

# Liberal divisions

**Nick Cott** examines why the Liberal Party failed to patch up effectively its first major post-war split, between the supporters of Asquith and those of Lloyd George.

# Liberal unity frustrated

## The impact of intra-party conflict on the reunited Liberal Party, 1923–31

Oh, for the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still!

*(George Lambert MP, 3 June 1929)<sup>1</sup>*

### The background to Liberal divisions and the failure of reunification

Between 1916 and 1918, the Liberal Party separated into two entities. In part, this was due to an ideological division in the government between compulsionists and voluntarists, who had different perceptions of the best way to approach the management of the war effort. This manifested itself in a struggle between the two sides for pre-eminence, crudely resulting in the ultimate defeat of the voluntarists, represented by Asquith and his allies, and the triumph of the compulsionists, represented by Lloyd George and his allies.<sup>2</sup> This conflict was highly personal, with many voluntarists believing that they were being forced out of the government. These Liberals felt that Lloyd George had waged a campaign against them in order to extend his influence and usurp Asquith's crown.<sup>3</sup> This seemed to be confirmed by Lloyd George's alliance with the Conservatives, who supported compulsion, and it was felt that they conspired together against Asquith, forcing him out of power, to be replaced by Lloyd George in December 1916.

A rift in the Liberal Party was thus created in 1916, with Asquith and his supporters relegated to opposition. However, there was no clear-cut separation of MPs, with whips still canvassing all Liberal members. In reality, the formal separation of the two elements did not occur until 1918 when Lloyd George, rather than seeking to reunite the Liberal Party, decided to continue to foster his relationship with the Conservatives. This was demonstrated by him and his supporters seeking to fight the election

on a joint platform with the Conservatives, intended as a means to secure a continuation of the wartime coalition into peacetime. When the election came, candidates with official backing from Lloyd George received a 'coupon' which entitled them to immunity from opposition from candidates of parties supporting the Coalition. Lloyd George was seen to be indicating a greater preference for Conservatives than Liberals, since only around 150 Liberal candidates received the coupon.

The Coalition's arrangement with the Conservatives quickly led to the splitting up of the party's parliamentary organisation in spring 1919. It also led to hostile relations between the two elements. Asquith's independent – or 'Wee Free', as they were known<sup>4</sup> – Liberals condemned the Coalition's policies and tactics. Criticism of policy was related chiefly to the Coalition's brutal tactics in Ireland, its continuing military commitments abroad, domestic expenditure and state intervention which was attacked as expensive, inefficient and defying individual freedom. In terms of tactics, a great deal of resentment was generated amongst Wee Free candidates by Coalition opposition at election time, most notably during the Spen Valley by-election of 1919, when Sir John Simon's attempt to be re-elected was frustrated by the intervention of Coalitionists.<sup>5</sup> A combination of these elements led to the decision of the 1920 Leamington party conference formally to reject the Coalition, splitting the Coalition Liberal minority from the party organisation, except in Wales.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the hostility between the two camps nurtured a tendency to seek to cooperate more extensively with politicians outside the two Liberal factions, making it conceivable that the separation would be permanent. On the Coalition side, there was some enthusiasm for the idea of seeking support from Coalition Conservatives for 'fusion' (the establishment of a new party made up of Coalitionist Liberals and Conservatives). Some Wee

Frees pursued their own version of fusion by opening up discussions with anti-Coalitionist Conservatives.<sup>7</sup> The aim behind both these attempts was to create a new 'National' party that in a sense distanced itself from party politics by creating a moderate force representing the interests of the nation as a whole, rather than sectional or class interests.<sup>8</sup>

However, the political landscape was totally altered in October 1922 by the fall of the Coalition and the new Conservative leader Baldwin's commitment to protection in 1923 – a move totally alien to Liberal free trade instincts. Party political government had re-emerged and Liberals could no longer expect to continue to find political comrades within other parties. They began to realise that it was only by working together that a moderate National political force could be created.<sup>9</sup> There was also self-interest to consider. Now Liberals perceived that they were uncertainly placed between the other two parties, with the prospect of electoral meltdown if they did not work together. Therefore there was an overwhelming desire amongst Liberal parliamentarians to create a National party and the imperative forced upon the party by electoral considerations led to rapid reunification just in time for the election of December 1923.

A vague notion of where the party should be positioned and a few electorally focused calculations were, however, hardly enough to ensure Liberal unity. There were differences between the left and right of the party that could not be resolved without compromise – but Liberals were not prepared to make the compromises necessary to ensure that it worked. Individualists on the right and collectivists on the left stubbornly refused to contemplate policies and strategies which did not totally match their own perspectives. Continuing factional quarrels were also troublesome. Former Wee Frees and Coalitionists continued to refuse to cooperate with each other because of mutual distrust, preferring to distance themselves from their rivals rather than seek reconciliation. This mixture of ideological problems, factional mistrust and sheer stubbornness prevented the party from developing a

clear purpose, a common identity and a sense of belonging, all vital to securing unity and preventing the various defections that occurred during the period, and the later partitioning of the party into disparate segments in 1931.<sup>10</sup>

## Reaction against the positioning of the party closer to Labour

In one sense, it seems incredible that differences should have emerged after reunification over where the party should be positioned in relation to the other two political parties, given the clear consensus to create a National party. However, this consensus was built on an abstract notion of what a National party constituted, with little discussion as to the party's likely position in relation to the two other parties. This was an error because being now the smallest party in a three-party system, it was vitally important that Liberals were clear about how they were to position themselves. It was also a recipe for conflict, since Liberals brought to the reunited party conflicting interpretations of what a National party actually meant in practice. Some felt the party should position itself closer to Labour and develop left-leaning policies, whilst others, by contrast, felt the party should position itself closer to the Conservatives and develop right-leaning policies.

Division over the issue began to surface after the election in December 1923, which delivered an inconclusive result.<sup>11</sup> The Conservatives were the largest party, but Asquith and Lloyd George decided to support the accession of a minority Labour administration in January 1924, as the election had been fought on the issue of protection versus free trade. The result was a clear defeat for protectionism, but the Labour Party had more seats than the Liberals and in these circumstances, it seemed constitutionally right that the Liberals should back the accession of a Labour government. This course of action received general support from Liberals who saw it as the only possible course, and from those like Alfred Mond and Walter Runciman who saw the arrangement as one which would eventually lead to the integration of

moderate Labour elements into the Liberal Party.<sup>12</sup> However, there were opposing voices; Edward Grigg believed that there was a possibility of 'being swallowed up by Labour', and Sir John Simon stated that the arrangement would see Liberals being culpable in the establishment of a 'socialist state.'<sup>13</sup> In the most extreme case, that of Winston Churchill, it appears that he left the party over the issue.<sup>14</sup> He saw Liberalism and socialism as opposites; 'Liberalism', he said, aimed to preserve and maintain the 'freedom of the individual and the sanctity of home', whilst socialism erected 'the State as a sort of God' and reduced 'man to a sort of slave.'<sup>15</sup> It seems then that there were fundamental objections in the Liberal Party to even the mildest form of tolerance of opposing parties since in this instance, Liberals had merely voted Labour into office. No formal pact was ever concluded.

Fundamental objections to the positioning of the party did not, however, surface strongly until 1926, after Lloyd George, now party leader, sought to forge a political alliance with Labour arising from his desire to build a left-leaning National bloc.<sup>16</sup> Whilst this won him the support of the social-radical element of the party, it led to opposition from some Wee Frees and former Coalitionist allies of Lloyd George. This was particularly the case during the General Strike of 1926, when Lloyd George came out in support of the trade unionists, and during the Parliament of 1929–31, when he gave support to a second minority Labour administration.<sup>17</sup> Reaction was sometimes extreme. Two of Lloyd George's former Coalitionist allies, Frederick Guest and Edward Hilton Young, were so aggravated by this that they decided to quit the party.

The policies arising from Lloyd George's strategy also generated opposition. This can be seen most distinctly, perhaps, in the controversy surrounding land policy that reached its climax in 1926. Lloyd George advocated a policy of 'cultivating tenure', which would have seen county council committees taking over the land and renting it out to farmers. This led to opposition from individualists who were fundamentally opposed to the abolition of owner-occupation. Hilton

Young and Mond, another former Coalitionist, were especially critical. In both cases it was a factor influencing their decision to leave the party.<sup>18</sup> Some Wee Frees also opposed the policy, but since by this stage they had severed ties of loyalty to the leadership and sectioned themselves off from the party mainstream, it is little wonder that they did not contemplate resignation.<sup>19</sup>

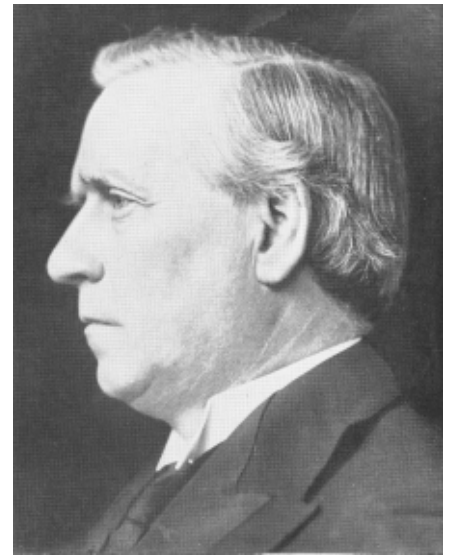
Whilst it is clear that there were principles at stake, Liberals showed a stubborn inability to make the compromises that might have led to a policy that was acceptable to all sides, or to put forward alternatives with which to challenge Lloyd George. Both of these positions could have led to greater unity and possibly prevented the fragmentation of the party. Lloyd George himself can be held partly to blame. His resolute determination to plough ahead with his policy led to reaction against it, particularly since it was believed he bought support through his Political Fund, a tactic that was hardly likely to endear opponents to his policies.<sup>20</sup> However, even if Lloyd George had been more accommodating, it probably would have made very little difference given the dogmatism displayed by the objectors. This is particularly true of the reaction against land policy when a compromise solution agreed by a special conference to allow cultivating tenure to coexist with owner-occupation still could do nothing to appease some of the objectors.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, evidence that at least one prominent Wee Free exaggerated his opposition in order to undermine the leadership suggests that whatever policy Lloyd George put forward would have encountered some opposition.<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, many of the objectors had a clear preference for aligning the party closer to the Conservatives and building a National party, or bloc, that involved Liberals and Conservatives, rather than Liberals and Labour. This was particularly true of former Coalitionists. Churchill, before his defection in 1924, was perhaps the most active of these Liberals trying to build support for the idea amongst members of the Liberal Party.<sup>23</sup> Following his defection, this mantle was passed to Grigg and Frederick Guest, who actively sought

to build support to challenge Lloyd George's strategy.<sup>24</sup> Both formed electoral pacts with the Conservatives in their constituencies, and Guest frequently voted with the Conservatives in Parliament.<sup>25</sup> However, there were firm advocates of this approach amongst Wee Frees too. After 1924, for example, Simon worked very closely with Conservatives in his constituency,<sup>26</sup> developed a strong political friendship with Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain,<sup>27</sup> and of course, led the Liberal National break-away in 1931 in order to pursue cooperation more formally.

Potentially, then, there was a strong body of opinion that might have challenged Lloyd George if the two sides had desired to cooperate. However, this was not the case. Former Coalitionists even deliberately sought to exclude Wee Frees from their discussions over the issue. This is reflected, for example, in a letter written by Grigg to Guest in which he stated that he was 'very anxious to discuss the possibility of common action' with Liberals who were 'not in sympathy with the Radical Group'.<sup>28</sup> Equally, there is no evidence that Simon sought their support. Wee Frees disliked Coalitionists and could never consider formal cooperation.<sup>29</sup> Tribal divisions therefore played a major part in preventing cooperation between the two factions. However, this was not the only explanation; a further one lies in the failure of the party leadership itself to produce acceptable policies and strategies. Whilst a united response to Lloyd George could have led to a change of direction, the chances of this happening were hindered because the policy that Lloyd George was pursuing alienated Liberals from the party as a whole, preventing any inclination to cooperate with other Liberals irrespective of their personal views about them.

Whatever the reasons, the inability to cooperate caused immense damage to the possibility of unity. It encouraged right-leaning Liberals to look outside the party for politicians to cooperate with and led to defections when they came to feel the greater sense of belonging to the Conservative fold that almost inevitably followed the development of fraternal relationships with members of the Conservative Party.



H. H. Asquith, Liberal leader 1908–26 and Prime Minister 1908–16

## The 'guerrilla war': Wee Free resistance to Lloyd George

Mistrust was undoubtedly the main reason for the continuing resistance of Wee Frees to Lloyd George and his allies. Much of this was related to recent party history, or perhaps more correctly a mythologised interpretation of it, which served to demonise Lloyd George and his allies.<sup>30</sup> Doubts remained as to their moral characters (as witnessed by their activities in undermining Asquith in the period 1916–18 and in electoral controversies thereafter) and also as to their competence in policy-making.

The former Wee Frees believed that Lloyd George and his allies would again try to usurp the leadership of the party by underhand tactics. This fear seemed to be justified by Lloyd George's tactics after 1924, when he began his ascent to the leadership of the party. Suspicious Wee Frees attributed his rise to his Political Fund, which they believed had allowed him to lever himself into a dominant position by bribing the party into accepting organisational and policy reforms that were to his 'own political advantage'.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, it seemed that he had somehow contrived the humiliating party rout in 1924 in order to remove those who opposed him.<sup>32</sup> Secondly, former Wee Frees saw in Lloyd George's 'illiberal' socialistic policies the worst excesses of

the Coalition's extravagant expenditure plans.<sup>33</sup> In reaction to this, they became preoccupied with a defence of abstract notions of individualism<sup>34</sup> to which some of them in fact did not totally adhere, in order to prove that Lloyd George's commitment to Liberalism had faded, even when it made them appear inconsistent and hypocritical.

This form of guerrilla warfare had its limitations in the immediate period following Lloyd George's effective takeover of the party from 1924. Whilst it is clear that it became powerful in perpetuating divisions which prevented Liberals from developing a sense of belonging to the reunified party, this resistance did little to undermine Lloyd George's leadership by solidifying opposition to him before the 1929–31 period. This is because it was designed to involve a few disaffected former supporters of Asquith, and therefore excluded other Liberals. Furthermore, there was no clear positive conception of what the rebels stood for, which might have won support from Liberals who sat between the former Wee Free and Coalitionist factions. Abstract principles were clearly not enough. However, from 1929 onwards, the resistance did start to have a greater impact as it distanced itself from tribal warfare tactics, eventually unifying part of the party around the right-leaning National policy in 1931, when half the parliamentary party deserted the Liberals for the new Liberal National

grouping. Some of this was luck: many other potential forces of resistance had disappeared because of earlier defections from the party; but it does at least show that the resistance had gained enough support amongst Liberals to have shattering consequences for the unity of the party in the longer term.

Two of the most vocal campaigners against Lloyd George and his allies were Runciman and Simon. Both had grievances against Lloyd George and his allies and were strong subscribers to the 'demonic' interpretation of their motivation.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, both were significant figures because of their ability to lead Wee Free opinion, especially after Asquith's retirement from the leadership in 1926, when they became identified as his successors.<sup>36</sup>

Of the two, Runciman was perhaps the most active in mobilising resistance to Lloyd George. He helped to create and direct the guerrilla warfare operation through a separate organisation within the party: the Radical Group, established in 1924, and its later replacement, the Liberal Council, in 1927.<sup>37</sup> Because of the key role he played in establishing these organisations, he was able to ensure that they focused efforts on the three-pronged attack he favoured to destabilise the leadership of opposing policy, opposing and frustrating strategy and frustrating electoral success.

In terms of policy, the propaganda suggested that the rebels adhered to traditional Liberal values.<sup>38</sup> In most cases, this appears to have been vaguely the case, but on Runciman's part, there appears to have been some disingenuousness, since at times he flirted with socialistic policies, such as land nationalisation, and he publicly backed Lloyd George's loan-financed public works programme in 1929.<sup>39</sup> Clearly, he aimed to create controversy over policy to undermine the leadership irrespective of whether he believed the principles he extolled in order to destabilise it.

In terms of strategy, there was resistance to the repositioning of the Liberal Party closer to socialism, as witnessed by opposition to Lloyd George's support for the General Strike of 1926, although again Runciman's opposition

can be seen to be disingenuous given his earlier support for moderate trade unionists.<sup>40</sup> In Parliament, Runciman led the organisation in trying to counteract 'official' overtures to the Labour Party by offering the minority Labour government under Macdonald (1929–31) general support for moderate Liberal policies. This was not entirely a political tactic to weaken Lloyd George, since Runciman was also determined to encourage Labour not to implement socialist legislation, but it certainly suited the purposes of tribal warfare since it affected the Lloyd Georgian influence over governmental policy and the Parliamentary Liberal Party.<sup>41</sup>

Finally, there were the electoral tactics. Most famously in this respect, Runciman played a key role in frustrating the chances of the Liberal candidate at the Tavistock by-election of 1928. The controversy he created by refusing to speak on behalf of the candidate, who was backed by Lloyd George, was said to have contributed to the narrow Conservative victory.<sup>42</sup>

Simon, by contrast, did not formally become part of the guerrilla resistance to Lloyd George by the Wee Frees. This is partly explained by his withdrawal from active Liberal party politics to pursue his legal career from 1924–26, which left him outside the resistance movement. However, in 1926 he returned to active politics to mount a challenge to Lloyd George, which he seems to have done in conjunction with members of the organised resistance, even if he did not become formally part of it.<sup>43</sup> This was particularly the case during the General Strike, when he joined with five members of the resistance in criticising Lloyd George.<sup>44</sup> However, he never played a wider part in the tactical aspects of the rebel campaign and in the period from 1929–31 his position in opposition to Liberal–Labour relations meant that he became distant from its leadership.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, unlike Runciman he clearly believed in right-leaning traditional Liberal individualism and as his opposition to Labour showed, he was an anti-socialist.

For these reasons, from 1929, Simon was able to project a clearer image as a

David Lloyd George, Liberal leader 1926–31 and Prime Minister 1916–22





Sir John Simon, Liberal National leader in 1931

Wee Free rebel leader, which eventually also won him credibility as a leader amongst former Coalitionists, who shared his views and now saw him as separate from the mainstream of Wee Free resistance. The perception of him was critical to the renewed division of Liberalism in 1931, which came about when the mounting financial crisis reinforced the idea that Liberals should seek to make an alliance with the Conservatives. Suddenly he realised that a body of disaffected Liberal opinion existed that was ready to work with the Conservatives. He exploited this by creating the Liberal National party, established in October, which united right-leaning Wee Frees and former Coalitionists around such a policy for the first time and under his leadership. His pre-eminent position reflected the luck that has been alluded to since the defection of other potential leaders left him in a strong position to gain such support. However, it also reflected something of the longer-term significance of Simon's style of Wee Free resistance. Through distancing himself from the main rebel group, he was eventually able to provide an element of the Liberal Party with a common sense of purpose again, encouraging them to cooperate with each other, but unfortunately, this precipitated the collapse of the reunified party.

## Conclusions

The period from 1923–31 was one in which Liberalism as a single political,

as well as an ideological, force struggled to survive, with many of its traditional policies, now seen as irrelevant to the post-war period and others having been adopted and adapted by the other parties. Furthermore, its electoral base was shrinking. This left Liberals having to redefine their position, not only in isolation but also in relation to other parties. Undoubtedly this was one of the main sources of the divisions which emerged – but they could to some degree have been overcome had Liberals chosen to work together and reached compromises to ensure greater, if not total, unity. This did not happen because of the factional disputes between the Wee Frees and the former Coalitionists, sheer dogmatism and, most significantly, the failure of the Liberals to develop a common sense of identity and belonging to their party that would have encouraged them to work together.

Liberals can be blamed, in part, for not laying aside their difficulties and stubbornly refusing to compromise over policy issues that would have enabled them to develop a sense of common identity. However, to some degree, they could only have developed this sense if the party had been seen to pursue policies with which they could identify. It had not, and the reunified Liberal Party from 1923 onwards therefore contained elements that never felt any sense of belonging to the party. Because of this lack of unity, it is perhaps not possible to speak of a single Liberal Party during the period, but rather of a collection of factions vying with each other for dominance over the party. In this climate, it was hardly surprising that the Liberal Party fragmented so badly.

*Nick Cott is a PhD researcher at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne and a Visiting Lecturer at Sunderland University. He also represents Grange ward on Newcastle City Council for the Liberal Democrats.*

1 George Lambert recalls happier days for the Liberal Party under William Gladstone. See Gladstone Papers BM Add. MS46, 476 fol. 207: Lambert to Viscount Gladstone 3 June 1929 cit. Michael Dawson, 'The Liberal Land Policy, 1924–1929. Electoral strategy and internal division,' *Twentieth Century British History* (1991) Vol. 113 p. 285.

- 2 The divisions were not quite as stark as is often implied. Conscription was introduced under Asquith's Coalition Ministry with only Simon resigning over the issue. Other Asquithians such as Reginald McKenna and Walter Runciman who theoretically opposed it, did not.
- 3 Two Cabinet supporters of Asquith were Sir John Simon and Walter Runciman. For Simon's attitude see David Dutton, *Simon – A Political Biography of Sir John Simon*, (London, 1992), p. 37 and Clementine Spencer-Churchill Trust Papers CSCT 2/9/5-6: 3 January 1916 – Churchill to Clementine Spencer-Churchill. For Runciman's see Jonathan Wallace, 'The political career of Walter Runciman, 1st Viscount Runciman of Doxford, 1870–1949', *Newcastle Ph.D.* (1995), pp. 202–06. In Runciman's case there is clear evidence that Lloyd George tried to undermine his position at the Board of Trade by establishing a Wheat Commission to circumvent the Board and by intervening in the Coal Dispute of 1915 to force a settlement. Both these instances affected Runciman's standing in the government and he was not invited to serve in the Second Coalition.
- 4 The term is a reference to the minority of the Free Church of Scotland who refused to accept union with the United Presbyterian Church in 1900 to become the United Free Church; they carried on (and still do) as the Free Church of Scotland, or 'Wee Frees'. (Confusingly, other factions of the Scottish Presbyterian church, which split more often even than the inter-war Liberal Party, also later became known as the 'Wee Frees'.)
- 5 See Simon Papers 151/1 – Extract from *Yorkshire Post* 1 December 1919, 152/57; *Daily Chronicle*, 17 December 1919, *Liberal Magazine*, January 1920 and *Liberal Monthly*, February 1920.
- 6 *Liberal Magazine* January 1920 and *Liberal Monthly* February 1920.
- 7 For general commentary see Geoffrey Searle, *Country Before Party – Coalition and the Idea of 'National Government' in Modern Britain, 1885–1987* (London, 1995), p. 121. The keenest advocates of Coalition were Winston Churchill and Frederick Guest. For examples of Churchill's position see Chartwell Trust Papers CHAR 5/26/11-12 11 March 1922 – Churchill to the Honorary Secretary of the Dundee Unionist Association and Paul Addison, *Churchill on the Home Front* (London, 1992), p. 202. For Guest see Chartwell Trust Papers CHAR 2/122/18 6 April 1922 Guest to Churchill. Research shows that Wee Free enthusiasts for fusion looked to Sir Edward Grey and the progressive Liberal-Conservative Robert Cecil for leadership. See Michael Bentley, 'Liberal Politics and the Grey Conspiracy of 1921', *Historical Journal* 20 2 (1977), pp. 461-478.
- 8 Not all Liberals favoured fusion. Mond favoured reunification. Especially see GM Bayliss, 'The Outsider: Aspects of the Political Career of Alfred Mond, First Lord Melchett (1868-1930)', *Wales Ph.D.* (1969), p. 333 and p. 403, Chartwell Trust Papers CHAR 5/28A/48-49: 29 October 1922 – Mond to Churchill and Melchett Papers AP5 Undated Mond to Lloyd George.
- 9 For examples of this sentiment see Kenneth O. Morgan, *Lloyd George* (London, 1974), pp. 170–73 and *Liberal Magazine* July 1923. The greatest enthusiasts were understandably Coalitionists such as Lloyd George and Frederick

- Guest, since their section of Liberalism had little grassroots organisation on which to base success. See K. O. Morgan, 'Lloyd George's Stage Army; The Coalition Liberals, 1918–22' in A. J. P. Taylor, *Lloyd George: Twelve Essays* (London, 1971), pp. 225–54.
- 10 From October 1931, three Liberal organisations emerged in Parliament: the Samuelite, or 'official' Liberals under the leadership of Herbert Samuel, the Simonites, or Liberal Nationals under the leadership of Sir John Simon, and a tiny Lloyd George 'family' group.
  - 11 The 1923 election led to a hung parliament with sizeable representation by all three main parties.
  - 12 See HC Debates Vol. 169 1924 col. 469. In this debate George Lambert summed up the constitutional case for voting in a Labour government. It was also a feature of election campaigns in 1924 when Liberals faced Tory criticism of their actions. For an example refer to Ian Macpherson's campaign in Ross & Cromarty. See *The Inverness Citizen* 30 October 1924. For Mond's attitude see Reading Papers MSS EUR F118/58/29-32 24 November 1924 – Mond to Reading. For Runciman's see Wallace thesis, p. 259.
  - 13 See Grigg Papers MSS (Film) Grigg 1001 24 January 1924 – Grigg to A. Bailey, *Liberal Magazine* February 1924 and Dutton, *Simon*, pp. 64–68. Simon may not, however, have been speaking entirely out of a genuine feeling, given his later acknowledgement that the right decision had been made. See Viscount Simon, *Retrospect – The Memoirs of the Rt. Hon. Viscount Simon* (London, 1952), p. 130.
  - 14 Chartwell Trust Papers CHAR 2/126/114-117: 28 December 1923 – Churchill to Violet Bonham-Carter (unsent), CHAR 2/132/10-13: 8 January 1924 – Churchill to Violet Bonham-Carter, CHAR 2/132/38-39: 5 February 1924 – Churchill to HG Tanner, Keith Robbins, *Churchill* (London, 1992), p. 91 and Henry Pelling, *Winston Churchill* (London, 1974), p. 287.
  - 15 Chartwell Trust Papers CHAR 2/135/96-97: 23 October 1924 – Churchill to Godfrey W. James.
  - 16 See John Campbell, *Lloyd George – The Goat in the Wilderness* (London, 1977), pp. 33–44 and p. 54.
  - 17 For Wee Free resistance especially refer to Simon's opposition. For the General Strike see *The Times* 15 June 1926 cit. MSS. Simon 110/1, Viscount Simon, *Retrospect* pp. 136–37, David Dutton, *Simon*: pp. 76–81. For his attitude from 1929 see *The Cleckheaton Guardian* 7 November 1930 cit. MSS. Simon 161/20, *The Cleckheaton Guardian* 21 November 1930 cit. MSS. Simon 160/84-89 and Extract from the *Western Morning News and Mercury* 2 February 1931 in MSS Eur F118101/32-5. For Coalitionists look at Guest's view. See Lloyd George Papers F/22/3/37 1 June 1926 – Guest to Lloyd George. For Hilton Young see Kennet Papers MSS Kennet 78/12/a-b: 29 May 1926 – Baldwin to Hilton Young and MSS Kennet 78/14/a-d: 6 June 1926 – Hilton Young to A. J. Copeman. Also look at Geoffrey Shakespeare for 1931. See Hore-Belisha Papers HOBE 1/1/1-2 Diary Entry – 24 March 1931, HOBE 1/1/21: Diary Entry – 29 June 1931 and *Liberal Magazine* June 1931.
  - 18 For Hilton Young see Kennet Papers MSS Kennet 78/2b-k: 13 February 1926 – Hilton-Young to Lloyd George and MSS Kennet 78/6: Hilton-Young – Speech to the National Liberal Federation Conference 18 February 1926.
- Mond's attitude was complex. See Dawson article, p. 276 for his attitude to owner-occupation. On his attitude to land policy see Lloyd George Papers 6/14/5/8 25 September 1924, Melchett Papers AP5/11 Extract from a speech dated 6 January 1926, AP5/12 1 February 1926 – Mond to John Lloyd. On his reasons for defection see AP5 Lloyd George's Comments undated and AP5/13 13 October 1927 Extract from speech at Llandovery and Bayliss thesis, p. 586.
- 19 See *Liberal Magazine* February 1926 and April 1926.
  - 20 A huge source of revenue built up through the sale of honours whilst Prime Minister.
  - 21 This was particularly true of Mond's attitude. See Lloyd George Papers 6/14/5/8 25 September 1924, Melchett Papers AP5/11 Extract from a speech dated 6 January 1926, AP5/12 1 February 1926 – Mond to John Lloyd, AP5/13 13 October 1927 Extract from speech at Llandovery and Bayliss thesis, p. 586.
  - 22 Walter Runciman. Refer to discussion in the next section.
  - 23 See Chartwell Trust Papers CHAR 2/133/71-72: 18 June 1924 – Churchill to Sir Samuel Hoare.
  - 24 See Grigg Papers MSS (Film) Grigg 1002 1 May 1925 – Grigg to Guest, 1002 6 May 1925 – Grigg to Lionel Hitchins, 1002 8 May 1925 – Guest to Grigg, 1002 30 March 1926 – Grigg to Lord Younger, 1003 28 March 1931 – Grigg to J.D. Birchall, 1003 28 March 1931 – Grigg to Neville Chamberlain, 1003 April 23 1931- Neville Chamberlain to Grigg, 1003 June 18 1931 – Neville Chamberlain to Grigg, 1003 26 June 1931 – Grigg to Neville Chamberlain.
  - 25 Grigg Papers MSS (Film) Grigg 1000 22 November 1923 – Grigg to A. Chamberlain and *Liberal Magazine* August 1927 and January 1929.
  - 26 *The Cleckheaton Advertiser* 4 May 1928 cit. MSS. Simon 158/28
  - 27 Simon became close to Baldwin around the time of the India Conference in 1927 when Baldwin appointed him as Chair. See Dutton, *Simon*, p. 82. Also see the endorsement of Simon's candidature by Baldwin in 1929 in *The Cleckheaton Guardian* 10 May 1929 cit. MSS. Simon 159/50. Furthermore, politically, he had much in common with Neville Chamberlain. See Dutton, *Simon*, pp 104–06. Also see MSS (Film) Grigg 1003 23 April 1931 – N. Chamberlain to Grigg for evidence of discussion with him over a formal relationship between him and the Conservatives.
  - 28 Grigg Papers MSS (Film) Grigg 1002 1 May 1925 – F.E. Guest to Grigg.
  - 29 To understand the position, examine the Wee Free response to Mond's resignation from the party. See *Liberal Magazine* February 1926 and April 1926. Also see Michael Hart, 'The decline of the Liberal Party in Parliament and in the constituencies,' *Oxford D.Phil* (1982), p. 275.
  - 30 See Michael Bentley, *The Liberal Mind* (Cambridge, 1977) and Hart thesis, pp. 85–100.
  - 31 Walter Runciman Papers WR 204 – A paper by Walter Runciman entitled 'A Secret Note on the Plight of the Liberal Party' dated 1 November 1926. Also see G. R. Searle, *The Liberal Party: Triumph and Disintegration, 1886–1929* (London, 1992), pp. 146–47.
  - 32 In the election of 1924 the Liberals fell from holding 158 seats to only 40. Wee Frees were the chief victims of the election and Lloyd George was blamed for stoking divisions before the election to ensure that they would be defeated. See Searle, *The Liberal Party: Triumph and Disintegration*, p. 143.
  - 33 See Walter Runciman Papers WR 204 – A paper by Walter Runciman entitled 'A Secret Note on the Plight of the Liberal Party' dated 1 November 1926.
  - 34 See Michael Bentley, *The Liberal Mind* (Cambridge, 1977), especially pp. 44–45. Bentley shows that part of the reason for this was that the Wee Frees wanted to prove greater commitment to Liberalism than that of Lloyd George and his allies through the identification with the figures, policies and philosophies of Liberalism's past.
  - 35 As has been indicated previously, both believed that they had been victimised before the war, and Simon had suffered at the hands of the Lloyd Georgians during the Spen Valley by-election of 1919. In addition to these grievances should be added Lloyd George's attempt to frustrate Runciman's return to Parliament. See Runciman Papers WR 326 – extract from the *Cardiff Western Mail* 31 March 1920.
  - 36 Asquith was in himself a barrier to unity because he was a focus of the wartime splits and showed little inclination to try to heal the wounds, despite agreeing to Liberal reunion. 1926 presented an opportunity to put aside some of the differences, but his former allies decided to take on his mantle rather than to set a new course.
  - 37 The Liberal Council was presided over by Grey but chaired by Runciman. The other members were Philipps, Maclean, Pringle, Collins, Gladstone, Spender, A.G. Gardiner and Gilbert Murray.
  - 38 For an indication of these see Walter Runciman, *Liberalism As I See It* (1927).
  - 39 For land policy see Hart thesis, p. 261. For public works see Walter Runciman Papers WR 331 – 18 May 1929 Extract from the *Western Morning News*. Runciman did, however, oppose the idea in 1928 at the Swansea West by-election. See Wallace thesis pp. 294–301. However, his objections do not seem to have endured, suggesting his 1928 position was merely one of his tactics to wreck the Lloyd George leadership.
  - 40 See Wallace thesis p. 4.
  - 41 For support for moderate Labour see Wallace thesis p. 259 and pp. 309–14. It seems that Runciman wanted to encourage Labour to become a constitutional party by encouraging its moderate elements. He felt that Macdonald was a better leader than Lloyd George and wanted to help to liberalise Labour policy. However, the approach also suited his tactic of undermining Lloyd George. This was particularly the case from 1930 when Runciman supported the Government's 1930 Budget, despite a Liberal amendment.
  - 42 WR 333 extract from the *Morning Advertiser* 20 November 1928.
  - 43 As a natural leader, he may have chosen not to join since he would have probably had to accept a subservient role to Runciman.
  - 44 These five were Runciman, Maclean, Phillipps, Pringle and Collins.
  - 45 For the General Strike see *The Times* 15 June 1926 cit. MSS. Simon 110/1, Viscount Simon, *Retrospect – The Memoirs of the Rt. Hon. Viscount Simon* (London, 1952) pp. 136–37, David Dutton, *Simon: A Political Biography of Sir John Simon*, (London, 1992) pp. 76-81. For his attitude from 1929 see *The Cleckheaton Guardian* 7 November 1930 cit. MSS. Simon 161/20, *The Cleckheaton Guardian* 21 November 1930 cit. MSS. Simon 160/84-89 and extract from the *Western Morning News and Mercury* 2 February 1931 in MSS Eur F118101/32-5.