The British Press and the 1918 Reform Act

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Abstract

This article provides the first comprehensive study of the British press's reporting of, and discussions about, the electoral reform proposals that became the Representation of the People Act 1918. It shows that in responding enthusiastically to calls for substantial constitutional change, newspapers from across the ideological spectrum revealed a deep disillusionment with partisan politics and party machines, and imagined a re-energised democracy that would rise to the complex tasks of post-war reconstruction. Female voters were to have a significant role in this more inclusive political system, and even long-standing opponents of women's suffrage chose this moment publicly to alter their position – although by repeatedly framing enfranchisement as an outcome of service to the nation, the language of democratic rights was sometimes blurred. Many newspapers also argued for proportional representation to create a fairer, less cynical and less strictly-managed type of politics. These debates marked an important moment in the redefinition of British democracy, and they would have a lasting influence on post-war political culture. After 1918, the press generally defended this new democracy, even if some commentators expressed anxieties that certain voters lacked the capacity or inclination properly to exercise their political responsibilities. Set against the political turbulence across Europe, and the inevitable disquiet generated by economic dislocation and mass unemployment, it is the resilience of democracy in Britain, rather than its weakness, that is notable. In these difficult times, the press played a crucial role in legitimising and stabilising the parliamentary system and celebrating a more inclusive politics.

Keywords

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Franchise

Female voters

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Welcoming, in March 1917, the introduction into the house of commons of the comprehensive programme of electoral reform that would become the Representation of the People Act 1918, a *Daily Telegraph* editorial predicted that any opposition to the measures would be restricted to a small number of MPs who had not grasped the new world brought about by the Great War. 'All men who are facing the future and not the past, whatever their political predilections,' the paper contended, 'know that one consequence of this war, to which the whole nation has devoted itself, is to render the demand for a fully democratised franchise irresistible, both morally and practically.'[1] The *Telegraph* succinctly articulated a set of ideas that was expressed repeatedly across the pages of the national press – namely that war had transformed the basis of British politics; that service to the nation had rendered almost irresistible the claims to representation of the disenfranchised; and that the partisan struggles of the past should be forsaken for a constructive, forward-looking spirit. As the reforms worked their way through the parliamentary system to become law in February 1918, the chorus of newspaper support and approval did not falter.

The exceptional circumstances of the Representation of the People Act, and its relatively consensual passage, has meant that it has received less attention from historians than earlier measures of enfranchisement or redistribution.[2] Lacking the drama of the party political battles, constitutional crises and high-profile extra-parliamentary campaigns that marked previous moments of reform, the 1918 Reform Act has been widely regarded as the inevitable, and long-awaited (near) endpoint of a characteristically British process of incremental democratisation.[3] The intellectual case for extending the suffrage had effectively been won; the war merely provided the conditions in which a political *impasse* could be unblocked, individuals could justify withdrawing from deeply entrenched positions by applauding service to the nation, and partisan electoral calculations no longer seemed quite so urgent.[4] It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that historians of the press have been drawn far more frequently to the bitter political conflict of the pre-1914 period, the role of the 'press barons' in unseating Asquith as Prime Minister in 1916, or newspaper attempts to appeal to the expanded electorate after 1918, than to the apparently routine debates about the Reform Act.[5] Indeed, Ian Machin has suggested that the press assumed that the public were more interested in developments on the battlefield, and therefore 'gave only brief references' to the reform of the electoral system.[6]

If one is looking for the vigorous cut-and-thrust of partisan journalistic confrontation, or the elaboration of innovative justifications for franchise extension, the newspaper coverage of the reform debates between 1916 and 1918 might well disappoint. But this is to miss the real significance of the press's contribution in this period. Given the space constraints imposed by newsprint rationing, most newspapers did provide serious and detailed reporting of the passage of this legislation, and staked out clear positions on contested issues such as women's suffrage and proportional representation. In so doing, they played an important role in helping to reformulate ideas about the nature of British democracy, the definitions of citizenship, and the process of representation. Indeed, the fact that there was widespread agreement among mainstream papers made these ideas even more influential, and therefore all the worthier of attention. This article

seeks to explore the debates about reform to tease out and analyse the attitudes and arguments underpinning the acceptance of reform. How did the *Telegraph*, and other papers, conceive the future that it encouraged its readers to face? How had the fact that the 'whole nation' had 'devoted itself' to war altered the nature of citizenship, and made a 'fully democratised franchise irresistible'? What did democracy mean in this new world? This article will contend that the emergence of a broad consensus about many of these questions was of major significance when Europe was about to enter a period in which democratic systems would be critiqued, rejected and overthrown. If the consensus frayed in Britain after 1918, it remained strong enough to sustain mainstream confidence in the legitimacy and effectiveness of parliamentary democracy and to limit the strength of the challenge from fascist and communist movements.

The article will proceed in four sections. The first will consider the press's general appetite for parliamentary reform, which became increasingly evident once Prime Minister Henry Asquith raised the question of updating the voting register in August 1916. In responding to calls for a substantial change to the existing system, newspapers revealed a deep disillusionment with partisan politics and party machines, and looked ahead to a re-energised democracy that would be able to rise to the complex tasks of post-war reconstruction. There was some irony in this, given that the press was deeply complicit in the polarisation of political life before 1914, but the wholehearted embrace of democracy, and the suggestion that it was a key part of what the Allies were fighting for, helped to smooth the transition to the new arrangements after 1918.

The second section examines the debates about citizenship and the reconstitution of the political nation. Newspapers from across the political spectrum accepted the claim of servicemen to the franchise, and even long-standing opponents of women's suffrage chose this moment publicly to alter their position. By repeatedly framing enfranchisement in terms of service to the nation, however, the language of democratic rights was sometimes blurred, which had a lasting impact on how women voters, in particular, were viewed; it also paved the way for the temporary exclusion of conscientious objectors from the electorate.

The third section discusses the proposals for reforming the operation of the electoral system by introducing a measure of proportional representation (PR). It is striking how enthusiastic many leading newspapers were for dismantling the first-past-the-post system in the name of developing a fairer, more responsive type of politics. This became a central theme of idealistic commentaries about creating a purer, less cynical and less strictly managed form of democracy, and lends weight to the argument that this was the greater missed opportunity for PR in the modern period.[7]

The final part briefly outlines how the press represented the functioning of the new system in the 1918 election and thereafter. Although the basic principles of the new democracy were never seriously threatened in the pages of the mainstream press – with the partial exception of the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Mirror* under Lord Rothermere – some journalists and commentators expressed anxieties that certain voters lacked the capacity or inclination properly to exercise their political responsibilities. There was also some nostalgia for a time when smaller electorates made political campaigning more straightforward and ensured that each individual vote had greater weight. Set against the political turbulence across Europe, and the inevitable disquiet generated by economic dislocation and mass unemployment, it is the resilience of democracy in Britain, rather than its weakness, that is notable. In these difficult times, the press played a crucial role in legitimising and stabilising the system.

This article is based on a detailed study of the output of the leading national daily and Sunday newspapers – notably the *Daily Chronicle*, *Daily Express*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Mirror*, *Daily News*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Manchester Guardian*[8], *Morning Post*, *Observer*, *The Times* and *Sunday Times* – as well as the leading political weeklies, the *New Statesman* and the *Spectator*.[9] The analysis focuses more intently on the responses of the right-wing publications. Liberal and Labour newspapers had few difficulties in embracing democratic reform and supporting the enfranchisement of women; in most cases, they had campaigned for these very changes for years. Of far greater significance for the emergence of a consensus around the reformed political system was the way in which cautious, sceptical and often anxious conservative voices came to terms with the new democracy. The article

is also concerned primarily with the press contribution to public debates about parliamentary reform – examining how it reflected and shaped wider opinion – rather than tracing its private influence in the corridors of power. It therefore concentrates on the published content of the newspapers, particularly leading articles, comment pieces, and reports of parliamentary proceedings, rather than the personal correspondence and internal policy decisions of editors, proprietors and journalists.[10] While the war restricted how much the papers could print, it increased the public appetite for news of all sorts. The all-consuming nature of this 'total war' inevitably directed attention away from local concerns to Britain's various campaigns on the global stage, and helped to reinforce a growing nationalisation of politics and culture that would be further consolidated by the democratic reforms of 1918.[11] The influence of the London-based press was steadily increasing: once newsprint rationing ended, the circulations of national newspapers rose significantly, with a near doubling of circulations in the inter-war period, and the combined sales of the national papers passing those of the provincial papers in 1923. If the powers of the 'press barons' were not as far-reaching as some feared - 'What England thinks is largely controlled by a very few men', lamented the journalist, author and peace campaigner Norman Angell in 1922[12] – newspapers were central to British political and popular culture in this period, and, especially before the rise of radio broadcasting, they had a very significant role in setting the political agenda and framing public discussion.[13]

I

For opponents of reform, the midst of war – and no less than the bloodiest conflict the nation had ever experienced – was not a moment for raising controversial questions of constitutional reorganisation. The proposals 'ought to be laid aside as a waste of our more precious time', grumbled the *Morning Post*, the only leading paper consistently against changes to the system of representation.[14] Most press commentators argued, by contrast, that the war, and the meanings ascribed to it, made reform necessary, morally, intellectually and practically. 'Whatever the war may have been in its earlier stages, it has now assumed definitely the complexion of a war for

democracy', argued the *Manchester Guardian* in May 1917. Britain's international reputation as a defender of democracy, the paper continued, made it essential that it get its own house in order:

> If this country is to maintain the place which is its due in the vanguard of the Allies it must show that it is in the vanguard of democracy. With our present wretched electoral system any such claim on our part is open to dispute, and indeed is being contested. We need a franchise reform to maintain our moral hegemony during the war, so that our full influence may tell in determining the course of the war and the character of the peace…[15]

The 'march of democracy is the cardinal fact of the war', agreed the *Daily News*.[16] If stirring celebrations of democracy might have been expected in liberal newspapers, though, similar sentiments were also voiced by more conservative publications. The *Observer*, edited by the widely respected, and fiercely independent, J. L. Garvin, published a substantial editorial in June 1917 entitled 'The New Democracy' which argued that war represented 'the struggle of a great principle', namely that of democracy against absolutism:

> in truth and in fact our war with Germany is in its essence a war between these two ideas: a war between the idea that the State should be as much like an Army as possible and the idea that it should be the living expression of the minds of the men and women who compose it…The stake, indeed, is nothing less than this: Whether military absolutism or democratic freedom shall emerge from this war with the prestige of success and all the immense consequences that victory and defeat for one or other of those ideas must bring upon Europe and the world.[17]

The *Observer*, like the *Manchester Guardian*, was very conscious of what it saw as Britain's world historical role, especially given the United States' recent entry into the war and the February revolution in Russia. The proposals to widen the franchise, in conjunction with Lloyd George's

recently-made promise that Ireland be allowed to become 'a free member of the Empire', were momentous steps that would buttress Britain's position as a moral exemplar: 'Both decisions bring to our nation an immediate strength, for they rally to us all the hopes and dreams of a world that bases on democracy, as never since the day of the fall of the Bastille, its passionate longing for peace and progress and freedom'.[18] The *Daily Express* was more pithy, but had a similar opinion: 'since we have acclaimed the fact that we are fighting to preserve democracy, it is ridiculous to decline to make Great Britain a truly democratic nation'.[19] For papers of both left and right, British national identity at this moment of crisis was deeply wedded to the notion of being a champion of democracy.

These defences of democratic principle revealed both a disdain for the habits and practices of pre-war politics, and a yearning for a parliamentary system that worked in different ways. There was, in particular, a widely professed contempt for the cynicism of party machines and the narrow-mindedness of the partisan battles. Such commentaries required some strategic forgetfulness, if not outright hypocrisy, on the part of the press, given that editors, proprietors and journalists had not only been fully committed to the bitter arguments about House of Lords reform, Irish Home Rule and female suffrage before 1914, but had often been guilty of polarising debates and sensationalising conflict.[20] Neal Blewett has, for example, demonstrated that leading national papers dedicated huge amounts of space and resources to the coverage of the general elections in 1910.[21] Nevertheless, the frequent articulation of a desire for a different form of politics, at a time of (relative) party truce and administration by coalition government, should not be dismissed as simply press opportunism or insincerity. This was, after all, a highly unusual moment of fluidity in British politics, with the Liberals riven by splits, the teenage Labour party poised to grow into adulthood, and the imminent prospect of millions of unaligned voters being added to the register. There were real possibilities for reshaping the British political scene, not least given Lloyd George's popularity as a war leader standing above party conflict, and there were also genuine anxieties about the dangers that lay ahead if the political system was insufficiently responsive.

The *Daily Telegraph* was perhaps the most vociferous in its criticism of pre-war politics. 'The country will never go back to the conditions of July, 1914', declared an editorial in March 1917, in which the repetition of the cursed word 'party' emphasised the paper's contempt:

> After a considerable experience, the British nation had begun very seriously to doubt if its affairs were best transacted by an apparatus of party caucuses, party funds, party programmes, party speechmaking. The party system was visibly decaying… The idea of reverting after this war to the old machinery, the old spirit, the old dead level of scheming professionalism, is one which the nation as a whole entirely refuses to entertain, and which no one takes seriously except those who found their livelihood in party management, and those who are afflicted permanently with the looking-backward temperament.[22]

The *Telegraph* was under no illusion that parties would disappear, but it hoped that they would rally around a 'living principle of one sort or another, and not round a machine'.[23] Without a shift to a more idealistic form of politics, warned another editorial, not only would parties risk losing support, the whole political system would be imperilled:

> If anything could totally wreck Parliamentary government in this country it would be the spectacle of a Legislature, formed by the old methods, flourishing the old weapons, and egged on by the old wirepullers, devoting itself to a protracted wrangle of that sort with all the life of a nation awaiting reconstruction.[24]

The liberal *Daily Chronicle* likewise argued that only by seizing the present opportunity for reform would the legitimacy of the political system be secured:

> our pre-war failure to set our electoral house in order had exposed us to a great danger and a great handicap… the nation has been extraordinarily lucky in having a way of escape from this danger and handicap… posterity would never forgive us if we threw such a great piece of good fortune away.[25]

Central to the arguments for reform was the belief that the enormous challenges of post-war reconstruction would require Parliament to be more efficient and agile than ever before: there simply would not be time for what *The Times* called 'the old fruitless controversies of long years before the war'. Those who contemplated addressing these tasks with an unreformed Parliament, the paper argued, 'must either be the blindest of partisans or they can have no conception whatever of the volume of work which will inevitably descend upon Parliament the very moment the war is over'; doing so would inevitably mean leaving 'our Parliamentary institutions to fall still further into disrepute.'[26] The *Observer* made similar predictions, and was equally concerned about the risks of preserving the status quo:

> Social, industrial and Imperial needs will demand our whole time for constructive legislation. Otherwise, there would be inefficiency, distraction, confusion – a disastrous barrenness and bitterness of party strife in the old manner. This for some years to come, as we value our lives, we must banish like the plague.[27]

The *Sunday Times* called upon politicians to maximise and build upon the 'new spirit of reasonableness and compromise that is in the air', while the *Express* echoed the Prime Minister's call not to 'leave ourselves the helpless slaves of party machines'.[28] 'We need a new machine for new work', stated the *Daily News* bluntly.[29] Perhaps most striking of all, even the *Morning Post*, the paper most resistant to constitutional reform, recognised the need 'to get a new spirit into our system of government', because before 1914 it 'had fallen into a state of rottenness which boded ill for the

future of this country.'[30] Indeed, central to the *Post*'s case against change was the fact that the wartime House of Commons was not representative of the nation, and had been elected 'solely upon party issues and by means of the powerful and secret operation of the great party machine and the subsidised caucus on both sides'; since then, however 'the whole sentiment and opinion of the country' had changed and 'the very name of party politics ha[d] become odious'.[31] Opponents of reform had no desire to stake their position on a defence of a form of partisan politics that was widely perceived as unpopular and ineffective.

This wholesale rejection of party had an important impact. In the short term, it helped to legitimise the maintenance of Lloyd George's coalition government not only until the end of the war, but into the 1918 general election and several years beyond. More deeply, though, it influenced the nature of inter-war political culture. In particular, it fed some of the tendencies identified by Jon Lawrence and Helen McCarthy – notably the 'low-key and homely' tone of much political discourse, the focusing of party propaganda on 'the vast numbers of less partisan, largely inactive citizens whose votes were said to decide elections', and the flowering of voluntary associations which defined themselves against the partisanship of the Westminster parties.[32] If partisan politics resumed in the 1920s – with the press more than playing its part during election campaigns – the wartime reaction against party machines nevertheless left a significant legacy.

II

The new politics that wartime commentators envisioned was to be based, it was almost universally agreed, on a broader and more inclusive franchise. The unprecedented demands and sacrifices of the Great War transformed the dynamics of the debates about who should be enfranchised. Citizenship could not be denied to those who had given so much. 'Every soldier or sailor, by the mere fact that he has fought for the country, should be entitled to a vote and should be permitted to exercise it', declared the *Daily Mail*; 'A vote is a small thing to offer a man who has been ready to give his blood' agreed the *Manchester Guardian*.[33] No mainstream politician or journalist was

inclined to dissent. The *Mail* was also one of the leading proponents of following this argument to its logical conclusion, by disbarring those 'who have ignobly shirked fighting': the conscientious objector, the paper argued, 'is one of the most contemptible products of our time and richly deserves the disgust with which the public regard him'.[34] The *Express* used similar language to voice its disdain: 'It is intolerable that the contemptible creatures who have discovered a "*conscience*" to save their precious skins should ever be allowed to enter a polling both and take any part in the grand inquest of the nation.'[35] The pressure from popular newspapers, and magazines such as *John Bull,* helped to create a climate of opinion in which Parliament agreed temporarily to enfranchise 19-year-old servicemen, while disqualifying conscientious objectors from voting for five years.

Inevitably, though, it was the proposal to grant suffrage to women that dominated the headlines and generated the most commentary. Before 1914, the press had been deeply divided on the issue. While the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Daily News* and the *Daily Herald* were avowed supporters of female enfranchisement, *The Times*, the *Daily Mail* and the *Morning Post* were consistently hostile; other papers condemned suffragette violence, while wavering about the broader principle.[36] By 1917, however, there was an enthusiastic press consensus around giving women the vote at 30, and, indeed, allowing them to stand as parliamentary candidates. Opposition was now presented as unreasonable and outdated, the preserve of an obstinate and out-of-touch minority. 'There can be no case against women suffrage now' insisted the *Express*; 'no other course is possible' agreed the *Telegraph*.[37] Even the *Spectator*, a bastion of resistance, accepted that 'we are faced now by a strong popular desire to give women the vote which cannot possibly be mistaken'.[38] Of the leading papers, only the die-hard *Morning Post* maintained its resistance, arguing that this reform was 'designed to swamp the voter who has political experience and sagacity', and concluding defiantly that 'a nation of men which hands its responsibility in government over to women is not adding to its reputation in the world of men'.[39]

Few historians now make a straightforward connection between the war and the success of the suffrage cause. 'The intellectual case for enfranchising women had long been won', suggests

Geoffrey Searle, building on the research of Martin Pugh: 'The war simply created circumstances in which Votes for Women could be granted with minimum political disturbance', and provided opponents such as Asquith with 'an escape from the impossible position' in which they found themselves.[40] This is a persuasive argument. Several conservative newspapers made clear that they would have been reluctant to agree to any reform that could have been perceived as a concession to violent campaigning. 'We think a great deal more of "Votes for Women" to-day than we did three years ago, when the cry was accompanied by church burnings and window smashing,' observed an *Express* editorial in August 1916.[41] *The Times* highlighted that enfranchisement was not a 'triumph of agitation, for agitation has long been stilled', while the *Telegraph* was keen to reach agreement so that parliament did not 'relight the flames of the miserable sex controversy over the suffrage which poisoned public life in England before the war'.[42] Nor did liberal and left-of-centre titles, apart from the *Herald*, dissent from this position. The *Daily Chronicle* suggested that 'some measure' of enfranchisement 'would almost certainly have become law ere now but for the antagonism aroused at Westminster and in the country by the methods of the Pankhurst agitation.' Only once 'the painful impression created by those follies and crimes' had subsided could the question be considered on its own merits. For the *New Statesman*, indeed, 'Perhaps the war's best help to the cause was the excuse with which it provided the militants for stopping militancy', given that in the immediate pre-war years their activism 'ceased to have any but an obstructive effect'.[43] If press opposition to the Pankhursts had softened, due to Emmeline and Christabel's conspicuous patriotism and support of the war effort, there was little inclination to show any generosity to the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU); more credit tended to go to the peaceful campaigns of Millicent Fawcett's National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), whose 'patient exercise of persuasion', in the *Chronicle*'s admiring words, 'brought opinion round to their side'.[44]

Instead, and with a remarkable consistency of tone and language, newspapers pointed to women's wartime service as demonstrating their suitability as full citizens. The outpouring of editorials and articles developing this argument should not be read, in the main at least, as a

reflection of journalistic insincerity or pragmatism. Martin Pugh has suggested, for example, that 'the positive welcome given to women's wartime work proved to have been very superficial and short-lived'.[45] Yet even if historians can see the limits to the wartime renegotiation of gender, and rightly dismiss simplistic claims that the conflict brought a 'liberation' for women, we should also not dismiss the very real impact on contemporaries of women moving into unfamiliar roles and bearing the burdens of the home front; the perception that women had 'proved' themselves during the war remained a cliché well into the 1920s.[46] The argument that the vote was conceived as a 'reward' for wartime service is undermined, as both contemporaries and historians have recognised, by the continuing exclusion from the franchise, on age grounds, of many young female munition workers. But this is too narrow an understanding of the debates. As Nicoletta Gullace has argued, the war involved a redefinition of citizenship around notions of patriotism, duty and sacrifice, and women's new and high profile public roles, as well as their private suffering as wives and mothers, included them within these freshly-drawn boundaries.[47] A *Times* editorial in March 1917, indeed, made this very distinction. The idea that the 'vote is a mere reward for good behaviour' was one that 'every patriotic women resents', the paper argued: 'It is based wholly on the palpable injustice of withholding such protection as the vote offers from a sex which has for the first time taken its full share in the national effort and will have sufficient difficulty in any case to maintain the position which it has won.'[48] It was not necessarily assumed that women would be able to 'maintain the position' they had won, but by taking a 'full share' in the 'national effort' they deserved their place in the political system and a voice in the reconstruction work to come. Such arguments, of course, patronised women both by rendering invisible the full range of their pre-war work, paid and unpaid, and by silencing women's own campaigns for equality. In the circumstances of the war, however, they provided very little discursive space in which opponents could counter or resist the logic of enfranchisement.

Considering the 'greatest change in our electoral law projected in modern times', for example, a *Daily Telegraph* editorial in June 1917 rehearsed arguments that were becoming very familiar in the

pages of the press. A 'great and decisive difference' had been made by the 'experience of war-time', it noted: 'those who needed that experience to persuade them of women's strength of patriotism, their capacity for public service, their steadiness in even the least familiar aspects of duty, must have had their fill of conviction after the first two years of war'.[49] Over the following months, as the decisive votes in parliament loomed, it returned to these themes time and again. In January 1918, on the eve of a debate in the House of Lords, the paper was adamant that there was only one legitimate option available, namely

> to extend the franchise to women in view of the part which they have played in the war and the multitudinous public, industrial, and social services which they are now rendering, and but for which the war work of the nation – in the widest sense of the term – would come to a standstill. The war could not be carried on as it is without the willing co-operation of the women, and still greater and greater calls will be made upon them in the near future. Whether, therefore, one has regard chiefly to their present war work or to the colossal task of Reconstruction which will confront the State after the war is over, the result is the same. It is now plain that the active co-operation of women is essential to the well-being of the State…[50]

The debate, concluded the *Telegraph*, 'has been irrevocably settled by the war.'[51]

Other papers made very similar arguments, declaring women's wartime contribution as unimpeachable evidence of their readiness for citizenship, and framing any contrary opinions as almost incomprehensible in the changed circumstances.[52] Opposition to reform, declared the *Express* in March 1917, 'that might have been reasonable before the war becomes mere stubborn reaction after the creation of a citizen army and its heroic achievements'. Women had 'shown their eager desire to fulfil the duties of citizenship even before they possess its privileges.'[53] Another editorial the following January likewise insisted that 'Women demonstrated their right to the privileges of citizenship by the enthusiasm for service that they have shown since the beginning of

the war.'[54] 'If there is one thing that the war has brought about,' contended the *Mail*, 'it is a change in the national feeling towards this question, a change that amounts to an almost universal conviction that the State will be all the better for the active participation of women in its public life.'[55] By the end of the war, indeed, the *Mail*, a long-time opponent of reform, could hardly conceive of women being excluded from citizenship:

> Now that we have admitted and realized the rights of women it seems almost incredible that we should ever have attempted to touch even the fringes of such problems [of social reform] while more than half of the population were excluded from any share in the management of the nation's affairs.[56]

The power of these arguments was such that even papers that had consistently supported the principle of female enfranchisement still drew upon them. The *Manchester Guardian*, a long-standing and consistent proponent of the women's cause, nevertheless informed its readers that 'The war has taught us many things, and among others the immense power, both moral and economic, which women command within the State'; women had proved themselves 'capable and worthy' as 'workers in every unaccustomed field, as nurses and doctors actually on the scene of conflict'.[57] Even when the paper described reform as a matter of 'elementary justice', as it did in an editorial of January 1917, it could not resist reinforcing its case in a similar way – it was 'a justice which the lessons of the war have brought home as never before to all thoughtful and patriotic people'.[58] Similarly, while the *Daily News* made clear its view that women's citizenship belonged 'to her as one who has an equal share in the burdens, responsibilities, and restraints of an organised society', it nevertheless added that the claim had been 'strengthened in these days beyond challenge even from those who have opposed that claim in the past on the infantile ground that women can have no part in the defence of the country'.[59] A headline after a key vote in the house of commons read 'Suffrage Earned by Magnificent Work During the War', and when female

enfranchisement was finally accepted by the house of lords in January 1918, the paper argued that it had been conferred by 'the popular feeling aroused by the importance of women's contribution to the war'.[60] This was precisely where the longer-term dangers for feminism lay. The invocation of women's wartime contribution was, by and large, genuine, and had a discursive power that opponents could not counter. It muted, however, the language of democratic rights and equality, and the 1918 Reform Act could not be straightforwardly claimed as a feminist victory. By so effusively encouraging readers to admire women's wartime contributions and service, newspapers may indeed have challenged some perceptions about female 'capabilities', but they may also have obscured the challenge that suffrage campaigners wanted to pose to conventional understandings of representation and citizenship.

III

If votes for women generated the most headlines, the most controversial and fiercely contested proposals proved to be those related to the introduction of a measure of proportional representation (PR). The Commons and the Lords ultimately failed to reach an acceptable compromise, other than the appointment of a royal commission, and the status quo prevailed.[61] Historians have not sufficiently appreciated how enthusiastic the press was for reform of the first-past-the-post system in 1917-18. The disillusionment with pre-war partisan politics, discussed earlier, ensured that there was widespread support for a new system that would better reflect the variety of public opinion, and would be less susceptible to management by party machines. Papers as different as the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Manchester Guardian* devoted considerable amounts of space to defending the merits of PR, and many press commentators agreed that some form of experiment was worth taking given the inequities and rigidities of the existing system. Such a groundswell of support would not be seen again for the rest of the century: here was the great missed opportunity for the implementation of PR.

For its advocates, PR brought a measure of rationality and transparency to an electoral system that was unrepresentative, opaque and unnecessarily complex. It would, papers of both left and right argued, strengthen the position of moderate and independent voices in the house of commons, which at present was too beholden to party whips and managers. 'Proportional representation, by abolishing the "swing of the pendulum" and giving to each political party a representation in the House of Commons substantially equal in proportion to the votes it can command in the country, would have an extraordinarily steadying effect on the composition of the House,' argued the *Manchester Guardian* in January 1917. It would also 'attract men of character, ability and influence' and would thereby 'raise the character of the House of Commons, and restore to it its due independence of the Executive'.[62] For the *Observer*, PR was the ideal way of ensuring that the wartime idealism surrounding politics and democracy was consolidated, and a return of the despised old ways avoided:

> The rigid and narrow traditions of party conflict, in our hope, belong to the past. Proportional Representation would be welcome as tending to strengthen the independent forces in political life, and the present moment, when men are speaking and thinking along new lines, breaking free from many an iron law of the past, would be very suitable for its introduction.[63]

It was, the paper affirmed in another editorial, 'a sane and excellent policy' hobbled by a 'ponderously impossible term': 'Why do not its supporters recognise this at once, and advocate PR henceforth as "Fair Voting"?'[64] The *Daily Telegraph* used similar language. The main argument in favour of PR was 'that it is fair; that in the absence of it there can be no fairness, and representation is an empty word; that it gives to majorities and minorities alike the weight that they ought to have if "representation of the people" is to be a real thing'. PR would inevitably triumph, it predicted, 'by virtue of its own intrinsic reasonableness and justice'.[65] The *Daily Chronicle* printed a column written by John Humphries, the Secretary of the Proportional Representation Society; under the headline

'How "P. R." Gives Every Vote A Value', he explained that 'It stands for the embodiment in our electoral laws of two democratic principles – Justice and Freedom'.[66] The paper ultimately argued in favour of the Alternative Vote system, which it described as 'a very reasonable and unrevolutionary proposal', which would avoid 'all the evils of three-cornered contests.'[67] 'P.R. is essential to a really representative system,' concluded the *Daily News*.[68] There was no need for the government to be 'shy' of the 'novelty' of PR agreed *The Times*, a paper hardly known for its embrace of change: 'we should be sorry to see the total disappearance from the scheme of an interesting and very limited experiment in minority representation.' Intellectual ballast for the reform was provided in a detailed letter from the author H. G. Wells, who labelled PR as 'A Necessary Remedy'.[69] This was an impressive consensus for a relatively novel proposal, and the language of justice and fairness had an extra power in the context of a society bearing all the sacrifices of total war.

There was a subsidiary case, put most strongly by the *Daily Telegraph*, for PR as a defensive measure that would limit the political turbulence that could result from the greatly expanded electorate. It was, argued an editorial in March 1917, 'a very necessary safeguard against the complete swamping, in many constituencies, of independent and moderate opinion under the proposed extension of the franchise'. Three months later, the paper spelled out the dangers with greater urgency, having received no satisfactory assurances about the risks of the expanded electorate (an expansion which it fully supported):

> No one, so far as we know, has attempted to meet the argument upon which we have laid most emphasis; that a measure which doubles the numbers of the electorate to-day makes certain an enormous and sweeping addition to the Socialist and extreme Radical elements in the representation of the country, if that representation is obtained by the fallacious and often glaringly unjust method pursued until now. Any man who looks even a little way beyond the conditions of the moment, or the temporary situation in his own Parliamentary constituency,

might well tremble for the future if it is to be wholly without guarantees for the fair representation of minority opinion.[70]

The *Telegraph* reported in great detail, and with some concern, the twists and turns of the stand-off between the Commons and the Lords over PR, before reaching the 'melancholy' recognition that it was not going to be accepted. As Blackburn has argued, a more determined government probably could have 'swayed opinion in the Commons'; Lloyd George's ambivalence on the measure ensured that MPs' perceptions of their own self-interest, and anxieties about losing their seats, fortified them to resist the considerable pressure placed upon them by newspapers and campaigners.[71] As anxieties about the expanded electorate faded, and the new system bedded in, the momentum for reform was lost. Yet if the PR cause did not triumph, the significant press support, made clear, once again, the considerable dissatisfaction with the existing system, and a yearning for a new politics, based on a fairer representation of a wider range of voices.

IV

If a more principled, less managed, politics did not emerge after the armistice in the form imagined by idealists, nor was there a return to the *status quo ante bellum*. The widely-expressed dissatisfaction with party machines and partisan conflict helped to sustain Lloyd George's government until 1922, and continued to resonate in a number of voluntary and campaigning organisations. The decline of the Liberals, and the rise of the Labour Party, ensured that politics looked and sounded different after 1918, and the House of Commons became (marginally) more representative of the broader public. The emergence of Labour as the second party, as well as the growth in power of trade unionism, helped to consolidate a gradual shift in Westminster debates away from constitutional and religious issues to those connected to economics, social policy and welfare.[72] Partly as response to the new female electorate that made up much of the 'silent

majority' that fascinated party strategists, there was a more domesticated tone in political discourse, typified by the reassuring radio broadcasts of Stanley Baldwin.[73] There was no escaping the transformation that the 1918 Reform Act had wrought in British political life, and the press debates discussed here played a vital role in explaining and justifying these changes to the electorate.

The press was generally staunch in the defence of the new democracy that it had helped to usher in. In the first general election involving the expanded electorate, in December 1918, newspapers repeatedly highlighted the diligence and maturity of the new female voters. If the overall turnout, at 58.9%, was disappointing, women were conspicuously excluded from any blame. For the *Daily Telegraph*,

> The General Election has provided the justification – if, indeed, justification were needed – of the policy of admitting women to the franchise. Their eagerness to fulfil the new duty of taking a full share of responsibility in a decision so vital to the country was the outstanding feature of polling day.[74]

'Not even the most ardent women suffragists… anticipated such a remarkable demonstration of women's interest in their new prerogative,' declared the *Express*: 'While the men were apathetic, the women turned out everywhere.'[75] The *Mirror* agreed: 'This election has been marked by a great number of abstentions: not amongst the women. The women voted.'[76] 'Two facts stand out from the polling' noted the *Mail*. 'First the public apathy; second the great strength of the women's vote… nearly as many women voted as men.'[77] Similar observations were made in subsequent elections. Women 'have taken their elective function seriously and responsibly', wrote the *Telegraph* the day after the general election in November 1922, and had 'gone to the poll in great numbers': 'The result is a full justification of that sweeping act of reform which the late Government placed upon the Statute Book'.[78] At the general election two years later, the paper was similarly optimistic,

suggesting that women 'have voted in greater numbers than ever before'.[79] Female voters, in short, were demonstrating their worth as citizens.

While the new female voters received the greatest attention from columnists and commentators, it was also widely agreed that the inclusion of more working-class male voters had altered electoral dynamics. When Labour won an eye-catching victory in the Spen Valley by-election in January 1920, for example, *The Times* speculated that the 'decisive votes were recorded in the main by men and women who were enfranchised for the first time by the Representation of the People Act passed two years ago'.[80] The Act was, the paper contended, 'a constitutional revolution, and it is only now that its effects are being felt':

> There are over 20 million electors now, with a vast expanse of virgin soil for a fresh political force. The 12 million new voters are of two classes, married women and young men… They are the classes who were most profoundly influenced by the war, and who retain after it the fewest of the old national prejudices and illusions. They offer a unique opportunity for the teaching of a new political creed, and there can be hardly any doubt that it is the swing of the women and ex-Service voters to Labour which is the chief lesson to be learnt from Spen Valley and other recent by-elections.[81]

In such circumstances, it was clear to moderate right-wing opinion that the Conservatives would have to work hard to attract some of these new working-class voters – which was a central part of Stanley Baldwin's appeal as party leader. A *Times* editorial in September 1924 warned that the 1918 Reform Act had 'revolutionized' the political situation, and there would be 'nothing but a slow death before the party which does not strive to be truly national by enlisting the cordial cooperation of every man and woman who shares its ideals, irrespective of the class to which they belong':

> The importance of associating the wage-earning class more closely with the Conservative Party becomes increasingly urgent with every day that lengthens the period separating the country from the two-party system and the relatively small electorate… The Conservative Party should not be behind the Labour Party in encouraging the youth of the nation to enlist under its banner with the possibility of satisfying its proper ambitions of public service. The time has gone by for putting up a few working-men candidates for hopeless seats at a General Election and forgetting their very existence when a safe seat falls vacant at a by-election.[82]

Such were the necessary challenges of the new democratic politics, and they were, in most cases, accepted with equanimity as an inevitable consequence of a more inclusive franchise.

This is not to suggest, of course, that there were no questions about the suitability of the new electors, or that nostalgia for the pre-1918 system was entirely absent. At the gentlest end of the spectrum, some voices expressed frustration that not all citizens fulfilled their duties at election times. The number of 'unpolled votes' in the 1923 general election was, the *Daily Telegraph* asserted, 'a mocking commentary upon democracy's assumed eagerness for the franchise'.[83] Others argued that the expansion of the electorate had gone so far that any single voter could easily feel insignificant. 'No one can doubt that the individual elector is today of less importance than he was sixty years ago', lamented the *Evening Standard* in 1928 when contemplating the granting of the vote to women at 21.[84] 'If women under thirty really want votes of ever decreasing value, they might as well have them,' grumbled another editorial in the same paper.[85] It was happy to accept, however, that the enlarged democracy was 'not an experiment concerning which there can be any thought of revocation'.[86]

More scathing in tone were those who argued that the franchise reform had allowed the electorate to become dangerously unbalanced. Harold Cox, an occasional columnist in the *Sunday Times* during the 1920s, insisted that ratepayers and companies did not have sufficient weight in the new system, and denounced the 'Scandal of the Pauper Vote'.[87] By the late 1920s, the *Daily Mail*,

under the idiosyncratic proprietorship of Lord Rothermere, was complaining that many electors lacked the political knowledge and civic responsibility to be worthy of the franchise:

> The fact is that quite a large number of people now possess the vote who ought never to have been given it. It is obviously unjust to the community, for example, that persons in receipt of public relief, who are living on the taxes paid by workers out of their earnings, should have the power to dictate policy and decide elections. It is curious that the more widely the vote is given, the less it appears to be desired. It ceases to be a sign of capacity and is even sometimes regarded almost with contempt.[88]

This concern famously developed into a crusade against equalising the franchise, under the slogan 'Stop the Flapper Vote Folly'. 'Nothing could be madder than at this present moment yet further to extend the franchise', argued a typical editorial: 'But by adopting this ridiculous proposal of "votes for flappers" Ministers are preparing to add millions of irresponsible voters to the total of electors.'[89] Ultimately, though, this campaign was motivated by the vehement anti-socialism of a 'press baron' who was increasingly out of touch with mainstream opinion in Britain, and it failed to resonate widely. Rothermere's main anxiety was that young women would disproportionately vote Labour, and therefore enable a left-wing domination of British politics. Other conservative papers felt such anxieties less keenly, and accepted that equalisation was both an inevitability and not to be feared; the *Mail*'s alarmist editorials also jarred badly with its encouragement over the previous decade of women's participation in the political arena.[90] As with Rothermere's campaign in support of the British Union of Fascists in 1934, this step outside the mainstream failed to move public or parliamentary opinion, and was fairly quickly disavowed; before long it was viewed as an embarrassment.

These fulminations against unqualified voters should not be ignored, but, viewed in the context of the serious and often successful attacks on democracy throughout Europe in the inter-war period,

nor should they be blown out of proportion. The national newspaper market in Britain was certainly dominated by a handful of rich men and their heavily capitalised companies; right-wing voices tended to drown out radical and socialist alternatives, and readers were offered a diet of celebrity, crime and consumerism that made many critics despair.[91] At the same time, mainstream newspapers helped to sustain the legitimacy of Britain's parliamentary system and did much to integrate new voters into the post-war democracy. The press's enthusiasm for wide-ranging measures of reform eased the passage of the Representation of the People Act through parliament by framing opposition as unreasonable and out-dated, and editors and journalists also offered an important platform for frustrations about the bitter partisanship that had become entrenched before 1914; on the question of proportional representation, indeed, the press's appetite for change was far greater than that within parliament. Newspapers across the political spectrum urged their readers to be politically informed and to exercise their vote, and right-wing commentators encouraged the Conservative party to adapt to the new electorate and find new ways of appealing to working class and female electors. The language of rights certainly remained rather muted, especially in relation to women, and the press, like politicians, tried to direct and control the ways in which readers and voters were mobilised, by pushing their own agendas and crusades. But as the western world was about be plunged into depression and democracy would undergo its fiercest challenges, the British press remained relatively secure in its faith in the political wisdom of its people. Twelve years after welcoming the 'fully democratised franchise', the *Daily Telegraph* could celebrate the 'calm' that characterised the general election of May 1929, even though its favoured party would be defeated: 'the people of Great Britain, at all times the least revolutionary-minded of peoples, are at the moment less disposed to militant and extremist courses than ever'.[92] The paper could still 'face the future' with confidence.

[1] *Daily Telegraph*, 29 Mar. 1917, 4.

[2] For a recent overview of the scholarship, see Robert Blackburn, 'Laying the Foundations of the Modern Voting System: The Representation of the People Act 1918', *Parliamentary History*, xxx (2011), 33-52.

[3] Ian Machin, *The Rise of Democracy in Britain, 1830-1918* (Basingstoke, 2001); John Garrard, *Democratisation in Britain: Elites, Civil Society and Reform since 1800* (Basingstoke, 2002).

[4] Martin Pugh, *The March of the Women: A Revisionist Analysis of the Campaign for Women's Suffrage 1866-1914* (Oxford, 2000).

[5] Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain, Vol. 2: The Twentieth Century* (1984); J. M. McEwen, 'The Press and the Fall of Asquith', *HJ*, xxi (1978), 863-883; Adrian Bingham, 'Enfranchisement, Feminism and the Modern Woman: Debates in the British Popular Press, 1918-1939', in *The Aftermath of Suffrage*, ed. Julie Gottlieb and Richard Toye (Basingstoke, 2013), 87-104; Adrian Bingham, '"An Organ of Uplift?" The Popular Press and Political Culture in Interwar Britain', *Journalism Studies,* xiv (2013), 651-662; Laura Beers, *Your Britain: Media and the Making of the Labour Party* (Cambridge, Mass., 2010).

[6] Machin, *Rise of Democracy*, 142.

[7] Blackburn, 'Laying the Foundations', 145-7.

[8] The *Manchester Guardian* was, of course, strictly speaking a provincial paper, but its reputation ensured that its voice was heard nationally and internationally.

[9] The Labour-supporting *Daily Herald* was unable to sustain daily publication throughout the war, and published a short, and rather idiosyncratic, weekly edition, which is only considered very briefly here: for more on the *Herald*, see Huw Richards, *The Bloody Circus: The Daily Herald and the Left* (1997), ch. 1.

[10] For editorial policies and the preoccupations of proprietors, see Koss, *Rise and Fall of the Political Press*; Kevin Williams, *Read All About It! A History of the British Newspaper* (2010); Adrian Bingham, *Gender, Modernity, and the Popular Press in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford, 2004).

[11] Paul Ward, *Britishness since 1870* (2004); Thomas Hajkowski, *The BBC and national identity in Britain, 1922-53* (Manchester, 2013).

[12] Cited in Williams, *Read All About It!,* 164.

[13] Bingham, '"An Organ of Uplift?"'.

[14] *Morning Post*, 28 Mar. 1917, 6.

[15] *Manchester Guardian*, 16 May 1917, 4.

[16] *Daily News*, 17 May 1917, 1.

[17] *Observer*, 24 June 1917, 6.

[18] *Observer*, 24 June 1917, 6.

[19] *Daily Express*, 24 May 1917, 2.

[20] Koss, *Rise and Fall of the Political Press*; Susanne Stoddart, 'The New Liberalism, the New Journalism and Emotion in Edwardian Liberal Newspapers', Royal Holloway, University of London, PhD thesis (2014).

[21] Neal Blewett, *The Peers, the Parties and the People: The British General Elections of 1910* (1972), ch. 15.

[22] *Daily Telegraph*, 30 Mar. 1917, 4.

[23] *Daily Telegraph*, 30 Mar. 1917, 4.

[24] *Daily Telegraph*, 29 Mar. 1917, 4.

[25] *Daily Chronicle*, 28 May 1917, 2.

[26] *The Times*, 19 June 1917, 7.

[27] *Observer*, 1 Apr. 1917, 6.

[28] *Sunday Times*, 1 Apr. 1917, 6; *Daily Express*, 29 Mar. 1917, 1.

[29] *Daily News*, 27 March 1917, 2.

[30] *Morning Post*, 28 March 1917, 6.

[31] *Morning Post*, 30 March 1917, 4.

[32] Jon Lawrence, *Electing Our Masters: The Hustings in British Politics from Hogarth to Blair* (Oxford, 2009), 96, 111, 113; Helen McCarthy, 'Parties, Voluntary Societies and Democratic Politics in Interwar Britain', *HJ*, l (2007), 891–912; Helen McCarthy, 'Whose Democracy? Histories of British Political Culture Between the Wars', *HJ*, lv (2012), 221-238.

[33] *Daily Mail*, 16 May 1916, 4; *Manchester Guardian*, 23 May 1917, 4.

[34] *Manchester Guardian*, 23 May 1917, 4.

[35] *Daily Express*, 29 Mar. 1917, 2.

[36] Pugh, *March of the Women*, 229-231; Bingham, *Gender, Modernity, and the Popular Press,* 111-13.

[37] *Daily Express*, 24 May 1917, 2; *Daily Telegraph*, 8 Jan. 1918, 6.

[38] *The Spectator*, 22 June 1917, 2.

[39] *Morning Post*, 8 Jan. 1918, 6.

[40] G. R. Searle, *A New England? Peace and War 1886-1918* (Oxford, 2004), 791.

[41] *Daily Express*, 15 Aug. 1916, 4.

[42] *The Times*, 29 Mar. 1917, 7; *Daily Telegraph*, 8 Jan. 1918, 6.

[43] *New Statesman*, 3 June 1917, 268.

[44] Martin Pugh, *The Pankhursts* (2002); *Daily Chronicle*, 21 June 1917, 2.

[45] Martin Pugh, 'Suffrage and Citizenship', in *20th Century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change*, ed. Francesca Carnevali and Julie-Marie Strange (2nd edn, Harlow, 2007), 101.

[46] M. R. Higonnet, J. Jenson, S. Michel, M. C. Weitz, ed., *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars* (New Haven, 1987); Gail Braybon and Penny Summerfield, *Out of the Cage: Women's Experiences in Two World Wars* (London, 1987); Adrian Bingham, '"An Era of Domesticity"? Histories of Women and Gender in inter-war Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, i (2004), 225-233; Bingham, *Gender, Modernity, and the Popular Press*, ch. 2.

[47] Nicoletta Gullace, *The Blood of Our Sons: Men, Women, and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship During the Great War* (New York, 2002).

[48] *The Times*, 29 Mar. 1917, 7.

[49] *Daily Telegraph*, 19 June 1917, 4.

[50] *Daily Telegraph*, 8 Jan. 1918, 6.

[51] *Daily Telegraph*, 8 Jan. 1918, 6.

[52] Sarah Pedersen has recently found similar language in the Scottish Press: 'Suffragettes and the Scottish Press during the First World War', *Women's History Review*, published online 22 Feb. 2017, DOI: 10.1080/09612025.2017.1292620.

[53] *Daily Express*, 29 Mar. 1917, 2.

[54] *Daily Express*, 11. Jan. 1918, 2.

[55] *Daily Mail*, 11 Jan. 1918, 2.

[56] *Daily Mail*, 26 Nov. 1918, 2.

[57] *Manchester Guardian*, 15 May 1916, 4.

[58] *Manchester Guardian*, 19 Jan. 1917, 4.

[59] *Daily News*, 27 Mar. 1917, 2.

[60] Daily News, 29 Mar. 1917, 1; 11 Jan. 1918, 2.

[61] Blackburn, 'Laying the Foundations'.

[62] *Manchester Guardian*, 19 Jan. 1917, 4.

[63] *Observer*, 24 June 1917, 6.

[64] *Observer*, 13 Jan. 1918, 3.

[65] *Daily Telegraph*, 11 Jan. 1918, 4.

[66] *Daily Chronicle*, 10 Jan. 1918, 3.

[67] *Daily Chronicle*, 6 Feb. 1918, 2.

[68] *Daily News*, 20 June 1917, 2.

[69] *The Times*, 7 Feb. 1918, 7; 30 Mar. 1917, 7.

[70] *Daily Telegraph*, 20 June 1917, 6.

[71] Blackburn, 'Laying the Foundations', 47, 51.

[72] Ross McKibbin, *Parties and People: England 1914-51* (Oxford, 2010).

[73] Lawrence, *Electing our Masters*; McCarthy, 'Parties, Voluntary Societies and Democratic Politics'; David Jarvis, 'Mrs Maggs and Betty: The Conservative Appeal to Women Voters in the 1920s', *Twentieth Century British History*, v (1994), 129-52.

[74] *Daily Telegraph*, 16 Dec. 1918, 7.

[75] *Daily Express*, 16 Dec. 1918, 7.

[76] *Daily Mirror*, 31 Dec. 1918, 5.

[77] *Daily Mail*, 16 Dec. 1918, 5.

[78] *Daily Telegraph*, 17 Nov. 1922, 10.

[79] *Daily Telegraph*, 30 Oct. 1924, 8.

[80] *The Times*, 7 Jan. 1920, 13.

[81] *The Times*, 7 Jan. 1920, 13.

[82] *The Times*, 17 Sept. 1924, 11.

[83] *Daily Telegraph*, 28 Oct. 1924, 8.

[84] *Evening Standard*, 4 Feb. 1928.

[85] *Evening Standard*, 30 Mar. 1928.

[86] *Evening Standard*, 4 Feb. 1928.

[87] For example, *Sunday Times*, 4 Sept. 1921, 7; 7 Feb. 1926, 8; 8 July 1926, 8.

[88] *Daily Mail*, 7 Apr. 1927,

[89] *Daily Mail*, 30 Mar. 1927, 10.

[90] Adrian Bingham, '"Stop the Flapper Vote Folly": Lord Rothermere, the *Daily Mail* and the equalisation of the franchise 1927-28', *Twentieth Century British History*, xiii (2002), 17-37.

[91] James Curran and Jean Seaton, *Power without Responsibility: The Press, Broadcasting and New Media in Britain*, (7th edn., 2009).

[92] *Daily Telegraph*, 31 May 1929, 12.