

that the Japanese gradually started feeling they could defeat China. From this point of view, temporal victory of Chinese policy in 1882 had caused an enormous defeat.⁸³

Thus, the events of the summer of 1882 were a tactical victory for the Chinese, who strengthened their position in Korea, and a strategic victory for Japan, which was motivated to enhance her military preparedness. For the Koreans it was undoubtedly a grave defeat, because both of their Asian neighbours have realized weakness of Korean reform efforts, as well as growing interest of their opponent. Both China and Japan have stationed their soldiers on Korean soil, and the growth of their rivalry forced them to interfere into the Korean matters much more intensively than before. Before July 1882 Kojong was able to direct the course of the matters, but after the Imo mutiny he couldn't feel safe. The position of the Mins was shaken as well. Despite bloodshed among members of the clan, the Mins remained an important faction. But whereas prior to July 1882 they were generally reform-minded, since that time they owed their return to power to Chinese intervention, thus became allies of Chinese representatives. This caused deep enmity between them and fanatic reformers, which were admiring Japanese progress and relied on Japan's assistance. Without this unnecessary struggle, the advance of Korea might have continued even despite Sino-Japanese tensions, but the clash between Korean factions gave to China and Japan the best pretext to infringe into Korean internal matters. And even worse things had to come.

Revival of British Liberal Party 1902–1905

PETER SKOKAN

In the general election in January 1906, the British Liberal party defeated the Unionists distinctively. The Liberals gained 397 seats and were supported by 29 Labour MPs and 82 Irish Nationalists. The Unionists shrunk to a minority of only 156, whereas they won in the previous general election as many as 402 seats. The considerable shift in composition of the Commons indicates that a significant change, both in political practice of parties and in popular perception of politics, occurred. The shift is more evident from a fact that the Liberal Party was in a deep crisis since 1886 and the revival itself took place only in last four years after the end of the Boer War. I suppose, it could be said, that the change related to two basic phenomenon. A slow and painful exchange of generations in the Liberal party since 1880s was the first; the second was a slow reintegration of the Liberal Party, which was arising from an absence of theme that could alienated various frictions amongst the Liberals and from opposition to proposed solutions to domestic reforms of the Unionists.

Generation exchange

Since the mid-1880s, the Liberal party faced a deep crisis that was caused by a stubborn endeavour of its leaders to solve the Irish question at any cost. It led to a split in 1886, which weakened the Liberals strongly. However, it cannot be claimed that the party lost considerable number of popular votes, because Francis Schnadhorst's activities in the National Liberal Federation prevented

83) DUUS, pp. 60–65.

it.¹ The loss itself was embodied, above all, in secession of some influential radicals under a leadership of Joseph Chamberlain. Their breakaway was directly connected with a loss of their quite provocative political potential. What was even worse, a majority of the Whigs joined Chamberlain and established the Liberal Unionists Party, which as early as in 1887 began to cooperate with the Conservatives directly at a Cabinet level. Moreover, the secession of the Whigs had a serious impact on finance of the Liberal Party that had to struggle with insufficient funds until the beginning of the 20th century.²

The Whigs however held an ambivalent attitude to the Liberals. They were bound to them by a long tradition and did not want to destroy it definitively. Therefore, they, in a limited extent, supported some Liberal proposals in the Lords within the years 1886-1893. Despite this fact, their suspicious attitude towards the Liberal party's activities in Irish question was insurmountable. It proved in 1893, when Gladstone introduced his second Home Rule Bill. This step of the Prime Minister destroyed last relics of their sympathy to the party and forced them to closer cooperation with the Conservatives definitively.³

Such a situation opened enough space for a young generation, which began to assert itself gradually. In 1880s and at the beginning of 1890s, men appeared there on the political scene, who led *the* party in the first three decades of the 20th century. Amongst them were such fine personalities as David Lloyd George, Herbert Henry Asquith, Augustine Birrell, Richard Burdon Haldane, Edward Grey, or James Bryce.⁴ They were strongly influenced by ideas of new liberalism, which come out from philosophy of

Neohegelian Oxford philosophers T. H. Green and D. G. Ritchie, who had reinterpreted classical liberal principles, had refused utilitarianism as the only aspect of social progress, and had formulated a concept of positive liberty.⁵ This ideological shift opened the door for interest in lower social classes that demanded their broader participation on political life. By adoption of these new ideas, the new generation move away from positions of mid-Victorian Gladstonianism in ideology. In practice, they inclined to more active welfare policy of the state in order to appease relatively aggressive strikes and lock-outs⁶ that appeared because of low living standards of the poor and spreading socialist movement.

The generation exchange reached the top in the 1890s, when plenty of Gladstonians, including Gladstone himself, retired, died or was gradually losing considerable part of their influence.⁷ The process of the generation exchange itself was accompanied with a deep crisis, threatening by another split of the party, concerning imperial and foreign policy as well as attitudes to the concept of new liberalism.

The crisis escalated in mid-1890s, after a retirement of Gladstone, when the Liberals were affected by an intra-party struggle over Gladstone's succession. It was definitively solved as late as in February 1899, when Sir Henry Campbell-Bannermann became the leader of the party. He fully represented certain "shift in progress" amongst the Liberals at the turn of the centuries. On the one hand, he was an old mid-Victorian, who was loyal to classical liberalism and who had advanced to the highest politics systematically. On the other hand, he was partially open to new liberalism. When he became the Leader of the Liberal party in 1899 hardly anybody could have imagined that he would restore an order amongst the Liberals. However, his attitudes to the Boer War and his ability to negotiate with numerous frictions within the party reunited, agglutinated and prepared the Liberals for a constructive opposition against the Unionists within the years 1902-1906.

1) MCGILL, B., *Francis Schnadhorst and Liberal Party Organisation*, in: *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol 34, No. 1 (Mar., 1962), pp. 19-39.

2) The situation changed, when a new Liberal Chief Whip - Herbert Gladstone - defined rules for financial support for Liberal candidates and cleared up competencies of National Liberal Federation and Liberal Central Association. See RUSSELL, A. K., *Laying the charges for the landslide: The Revival of Liberal Party Organisation 1902-1905*, in: MORRIS, A. J. A. (ed.), *Edwardian Radicalism 1900-1914. Some Aspects of British Radicalism*, London and Boston, 1974, pp. 62-74.

3) PHILLIPS, G. D., *The Whig Lords and Liberalism, 1886 -1893*, in: *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Mar., 1981), pp. 167-173.

4) David Lloyd George joined the Parliament in 1890 for Caernarvon Borough; Herbert H. Asquith in 1886 for East Fife; Augustine Birrell in 1885 for Liverpool; Edward Grey in 1882 for Berwick-upon-Tweed; James Bryce in 1880 for Tower Hamlets.

5) EMY, H. V., *Liberals, Radicals and Social Politics*, Cambridge, 1973, pp. 6-7.

6) POWELL, D., *The New Liberalism and the Rise of Labour*, in: *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (1968), pp. 369-393. Compare also PELLING, H., *A History of British Trade Unionism*, pp. 89-103.

7) We can mention here, for instance John Bright, who died in 1889, W. E. Gladstone himself died in 1898, W. V. Harcourt left active politics in 1895, John Morley was continually losing influence since the general election in 1895.

Similar shift shaped up amongst the Conservatives as well in the mid-1880s. Randolph Churchill's expression of "Tory democracy"⁸ that accentuated a need to focus an attention of the Tories to middle classes primarily, offered a direct competition with Whigism and Liberalism and their concentration on a broad political reform. Popularity of the concept proved a fact that, according to the general election results within years 1885–1900, the suburbs of cities and big towns was marked as "villa toryism."⁹ However, the radical shift entirely connected with a generation exchange in the Conservative Party did not succeed and political mistakes of the Unionists within the years 1902–1905 destroyed its potential.

Moreover, the new Liberal generation was on alert because of foreign competition, above all German and American. It included all fields of social life in all its forms. They worried about British ability to compete other Powers, what was braced up by British inability to defeat the Boers quickly and decisively. Their adherence to the initiative for quest for national efficiency had roots somewhere there, which required a definitive shift in liberal policy, in favour of new liberalism, and an adaptation of its new ideas to practice.

From this point of view, it seems that the revival of the Liberal party after the year 1902 is not possible to separate from the generation exchange from late 19th century. The new liberal generation was prepared to answer the new situation and to answer needs and challenges of the era by adoption of new approaches. This attitude met positive response at the beginning of the 20th century. However, it would be misleading to claim that generation exchange and adoption of new liberalism were the only or the most important causes of the revival. Political mistakes of the Unionists played an important role as well.

Opposition to Unionist reforms

After the Khaki election in autumn 1900, it seemed that the Unionists were at the top of power and that the Liberals could not endanger them for a very long time. A jingoistic wave accompanying the election gave a considerable advantage to the Unionists. However, a zeal rising from a quick victory was

vanishing together with growing difficulties in South Africa. Finally, British problems to defeat Boer commandos led to a scorched earth policy and to an establishment of concentration camps. The latter issue was, for a long time, beyond an attention of the Liberals. Only a return of Emily Hobhouse, on 24 May 1901, to London, opened an arduous discussion over the problem.¹⁰ Her report about conditions in camps shook up Campbell-Bannerman to such an extent that he denounced practice of the British in South Africa as "methods of barbarism".¹¹ A reaction to the expression was immediate and twofold. On the one hand, there were those, mainly Unionists and an influential friction of Liberal Imperialists within the Liberal party, who supported the policy of the Cabinet against the Boers and refused criticism of the Liberal leader. On the other hand, there were moderate Liberals and the so-called pro-Boers adhering principles of Little Englanderism,¹² who joined Campbell-Bannerman in assault on the Cabinet. Although the Liberal leader by his denunciation almost caused another split in the party,¹³ his attitude to the problem, playing on exhaustion of British society of the war, built out a background for future success. The victory of the Liberals in 1906 was based, amongst others, on political mistakes of the Unionists regarding domestic policy. However, only the end of the Boer War turned a full attention of politicians and society to the inland issues.

The first question that sharply weakened a Unionist position concerned education reform. It had been discussed in various forms since the year 1895 when, Bryce Commission on Education advised to concentrate executive power in education system in a newly established central educational body.¹⁴ Simultaneously, it was clear that it was necessary to reform the whole

10) NERAD, *Velká Británie a búrské státy. Příspěvek ke studiu politiky v jižní Africe na sklonku viktoriánské éry*, doctoral thesis at FF UK in Prague 2004, p. 201, (manuscript).

11) WILSON, J., *A Life of Sir Henry Campbell - Bannerman*, London 1973, str. 348.

12) The concept of Little Englanderism was based upon a traditional gladstonian attitude to foreign affairs that was determined by moral values strongly. An idea to extend the Empire was for Little Englanders unacceptable and unmoral because of its aggressiveness and expenses. From this point of view, active imperialism was inconsistent with Nonconformist creed that had completely different priorities: self-help, political reform, peace, temperance and religious liberty. See for example AULD, J. W., *The Liberal pro-Boers*, in: *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 2. (May 1975), p. 97.

13) MCCALLUM, R. B., *The Liberal Party from Earl Grey to Asquith*, London 1963, pp. 133–134.

14) MACKAY, R. F., *Balfour. Intellectual Statesman*, Oxford 1985. p. 85.

8) FORSTER, R. F., *Lord Randolph Churchill. A Political Life*, Oxford 1981 pp. 297–298.

9) ROBERTS, M., *Villa Toryism and Popular Conservatism in Leeds, 1885–1902*, in: *The Historical Journal* Vol. 49, No. 1 (Mar., 2006), pp. 217–246.

system of national education, according to its fragmentation and constantly higher requirements for effective technical education.

The first attempt to enforce the reform of education was undertaken as early as in 1896, but a strong opposition of the Liberals, whom Joseph Chamberlain joined, destroyed it. By 1899, owing to the recommendation of the Bryce Commission, it was set up the Board of Education, but its first president Duke of Devonshire had little interest in its competencies. Despite this fact, a work on a broad reform of British education system began as early as in 1900. It was complicated because of an opposition of the Nonconformists amongst the Liberal Unionists headed by Joseph Chamberlain. They felt endangered by Balfour's intention to adopt clause 27 of the 1896 Bill, which breached the Cowper-Temple clause of 1870 Act. The Cowper-Temple rule secured that education provided by state schools were undenominational and that denominational schools required religious instructions according to their creed. Although the Government offered Nonconformists, under the clause 27, system as was used in voluntary schools, they rejected it as unsatisfactory. Finally, the clause 27 had to be abandoned and exempted from the 1902 bill.¹⁵

Owing to such a complication, it took until 24 March 1902, when Arthur Balfour was able to introduce the Bill to the Parliament. The Bill intended to abolish school boards established in 1870 in every nonconformist or state school¹⁶ and proposed a unified system of control through local education authorities. It planned to set up committees working within the county councils, county borough councils, councils of borough with a population higher than 10000 and councils of urban districts with more than 20000 inhabitants. The Bill gave financial security to voluntary schools in a form of share from collected rates in return for a partial public control. However, a fundamental issue was that the voluntary schools, both Anglican and Catholic, did not lose their identity, because the managers of the schools retained the right to select their own staff through religious instructions. On the other hand, schools of Nonconformists and state schools were submitted to local education authorities what meant their loss of a relative independence without any compensation.

15) Ibidem, p. 91.

16) According to the Education Act of 1870, Anglican and Catholic schools were exempted from the school boards system. Therefore, they were labelled as voluntary schools. At the turn of the centuries most children were educated at voluntary schools, mainly Anglican. GRIGG, J., *Lloyd George. The Peoples Champion, 1902-1911*, London, 2004, p. 22.

Nonconformists were moreover outraged by a fact that they would pay Anglican and even Catholic schools through the rates directly.¹⁷ In addition, they refused to send their children to schools provided by state, which were undenominational. The latter problem was serious mainly in areas, where was no other alternative to schools provided by the state.¹⁸

Both objections were matters of principle. The Nonconformists, struggling since the 17th century against privileges of the Anglican Church, could not take into account granting of Anglican education by local rates. However, in fact, they participated on granting of the established Church through taxes and national budget indirectly for a long time. From this point of view, the Bill just modified a cash flow, but even this change was unacceptable for them, because they were not disposed to fund their old enemies directly.

The second issue was more serious. The resistance of Nonconformists to send children to state schools rose from a fear that a religious creed of their offspring was endangered. Practically, it was easier to influence the school board than county council, which was immune to such activities. In this respect, they felt that whereas Anglican and Catholic school retained their identity, the Nonconformist ones losing it.

The divided Liberal party faced the Bill surprisingly united. Only some Liberal Imperialists supported the measure, but the majority of Liberals rejected it, because there were too many Nonconformists amongst them. They hoped that the Bill would be abandoned because of the opposition of Joseph Chamberlain, exactly like in 1896. A widespread campaign had also some fruits. The Education Bill had become the topic number since July 1902 in public and by-elections in Orkneys and Shetlands showed a slight shift of public opinion to Liberal attitude. Moreover, some Nonconformists organized themselves in the Passive Resistance Committee, which exhorted for refusing to pay rents. Although the campaign had not expected national effect, locally, above all in Wales, it had a relatively long life. For example, in 1904 there were 7324 refusals to pay local rates.¹⁹

17) McCALLUM, pp. 136-137.

18) ROWLAND, P., *The Last Liberal Governments: The Promised Land. 1905-1910*, London 1968, p. 77.

19) GRIGG, J., *Lloyd George. The People's Champion, 1902 -1911*, London 2002, p. 37.

In December 1902, finally, the Bill became the law. Although it was considerably amended,²⁰ it changed British educational system significantly. Simultaneously, it offered the Liberals a background for reunion of the Liberal Imperialist with the rest of the Party on a basis of general opposition to the measure.

Whereas the education issue created foundations for the future success, the dispute over rights of trade unions helped to set up a closer cooperation between Labour representatives and the Liberal party. The Taff Vale judgement²¹ together with cases *Lyons vs. Wilkins* and *Quinn vs. Leatham*²² was a real disaster for trade unions. These affairs established a dangerous precedent according to which trade unions were responsible for financial losses of employers caused by strikes. It was a huge threat to funds of trade unions and it destroyed their most important and efficient weapon – strike as such. Employers had not to worry of their profit more, because financial losses were, since the Taff Vale judgement, exportable. Owing to the treat, the membership in trade unions began to rise considerably as well. In 1903, the Labour Representation Committee (LRC) established in February 1900 represented as many as 850 thousands organized workers.²³ In the same time, the LRC was recovering from the Taff Vale judgement, what proved in by-election in Bernard Castle, where the LRC candidate, Arthur Henderson, defeated both Liberal and Unionist candidate for the first time.

The Liberal party, influenced by ideas of new liberalism, interested in issues of working men as well. Its turn to welfare questions assumed an importance continually and the Taff Vale judgement helped to intensify its concern about industrial relations. Growing potential of the LRC and an adoption of new liberalism by the Liberals led to a political agreement between Chief Whip, Herbert Gladstone, and Secretary of the LRC, Ramsey MacDonald, to the so-called Lib-Lab Pact. It opened a closer cooperation for the next

20) The most important amendment proposed by Henry Hobhouse meant preservation of school board, but their competencies were strongly limited on issues concerning only direct material managing of the school. MACKAY, R. F., op. cit., p. 101.

21) DAVIDSON, R., *The Board of Trade and Industrial Relations*, in: *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Sept., 1978), pp. 571-591.

22) Decision in the case *Lyons vs Wilkins* forbade demonstration against picketing and decision in the case *Quinn vs. Leatham* confirmed the Taff Vale judgement. See PELLING, p. 124.

23) *Ibidem*.

general election and set down that the Liberals would not oppose LRC candidates in 50 constituencies.²⁴

The agreement was secret and did not provoke bigger excitement. Simultaneously, it is necessary to remark that it was profitable for both sides. At the first place, the Liberals secured for themselves a political support of a relatively sharply expanding movement that they wanted to take under control. In addition, they had not to care for 50 constituencies, what was a clear relief for funds of the party. Moreover, in case of Labour success, Liberals could calculate with support of Labour MPs. On the other side, the LRC, in these 50 constituencies, eliminated one of the key political players – the Liberal Party – and thus heightened its chances to press through more Labour candidates into the Parliament. The basic presumption was that Liberal voters would vote LRC candidates because of proximity of attitudes of the Liberal party and LRC in last political issues and because of their joint opposition to the Unionist government. However, the agreement created, meanwhile, just a relatively weak alliance, but in the year 1903 it appeared an issue that hardened it. On the other hand, it cemented views within the Liberal party itself and contributed to the general election results of 1906 considerably. The issue was a controversy over the Chamberlain's proposal of the Tariff reform.

Chamberlain's idea of imperial preference and relatively closed economic system had developed since the 1890s continually. First request for such a system came from white colonies and dominions as Canada and Cape Colony but were motivated only by an endeavour to strengthen the economic position of the colonies and the Empire itself.²⁵ Chamberlain's proposal went further. In a final version, he assumed not only economic improvement of the Empire but also a reinforcement of mutual ties between colonies and the mother country and between colonies altogether.

Moreover, the measure was to have one additional and very important side effect. By rising tariffs, the solution was to secure financial reserves for extended shipbuilding programme and for welfare reforms, above all old age pensions that concerned Chamberlain's mind since the 1890s. He introduced the proposal to the Cabinet in 1902 but he met with a hard op-

24) BRIGGS, A., *The Political Scene*, in: NOWELL-SMITH, S. (ed.), *Edwardian England, 1901-1914*, London 1964, p. 65.

25) ZEBEL, S. H., *Joseph Chamberlain and the Genesis of Tariff Reform*, in: *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1. (November 1967), p. 137.

position. His main opponents appeared amongst Unionist diehard adherents of the free trade, who refused any protective or preferential basis of Britain's economic system. Vice versa, they demanded an abandonment of temporary tariffs on corn and flour that were introduced due to expenses of the Cabinet on the Boer War.²⁶

Finally, he lost a vote in the Cabinet over the question and thus he decided to present the measure to the public in Birmingham on 15 May 1903. In the speech itself he did not omit to underline: *"For my own part, I believe in a British Empire, in an Empire which, although it should be its first duty to cultivate friendship with all the nations of the world, should yet, even if alone, be self-sustaining and self sufficient, able to maintain itself against the competition of all its rivals."*²⁷

The political situation became explosive. From Chamberlain's impulse was set up the Tariff Reform League, but 54 his Unionist opponents established the Free Food League immediately.²⁸ The crisis within the Cabinet reached the top in September 1903, when Chamberlain himself but also his three major opponents - C. T. Ritchie, Lord Balfour of Burleigh and Lord George Hamilton - resigned. Prime Minister Balfour announced all four resignations altogether, by what he avoided an open split and came in for a reputation of conciliatory and far-sighted politician for some time. However, then he appointed Chamberlain's son, Austin, Chancellor of the Exchequer, what was generally felt as an expression of his sympathy to the proposed tariff reform. Consequences were almost immediate. A key person of the Liberal Unionists in the Cabinet - Duke of Devonshire - resigned on the 2 October.

After the 15 May 1903, when the proposal became public, the Liberal party could not stay aside. Its reaction was united as in the case of the Education Act in previous year. Although the tariff reform was closely bound with approaches to the colonial and imperial policy upon which the party was divided, it offered a perfect opportunity for definitive reunion of various fractions within the party. Certain indication for successfulness of their attitudes among the public was a campaign against the so-called bread tax in 1902, which had attacked at corn tax set up because of expenses of the Boer

War and which had been finally abolished by the budget for the year 1903. It had revived reminiscences on and rhetoric of the 1840s.

In face of such an opposition, Liberal Imperialist, from whom some were sympathetic to the Chamberlain's, were forced to defend basic principles of the free trade.²⁹ From this respect, Chamberlain's attack at the free trade had a unifying effect on the Liberal Party. Free trade was a basic element of ideology of the party and of the country itself as well, because *"it has had no experience of the working of a system of protection, has never seen the pinch of poverty, of distress, and the lawlessness and disorder which accompanied it when it existed before."*³⁰

A Liberal opposition to the imperial preference was backed up by both ideological and practical reasons. An ideological level, they felt that such an attack on free trade was simultaneously an attack on liberal and Victorian faith in abilities of individuals to assert themselves in a hard competition. It was an attack on belief in man himself and his talents. Although the Liberal party was shifting to the concept of New Liberalism slowly, it was not prepared for protectionism in economic field. It developed an idea of national efficiency, which presumed industrial and social efficiency within the principles of free trade that could be reached only by widespread domestic reforms and not by conservation of current circumstances by adoption of protectionism.

At a practical level, the Liberal party used an argument that the imperial preference would mean considerable rise of prices of food. Their argument was based on well thought reasons. Foreign food was cheaper because of its mass production and thus because of its production costs. Now prices of foreign food had to hike to very high level in order to British food production could compete them in prices. The problem was that the domestic food production was able to cover only 1/6 of the demand.³¹ Therefore, because of British non-self-sufficiency, the rise of prices of foreign food could rise above prices of food produced in Britain. Even import of a cheap Canadian food could not hinder the trend, because also this import was to be charged by although lower but still tariffs, that would hike prices.

26) GRIGG, p. 58.

27) An article in Birmingham Daily Post from the 16th May 1903 referring about Chamberlain's speech. Quoted in ZEBEL, p. 148.

28) JUDD, D., *Vzestup a pád britského impéria*, Praha 1999, p. 207.

29) HOWE, A., *Free Trade and Liberal England, 1846–1946*, Oxford, 1997, pp. 244–245.

30) Speech of Henry Cambell-Bannermann at Scarborough on 16th May 1903. Quoted in WILSON, p. 408.

31) CAIN P. J. - HOPKINS, A. G., *British Imperialism, 1688–2000*, London 2002, p. 191.

The topic of expensive food was one of the most important themes in the Liberal campaign against the imperial preference. The struggle against the “*stomach tax*”³² was to some extent based on a fight for moral good and for protection of the poor from undesirable rising of living costs. Liberals, quite in a populist way, connected moreover the problem with possible spreading of the poverty within the mother country. Therefore, they were not willing to save the Empire by lowering of living standards in Britain itself. Sir Campbell-Bannerman himself expressed this attitude in a relatively dramatic way: “*In this country we know – thanks to the patience and accurate scientific investigations of Mr. Rowntree and Mr. Charles Booth... that there is about 30 % of our population underfed, on the verge of hunger... 30 % of 41 millions comes to something over 12 millions – almost identical, as you see, with the whole population of the Colonies. So that it comes to this, that for every man in the Colonies who is benefited, one head is shoved under water in this country.... These are terrible figures, terrible in condemnation of this wild and rash project...*” He continued in similar manner and attacked imperial preference from a position of practical tradition: “*To dispute Free Trade, after fifty years’ experience of it, is like disputing the law of gravitation.*”³³

Not only prices of food concerned the Liberal party. Another field was industry as such. It appeared an argument that the adopting of imperial preference would mark up production costs, what, in a result, would endanger ability of British companies to compete with foreign concurrence.³⁴

From a point of British trade, they criticized general direction of the proposal. Lloyd George put it well in a speech at Cambridge University Liberal Club on the 23 May 1903, when he said: “*The Colonial trade is only one-quarter of the English trade; three quarters is with foreign countries. ... Are we going to close our doors against customers numbering 250 millions at least, simply in order to increase the custom of eleven millions of people? It is folly.*”³⁵

Similar approach adopted Liberal Imperialists organised in the Liberal League. Although Lord Rosebery tried to maintain beyond party lines firstly, he recognized quickly, that he had find himself in a political isolation. Consequently, he wanted to renew his position and tried to transform

the Liberal League into the most aggressive Liberal weapon against the imperial preference.³⁶

He was sympathetic to accent of the Chamberlain’s measure to imperial questions, but he refused strengthening of the Empire at the cost of newly established protectionism. He was afraid of opening foreign hostility to protectionist imperial custom union.³⁷ Therefore, he preferred another solution, which appeared in demands of the above-mentioned national efficiency. The reason was simple; the national efficiency did not attack any old Victorian principle and required only certain redefinition and adaptation on new circumstances. It advocated a strengthening of mutual relations between the mother country and colonies by free trade, which should be stimulated by raised national efficiency secured by broad industrial, educational and social reforms. This way should refresh the Empire, whereas controversial political issues as economic protection should remain closed.

Despite Rosebery’s ambitions, his lack of action led the Liberal League to total isolation.³⁸ The organisation, which had been established as an alternative programme to the main Liberal body originally lost its power and discipline. It could be observed on a fact that even its members did not want to wait for clear political action of their leader. However, they had not alternative and were relatively easily reintegrated to the main party structures. The Liberal League thus stopped being a separate or semi-separate political organisation. Its joint opposition with the Liberal party to Unionist measures and passivity of Lord Rosebery caused the wished conciliation of the party. A fact that until next general election it did not appear a foreign problem with a potential to split it up again was also important.

Behind this, Chamberlain had to face the opposition from his own Unionist ranks in the Parliament. The situation went too far that there was even considered a possibility of reunion of Liberal party and a Unionist party wing that criticized Chamberlain’s proposal. However, it did not take place, because of various views on the education question and of the issue concerning leadership of the Liberal party. A crucial hurdle was a fact, that Unionists accepted the education reform. Moreover, they were prepared to

32) An author of this horrifying expression was journalist Alfred Harmsworth. See GRIGG, p. 61.

33) An article in The Times published on 6 June 1903. Quoted in WILSON, p. 410.

34) ZEBEL, p. 140.

35) In this case, he did not count India amongst inhabitants of the Empire, because, as he told: „*she is not a great customer and never will be.*” GRIGG, J., op. cit., pp. 62–63.

36) MATTHEW, H. C. G., *Liberal Imperialists. The Ideas and Policy of a post-Gladstonian Élite*, Oxford 1973, pp. 100–101.

37) JACOBSON, P. D., *Rosebery and Liberal Imperialism, 1899–1903*, in: The Journal of British Studies, Vol. 13, No. 1. (nov., 1973). p. 104.

38) MATTHEW, pp. 102–105.

join the Liberal party only if Sir Henry Campbell-Bannermann was replaced. They were able to accept only Lord Rosebery or Duke of Devonshire on his place. Such terms were unacceptable for the Liberals of course. The education issue was fundamental for them and it was impossible to accept demands of some few newcomers for the exchange of the party leader as well. In spite of the fact, eleven Unionists cross the line individually between the February 1904 and the beginning of the 1906.³⁹

By-elections within years 1904 and 1905 indicated shift of the public opinion in favour of the Liberal party. The scene was not more divided by the Irish question only. In the imperial preference, it appeared a new issue that laid down a new political border. An advantage of the Liberal party was that the Irish question lost its urgency for some time, what was caused by the new policy of constructive Unionism adopted at the turn of the centuries, which tried to *"Kill Home Rule with kindness."*⁴⁰ Another Liberal advantage was that all fractions of the party opposed the imperial preference jointly, whereas both the Conservatives and the Liberal Unionists were divided strongly between adherents and opponents of this scheme. Although the imperial preference remained the most important topic until the second half of the year 1906 and, in some respect, it led to considerable weakening of Balfour position in the Cabinet and thus to his resignation, within the years 1904-1906 appeared two another issues that helped to cement a new founded unity of the Liberal party.

The first one was a struggle against Licensing Bill of the year 1904. Production and distribution of alcohol was not new issue. The Liberal government, from the year 1890s, dealt with the question due to eminent interest of Nonconformists, who considered spirits as a true cause of poverty, bad housing and illiteracy. Finally, Lord Salisbury's Unionist Cabinet appointed the Royal Commission on Licensing Laws in 1896 under the leadership of Lord Peel. It submitted two reports in 1899, because of disagreements between its members. Of course, conclusions of both reports were weakened

39) MACKAY, p. 198.

40) The constructive Unionism destroyed argument of the Irish Nationalists about brutal and regards British rule over Ireland. The movement reached the top at the turn of the 19th and 20th century and was characterised by struggle with unemployment, support of Irish industry, helpfulness to peasants and endeavour to develop congested areas in Ireland. LYONS, F. S. L., *Ireland Since the Famine*, New York 1971, p. 200-201.

by the situation and could not be implemented into the practice.⁴¹ Both reports advised reduction in licenses of public houses and breweries, but differences appeared in ways of compensations for cancelled licenses. Lord Peel, on the one hand, requested very limited financial compensation, what outraged producers and distributors. On the other hand, his opponents demanded full financial compensations. It meant that it was to be paid a sum identical with a value of closed public house or brewery.⁴²

Problem was that the Unionist government submitted its Licensing Bill in 1904, which was based on the second recommendation. Although consumption of the alcohol declining at the beginning of the 20th century, Nonconformists used an argument that there were spent 200 million pounds on alcohol in 1903, what was, from their point of view, an unforgivable support of alcoholism.⁴³ In this situation, it was inconceivable for them to approve some kind of financial compensation for cancelled licences. The issue brought single wings of the Liberal party nearer, above all Nonconformists and the main body of the Liberals found new common topic. Moreover, due to the fact that among the Liberal Imperialists was a considerable number of Nonconformists, a process of strengthening newly founded unity continued further.

The Unionist Cabinet enforced the proposal through both Houses and finally, the bill became the law at the beginning of 1905. However, this victory was the last of the Cabinet. It had to deal henceforth with Chamberlain's problematic private campaign for imperial preference, which had been dividing between both the Conservative and the Liberal Unionist Party since 1903. Moreover, government faced some kind of exhaustion, lack of agenda and burnout that resulted from twenty years long dominance on the British political scene.

On the other side, the Liberal party, that had been in a crisis since 1886, revived, found its new agenda and its unity and turned profit from every controversy with the government. The last one broke out in the March 1904 and was closely related to a post-war renewal of the South Africa. Reconstruction of the country did not progress as scheduled and therefore, in the autumn 1903, owners of golden mines on the Rand had asked Governor of the Transvaal and the Orange State Colony, Alfred Milner, for an endorse-

41) More about Peel Commission and its conclusions compare FAHEY, D. M., *Temperance and the Liberal Party - Lord Peel's Report, 1899*, in: *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2. (máj 1971), pp. 132-159.

42) *Ibidem*, p. 136.

43) ROWLAND, P., *The Last Liberal Governments: The Promised Land, 1905-1910*, London 1968, p. 3.

ment to rent sufficient number of the Indian and the Chinese labourers.⁴⁴ The request was set before the Parliament in London and was approved. In spite of opposition of some prominent Boers as generals Smuts and Botha, there were imported 5 000 Chinese to South Africa at the beginning of 1904. Until 1906 the number increased to 50 000.⁴⁵

Emily Hobhouse brought information about the situation into Britain once again. This time she criticized horrible working conditions, housing and pitifully low wages.⁴⁶ The problem was discussed in the Commons on 21 March 1904 and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannermann attacked the government with an address similar to the “*methods of barbarism*” speech. He refused the import of the Chinese and Indian labourers and criticized the Cabinet, that it was not able to employ native inhabitants there and simultaneously to motivate more Englishmen to move to South Africa for work, what would have a significant effect on a faster anglicisation of the whole area.⁴⁷ At the end of his address he declared that the conditions, under which the Chinese worked was “*very like slavery*” and later he said: “*Indentured labour no doubt sounds better but do not let us haggle over words: let us see what the thing itself is*”⁴⁸ The question of the so-called Chinese slavery considerably influenced public opinion. An expressiveness of the word “slavery” and a charge of it had a strong effect within the society that had proscribed it as a social system more than 70 years ago. At the beginning of the 20th century the public opinion could not accept a fact that someone was engaged in a system similar or reminding an unmoral and outdated one. The issue was helped the Liberal party because of its moral dimension. Beyond it, it contended also a rather absurd speculation that the government was prepared to hire the Chinese and Indian labourers for a work in Britain in order to lower production costs, what would lead to higher unemployment and bigger poverty.⁴⁹

In the autumn 1905, the education issue, the imperial preference and the Chinese slavery were still discussed within the society. They weakened the position of the Unionist government and strengthening the Liberal

opposition. This could be proved in results of the by-elections. The Liberal Imperialist wing and Lord Rosebery lost influence upon party structures and they were not regarded as a threat to the unity any more. Despite the fact, some Limps intended to force Sir Henry Campbell-Bannermann to resign from party leadership and then to leave for the Lords, what would mean an elimination of his influence among the Liberals and in a future Cabinet. R. B. Haldane, E. Grey and H. H. Asquith agreed in the so-called Relugas Compact of September 1905 that they would join the new Liberal Cabinet only under mentioned condition. Simultaneously, they expressed ambitions for concrete posts in the new Liberal government. Asquith was to become The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Grey Foreign Secretary and Haldane was to obtain the Woolsack.⁵⁰ Campbell-Bannermann learned about the pact relatively quickly. He accepted their demand for concrete Cabinet post on the one hand, but on the other hand, he refused the main condition of the Relugas Compact – his leaving to the Lords.⁵¹

On 3 December 1905, Balfour resigned and offered Liberals an opportunity. He thought the Liberal party was divided once again and therefore Sir Henry Campbell-Bannermann would not be able to form a new Liberal government. In a case of such development, the Liberal party would discredit itself and Unionists would win announced general election. The short brake should thus give enough time and place to the Unionists for regeneration and consolidation.⁵² However, he was mistaken awfully. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannermann destroyed the Relugas Compact and forced its members to join the government without his leaving to the Lords. On this background, he formed the so-called “*Cabinet of all the talents*”. Consequent Liberal victory in the general election that took place at the turn of years 1905 and 1906 was thus a result of reintegration process lasting from 1902, political mistakes of the Unionist Cabinet. Balfour’s timing did not have a positive impact on results of the Unionists, because of the political experience of Campbell-Bannerman. Moreover, it was questionable if, after 20 years of dominance, the exhausted, divided and burned out Unionists could offer an adequate alternative to the rejoined and consolidated Liberal party.

44) BLAKE, R., *The Conservative Party from Peel to Churchill*, London 1974, p. 172.

45) GRIGG, p. 70.

46) ROWLAND, p. 3.

47) WILSON, p. 399.

48) Ibidem.

49) BLAKE, p. 173.

50) WILSON, p. 427.

51) JENKINS, R., *Asquith*, London 1964, pp. 162-164.

52) ROWLAND, pp. 7-8.

Conclusion

The revival of the Liberal party at the beginning of the 20th century had two main aspects. Firstly, it was an exchange of political generations, which lasted since the 1880s. This factor appeared as essential, because it was naturally accompanied by a slow shift in politics and by reconsideration of some outdated late-Victorian dogmas. According to the process, the Liberal party was able to offer electors some new perspectives and views that were to react to acute problems of society. They made up a new agenda thus, to which Unionists were not able to answer adequately and from which was growing up Liberal enthusiasm for welfare reforms.

The second aspect was represented by political mistakes of the Unionists that helped to reunite and consolidate the Liberal party on the background of collective resistance to Unionist measures. Unionists offered Liberals, struggling since the 1890s with different views on foreign and colonial policy, an opportunity to reunite and to put aside controversial topics of the day that had a dividing effect on party structures. Influential frictions within the Liberal Party, as Liberal Imperialists, were therefore appeased quickly. The reason was that it did not appear a foreign issue, which would have a potential to split up the party again. It did not appear because main political themes concerned controversial domestic issues. These, controversial domestic reforms caused that the process of disintegration within the Liberals stopped and started their joint and collective defence of Liberal principles both outside and inside the party. Issues as the education reform, the imperial preference, licensing reform and Chinese slavery attacked Liberal and Nonconformist creed to such an extent, that they often helped to surmount or even erase personal disgust between the Liberals and to create strong constructive opposition with a new political agenda. This was the background and a keystone of the Liberal landslide victory in general election at the beginning of 1906.

Die letzten zwanzig (normalen) Monate der tschechoslowakisch-deutschen Handels- und Verkehrsbeziehungen (Januar 1937–September 1938)¹

IVAN JAKUBEC

Die Jahre 1937–1938 gehören im Rahmen der tschechoslowakisch-deutschen Beziehungen zu den dynamischen (die Münchener Konferenz ausgenommen), voller offizieller Kontakte ohne Rücksicht auf die unterschiedlichen politischen und ideologischen Standpunkte beider Staaten, bzw. ihrer Regierungsvertreter. In diesem Zeitraum wurde sogar eine Reihe langjährig verhandelter Kompromisse, Abkommen und Verträge beschlossen. Zugleich zeigen diese Verhandlungen, wie die tschechoslowakischen und deutschen Wirtschafts- und Verkehrsbeziehungen geknüpft wurden. Die kurze Übersicht über die bedeutendsten Verhandlungen bildeten Inhalt dieses Beitrages.

Die Bedeutung Deutschlands vergrößerte sich wirtschaftlich und verkehrsmässig für die Tschechoslowakei, besonders nach dem „Anschluss“ Österreichs im März 1938. Betrachten wir jetzt den tschechoslowakisch-deutschen und tschechoslowakisch-österreichischen Handel in den letzten vor der Münchener Konferenz Jahren 1936 und 1937.²

1) Dieser Beitrag entstand im Rahmen des Projektes GAČR 409/09/H024 Die Rolle des Staates in der deutschen Wirtschaft des 20. Jahrhunderts.

2) The National Archives Kew (NA Kew), Foreign Office (FO), vol. 371/21579, No C3500/1938, Czechoslovak Trade with Germany and Austria.