-49.

Pilcher, Jane, 'School Sex Education: Policy and Practice in England 1870 to 2000', *Sex Education*, 5.2. (2005), pp. 153-170.

Pimlott, Ben, 'The Socialist League: Intellectuals and the Labour Left in the 1930s', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 6.3 (1971), pp. 12-38.

Porter, Bernard, 'Further Thoughts on Imperial Absent-Mindedness', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 36.1 (2008), pp. 101-117.

Prynn, David, 'The Clarion Clubs, Rambling and the Holiday Associations in Britain since the 1890s', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 11 (1976), pp. 65-77.

Prynn, David, 'The Woodcraft Folk and the Labour Movement 1925-70', *Journal of Contemporary History,* 18.1 (1983), pp. 79-95.

Pugh, Martin, 'Popular Conservatism in Britain: Continuity and Change, 1880-1987', *Journal of British Studies*, 27.3 (1988), pp. 254-282.

Pugh, Martin, 'The British Union of Fascists and the Olympia Debate', *The Historical Journal,* 41.2 (1998), pp. 529-542.

Pugh, Martin, 'The Liberal Party and the Popular Front', *The English Historical Review*, 121.494 (2006), pp. 1327-1350.

Pugh, Martin, 'The National Government, the British Union of Fascists and the Olympia Debate', *Historical Research,* 78.200 (2005), pp. 253-262.

Pugh, Martin, 'The Rise of Labour and the Political Culture of Conservatism, 1890-1945', *History*, 87.288 (2002), pp. 514-535.

Ramsden, John, ''A Party for Owners or a Party for Farmers?' How far did the British Conservative Party Really Change after 1945?', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society,* 37 (1987), pp. 49-63.

Rasmussen, Jorgen S., 'Women in Labour: The Flapper Vote and the Party System Transformation in Britain', *Electoral Studies*, 3.1 (1984), pp. 47-63.

Readman, Paul, 'Landscape Preservation, 'advertising disfigurement', and English National Identity c. 1890-1914', *Rural History,* 21.1 (2012), pp. 61-83.

Readman, Paul, 'Preserving the English Landscape, c. 1870-1914', *Cultural and Social History,* 5.2 (2008), pp. 197-218.

Reid, F., 'Socialist Sunday Schools in Britain 1982-1939', *International Review of Social History*, 11.1 (1966), pp. 18-47.

Richmond, Vivienne, 'Rubbish or Riches? Buying from Church Jumble Sales in Late-Victorian England', *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing,* 2.3 (2010), pp. 327-341.

Rieger, Bernhard, ''Fast Couples' Technology, Gender and Modernity in Britain and Germany during the Nineteen-Thirties', *Historical Research,* 76.193 (2003), pp. 364-388.

Robinson, James and Sarah Mills, 'Being Observant and Observed: Embodied Citizenship Training in the Home Guard and the Boy Scout Movement, 1907-1945', *Journal of Historical Geography,* 38 (2012), pp. 412-423.

Samuel, Raphael, 'Lost World of British Communism', *New Left Review*, 154 (1985), pp. 3-53.

Schwarz, Bill, 'Politics and Rhetoric in the Age of Mass Culture', *History Workshop Journal*, 46 (1998), pp. 129-159.

Schwarzkopf, Stefan, 'Classes to Masses? How Advertising Agencies Responded to the Challenges of the Mass Market in Inter-war Britain', *Economic History Society Paper*, (2006).

Schwarzkopf, Stefan, 'Discovering the Consumer. Market Research, Product Innovation, and the Creation of Brand Loyalty in Britain and the United States in the Inter-War Years', *Journal of Macromarketing,* 29.1 (2009), pp. 8-20.

Smith, Gareth, and Alan French, 'The Political Brand: A Consumer Perspective', *Marketing Theory*, 9.2 (2009), pp. 209-226.

Spencer, Martin E., 'What is Charisma?', *The British Journal of Sociology,* 24.2 (1973), pp. 341-354.

Speck, William Arthur, 'Robert Southey, Benjamin Disraeli and Young England', *History*, 95.318 (2010), pp. 194-206.

Springhall, John, 'Baden-Powell and the Scout Movement before 1920: Citizen Training or Soldiers of the Future', *English Historical Review*, 102 (1987), pp. 934-942.

Springhall, J.O., 'Lord Meath, Youth, and Empire' *Journal of Contemporary History*, 5.4 (1970), pp. 97-111.

Springhall, J.O., 'The Boy Scouts, Class and Militarism in Relation to British Youth Movements 1908-1930', *International Review of Social History*, 16.2 (1971), pp. 125-158.

Springhall, John, 'Woodcraft Youth: The Interwar Alternative to Scouting', *The Historian,* 155 (2012), pp. 26-30.

Spurr, Michael A., ''Living the Blackshirt Life': Culture, Community and the British Union of Fascists, 1932-1940', *Contemporary European History,* 12.3 (2003), pp. 305-322.

Stapleton, Julia, 'Citizenship verses Patriotism in Twentieth-Century Britain', *Historical Journal*, 48.1 (2005), pp. 151-178.

Stedman-Jones, Gareth, 'Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics in London, 1870-1900: Notes on the Remaking of the Working Class', *Journal of Social History*, 7.4 (1974), pp. 460-508.

Stoker, Paul, 'Importing Fascism: Reappraising the British Fascisti, 1923-1926', *Contemporary British History,* 30.3 (2016), pp. 326-348.

Summerfield, Penny, 'Conducting Thoughts: Performance, the Self, and Women's History', *Women's History Review*, 22.2 (2013), pp. 345-352.

Tajfel, Henri, M.G. Billig, R.P. Bundy, and Claude Flament, 'Social Categorization and Intergroup Behaviour', *European Journal of Social Psychology,* 1.2 (2009), pp. 149-178.

Tanner, Duncan, 'Socialist Pioneers and the Art of the Political Biography', *Twentieth Century British History*, 4 (1993), pp. 284-291.

Taylor, James, ''A Fascinating Show for John Citizen and his Wife': Advertising Exhibitions in Early Twentieth-Century London', *Journal of Social History*, 51.4 (2017), pp. 899-927.

Taylor, James, 'Written in the Skies: Advertising, Technology, and Modernity in Britain since 1885', *Journal of British Studies*, 55 (2016), pp. 750-780.

Taylor, Miles, 'Patriotism, History and the Left in Twentieth-Century Britain', *The Historical Journal*, 33.4 (1990), pp. 971-987.

Tebbut, Melanie, 'Listening to Youth? BBC Youth Broadcasts during the 1930s and the Second World War', *History Workshop Journal,* 84 (2017), pp. 214-233.

Thackeray, David, 'Home and Politics: Women and Conservative Activism in Early Twentieth-Century Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, 49.4 (2010), pp. 826-848.

Thorpe, Andrew, 'Comintern 'Control' of the Communist Party of Great Britain, 1920-43', *The English Historical Review,* 113.452 (1998), pp. 637-662.

Thorpe, Andrew, 'The Membership of the Communist Party of Great Britain, 1920-1945', *The Historical Journal,* 43.3 (2000), pp. 777-800.

Tilles, Daniel, 'Bullies or Victims? A Study of British Union of Fascist Violence', *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 7.3 (2006), pp. 327-346.

Tinkler, Penny and Cheryl Krasnick Wosh, 'Feminine Modernity in Interwar Britain and North America. Corsets, Cars, and Cigarettes', *Journal of Women's History,* 20.3 (2008), pp. 113-143.

Todd, Selina, 'Flappers and Factory Lads: Youth and Youth Culture in Interwar Britain', *History Compass,* 4.4 (2006), pp. 715-730.

Toye, Richard, ''Perfectly Parliamentary'? The Labour Party and the House of Commons in the Interwar years', *Twentieth Century British History,* 25.1 (2014), pp. 1-29.

Toye, Richard, 'H.G. Wells and New Liberalism', *Twentieth Century British History,* 19.2 (2008), pp. 156-185.

Toye, Richard, 'The Rhetorical Culture of the House of Commons after 1918', *History,* 99.332 (2014), pp. 270-298.

Tucker, Robert C. 'The Theory of Charismatic Leadership', *Daedalus,* 97.3 (1968), pp. 731-756.

Tyldesley, Mike, 'The German Youth Movement and National Socialism: Some Views from Britain', *Journal of Contemporary History,* 41.1 (2006), pp. 21-34.

Walby, Sylvia, 'Is Citizenship Gendered?', *Sociology*, 28.2 (1994), pp. 376-395.

Walton, John, 'The Northern Rambler: Recreational Walking and Popular Politics of Industrial England, from Peterloo to the 1930s', *Labour History Review*, 78.3 (2013), pp. 243-268.

Ward-Smith, G., 'Baldwin and Scotland: More than Englishness', *Contemporary British History*, 15.1 (2001), pp. 61-82.

Ward, Stephanie, 'Labour Activism and the Political Self in Inter-War Working-Class Women's Politics', *Twentieth Century British History*, 30.1 (2019), pp. 29-52.

Wijfjes, Huub, 'Spellbinding and Crooning: Sound Amplification, Radio, and Political Rhetoric in International Comparative Perspective, 1900-1945', *Technology and Culture*, 55.1 (2014), pp. 148-185.

Wilkinson, Paul, 'English Youth Movements', *Journal of Contemporary History,* 4.2 (1969), pp. 3-23.

Woodbridge, Steven, 'Richmond's 'Imps': The Junior Imperial League in the 1920s', *Richmond History Journal,* 37 (2016), pp. 64-69.

Worthy, Daryl Lee, 'Partisan Players: Sport, Working-Class Culture, and the Labour Movement in South Wales 1920-1939', *Labour History*, 55.5 (2014), pp. 580-593.

Wrigley, Christopher, 'The Labour Party and the Impact of the 1918 Reform Act', *Parliamentary History*, 37.1 (2018), pp. 64-80.

Wring, Dominic, 'Political Marketing and Party Development in Britain. A 'Secret' History*, European Journal of Marketing*, 30.10/11 (1996), pp. 92-103.

Wring, Dominic, '"Selling Socialism" – The Marketing of the "very old" Labour Party', *European Journal of Marketing*, 35.9/10 (2001), pp. 1038-1046.

Yeandle, Peter, 'Englishness in Retrospect: Rewriting the National Past for the Children of the English Working Classes, c. 1880-1919', *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 6.2 (2006), pp. 9-26.

Young, Lewis, 'Internal Party Bulletin or Paper of the Working Class Movement? The Communist Party of Great Britain and the Role of the *Daily Worker*, 1930-1949', *Media History,* 22.1 (2016), pp. 123-134.

Unpublished PhD Theses

Bailey, Peter Cecil, ''Rational Recreation': The Social Control of Leisure and Popular Culture in Victorian England, 1830-1885', unpublished PhD thesis, The University of British Columbia, 1974.

Lamb, Matthew, 'Young Conservatives, Young Socialists and the Great Youth Abstention: Youth Participation and non-Participation in Political Parties', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 2002.

Scott, Claude Frederick, 'Caring about the British Empire. British Imperial Activist Groups, 1900-1967, with Special Reference to the Junior Imperial League and the League of Empire Loyalists', unpublished PhD thesis, Kings College London, 2013.

Yeandle, Peter David, 'Lessons: Citizenship: Citizenship National Identity in the Teaching of History in England, c. 1880-1914', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Lancaster, 2007.

Webb, Michelle, 'The Rise and Fall of Labour's Youth', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Huddersfield, 2007.

Online Resources

http://www.labour-party.org.uk/manifestos/

http://www.conservativemanifesto.com/

https://www.oed.com/

https://www.oxforddnb.com/

http://www.advertisingarchives.co.uk/

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/

https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/cpa/collections/posters-collection