

Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh
 Summer Examinations 2000
 B.A. Degree. History

HI 362. Party and power in 19th and early 20th century British politics.

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 M.A.G. Ó Tuathaigh

Answer three questions.

Time allowed: two hours.

1. What did the Reform Act of 1832 change, and in whose interest ?

or

“What Grey and his colleagues had done was to forge the most durable of political alliances, that between land and industry; it would stand fast for many years against the assaults of the democracy” (E.J.Evans).

Discuss.

2. “ What happened between 1834 and 1841 was the emergence of two great political parties, rooted in the religious and constitutional issues thrown up by the events of the previous half-dozen years, stiffened by a rapid growth of central and constituency organisation to which the Reform Act itself had unwittingly contributed, and embodying definable social, economic and regional characteristics” (N.Gash). Discuss.

or

What changes in party organisation followed the 1832 Reform Act?

3. “ He is so vain that he wants to figure in history as the settler of all great questions; but a Parliamentary constitution is not favourable to such ambitions: things must be done by parties not by persons using parties as tools ..” (Disraeli on Peel, December 1845). Discuss this verdict on Peel as a party leader.

4. “Chartism itself was not one movement but many. Its one unifying feature was the demand for political reform as expressed in the People’s Charter” (Edward Royle). Discuss.

5. “That, then, is Disraeli’s most lasting contribution to the success of his party. He made it the ‘national party’. It cannot be said that this was an inevitable development” (R.Blake). Discuss

or

“Above all, it is clear that Disraeli himself had no idea of the electoral

consequences of the Act for which he was ultimately responsible. His was a party victory, the ultimate consequences of which could not be foreseen" (J.K.Walton). Discuss this verdict on the Second Reform Act of 1867.

6. How did the main parties respond organisationally to the passing of the Second Reform Act?

7. "The Irish Home Rule issue in 1886 was the occasion rather than the cause of the crisis of Gladstonian Liberalism" Discuss.

or

Why was the Conservative party perceived in the later Victorian period as the enthusiastic ' party of empire ' ?

8. "Salisbury might have despised democracy, but he certainly made it work for the Tories, discovering in the new suburbia and lower middle-classes a whole new area of support for his brand of Tory Unionism. In the course of his career he turned the Party from a disaffected, marginalised pressure group into the popular, natural Party of government" (Andrew Roberts). Discuss.

9. "The Labour Party was born out of the bowels of the T.U.C."(Ernest Bevin). Discuss.

10. " [By 1901] it appeared as though the Liberals must be condemned to the wilderness for ever by their internal dissensions and that the Unionists were set for a further long spell of office when the situation was reversed with startling and dramatic rapidity." [Ivor Bulmer-Thomas]. What circumstances led to this reversal of political fortunes ?

or

Assess the role of Joseph Chamberlain in the gathering crisis of the Conservative and Unionist government during 1901-1906.

11. Can we already before 1914 discern the beginnings of future Liberal decline and Labour expansion ?

12. "The First World War had a dramatic effect on the fortunes of the British political parties" (Paul Adelman). Discuss.

13. " From 1918 the Labour Party had to be taken seriously as a major force in British politics, independent of Conservatives and Liberals and opposed to both" (I.Bulmer-Thomas). Discuss.

or

" It is these six years [1918-24] that form the key period in the decline of the Liberal party". (P. Adelman) . Discuss.

Appendix: The Labour Vote

Elections	Votes	M.P.s elected	Candidates	% share of total vote
1900	63,304	2	15	1.8
1906	329,748	30	51	5.9
1910 (Jan.)	505,657	40	78	7.6
1910 (Dec.)	371,772	42	56	7.1
1918	2,385,472	63	388	22.2
1922	4,241,383	142	411	29.5
1923	4,438,508	191	422	30.5
1924	5,489,077	151	512	33.0
1929	8,389,512	288	571	37.1
1931	6,649,630	52	515	30.6
1935	8,325,491	154	552	37.9
1945	11,995,152	393	604	47.8

Appendix: The Liberal Vote

Elections	Votes	M.P.s elected	Candidates	Percentage share of total vote
1906	2,757,803	400	539	49.0
1910 (Jan)	2,880,501	275	516	43.2
1910 (Dec)	2,295,808	272	467	43.9
1918				
Coalition Liberal Independent Liberal	1,455,640	133	158	13.5
1922	1,298,808	28	253	12.1
(Lloyd George) Liberal (Asquith) Liberal	1,673,240	62	162	11.6
1923	2,516,287	54	328	17.5
1924	4,311,147	159	453	29.6
1929	2,928,747	40	340	17.6
1929	5,308,510	59	513	23.4
1931				
Liberal National (Simonites) Liberal	809,302	35	41	3.7
(Samuelites) (Lloyd George) Liberal	1,403,102	33	112	6.5
1935	106,106	4	7	0.5
1935	1,422,116	21	161	6.4
1945	2,248,226	12	306	9.0

214. The Chartist demands, 1837

THE SIX POINTS OF THE PEOPLE'S CHARTER

1. A vote for every man twenty one years of age, of sound mind, and not undergoing punishment for crime.
2. THE BALLOT.—To protect the elector in the exercise of his vote.
3. NO PROPERTY QUALIFICATION for members of Parliament—thus enabling the constituencies to return the man of their choice, be he rich or poor.
4. PAYMENT OF MEMBERS, thus enabling an honest tradesman, working man, or other person, to serve a constituency, when taken from his business to attend to the interests of the country.
5. EQUAL CONSTITUENCIES, securing the same amount of representation for the same number of electors,—instead of allowing small constituencies to swamp the votes of larger ones.
6. ANNUAL PARLIAMENTS, thus presenting the most effectual check to bribery and intimidation, since though a constituency might be bought once in seven years (even with the ballot), no purse could buy a constituency (under a system of universal suffrage) in each ensuing twelvemonth; and since members when elected for a year only, would not be able to defy and betray their constituents as now.

Cole and Filson, *British Working Class Movements*, p. 352