

The Lloyd Georges

J Graham Jones examines the defections, in the 1950s, of the children of David Lloyd George: Megan to Labour, and her brother Gwilym to the Conservatives.

A breach in the family

‘L G. thinks that Gwilym will go to the right and Megan to the left, eventually. He wants his money spent on the left.’ Thus did Lloyd George’s trusted principal private secretary A. J. Sylvester write in his diary entry for 14 April 1938 when discussing his employer’s heartfelt concern over the future of his infamous Fund. It was a highly prophetic comment. The old man evidently knew his children.

Megan

Megan Lloyd George had first entered Parliament at only twenty-seven years of age as the Liberal MP for Anglesey in the *We Can Conquer Unemployment* general election of 30 May 1929, the first woman member ever to be elected in Wales.² Her maiden speech, which she did not deliver until 7 April 1930, was a notably pungent, left-wing peroration in support of the Rural Housing Bill introduced by Ramsay MacDonald’s second minority Labour government. Almost immediately she had carved out a distinct niche for herself as an independent minded, highly individualistic member with unfailingly strong radical, even labourite, leanings — to the acclaim of her famous father. When the so-called National Government was formed in August 1931, Megan became one of the tiny group of Lloyd Georgeite ‘independent Liberals’ and was, in this guise, comfortably re-elected to the Commons in the general elections of 1931 and 1935. In the former campaign she had fiercely opposed MacDonald’s plans to axe public spending, and she appealed for job creation, most notably in the port of Holyhead where unemployment ran at perilously high levels. Even in the early 1930s there were persistent (if unconfirmed) rumours that she was likely to join the Labour Party as she frequently urged cooperation between the Liberal and Labour Parties, and it is possible that it was only her overwhelming loyalty to her father which kept her true to the Liberal faith.

In the 1931–35 Parliament, Megan continued to press for an expansionary economic approach to tackle the problem of the ‘intractable million’ long-term, structural, unemployed, and in the spring of

1935 she became a cogent exponent of her father’s dramatic ‘New Deal’ proposals to deal with unemployment and related social problems. Although opposed by a strong local Labour candidate in the person of Holyhead County Councillor Henry Jones in the general election of 1935, she secured the votes of large numbers of Labour sympathisers on the island. In 1936, she urged Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin to welcome the Jarrow marchers, and she battled heroically (although ultimately in vain) to gain Special Assisted Area Status for Anglesey. Megan’s innate radicalism and natural independence of outlook grew during the years of the Second World War, which she saw as a vehicle of social change, especially to enhance welfare reform and the rights of women. She served on an impressive array of wartime committees within the ministries of Health, Labour and Supply, while in 1940 her close friend Herbert Morrison, the Minister of Supply, invited her to chair the vaunted ‘Women against Waste’ campaign. She also pressed for increased agricultural production and for more effective organisation of the Women’s Land Army.

All these activities served to activate her indignant labourism, as did her unqualified welcome for the proposals of the Beveridge Report and her membership of the Central Housing Advisory Committee established to coordinate post-war housing construction. In the first ever ‘Welsh Day’ debate held in October 1944, which she herself was privileged to open, Megan’s rousing speech called for the reconstruction of the public industries — coal, steel, electricity and forestry — and she insisted that the full employment achieved by the exigencies of war should continue in the post-war world. She had clearly drifted far to the left of mainstream, moderate Liberal thinking and she voiced concern over the policies which her party might embrace when peace came. Together with colleagues like (Sir) Dingle Foot, she urged that the Liberals should align themselves unambiguously on the left, rejecting out of hand any possibility of an alliance with the Simonite Liberal Nationals.

Most surprisingly, in the general election of 1945, Megan was relieved of Conservative opposition on Anglesey (one of five Liberal MPs in Wales to receive this stroke of good fortune) and she faced only a sole Labour opponent in the person of Flying Officer Cledwyn Hughes (now Lord Cledwyn of Penrhos), a Holyhead solicitor then on leave from the RAF. Local rumours that she had made a pact with the Anglesey Conservatives³ were totally unfounded as it was Hughes who seemed to reap the benefit of a two-concerned fight.⁴ ‘Unless Liberalism is the dominating force in the next House of Commons’ asserted Megan, ‘We shan’t get peace, good houses or work’, subsequently claiming that ‘the Liberal Party [had] the most practical policy for social security in the famous Beveridge Plan’. In the event her majority was unexpectedly axed to 1,081, only twelve Liberals MPs were re-elected to Westminster (seven of these from Wales) and Megan was suddenly compelled to re-assess her political position. Congratulating her constituents on remaining firm in the midst of the ‘Socialist avalanche’, she declared, ‘My faith in Liberalism and its future remains unchanged’. But the nub of her new-found dilemma was this: how should the self-confessed Labourite radical respond to a landslide Labour government firmly entrenched in power and determined to enact its own left-wing legislative programme?

Following the Liberal Party’s near decimation at the polls in 1945, and the unexpected defeat of party leader Sir Archibald Sinclair in Caithness and Sutherland, E. Clement Davies, the little-known former Simonite MP for Montgomeryshire (like Megan, a veteran MP first elected in 1929) was chosen as party ‘chairman’ by the twelve remaining MPs. Lady Megan Lloyd George, after 1945 just about the only popular national figure within the party still an MP, had suddenly become ‘a minority radical in a minority Party’, whose new-found role was to attempt to thwart Davies’ strong inclinations to veer his party sharply to the right. Entering the House of Commons in 1950, Jo Grimond found her ‘perpetually young, perpetually unfulfilled’ and yet ‘nervous and idle’.⁶ She had become a close per-

sonal friend of both Clement Attlee⁷ and Herbert Morrison and was on especially amicable terms with the close-knit group of women Labour MPs, one of whom was to recall, ‘Megan was a great favourite in the Labour women’s Parliament of 1945; we looked on her as one of us’.⁸ Her close relationship with Labour MP Philip Noel-Baker also brought her closer to the left. She was vehemently critical of local electoral pacts between the Liberal and Conservative parties and she frequently attacked what she considered to be Clement Davies’ right-wing stand. As early as December 1945 she had spoken out in defence of the nationalisation programme of the Labour government: ‘We are not afraid of public control of coal, transport, electricity and water’,⁹ and a year later she was the only Liberal MP to defy the party whip by supporting the government’s Transport Bill.¹⁰

Persistent rumours that Lady Megan was on the point of joining the Labour Party intensified during 1947 and 1948. Describing her as ‘the only ... radical left in the Liberal Party’ influential north Wales trades union leader Huw T. Edwards implored her to ‘move left’ in November 1948,¹¹ and Herbert Morrison in particular urged her to change her political allegiance.¹² Small wonder that Clement Davies appointed her deputy leader of the Liberal Party in January 1949, a move undoubtedly designed to restrict her freedom of manoeuvre.¹³ Even in her new position, she underlined her party’s need for a ‘true Radical programme’ adding somewhat impudently, ‘of course that means shedding our Right Wing’.¹⁴ Generally, Davies and his chief whip Frank Byers failed conspicuously to create a united front within the Liberal Party during the years of the Attlee administrations.

In the general election of 1950, Megan surprisingly increased her majority in Anglesey to 1,929 votes. Now there were no more than nine Liberal MPs in the Commons, five of them in Wales. In May, she and Dingle Foot co-authored a lengthy memorandum protesting against the internal organisation of the Liberal Party.¹⁵ Together with Emrys Roberts (Merionethshire) they were simultaneously engaged in clan-

destine negotiations with Herbert Morrison to prepare the ground for a ‘Lib-Lab pact’. Then, in November, matters came to a head when Megan and three followers – Foot, Roberts and Philip Hopkins – staged a revolt inside the Liberal Party, threatening to join Labour immediately and causing Clement Davies seriously to consider resigning as party leader. Eventually the storm blew over, and the fractious party remained intact, but Megan remained obsessed with what she insisted was a distinct ‘drift to the Right in the Liberal Party — a drift away from the old radical tradition’,¹⁶ and with what she regarded as Clement Davies’ weak-kneed leadership — ‘There is no telling what Davies will say or do next’.¹⁷ When the next parliamentary session began in November, Megan was predictably outspoken at a meeting of the Liberal Party Committee — ‘The Liberal ship is listing to the right and almost sunk beneath the waves’.¹⁸

When the ‘frustrating and frustrated Parliament’¹⁹ elected in February 1950 was compelled to go to the country in the autumn of the following year, Lady Megan faced yet another extremely close three-cornered fight in Anglesey. Cledwyn Hughes fought the seat for the third general election in succession and local Conservatives had secured a notably strong contender in O. Meurig Roberts who launched hard hitting personal attacks in Megan — ‘True Liberals in Anglesey are not at present represented by any candidate’ — while the performance of the Liberal Party within the House of Commons marked them out, he claimed, as ‘a very small party which cannot even agree among themselves’.²⁰ It was suggested that Lady Megan, like Emrys Roberts and Edgar Granville, had been singled out for special attention by the Tories because of their general support for the Labour government.²¹ In the event, a substantial upsurge in the Conservative poll in Anglesey deprived Megan of victory by 595 votes. At last Cledwyn Hughes had succeeded in capturing the seat. For Megan it was a severe personal blow as she had been more confident of re-election than in 1950.²² Reflecting on her ignominious defeat to Liberal elder statesman Lord Samuel, she wrote, ‘There is no doubt that



David and Megan Lloyd George in 1923

a substantial number of Liberals voted Tory. The truth is that I am too left for the modern Liberal taste'.²³ For the first time since 1890 no member of the Lloyd George family represented a Welsh constituency in Parliament.

Predictably, feverish speculation immediately surrounded Lady Megan's future political intentions. Many observers asked the same questions as Gwilym Roberts — 'What is going to be Lady Megan's political future? Will she stick to the Liberal Party or will she join Labour?'²⁴ Initially, a buoyant Megan told the local press, 'I am not of retiring age nor of a retiring disposition. I am ready for the next fight whenever it comes.'²⁵ As she was the president of the tenacious Parliament for Wales campaign, there was considerable speculation that she might join Plaid Cymru.²⁶ In December, together with her sister, Lady Olwen Carey-Evans, she left on a tour of the USA and Canada, telling Anglesey Liberals, 'I would sooner go down with my limehouse colours flying than abandon my radical principles ... I have fought a good fight and I have kept my faith. That is the only important thing in public life. My conscience is perfectly clear'.²⁷ Some commentators conjectured that she might stand as a Liberal again in Anglesey or perhaps contest a by-election in an English constituency.²⁸ James Callaghan (Cardiff South) urged her to return to the Commons: 'But you must come back as a member of our party. First because we are right about the malaise and the remedies for the twentieth century. Secondly, because there is no other way back.'²⁹

had no MPs and was consequently unable to mount an effective challenge to what it regarded as Clement Davies' uninspiring leadership. Edgar Granville had thrown in his lot with Labour in January 1952. Megan wavered as 1952 gave way to 1953, displaying what the press dubbed a 'tactful – or tactical – coyness', and 'sphinx-like silence'.³¹ She may have hesitated because of the difficulty of finding a suitable seat in England and because entering the faction-racked Labour Party of the early 1950s – divided rigidly into Bevanites and Gaitskellites – was an unappealing prospect. During 1953, however, conversations with Attlee persuaded Megan that the Labour Party was now the essential voice of British radicalism, and in April 1955 she announced that she had resolved to join the party: 'The official Liberal Party seems to me to have lost all touch with the Radical tradition that inspired it ... There is a common attitude of mind and thought between Radicals and Labour'.³²

Although her conversion took place too late for her to fight a seat for Labour in the general election of May 1955, Megan was immediately bombarded with scores of insistent requests to speak throughout the length and breadth of the United Kingdom. It was widely felt within the Labour Party that any prospect of electoral success depended on winning over disillusioned former Liberals. In Welsh constituencies in particular, she may have brought large numbers of 'radical Liberals' into the Labour fold. Lady Megan appeared alongside Herbert Morrison, Jim Callaghan and party leader Hugh

Eventually, in November 1952, Megan Lloyd George refused an invitation to stand again as Liberal candidate for Anglesey, asserting that she had 'latterly been disturbed by the pronounced tendency of the official Liberal Party to drift towards the Right'.³⁰ She also tendered her resignation as deputy leader of the party. The radical wing of the Liberal Party now

Gaitskell in the party's final election broadcast on 20 May, and she was afterwards accused of a tendency to 'hog the mike' repeatedly.³³

Throughout the campaign Labour made much of its distinguished new recruit, who duly penned a column for the 'party platform' election series published by the *Daily Mail*, and contributed items to an array of local newspapers during the run-up to the poll. During the closing two weeks of the election campaign Megan spoke every day to enthusiastic audiences wherever she went — 'They call me the wild woman of Wales. The Liberal Party left me, not the other way about'.³⁴

Lady Megan herself returned to the Commons in November 1956 as the Labour MP for Carmarthenshire in a by-election caused by the death of veteran Liberal Sir Rhys Hopkin Morris. She captured the seat by a majority of more than 3,000 votes and increased her majority in the general elections of 1959, 1964 and 1966. The outcome of the 1956 by-election reduced the number of Liberal MPs to five, and this represented the nadir of the party's fortunes as it faced stagnant local organisation, hopelessly inadequate financial resources, a total of only thirty paid agents in the whole of Britain and a woeful lack of radical and progressive policies. Former Liberal MPs Dingle Foot and Wilfred Roberts also went over to Labour during 1956, while Emrys Roberts retired (permanently as it so happened) from political life.

As Labour MP for Carmarthenshire for the last nine and a half years of her life (she died prematurely in May 1966), Megan may have found herself somewhat hamstrung, missing her former freedom as the highly independent backbench Liberal member for Anglesey, and sometimes feeling a little ill at ease representing a division with a significant industrial base. She became uncomfortable, too, at her new party's marked reluctance to embrace a worthwhile measure of devolution for Wales. It is possible, moreover, that her relatively late entry into the Labour Party meant that she was never offered a ministerial position or even the opportunity to speak from the opposition front bench.

Gwilym

Megan's elder brother Gwilym was the second son and the fourth child of David and Margaret Lloyd George. Having attained the rank of major while in command of a battery of artillery on the Somme and at Passchendaele during the First World War, he became closely involved with his father's career during the years of the post-war Coalition government, attending the 1919 peace conferences and displaying an avid interest in foreign affairs. In 1922 he entered the House of Commons as the Coalition Liberal MP for Pembrokeshire in a straight fight with Labour at a time when his father's writ certainly still ran in rural Wales. He held on to the seat in a three-cornered contest in 1923, soon becoming a junior Liberal whip during the brief lifetime of the first minority Labour government.

In 1924, however, Gwilym was defeated by the Conservative Major Charles Price, a Haverfordwest solicitor and county councillor, who had also stood the previous year. In the wake of his defeat, his father (while privately accusing him of indolence) made him managing-director of United Newspapers (which included the *Daily Chronicle*) and a junior trustee of the infamous National Liberal Political Fund accumulated during the years of post-war Coalition government. At this point Gwilym remained very much in the mainstream of the Liberal Party, which he was anxious to re-build, and sought to regain his Pembrokeshire constituency. Somewhat unexpectedly (in the wake of an announcement, only two days before the dissolution of Parliament, that an air base was to be established at Pembroke Dock, news of which was certain to enhance the prospects of Major Price, the sitting Conservative MP), Gwilym recaptured the division in May 1929, joining his father and newly elected sister Megan at Westminster. This made Lloyd George 'the first man to have a son and daughter with him in the House of Commons'.³⁵ Even the defeated Tory leader Stanley Baldwin was said to rejoice in the unprecedented success of the Lloyd George dynasty, while commenting, 'I like Gwilym; he takes after his mother'.³⁶ Gwilym was in fact to remain MP for Pembrokeshire until 1950.

Although he remained intensely loyal to his father during the harsh vicissitudes which beset the Parliamentary Liberal Party during the lifetime of the second Labour government, in early September 1931, the wake of the formation of the National Government, Gwilym (contrary to press speculation) accepted the position of parliamentary secretary to the Board of Trade, his first ministerial appointment. 'Gwilym is to be offered a post today' wrote Lloyd George to his wife at the end of August, 'He was very disinclined to take it. *I offered no opinion*, but I am expecting to hear from him. Unemployment & trade figures getting worse. It is a dreary prospect for the new Gov[ernment]'.³⁷ Margaret was more positive — 'We were delighted about G[wilym]'.³⁸ It may well be that Lloyd George, although disapproving, was reluctant to veto his ambitious son's first prospect of office. At the same time, Gwilym's brother-in-law Major Goronwy Owen (Liberal, Caernarfonshire) accepted the position of Comptroller of the Household.

When, however, in early October, Ramsay MacDonald announced his government's intention of going to the country, both Gwilym and Owen promptly resigned from the government, after only five weeks in office. Gwilym followed his father's line, asserting that the sudden dissolution meant 'that the Conservatives [had] been successful in stampeding the country into a rash and ill-timed general election from which they hope to snatch a party majority. This will enable them ... to enact the full Tory programme of protectionist tariffs'.³⁹ The decision to appeal to the electorate was, he insisted, 'a discreditable manoeuvre by the Tory Party'.⁴⁰ Urged by party chief whip Ramsay Muir to reconsider, Gwilym showed his draft resignation letter to his father who only then indicated his heartfelt approval of his son's decision. Together with father, sister Megan and Goronwy Owen, he formed a curious Lloyd Georgeite splinter group of Independent Liberals who took their place alongside the Labour MPs on the opposition benches, the only Liberals initially ranged in opposition to the National Government. In Pembrokeshire, Tory contender Ma-

gor Price received the stock letter of support of Herbert Samuel, leader of the mainstream group of Liberal MPs.⁴¹ Both Gwilym Lloyd George and Price were contesting the constituency for the fourth successive general election — a unique record — and perhaps it was only the eleventh-hour withdrawal of the Labour aspirant which enabled Gwilym to hold on by a majority of just over 5,000 votes.

All four Lloyd George Liberals were in fact re-elected in October 1931 and again in November 1935. Throughout the 1930s Gwilym was generally loyal to his father's domestic and foreign policies, warmly embracing his dynamic 'New Deal' proposals during the spring and summer of 1935. Yet father and son did not enjoy the same kind of rapport as Lloyd George shared with Megan. When Gwilym's wife, Edna, informed her father-in-law in November that 'the result would be very close in Pembrokeshire', Lloyd George, 'annoyed with her', responded simply by 'literally pump[ing] optimism into him over the telephone'.⁴² On polling day, his principal private secretary A. J. Sylvester noted in his diary, 'He showed little concern for Gwilym, who is the one in difficulty'.⁴³ At the same time the old man had spared no effort to buttress Megan's election campaign in Anglesey, even addressing huge open-air audiences at Llangefni and Holyhead. In the event Megan's majority was 4182 and Gwilym's a wafer-thin 1074.

Yet in the following summer Gwilym accompanied his father on his infamous visit to Hitler at Berchtesgarden. He remained one of the trustees of the Lloyd George Fund⁴⁴ and was to some extent dwarfed in stature by the name of his famous father and more mercurially dynamic sister, Megan. Gwilym ('takes after his mother ... quite straight') lacked bravado, was sometimes accused of inertia and apathy, and was known within his constituency as 'Ask my Dad' after a succession of embarrassingly evasive replies at political meetings. In his account of Lloyd George's activities, Sylvester wrote in his diary in October 1938, 'He is not quite certain of the attitude of some of the family at the moment, particularly Gwilym, whom L.G. thinks has got a swelled head'.⁴⁵

At the outbreak of the Second World War, Gwilym returned to his former position as Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, strikingly the only Liberal to join Chamberlain's pseudo-coalition government which now included Churchill and Eden. He served amicably in this position under Chamberlain and Churchill until February 1941 when he became Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food under Lord Woolton. These offers may have been made to conciliate his father (who was by now too old for high office) by whose outmoded ranting oratory Gwilym himself confessed to being embarrassed. In June 1942, he was promoted to the new position of Minister of Fuel and Power where he remained for more than three years until the dissolution of the Coalition at the termination of hostilities. Sylvester noted in his diary for 1 October 1942:

Gwilym opened the debate on coal and did exceedingly well. He was very confident in his manner and made a good impression on the House. At two o'clock, whilst L.G., Megan and I were at lunch, Gwilym joined us. L.G. said to him: 'However worried you were, it was nothing like what I felt'. I must say that L.G. looked the part too, as he sat on the front opposition bench. With his eyes and mouth open, he was terribly het up all the time Gwilym was speaking. During the whole of lunch an endless number of MPs came up to congratulate L.G. on Gwilym's speech saying that he must feel a proud father. L.G. seemed really pleased.⁴⁶

In his new post Lloyd-George (his use of the hyphen was significant), displaying unflinching tact and professional competence. He made a vital contribution to the war effort, encouraging the miners to produce ever-increasing supplies of coal (required for both the war industries and domestic heating) and persuading consumers to exercise rigid economy in its use — thus winning the 'battle of the gap' in the sphere of fuel supplies. He also inaugurated a far-reaching reorganisation of the industry, setting up a National Coal Board to proffer him advice on wartime regulation. Collaborating with Labourite Ernest Bevin, the Minister of Labour, he helped to establish the 'Bevin Boy' scheme to increase the labour force in the coal mines and to institute a na-

tional minimum wage for working miners. Perhaps it was only Churchill's personal veto which blocked the outright nationalisation of the coal industry and Lloyd-George's ambitious proposals to convert the electricity supply industry into a public corporation.

Gwilym Lloyd-George was now a political figure of some importance. It had been proposed in 1942 that he might become Viceroy of India and intense rumours circulated in 1943 that he was about to be chosen Speaker of the House of Commons. Sylvester recorded on 1 March, 'The Speaker is very ill. Last Friday I went to see Gwilym at the Ministry of Food and ascertained from him that he was definitely interested in the Speakership, and that if it were offered to him he would certainly take it. I am doing a lot of propaganda on his behalf'.⁴⁷ At the end of the war it was noticeable that he did not follow the Labour men and the other Liberals out of the government in advance of the election. In the general election of 1945, now standing in Pembrokeshire as a 'National Liberal and Conservative' (and relieved of Tory opposition) he was narrowly re-elected by 168 votes. Even so, he appears to have been offered by Sir Archibald Sinclair the leadership of the small band of Liberal MPs, immediately

refusing the offer because of the onerous incidental expenses which the position would entail.⁴⁸ He also turned down the chairmanship of the National Liberal Party at the same time,⁴⁹ and, when the new House assembled and Churchill offered him a place on the opposition front bench, he insisted he could sit only as a Liberal. 'And what the hell else should you sit as?' was Churchill's characteristically belligerent response.⁵⁰ It soon became apparent, however, that Gwilym was supporting the Conservatives and seemed to enjoy a warm rapport with Churchill, who, as a former Liberal himself, had genuinely regretted the departure of all the other Liberal ministers from his Coalition government in the spring of 1945. Gwilym would no doubt have eagerly endorsed

Churchill's broadcast on 4 June, 'Between us and the orthodox Socialists there is a great doctrinal gulf which yawns and gapes ... There is no such gulf between the Conservative and National Government I have formed and the Liberals. There is scarcely a Liberal sentiment which animated the great Liberal leaders of the past which we do not inherit and defend'.⁵¹ So consistent was Gwilym's support for the Conservatives that in 1946 the Liberal whip was finally withdrawn from him.

In his public speeches, Gwilym Lloyd-George now insisted that no major policy issues divided the Liberals and the Conservatives, and that, to both parties, the battle against the 'socialist menace to liberty' was paramount. Asquith's daughter, Lady Violet Bonham-Carter, reported coyly to Gwilym's sister Megan at the end of 1947, 'Gwilym is speaking with Harold Macmillan etc'.⁵² During the February 1950 general election campaign, he appeared on Conservative platforms even in constituencies where Liberal candidates were standing and he was publicly

disowned by the Liberal Party.⁵³ 'Gwilym has caused us a lot of worry' party leader Clement Davies lamented wearily to his predecessor, Sir Archibald Sinclair.⁵⁴ The La-

'Politicians are like monkeys. The higher they climb, the more revolting are the parts they expose.'

bour Party targeted highly marginal Pembrokeshire as one of its most likely wins, soon increasing its representation in local government in the county and bringing in party heavyweights like Clement Attlee and Aneurin Bevan to woo the local electorate. The ploy succeeded as Desmond Donnelly narrowly toppled Gwilym by 129 votes in 1950.

Gwilym ventured north in search of a safer haven, eventually securing the 'National Liberal and Conservative' nomination for Newcastle-upon-Tyne North where he won comfortably in 1951 — with Churchill's support and in spite of an Independent Conservative rival.⁵⁵ He offered himself to his new electorate as 'a firm opponent of Socialism and a supporter of the Conservative policy' and making an especial

appeal to traditional Liberals: 'A word to Liberals. The old antagonism between Liberals and Conservatives has lost its meaning today. I can find no essential difference between them in policy and outlook, while both are fundamentally opposed to Socialism, the deadly enemy of Liberalism and Freedom. The first duty of Liberals in this election is the defeat of Socialism'.⁵⁶ His return to the Commons coincided with Megan's defeat in Anglesey. Churchill, evidently fully aware of his administrative acumen and tactful approach, immediately re-appointed Lloyd-George to the sensitive position of Minister of Food, where until 1954 he cautiously presided over the gradual withdrawal of food rationing (which he himself had helped to implement during the war) and made economies in the bill for food imports.

In October 1954, Churchill promoted Lloyd-George to be Home Secretary and (the largely nominal) Minister for Welsh Affairs. Ironically, when the monster petition of the Parliament for Wales campaigners of the early fifties was presented to parliament by the movement's indefatigable president, Lady Megan Lloyd George, in 1956, she placed it in the hands of her brother. Under Anthony Eden, Lloyd-George piloted through the House of Commons the 1957 Homicide Act, a measure which somewhat modified the severity of the law in murder cases. He generally resisted the growing pressure for the abolition of capital punishment following the public outcry over the infamous Timothy Evans case, arguing for its retention as a deterrent and as a statement of society's 'moral revulsion for murder.' When Macmillan succeeded Eden in 1957 Lloyd George was unceremoniously shunted off to the House of Lords as the first Viscount Tenby. He accepted his fate with characteristic good grace and humour, and jested that the title should have been 'Stepaside'. Among the wide array of public offices which Lord Tenby filled during the last decade of his life were president of University College, Swansea and chairman of the Council on Tribunals.

Gwilym Lloyd-George, Viscount Tenby, succeeded in carving out a distinct niche for himself in political life,

quite independent of his famous father. A convivial, popular and respected colleague, he made friends in all political parties, and his 'move to the right' was never especially resented in political circles. He displayed administrative competence in several government departments, and his work at the Ministry of Fuel and Power during 1942–45, building up and conserving the nation's energy supplies, was a major contribution to the success of the Allied war effort. Upon attaining the position of Home Secretary, he made the memorable comment, 'Politicians are like monkeys. They higher they climb, the more revolting are the parts they expose'⁵⁷ — a strange remark from a Conservative Home Secretary and one who was the son of the arch-monkey himself. Yet Gwilym had himself succeeded in climbing the greasy pole of political life without forfeiting the respect and friendship of fellow politicians or the goodwill and admiration of the British people.

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- 1 Colin Cross (ed.), *Life with Lloyd George: the diary of A J Sylvester, 1931–1945* (London, 1975) pp 206–207.
- 2 See J Graham Jones, 'Lady Megan's first parliamentary contest: the Anglesey election of 1929', *Transactions of the Anglesey Antiquarian Society and Field Club*, 1992, pp 107–122
- 3 *Evening News*, 18 June 1945
- 4 *North Wales Chronicle*, 27 July 1945
- 5 See the reports in the *Holyhead Mail* for June and July 1945
- 6 Jo Grimond, *Memoirs* (London, 1979) p 149
- 7 See NLW MS 20,475C, Atlee to Megan Lloyd George, 4 September 1948 and 10 March 1949
- 8 Jean Mann, *Women In Parliament* (London, 1962) p 21
- 9 *Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald*, 7 December 1945
- 10 *News Chronicle* 20 December 1946
- 11 *Liverpool Daily Post*, 12 December 1948
- 12 *The Observer*, 2 January 1949
- 13 *The Times*, 22 January 1949
- 14 *Western Morning News*, 12 January 1949
- 15 House of Lords Record Office, Herbert Samuel Papers A/130(30)
- 16 Cited in Robert Pitman, *What happened to the Liberals* (Tribune pamphlet, 1951)
- 17 Cited in Mervyn Jones, *A Radical Life: the Biography of Megan Lloyd George* (London, 1991) p 213
- 18 Cited *ibid*, p 214
- 19 The phrase is that used by Harold Macmillan, *Tides of Fortune* (London, 1969) p 352

- 20 *Holyhead and Anglesey Mail*, 19 October 1951
- 21 *The Times*, 24 October 1951
- 22 See House of Lords Record Office, Herbert Samuel Papers A/155/xiii/161, Megan Lloyd George to Samuel, 9 November 1951
- 23 *Ibid*
- 24 *Liverpool Daily Post*, 27 October 1951
- 25 *North Wales Chronicle*, 2 November 1951
- 26 *Western Mail*, 27 October 1951
- 27 *Liverpool Daily Post*, 7 December 1951
- 28 *Ibid*
- 29 NLW MS 22752C, f 38, James Callaghan to Megan Lloyd George, 31 December 1951
- 30 Gregynog Hall, Newtown, Liberal Party of Wales archive, Megan Lloyd George to W Schubert Jones, 5 November 1952.
- 31 Columns from the *Guardian* and *Western Mail* cited in Jones, *A Radical Life* p 238
- 32 Cited *ibid* p 248
- 33 D E Butler, *The British General Election of 1955* (London, 1955) p 61
- 34 Cited in Jones, *A Radical Life* p 249
- 35 *Liverpool Post and Mercury*, 3 June 1929. See also Frances Lloyd George, *The Years that are Past* (London, 1967) p 221
- 36 Cited in A H Booth, *British Hustings, 1924–1950* (London, 1956) p 90
- 37 NLW MS 20,440D, no 1872, D Lloyd George to Margaret Lloyd George, 'Wednesday' [26 August 1931].
- 38 House of Lords Record Office, Lloyd George Papers I/1/3/22, MLG to DLG, 3 September 1931.
- 39 *The Times*, 9 October 1931
- 40 Cited in his obituary *ibid.*, 15 February 1967
- 41 Roy Douglas, *The History of the Liberal Party, 1895–1970* (London, 1971)
- 42 *Life with Lloyd George*, p 134 diary entry for 6 November 1935
- 43 *Ibid.*, p 135, diary entry for 14 November 1935
- 44 See the *News Chronicle*, 2 November 1935, where Gwilym estimated that the not insignificant sum of £100,000 had been expended on the election campaign from the Lloyd George Political Fund. The same point is made in Frank Owen, *Tempestuous Journey: Lloyd George, his life and times* (London, 1954), p 692
- 45 *Life with Lloyd George*, p 206 diary entry for 14 April 1938. But cf. Owen op. Cit., p 694, 'As a rule, they got on splendidly, for Gwilym could calm the old man out of his most typhonic rage by a funny story, delightfully acted'.
- 46 *Life with Lloyd George*, p 304
- 47 *Ibid.* p 312–313, diary entry for 1 March 1943
- 48 Douglas, op. Cit. P 249
- 49 See his obituary notice in the *Guardian* 15 February 1967
- 50 Cited in Douglas op. cit. P 249
- 51 Cited in C Cooke, *Sir Winston Churchill: a self-portrait* (London, 1954) p 199
- 52 NLW MS 20475, no 3168, VB-C to MLG, 17 November 1947
- 53 NLW Clement Davies Papers J3/11, Sir Archibald Sinclair to Davies, 9 January 1950. I am most grateful to Mr Stanley Clement-Davies of London for his kind permission to consult his father's papers.
- 54 *Ibid*. J3/10, Davies to Sinclair, 6 January 1950
- 55 See D Butler, *The British General Election of 1951* (London, 1952) pp 93–94
- 56 Election address of Gwilym Lloyd-George, 25 October 1951
- 57 Cited in Andrew Sweeting, 'Gwilym Lloyd-George, Viscount Tenby' in Brack et al (ed) *Dictionary of Liberal Biography* (London, 1998)