The Labour Party's attitude to gambling, 1918-1970

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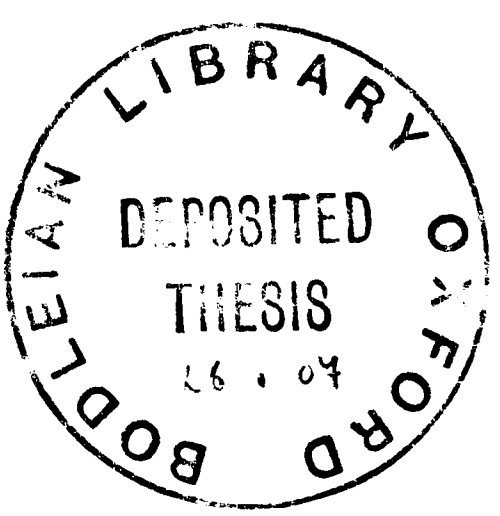

Short Abstract

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The Edwardian labour movement opposed gambling. But hostility to this integral aspect of twentieth century working-class culture is presumed to have disappeared rapidly as the Labour Party moved towards political maturity. This thesis challenges the declinist assumption: what emerges, rather, is the partial nature of Labour's accommodation to gambling between 1918 and 1970. The introduction establishes the intellectual status quo and critiques it: the existing literature neglects the extent to which the Party maintained a socialist objection to gambling. Chapter one details the Party's opposition to the administrative regulation of betting on horses during the 1920s. Chapter two initially focuses on Labour's negative reaction to the growth of lotteries, dog racing and the football pools during the interwar years; it ends by examining the extent to which the political crisis of 1931 weakened the Party's objections to working-class betting. Chapter three suggests that the Second World War's redistribution of social esteem further encouraged an accommodation to gambling in its working-class forms – but only in some of its forms and only to some degree. Chapter four examines the Party's attitude to gambling during the 1950s and 1960s: liberalization continued but the pace was slow and the direction of change contested. The conclusion emphasizes that the Labour Party maintained a socialist critique of wagering on luck throughout the period 1918-70: this ensured that its tolerance of working-class gambling remained somewhat grudging and limited.

Long Abstract

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'The Labour Party's attitude to gambling, 1918-70'

The Edwardian labour movement opposed gambling. But hostility to this integral aspect of twentieth century working-class culture is presumed to have disappeared rapidly as the Labour Party moved towards political maturity. This thesis challenges the declinist assumption: what emerges, rather, is the partial nature of Labour's accommodation to gambling between 1918 and 1970. The introduction establishes this intellectual status quo and critiques it: the existing literature neglects the extent to which Party maintained a socialist objection to gambling.

Chapter one details the Labour Party's strong opposition to the administrative regulation of betting on horses during the 1920s. The Edwardian consensus had begun to break down after the First World War: the Conservative Party, in particular, increasingly favoured the taxation and legalization of cash betting off-course. Labour resisted any retreat from the strategy of prohibition: it continued to defend the Street Betting (Prohibition) Act. Section one discusses the Party's contribution to the proceedings of the 1923 House of Commons Select Committee on Betting Duty. Represented by MPs who combined Protestantism and socialism, the Labour Party articulated objections of principle to gambling. Section two traces the further development of these objections. Taxation implied approval of betting and Labour could not therefore support the betting tax imposed by the Conservative Government in 1926. The Party's hostility to the creation of the Tote two years later proceeded on similar grounds. Although imperatives of politics and class were also involved, Labour opposed the

installation of the totalisator at racecourses, under the aegis of a government-dominated statutory authority (the Racecourse Betting Control Board), on the grounds that it would encourage gambling. This episode is the subject of section three. The fourth section argues that the socialist critique of gambling articulated by the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) was rather more widely shared: the leadership of the trade unions also deprecated gambling on this basis.

Chapter two initially focuses on Labour's negative reaction to the growth of lotteries, dog racing and the football pools during the interwar years; it ends by examining the extent to which the political crisis of 1931 weakened the Party's objections to working-class betting. Section one details the Labour Party's objections of principle to lottery gambling. Articulated most explicitly in the Party's overwhelming opposition to an issue of Premium Bonds at the end of the First World War, Labour maintained its opposition to lottery gambling throughout the interwar period. However, principle was compromised by pragmatism: fundraising lotteries were increasingly part of the political culture of the labour movement. Section two examines the Labour Party's evolving attitude to football pool betting. The tension between ideology and electoralism was acute here: on the one hand, Labour saw the football pools not just as a form of lottery but one which made massive profits for unscrupulous businessman; on the other, by the mid-1930s this form of gambling was ubiquitous in working-class communities. By the end of the interwar period the Party had largely accommodated itself to this form of betting. The same could not be said of dog racing, the subject of section three. The Labour Party viewed the emergence and proliferation of urban dog tracks, which enabled the working classes to regularly bet on-course for the first time, with hostility throughout the interwar period. It was a capitalist swindle designed to part fools and their money. The fourth section examines the extent to

which the political crisis of 1931 altered Labour's attitude to gambling. A radical disjuncture in the Party's history, Labour subsequently developed a greater sense of class solidarity. This encouraged toleration of working-class betting. But the impact of 1931 was not all in the one direction: by increasing the Party's hostility to financial speculation the events surrounding the demise of the Second Labour Government encouraged, if imprecisely, hostility to wagering on luck.

Chapter three argues that the redistribution of social esteem which accompanied the Second World War further encouraged the Labour Party's accommodation to working-class betting – but only in some of its forms and only to some degree. Labour's objections to the taxation of betting had disappeared entirely by the end of the war: the Attlee Government proceeded to tax some forms of betting and indicated its interest in taxing others, specifically off-course cash betting (section four). To this end, it appointed another Royal Commission, which recommended the licensing of betting shops (section five). However, the depth of support within the parliamentary party for this reform remained unclear when Labour left office in 1951 (section six). Furthermore, as the first half of the chapter details, the Labour Party continued to oppose some forms of popular gambling. Section one discloses the persistence of its objections to dog racing between 1939 and 1951, section two the Attlee Government's dismissive response to a campaign in favour of state lotteries, and section three examines the criticism that Labour MPs directed at the football pools after the war. Although, in the case of the latter, administrative regulation rather than prohibition was the overwhelming objective.

Chapter four examines the Party's attitude to gambling during the 1950s and 1960s: Labour's accommodation to working-class gambling continued but the pace was slow and the direction

of change contested. This was nowhere more evident than in MPs' reluctance to support the licensing of betting shops during the 1950s. The PLP spurned Conservative attempts to build a cross-party alliance in favour of reform: the licensing of betting shops subsequently proceeded in the face of significant Labour Party opposition. Section one discusses this episode. Sections two and three point in a somewhat different direction: they examine Labour's overwhelming backing for the administrative regulation of the football pools (section two) and the legalization of small semi-private non-commercial lotteries (section three) during the early-to-mid 1950s. The Party was particularly keen on the licensing of this kind of lottery: Labour's fundraising was largely dependent on them. Yet, at the same time as the Labour Party was actively promoting one form of lottery it was actively opposing another: namely, premium bonds. Section four details Labour's opposition to the introduction of the Premium Savings Bond in 1956. The Party perceived it as a form of state lottery: premium bonds involved the government in the stimulation of gambling demand for the first time. The Labour Party opposed the scheme on this basis, but also in the context of a wider unhappiness about the direction of the nation's political economy. Labour accused the Conservative Government of promoting an acquisitive individualism predicated on disproportionate reward: in this context, the socialist critique of gambling enjoyed particular traction. Sections five and six examine interventions in the gambling sphere by the Wilson Governments. The former details the Chancellor Roy Jenkins's failure to secure parliamentary support for the creation of a national lottery. Jenkins's increasing distance from the Labour mainstream was a significant aspect of his political identity: his efforts to promote a national lottery were another way in which Jenkins misjudged the Party. Section six discloses a debate within the Wilson Government about the future of the Grand National steeplechase. Senior ministers, including the Prime Minister, were determined that Aintree should not be sold to property developers. But other ministers, hostile to gambling, opposed

government intervention. That the pro-Grand National position won out reflected more the attitude of the Prime Minister than it did the balance of opinion in government. Section seven briefly reiterates the nature and extent of the Labour Party's accommodation to gambling between 1951 and 1970.

The conclusion of the thesis emphasizes that the Labour Party maintained a socialist critique of wagering on luck throughout the period 1918-70 and that this, above all else, ensured its tolerance of working-class gambling remained somewhat grudging and limited.

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List of Abbreviations

DLB	Dictionary of Labour Biography
DNB	Dictionary of National Biography
HCD	Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons)
HLD	Parliamentary Debates (House of Lords)
LPACR	Labour Party Annual Conference Reports
LPLF	Labour Party Letter Files
TUCACR	Trades Union Congress Annual Conference Reports
1902SC	Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords on Betting, 1902
1908SC	Report from the Select Committee on Lotteries and Indecent Advertisements, 1908
1918SC	Report from the Select Committee on Premium Bonds, 1918
1923SC	Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Betting Duty, 1923
1928STC	Standing Committee of the House of Commons on the Racecourse Betting Bill, 1928
1933RC	Final Report of the Royal Commission on Lotteries and Betting, 1932-33
1934STC	Standing Committee of the House of Commons on the Betting and Lotteries Bill, 1933-4
1951RC	Report of the Royal Commission on Betting, Lotteries and Gaming, 1949-51, 1951
1954STC	Standing Committee of the House of Commons on the Pool Betting Bill, 1953-4
1959STC	Standing Committee of the House of Commons on the Betting and Gaming Bill, 1959-60

Introduction

This thesis offers the first systematic account of the Labour Party's attitude to gambling after 1918. Although the Party's viewpoint in its early years has been clearly established by a number of studies, this is not the case for its years of maturity, in respect of which the historical literature is both fragmentary and contradictory.

The Edwardian labour movement was largely hostile to gambling.[1] McKibbin noted that 'Protestant religious affiliation was the most perfect determinant of opposition to betting' and many of the Labour Party's leading figures 'were nonconformist and shared the views of their co-religionists of whatever class'. 'Others agreed with the official middle-class view that gambling depressed the educational and cultural levels of the working-class'. However, there also existed 'a specifically socialist critique', which 'did much to determine' the attitude of the Labour Party's first generation of leaders and activists. There were two dimensions to the socialist critique. The first emphasized that, 'in the event of a win, particularly on the pools,

[1] The most important treatments in this respect are those by the political-cum social historian McKibbin and the socio-legal historian Dixon. R. McKibbin, 'Working-class gambling in Britain, 1880-1939', *Past and Present*, 82 (1979), 147-78, 172-4, 176. This essay was republished in revised form in R. McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class: Social Relations in Britain 1880-1950* (Oxford, 1990), 101-38, 136. The revised version included additional comment about the objections to gambling of Labour's first generation political leadership. (Unless otherwise stated subsequent references are to the revised version of the essay). D. Dixon, "'Class Law': The Street Betting Act of 1906", *International Journal of the Sociology of Law*, 4 (1980), 101-28, 118-9. D. Dixon, *From Prohibition to Regulation: Bookmaking, Anti-Gambling and the Law* (Oxford, 1991), 72-81. A number of studies have endorsed their conclusions: N. Baker, 'Going to the Dogs – Hostility to Greyhound Racing in Britain: Puritanism, Socialism and Pragmaticism', *Journal of Sport History*, 23 (1996), 97-119, 105 [accessed at http://www.aafla.org/SportsLibrary/NASSH_Proceedings]. C. Chinn, *Better Betting with a Decent Feller: Bookmaking, Betting, and the British Working Class, 1759-1900* (London, 1991), 11-12, 179-80. M. Clapson, *A bit of a flutter: popular gambling and English society c.1823-1961* (Manchester, 1992), 30. J. Harris, 'Labour's Political and Social Thought', in D. Tanner, P. Thane and N. Tiratsoo, (eds.), *Labour's First Century* (Cambridge, 2000), 8-45, 22. M. Huggins, *Flat-Racing and British Society, 1790-1914: a social and economic history* (London, 2000), 199, 214, 225. R. Munting, *An economic and social history of gambling in Britain and the USA* (Manchester, 1996), 25, 60. R. Munting, 'The Revival of Lotteries in Britain: Some International Comparisons of Public Policy', *History*, 83 (1998), 628-45, 630-1. O. Newman, *Gambling, Hazard and Reward* (London, 1972), 2. J. Orford, 'A Nation of Gamblers', *Fabian Review*, 114 (2002), 11. C. Waters, *British Socialists and the Politics of Popular Culture, 1884-1914* (Manchester, 1990), 27, 40, 181-2. J. D. Young, *Socialism and the English working class: a history of English labour, 1883-1939* (London 1989), 27, 131.

the disproportion between the effort required and the reward obtained was so gross that no socialist could defend it'. The second aspect focused on gambling's implications for the future of socialist politics. Betting 'encouraged [men and women] to believe that life could be transformed not by social change but by luck' and, as such, was an impediment to political organization. In practice, concluded McKibbin, the Edwardian political leadership held 'at least in part, both the official and the socialist views', leading to the creation of 'a cross-class alliance' strong enough to bolster 'the case against popular betting and diminish [working-class] hostility to anti-betting pressure groups which were, in fact, drawn very largely from the official classes'.[2]

Dixon agreed that 'the characteristic primary tone of anti-gambling opinion was moralistic criticism, an insistence that gambling was wrong not merely because of its effects (which would have made moderate private gambling permissible), but inherently'. Three related arguments were 'constantly regurgitated' by the anti-gambling movement to which Labour was allied: first, gambling was not merely irrational but involved the 'organized rejection' of all reason. It 'was, therefore, contrary to the civilizing process itself, at the heart of which was the minimization of chance and risk'.[3] Second, it undermined sociability and promoted selfishness. Herbert Spencer emphasized that gambling was 'essentially anti-social – [it] sears the sympathies, cultivates a hard egoism and so produces a general deterioration of character and conduct'; John Ruskin insisted that wagering "involved the making of judgments that one had no grounds for forming other than 'merely because they are your own.'" This was egotism pure and simple.[4] Third, and 'most important', 'gambling's dependence on chance made it an illegitimate method of distributing property'. As such, it

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[2] McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class*, 136, 295.
[3] Dixon, *From Prohibition to Regulation*, 48-49.
[4] ibid, 49-50.

undermined the relationship between effort and reward established by a system in which property could only be transferred by gift or exchange.[5]

But Dixon denied the ideological case ultimate importance. There existed a 'complex dialectic between moral and social concerns',[6] which produced an anti-gambling movement driven more by 'concern about gambling's effects on individual and national efficiency and on social and political stability than by moralism'.[7] McKibbin was 'too cynical in suggesting that attempts to demonstrate gambling's deleterious effects were mere sugar on a puritan pill'.[8] Thus the Labour Party's opposition to gambling, though including an objection to the distribution of property by chance,[9] proceeded largely on the basis of its observable consequences for the working-class better and his family, and more widely, for the labour movement. In the absence of any immediate likelihood of creating a socialist society, one of Labour's major tasks was to ensure that the working-class family did not disintegrate under the pressure exerted by poverty and hardship. Gambling threatened exactly such disintegration and on these grounds alone was to be deprecated.[10] Furthermore, the belief that gambling acted as a 'political sedative' was "not confined to misguided 'social control' theorists". It resonated widely among labour movement activists.[11] Articulated via the language of self-discipline, organization and personal restraint, the opposition to gambling of the labour leadership was 'inextricably entwined with the[ir] nonconformist moralism'.[12]

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[5] Ibid, 50-51.
[6] ibid, 53.
[7] Ibid, 63. See also the similar formulation at p.51.
[8] Ibid, 53.
[9] 'labour's principle that workers should receive the fruits of their own work was easily linked with objections to gambling as a means of distributing property'. Ibid, 74. Objections which themselves proceeded on the basis of 'gambling's dependence on chance'. Ibid, 50.
[10] ibid, 73-4.
[11] Ibid, 74-5.
[12] Dixon, " 'Class Law' ", 118. It is interesting to note that Huggins' discussion of anti-gambling, almost entirely drawn from Dixon, reversed the emphasis: Huggins stressed that betting was increasingly seen 'as inherently wrong, rather than (as previously) wrong because of its effects'. Huggins, *Flat Racing and British Society*, 212.

Leading figures in the Edwardian Labour Party had close connections with the National Anti-Gambling League (NAGL). Keir Hardie, Arthur Henderson, Ramsay MacDonald, David Shackleton, Philip Snowden and others attended meetings, gave speeches and wrote pamphlets against gambling.[13] So did Will Crooks, whose prominence among anti-gamblers[14] evidenced the extent to which that creed penetrated the early Labour Party: famously praised by G. K. Chesterton for the 'absolute genuineness of his connection with the working classes', he was, in the latter's view 'the one modern Labour member who...even remotely suggests the real labouring men of London'.[15]

MacDonald's contribution to Seebohm Rowntree's collection of anti-gambling essays was also of particular significance,[16] his secretaryship of the Labour Representation Committee (LRC) indicating that body's backing for a strategy of prohibition. He endorsed the suppression of betting on and off the racecourse, and the banning of betting news, advertisements, and tips:[17] 'Every Labour leader I know recognizes the gambling spirit as a menace to any form of labour party'.[18] At the TUC Conference of 1904, W. E. Harvey of the Miners' Federation had dismissed a delegate's suggestion that racing 'tips' might be included in any Labour newspaper: 'Gambling in a Labour newspaper! He would never have anything to do with a Labour newspaper that sullied its columns by the inclusion of gambling news'.[19] The first Labour Party (as opposed to LRC) Conference had in 1906 unanimously passed a

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[13] Dixon, *From Prohibition to Regulation*, 73, fn.84, fn.85.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Introduction to G. Haw, *From Workhouse to Westminster: The Life Story of Will Crooks MP* (1907, 1911), xiii-xx.
[16] J. R. MacDonald, 'Gambling and Citizenship', in B. S. Rowntree, (ed.), *Betting and Gambling: A National Evil* (London, 1905), 117-34.
[17] Ibid, 130.
[18] Ibid, 127. Although MacDonald did stress that prohibition alone was not enough: 'But when we have done all that [banned betting], we have not gone very far...to the great mass of the people we shall but appear to be smug Pharisees, and a reaction will set in...the attack upon the gambling habit can be successful only if it is positive and constructive, and not merely negative and prohibitory.' Ibid, 131. See also Dixon, " 'Class Law' ", 117.
[19] *TUCACR* (1904), 106.

Burnley Weavers' resolution calling for a ban on all betting news.[20] Two years later, the Glasgow Trades Council asked the PLP to introduce a Bill prohibiting racing tips.[21]

In the same year, the newly established Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) supported the Street Betting (Prohibition) Act,[22] despite the fact that this extremely important piece of legislation was 'blatantly discriminatory'. It was 'class law', as Dixon explained:

> By making betting and bookmaking in the street illegal, the 1906 Act effectively completed the prohibition of a major working class recreational activity, while leaving untouched the betting facilities of those higher on the social scale. Betting on a credit account or at the racecourse may have remained legally open to all, but few bookmakers were prepared to offer credit to working men and, while trips to the racecourse were part of the traditional working class holiday, they could do nothing to meet the needs of everyday betting.[23]

The PLP, in line with the views expressed in MacDonald's essay, hoped to widen the Bill's scope. Shackleton, its vice-chairman, supported the second reading 'on the strict understanding that if there was an opportunity of dealing with...betting in a wider sense he should support it'.[24] Henderson also emphasized the necessity of equality before the law[25] and, in concert with MacDonald, tried to extend the Bill's provisions to cover racecourses.[26]

They failed; yet the PLP continued to support the Bill. Labour MPs assumed that the emergence of working-class betting 'was a recent development...the creation of commercialization and exploitation since around 1860...[since] gambling had no deeper roots

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[20] *LPACR* (1906), 63.
[21] *Minutes of the Parliamentary Labour Party* (hereafter *PLP minutes*), 11 June 1908. See also Dixon, *From Prohibition*, 74, fn.88.
[22] Dixon, *From Prohibition to Regulation*, 73-4.
[23] Dixon, " 'Class Law' ", 103, 108-9.
[24] 31 July 1906, HCD, vol.162, col.862. He repeated this view at the Committee stage: I August 1906, HCD, vol.162, col.1162.
[25] Ibid, col.1164.
[26] Ibid, cols.1167-70. The amendment fell narrowly by 77 votes to 69.

in popular culture [it] could therefore be excised with relatively little difficulty'.[27] They might also have been unaware that the Bill criminalized the better as well as the bookmaker.[28] The Labour leadership accepted the Street Betting Act and, in the period up until the First World War, supported the NAGL's campaigns for additional legislation.[29] When the management of the *Daily Citizen*, in an effort to increase the circulation of Labour's first daily newspaper, suggested, in 1913, that the Board of Directors reverse its original decision to exclude betting tips, Henderson, W. C. Anderson,[30] and Bruce Glasier objected strongly. Indeed, Henderson and Anderson resigned after management's proposal was approved.[31]

Admittedly, as has been acknowledged, a few in the labour movement were unhappy about the Party's stance: Dixon noted the disruption of NAGL meetings by 'socialists' protesting against the class bias of the betting laws;[32] and McKibbin suggested that the gambling issue 'caused real tension'.[33] But those who defended gambling were in a minority. Chinn's observation that 'most socialists believed that betting was a pernicious habit'[34] certainly captures the dominant tendency in the Labour Party before 1914.

By contrast, there is no adequate account of Labour's attitude to gambling after the First World War. All we have is a fragmentary literature, which moreover pulls in conflicting interpretative directions. One group of texts implies that the Party's hostility to gambling continued; another group insists that it went into significant decline.

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[27] Dixon, " 'Class Law' ", 119. See also Chinn, *Better Betting with a Decent Feller*, 12.
[28] Dixon, " 'Class Law' ", 119. See also Shackleton's speech, 1 August 1906, HCD, vol.162, col.1162.
[29] Dixon, *From Prohibition to Regulation*, 73.
[30] Anderson was an ILPer from a Nonconformist background. He was subsequently a Labour MP and advocate of Freethought. A promising career was ended by his sudden death in 1919. *DLB*, vol.ii, 11-16.
[31] Waters, *British socialists and the politics of popular culture*, 181-2. L. Thompson, *The Enthusiasts: a biography of John and Katharine Bruce Glasier* (London, 1971), 181, 186.
[32] Dixon, *From Prohibition to Regulation*, 79-80.
[33] McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class*, 297. McKibbin, 'Working-class gambling', 176.
[34] Chinn, *Better Betting with a Decent Feller*, 11-12.

The persistence of anti-gambling is hinted at in a rare study of Labour's relationship to gambling (or more accurately, a study of one aspect of it): an article by Baker, a sports historian, about the Attlee Government's attitude to dog racing.[35] Nonconformity, though less pervasive than previously, was 'still an important influence within the Parliamentary Labour Party' after the Second World War. MPs from this background, 'bent on self and class improvement' and 'the spiritual as well as the material ascendancy of the working class' were natural adversaries of gambling.[36] So too was the Left of the Party, 'those who regarded themselves as real socialists.' Gambling was 'essentially exploitative of the working class, a capitalist-controlled practice' which 'diverted working-class energies and aspirations from the pursuit of collective political solutions to their problems'. It encouraged an emphasis on 'luck and superstition [which] tied working people to a traditional outlook of fatalism and docility'.[37] Fabianism was a third tributary through which opposition to gambling apparently entered the post Second World War Labour Party. Its

> long-standing rejection of gambling on ethical grounds, that it was escapism and was at odds with approved values of serious-mindedness, was blended with a pragmatic need for commitment by everyone to tackle Britain's emerging economic problems. The assumed passion of the working man for gambling was now not only not sensible, it was dangerous and unpatriotic, threatening the fulfillment of the opportunities presented to Labour by its 1945 victory.[38]

More general works have also suggested that Labour's objections to gambling continued. Newman's conceptual study of gambling included an account of Harold Wilson's attack on the premium bonds scheme introduced during the 1950s.[39] Clapson's social history also identified a continuing aversion to gambling on the part of Labour politicians: in addition to a

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[35] Baker, 'Going to the Dogs - Hostility to Greyhound Racing in Britain: Puritanism, Socialism and Pragmaticism'.
[36] ibid, 105.
[37] ibid, 106.
[38] ibid, 106-7.
[39] Newman, *Gambling, Hazard and Reward*, 2. He also cited comments made by Roy Jenkins during the 1960s but these comments evidenced not so much hostility to gambling but concern about organized crime's infiltration of gaming clubs. Ibid.

discussion of the premium bonds affair, Clapson disclosed that some Labour MPs at least were hostile to the football pools during the 1940s and to the licensing of betting shops in 1959-60.[40] Monographs on other topics have picked up on this theme. Thus Catterall, in his study of the relationship between Nonconformity and the Labour Party during the interwar period noted that 'Although gambling was very widespread amongst the working classes...this...seems to have had remarkably little effect upon the attitudes of the parliamentary party. There were few defenders of gambling interests on the Labour benches in parliament, and many of their opponents'.[41] More substantially, Jones's analysis of the interwar labour movement's attitude to working-class leisure[42] suggested that opposition to gambling remained a significant aspect of the Party's identity. The imperatives of electoral politics were strong enough to prevent the 'drafting [of] concrete proposals', and also explained the 'reluctance to intensify any campaign against betting'. But Labour's opposition to the taxation of betting and the creation of the Tote during the 1920s, and the Party's insistence that 'sweepstakes and other forms of gambling were incompatible with socialist principles' left 'little doubt that the Labour party was opposed to betting'.[43] Intellectually, gambling remained unacceptable to most: 'The dynamic behind all the polemics was closely related to socialist ideology of one kind or another'.[44]

However, other historians have advanced what we might call a declinist assumption. Dixon and McKibbin, who did most to establish Labour's hostility to gambling during the

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[40] M. Clapson, *A bit of a flutter*, 68, 171-2, 200-2. For premium bonds see also M. Clapson, 'The Revival of the State Lottery in Britain', *Contemporary Record*, 8 (1994), 321-42. Munting, *An economic and social history*, 60. For limited evidence of Labour objections to betting shops see also C. Hill, *Horse power: the politics of the turf* (Manchester, 1987), chapters 1 & 2.

[41] P. Catterall, 'The Free Churches and the Labour Party in England and Wales 1918-1939' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1989), 372-3. Though see also a subsequent article in which he suggests that the interwar Labour Party's attitude to gambling was mixed. P. Catterall, 'Morality and Politics: the Free Churches and the Labour Party between the Wars', *Historical Journal*, 36 (1993), 667-685, 682.

[42] S. G. Jones, 'The British Labour Movement and Working-Class Leisure, 1918-39', (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 1983), 218-27.

[43] Ibid, 221.

[44] ibid, 227.

Edwardian period, presume that its objections rapidly disappeared thereafter. The decline of Nonconformity, the labour movement's (related) shift away from an emphasis on personal character and towards environmental determinism, and more widely, the maturing of the 'traditional' working-class culture that emerged in the late nineteenth century, remained in place throughout the first-two thirds of the twentieth,[45] and of which mass organized betting was an integral part,[46] are thought to have been the critical developments in a process of social democratization that spelled the end for anti-gambling as a significant force within the Labour Party.[47] This process, already underway during the Edwardian period, is presumed to have been well advanced by 1918. Labour's parliamentary leadership might have maintained an anti-gambling stance throughout the 1920s, but they were increasingly unrepresentative of the party as a whole.[48] 'The significant change [after the First World War] was not towards positive affirmation of gambling, but rather simple neutrality: there were more important matters to argue about...Anti-gambling became classified as a personal rather than political conviction' according to Dixon.[49]

McKibbin's attitude is especially interesting since his account of the Edwardian Labour Party emphasized the importance of socialist, as well as Protestant and 'middle-class', objections to gambling. As such, and given the Party's leftish trajectory after the First World War, it might be thought that the socialist critique of gambling would have retained some purchase.

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[45] For this culture see inter alia, J. Cronin, *Labour and society in Britain, 1918-1979* (London, 1984), passim. R. Hoggart, *The uses of literacy: aspects of working-class life with special reference to publications and entertainments* (London, 1957), pt.2. E. Hobsbawm, 'The Making of the Working Class 1870-1914', in E. Hobsbawm, *Uncommon People. Resistance, Rebellion and Jazz* (London, 1998), 57-74. G. Stedman Jones, 'Working-class culture and working-class politics in London, 1890-1900: Notes on the remaking of a working-class', *Journal of Social History*, 7 (1974), 460-508.

[46] For betting's place in working-class culture see Chinn, *Better Betting with a Decent Feller: Bookmaking, Betting, and the British Working Class,* passim. A. Davies, 'The Police and the People: Gambling in Salford 1900-39', *Historical Journal*, 34 (1991), 87-115. Hoggart, *The uses of literacy*, 114-6. McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class,* 101-38.

[47] Dixon, *From Prohibition to Regulation*, 77-81. McKibbin rarely spelled out his view but the assumption of decline was implicit in *The Ideologies of Class*. His views are discussed below. Chinn, *Better Betting with a Decent Feller*, 190-1.

[48] Dixon, *From Prohibition to Regulation*, 80.

[49] Dixon, *From Prohibition to Regulation*, 80-1.

Ultimately, though, McKibbin appears to have assumed that ideology was trumped by class and (especially) by religion: 'Class was a powerful determinant' of attitudes to gambling 'but Protestantism was probably even more powerful... a nonconformist of whatever class was most likely to oppose gambling; a 'secularist' of whatever class was least likely to oppose it.'[50] And there were more of the latter, and less of the former, at all levels of the Labour Party in its period of political maturity.[51]

The declinist argument has similarities to the one developed by Harrison in his seminal study of the Victorian anti-drink movement.[52] From Chartism onwards, labour leaders had supported the campaign against drink,[53] and would continue to do so, he suggested, for "as long as the need for 'personal effort' and the 'development of individual character' featured prominently in Labour party propaganda".[54] But neither featured long into the twentieth century. An increasingly class-conscious labour movement developed an environmentalist critique of society, deprecated the whole notion of 'respectability', and specifically dethroned the 'Victorian virtues' associated with Puritan Nonconformity.[55] The result was that by the 1900s 'the long and unquestioned alliance between the temperance movement and the spokesman of the working class had come to an end'.[56]

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[50] McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918-51* (Oxford, 1998), 376-7.
[51] See in particular his essay on Arthur Henderson in *The Ideologies of Class*, 42-65, esp., 64: 'religion and temperance...was certainly a divisive force in the labour movement. Increasingly after 1918 this was no longer true.'
[52] B. Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: the temperance question in England, 1815-1872* (London, 1971), 395-405.
[53] Ibid, 387-9.
[54] ibid, 395.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid, 405.

Jones has contended that the Labour Party continued to be interested in the drink issue through until the end of the 1920s.[57] But Harrison's wider point, that intellectual and social change was undermining the labour movement's longstanding emphasis on the development of personal character, has been endorsed by the only monograph treatment of its approach to issues of popular culture: Waters' study of socialist attitudes to leisure and recreation in the late Victorian and Edwardian period.[58] It argues: 'Until the early 1900s, at least, socialists were as concerned with ethics as they were with narrowly conceived municipal or parliamentary politics, as interested in the moral reform of the individual as in effecting widespread economic changes'.[59] They insisted upon 'the importance of individual transformation rather than – or hopefully along with – political and economic change'.[60] But socialist horizons narrowed following the emergence of the Labour Party,[61] and also as socialists came to terms with substantial empirical evidence of the centrality to working-class culture of pursuits such as gambling and drinking.[62] In the short-term, argued Waters, socialists looked to the state to ban dissipating aspects of popular culture,[63] in the longer-term the shift away from an emphasis on personal character ensured that the labour movement's interest in leisure and recreation dissipated. 'By 1914 reformers were less interested in popular culture than they had been a generation earlier.'[64]

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[57] S. G. Jones, 'Labour, society and the drink question in Britain, 1918-1939', *Historical Journal*, 30 (1987), 105-22.
[58] Waters, *British Socialists and the Politics of Popular Culture, 1884-1914*. Waters' study focused specifically on "the Social Democratic Federation (SDF), the Socialist League, the Independent Labour Party (ILP), the Fabian Society and Robert Blatchford's 'Clarionettes' ". Ibid, 1.
[59] Ibid, 187.
[60] Ibid, 14, 42.
[61] Ibid, 174-6.
[62] Ibid, 42, 131, 177-80, 182-3, 192.
[63] Ibid, ch.5.
[64] Ibid, 183.

Hostility to the organization and development of working-class recreational culture did not disappear entirely,[65] but it was, as Jones emphasized in his study of the interwar period, increasingly directed at the capitalist organization of leisure time rather than specific forms of amusement.[66] Indeed, from Waters' perspective, the furore over the *Daily Citizen's* resort to betting tips in 1913 possessed an elegiac quality: the protests of Anderson, Henderson, and Glasier represented "one of the last gasps of a nineteenth century emphasis on the values of self-improvement, moral restraint and 'self-culture'".[67]

By examining in detail Labour's post-1918 thinking on gambling I shall show that the Party's anti-gambling proved more durable than the declinist thesis allows, yet that the Labour Party was none the less obliged on grounds of political realism, and in response to the social democratization of society, to moderate its opposition to this integral aspect of working-class culture. Above all I will show how complex and diverse were the processes whereby individual politicians reconciled ideological impulses and political constraints. As such, the thesis is guided by two sets of operating assumptions.

First, and most important, the Labour Party's objections to gambling were generally a priori. McKibbin emphasized this aspect, of course, and even Waters' study was suggestive: MacDonald's anti-gambling essay, according to Waters, located the growth of popular gambling in an emergent consumer capitalism, which was encouraging 'respectable workers' 'to abandon the world of thrift for a new world of instant gratification'.[68] As such, gambling

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[65] Ibid, 193-5.
[66] S. G. Jones, *Workers at Play: a social and economic history of leisure, 1918-39* (London, 1986), ch.6.
[67] Waters, *British socialists and the politics of popular culture,* 182. It is worth noting that twenty years later the *Daily Worker* experienced this process in reverse: it initially carried racing tips but within a month had removed them: 'we cannot possibly assist capitalists in the carrying on of a gigantic swindle and money making concern'. See A. Howkins, 'Class Against Class: the Political Culture of the CPGB 1930-35' in F. Gloversmith (ed.), *Class, Culture and Social Change: a new view of the 1930s,* 240-57, 252. Though it later restored them. My thanks to Tony Shaw for this reference.
[68] Waters, *British socialists and the politics of popular culture*, 39.

for MacDonald represented a 'serious failure on the part of society' rather than merely the 'moral breakdown of isolated individuals'.[69]

The Labour Party did continue to deprecate the observable consequences of gambling for the individual, but it did so less and less as the twentieth century progressed. Furthermore, there was always a strong tactical element: consequential arguments were perceived as having greater purchase and were for this reason often deployed. The Church of Scotland's submission to the 1932-33 Royal Commission on Lotteries and Betting was unusual only in its frankness: 'the strongest argument for controlling gambling in all its forms is its unethical and anti-ethical character; but, as many may consider it inadvisable to regard this attitude as a foundation for legislation, to this fundamental argument we add the arguments from results...'.[70] The influence of British empiricism is surely significant in this connection. Mill, after all, insisted that in a free society, adults must be left to mould their own destinies and express their own tastes as they see fit – unless their actions harm other people. The general temper of British politics reflected the wider biases of the British intellectual tradition: an emphasis on the observable consequences of an individual's wagering on luck for family and community often obscured the extent to which objections to gambling were ideologically a priori. The Labour Party, an institution 'at all times deeply embedded' in wider British society,[71] was as guilty of this as anyone else.

Thus, a study of the relationship between the Labour Party and gambling necessarily involves a significant engagement with ideology. Gambling, that is wagering on luck, by its very nature raised fundamental questions. This is why gambling has attracted a substantial

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[69] ibid, 40. Quoting MacDonald 'Gambling and Citizenship', 118-119.
[70] 1933RC. Minutes of Evidence. 7th day, 29 Sept 1932 (Preliminary memorandum from Church and Nation Committee of the Church of Scotland).
[71] Harris, 'Labour's Political and Social Thought', 10.

conceptual literature.[72] As the preface to Reith's recent sociological study observed, gambling is 'potentially subversive of every settled notion and practical routine of life...Even a fleeting encounter with chance opens before us an abyss, not of moral ruin, addiction and irresponsible squandering of hard earned money, but of the real uncertainties of life and of our own existence'.[73] Downes et al's sociology emphasized, in particular, the implications of wagering on luck for the distribution of property. 'The disapproval of gambling centres around a basic theme: gambling rests in chance, and chance is a non-ethical (even anti-ethical) basis for the distribution of reward'.[74] Especially suggestive from the point of view of this thesis is Devereux's classic study, the nub of which was that the values deprecated in gambling are in fact the values intrinsic to capitalist society.[75]

Labour's tolerance of working-class betting, it will be argued below, was circumscribed by a socialist critique of gambling, which was widely held, and which perceived wagering on luck to be antithetical to the Party's core values of equality and community. Harris has noted the diversity of Labour's 'historic roots', which "lay not just in trade unionism and democratic socialism, but in radical republicanism and pro-Gladstonian Lib-Labism, Marxism and municipal reformism, positivism and idealism, Nonconformist and incarnationalist Christianity, anti-modernist medievalism and the quest for advanced 'scientific' modernity".[76] In a similar vein, Lawrence has cautioned that

> All too often analyses of political parties attribute an unwarranted ideological homogeneity to their subject. New monographs appear frequently purporting to present

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[72] See, inter alia, R. Callois, *Man, Play and Games* (London, 1962). D. M. Downes, et al, *Gambling, work and leisure: a study across three areas* (London, 1976). R. D. Herman (ed.), *Gambling* (New York, 1967). J. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens* (London, 1949). Newman, *Gambling: hazard and reward.* G. Reith, *Age of Chance: Gambling in western culture* (London, 1999).
[73] Reith, *Age of Chance*, xvii-xviii (preface by H. Ferguson).
[74] Downes et al, *Gambling, work and leisure*, 24.
[75] E. C. Devereux Jnr., 'Gambling and the social structure: a sociological study of lotteries and horse racing in contemporary America', 2 vols (unpublished PhD thesis, Harvard University, 1949). Discussed by Downes, et al, *Gambling, work and leisure*, 24-8.
[76] Harris, 'Labour's Political and Social Thought', 9.

> the definitive picture of Labour, Liberal or Tory politics, when in fact democratic political parties are invariably broad-based coalitions, within which one can identify a wide range of ideological traditions.[77]

But, at the risk of generalization, it can be said that most of the Labour Party, for much of the twentieth century, subscribed to a form of ethical socialism which, though often rhetorical and imprecise, 'anodyne' even, nonetheless 'helped to determine the way in which' the Labour Party 'viewed the world'. 'It was therefore, but in no precise way, as much ideological as instrumental'.[78] Furthermore, this ethical socialism cohered around aspirations to rationality, proportionate reward, and mutual service; values to which gambling appeared antithetical.

Labour's emphasis on reason was particularly well captured by Reynolds and the Woolleys, in their study of the Edwardian working classes.[79] It counterposed a ratiocinative Labour Party to a working-class that 'emphasizes feelings and emotion, impulse and instinct, rather than intellect and reason as governing actions'.[80] Socialists, according to this Tory analysis, failed to understand the working man's instinct for adventure, his love of hazard: 'Life is a gamble, and men will have it so'.[81] From the other –socialist – side, *The ragged trousered philanthropists* came to a somewhat similar conclusion. Its peripatetic house painters, 'lacking any real interest in matters outside beer, football, betting and sex', exposed the inadequacy, according to Tressell, of the socialist belief that the mere use of 'reasoning' could end poverty.[82]

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[77] J. Lawrence, 'Class and Gender in the Making of Urban Toryism', *English Historical Review*, 108 (1993), 629-52, 634.
[78] R. McKibbin, *The evolution of the Labour Party 1910-24* (Oxford, 1974, 1991), xi.
[79] S. Reynolds, B. Woolley, T. Woolley, *'Seems So'. A Working-Class View of Politics* (London, 1911).
[80] Ibid, xii, 297.
[81] Ibid, xxv, 152, 171. *Seems So!* praised Graham Wallas's *Human nature in politics* for its recognition of the irrationalism of human nature. Ibid, 136-7. But it is worth noting that even a progressive of Wallas's type expected reason to gain in importance over the long-term. See *DLB*, vol.v, 226-31, 229.
[82] R. Tressell, *The ragged trousered philanthropists* (1914, 1965), 458. Discussed in *DLB*, vol.x, 156-62, 160.

Of course, the extent of Labour's rationalism can be exaggerated – the trade unions, in particular, were the locus of a different conception of politics, one often based more on class and sectional interests. But to the extent that the rationalist strand remained a significant one,[83] it ensured that the Labour Party, at the broadest possible level, would continue to have a problem with wagering on luck.

More acutely, gambling appeared at odds with the Labour Party's essential commitments to proportionate reward and social solidarity. Labour "brought to the 'property' question a complex range of ideas",[84] but, as Jackson has observed in a recent study of the British Left's political thought, 'all shades of progressive opinion agreed that reward ought to be related to productive effort usually understood as any kind of participation in the labour market.' Property otherwise acquired, with the exception of reward for 'other important social tasks, such as raising children', was 'functionless wealth': it bore no relation to productive effort.[85] 'Exemplified in windfall gains, monopolies, mineral royalties and urban ground rents',[86] property gained via wagering on luck also stood condemned as functionless.[87]

Related to this emphasis on proportionate reward was Labour's aspiration to a society governed by altruism and social co-operation. Halsey and Dennis, in their history of ethical socialism, were in no doubt as to the importance of community: 'Fraternity is the ethical socialist's sine qua non...history is a never ending struggle to develop the altruism of

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[83] For the pervasiveness of rationalism within the Labour Party see B. Jackson, 'Egalitarian political thought on the British Left, 1910-64' (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2003), passim.
[84] Harris, 'Labour's Political and Social Thought', 19. See also S. MacIntyre, *A Proletarian Science: Marxism in Great Britain 1917-33* (Cambridge, 1980), 164.
[85] Jackson, 'Egalitarian political thought on the British Left', 66. See also Harris, 'Labour's Political and Social Thought', 18-21. For the extent to which the concept of function remained important to Labour even during the 1950s see B. Jackson, "Revisionism Reconsidered: 'Property-owning Democracy' and Egalitarian Strategy in Post-war Britain", *Twentieth Century British History*, 16 (2005), 414-40, 423-4, 438.
[86] Harris, 'Labour's Political and Social Thought', 21.
[87] R. H. Tawney, *The acquisitive society* (London, 1921), 67. Tawney here endorsed J. A. Hobson's suggestion that property distributed by 'good luck and good fortune' was a form of 'improperty'. See also p.17, below.

individuals'.[88] The importance of this dimension was evident during the memorable House of Commons debate on the nature of socialism which took place in 1923: Philip Snowden insisted that the economic and social system promoted by the Labour Party was driven by the notion of 'Service'.[89] Marquand has captured this aspect of the Party's thought well: 'the central premise of Labour's creed between the wars...was that capitalism was immoral because the profit motive involved the exploitation of man by man. Service, not profit, should be the motive force for economic activity and Tawney's doctrine was repeated from a thousand Labour platforms'.[90]

One of the most influential of all socialist thinkers, Tawney continued to exert intellectual authority into the second half of the twentieth century.[91] Furthermore, as Halsey and Dennis have observed, he explicitly associated wagering on luck with a capitalist system based on disproportionate reward and acquisitive individualism:

> In a country without socialist values, material standards of living, however high, would be associated with the 'futilities' of self-indulgence, irregular habits, and gambling, and a wider dissemination of the capitalist leisure and work cult of 'betting coupons, comforts and careers'...such failings were no more edifying in millions of wage earners, than in a handful of monopolists, speculators, or urban landlords.[92]

The acquisitive society was one in which gain was based 'upon *chance* or power...upon what men can with good *fortune* snatch for themselves'.[93]

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[88] A. H. Halsey and R. Dennis, *English ethical socialism: Thomas More to R.H. Tawney* (Oxford, 1988), 4.
[89] 20 March 1923, HCD, vol.161, cols.2472-2512, 2485.
[90] D. Marquand, *The Progressive Dilemma* (London, 1991), 62.
[91] 'The way in which Tawney was appropriated and sanctified by the Labour Party as an in-house philosophical guru is a complicated story, and has rightly been subjected to some sceptical treatment by succeeding generations of scholars...Nonetheless...Tawney's work...both directly and through its dissemination into the Labour Party's conventional wisdom, did [continue to] exert a substantial influence [during the 1950s and 1960s]'. Jackson, 'Egalitarian political thought on the British Left, 1910-64', 261. See also, ibid, 262, 286. For scepticism about Tawney's influence see, for example, A. Arblaster, 'Tawney in Retrospect', *Society for the Study of Labour History Bulletin*, 54 (1989), 95-102.
[92] Halsey and Dennis, *English ethical socialism*, 211. Tawney explicitly discussed financial speculation in *The acquisitive society* (London, 1921), 70-6.
[93] Ibid, 226-7. My italics.

This being said, the thesis does not suggest that Labour's attitude to gambling is understandable in terms solely intellectual. If, as McKibbin recently suggested, 'Hardly any aspect of British life has combined religion, class, ideology, politics and law more potently than attitudes to gambling',[94] then it would be obtuse to imagine that the socialist critique alone determined the Party's approach. Religion, in particular, was an important variable. Protestant (that is, Nonconformist and Church of Scotland) socialists were much more likely to oppose gambling than Catholic socialists. Further, if McKibbin is also right to insist that 'people found it as difficult to hold coherent views on betting as they did on sex'[95] then we might expect to find that the Labour Party's attitude to gambling was sometimes inconsistent and contradictory. More widely, the views that Labour politicians held in respect of gambling often reflected aspects of their personal style and identity – dimensions sometimes far removed from policy and ideology.[96] That a study of the Labour Party's attitude to gambling must pay particular attention to political styles and identities is, indeed, the second assumption on which the thesis proceeds.

The focus of the thesis is the national Labour Party and particularly the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP). I seek to reconstruct Labour's attitude to gambling via parliamentary debates and committees in particular; these were the arenas in which rank and file MPs felt most comfortable articulating their attitudes to gambling. The thesis also draws heavily on the evidence of the two Royal Commissions, as well as on contemporary newspapers and labour publications. Labour's relationship to gambling is explored via the Party's attitude to the most popular forms of organized mass betting: namely, betting on horses, dog racing,

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[94] R. McKibbin, 'Perhaps a Merlot', *London Review of Books*, 25, (March 2005) [accessed at http://www.lrb.co.uk/v27/n05/mcki01_.html]
[95] McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 376.
[96] This approach to the study of the Labour Party is one particularly associated with Howell. For his most recent exposition of this view see *MacDonald's Party. Labour Identities and Crisis, 1922-31* (Oxford, 2002), passim.

lotteries, and the football pools. Gaming is also discussed at several junctures, but since a consensus existed that it should be prohibited as far as possible, it only rarely entered the political arena in meaningful fashion. More widely, I frequently use the term 'stock exchange gambling': this denotes financial speculation and the term is used comparatively. Labour's perpetual opposition to this form of wagering on luck serves, throughout the thesis, to illuminate the degree to which the Party's increasing accommodation to the forms of gambling practised by the working classes remained expedient rather than principled.

Chapter one of the thesis details the Labour Party's strong opposition to the administrative regulation of betting on horses during the 1920s. The Edwardian consensus had begun to break down after the First World War: the Conservative Party, in particular, increasingly favoured the taxation and legalization of cash betting off-course. Labour resisted any retreat from the strategy of prohibition: it continued to defend the Street Betting Act. Section one discusses the Party's contribution to the proceedings of the 1923 House of Commons Select Committee on Betting Duty. Represented by MPs who combined Protestantism and socialism, the Labour Party articulated objections of principle to gambling. Section two traces the further development of these objections. Taxation implied approval of betting and Labour could not therefore support the betting tax imposed by the Conservative Government in 1926. The Party's hostility to the creation of the Tote two years later proceeded on similar grounds. Although imperatives of politics and class were also involved, Labour opposed the installation of the totalisator at racecourses, under the aegis of a government-dominated statutory authority (the Racecourse Betting Control Board), on the grounds that it would encourage gambling. This episode is the subject of section three. The fourth section argues that the socialist critique of gambling articulated by the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP)

was rather more widely shared: the leadership of the trade unions also deprecated gambling on this basis.

Chapter two initially focuses on Labour's negative reaction to the growth of lotteries, dog racing and the football pools during the interwar years; it ends by examining the extent to which the political crisis of 1931 weakened the Party's objections to working-class betting. Section one details the Labour Party's objections of principle to lottery gambling. Articulated most explicitly in the Party's overwhelming opposition to an issue of Premium Bonds at the end of the First World War, Labour maintained its opposition to lottery gambling throughout the interwar period. However, principle was compromised by pragmatism: fundraising lotteries were increasingly part of the political culture of the labour movement. Section two examines the Labour Party's evolving attitude to football pool betting. The tension between ideology and electoralism was acute here: on the one hand, Labour saw the football pools not just as a form of lottery but one which made massive profits for unscrupulous businessman; on the other, by the mid-1930s this form of gambling was ubiquitous in working-class communities. By the end of the interwar period the Party had largely accommodated itself to this form of betting. The same could not be said of dog racing, the subject of section three. The Labour Party viewed the emergence and proliferation of the urban dog track, which enabled the working classes to regularly bet on-course for the first time, with hostility throughout the interwar period. It was a capitalist swindle designed to part fools and their money. The fourth section examines the extent to which the political crisis of 1931 altered Labour's attitude to gambling. A radical disjuncture in the Party's history, Labour subsequently developed a greater sense of class solidarity. This encouraged toleration of working-class betting. But the impact of 1931 was not all in the one direction: by increasing the Party's hostility to financial speculation the events surrounding

the demise of the Second Labour Government encouraged, if imprecisely, hostility to wagering on luck.

Chapter three argues that the redistribution of social esteem which accompanied the Second World War further encouraged the Labour Party's accommodation to working-class betting – but only in some of its forms and only to some degree. Labour's objections to the taxation of betting had disappeared entirely by the end of the war: the Attlee Government proceeded to tax some forms of betting and indicated its interest in taxing others, specifically off-course cash betting (section four). To this end, it appointed another Royal Commission, which recommended the licensing of betting shops. (Section five). However, the depth of support within the parliamentary party for this reform remained unclear when Labour left office in 1951 (section six). Furthermore, as the first half of the chapter details, the Labour Party continued to oppose some forms of popular gambling. Section one discloses the persistence of its objections to dog racing between 1939 and 1951, section two the Attlee Government's dismissive response to a campaign in favour of state lotteries, and section three examines the criticism that Labour MPs directed at the football pools after the war. Although, in the case of the latter, administrative regulation rather than prohibition was the overwhelming objective.

Chapter four examines the Party's attitude to gambling during the 1950s and 1960s: Labour's accommodation to working-class gambling continued but the pace was slow and the direction of change contested. This was nowhere more evident than in MPs reluctance to support the licensing of betting shops during the 1950s. The PLP spurned Conservative attempts to build a cross-party alliance in favour of reform: the licensing of betting shops subsequently proceeded in the face of significant Labour Party opposition. Section one discusses this

episode. Sections two and three point in a somewhat different direction: they examine Labour's overwhelming backing for the administrative regulation of the football pools (section two) and the legalization of small semi-private non-commercial lotteries (section three) during the early-to-mid 1950s. The Party was particularly keen on the licensing of this kind of lottery: Labour's fundraising was largely dependent on them. Yet, at the same time as the Labour Party was actively promoting one form of lottery it was actively opposing another: namely, premium bonds. Section four details Labour's opposition to the introduction of the Premium Savings Bond in 1956. The Party perceived it as a form of state lottery: premium bonds involved the government in the stimulation of gambling demand for the first time. The Labour Party opposed the scheme on this basis, but also in the context of a wider unhappiness about the direction of the nation's political economy. Labour accused the Conservative Government of promoting an acquisitive individualism predicated on disproportionate reward: in this context, the socialist critique of gambling enjoyed particular traction. Sections five and six examine interventions in the gambling sphere by the Wilson Governments. The former details the Chancellor Roy Jenkins's failure to secure parliamentary support for the creation of a national lottery. Jenkins's increasing distance from the Labour mainstream was a significant aspect of his political identity: his efforts to promote a national lottery were another way in which Jenkins misjudged the Party. Section six discloses a debate within the Wilson Government about the future of the Grand National steeplechase. Senior ministers, including the Prime Minister, were determined that Aintree should not be sold to property developers. But other ministers, hostile to gambling, opposed government intervention. That the pro-Grand National position won out reflected more the attitude of the Prime Minister than it did the balance of opinion in government. Section seven briefly reiterates the nature and extent of the Labour Party's accommodation to gambling between 1951 and 1970.

The conclusion of the thesis emphasizes that the Labour Party maintained a socialist critique of wagering on luck throughout the period 1918-70 and that this, above all else, ensured its tolerance of working-class gambling remained somewhat grudging and limited.

Chapter One

'The Unclean Thing': Opposing the Administrative Regulation of Betting on Horses during the 1920s

Introduction

The failure of the Street Betting Act was evident by 1918. Far from excising off-course cash betting, prohibition had failed even to stem its growth.[1] A challenge to the Edwardian consensus emerged. Conservative Governments, encouraged by the financial possibilities of taxation, and also responding, perhaps, to the "stronger 'democratic' impulse" that existed after the First World War,[2] moved towards the licensing, registration, and taxation of betting on horses: in short, towards a strategy of administrative regulation. A Select Committee on Betting Duty was appointed in 1923, a tax on legal betting transactions followed in 1926, and two years later, the totalisator, a mechanical pool betting machine, was licensed for use on racecourses under the direction of a new government body, the Racecourse Betting Control Board (subsequently known as 'The Tote'). The implications of these innovations were not principally technocratic: increasing support for administrative regulation reflected greater toleration of gambling, as Dixon recognized:

> The significance of accepting administrative regulation must not be underestimated. It meant that, for the first time, a certain amount of everyday working-class gambling was officially regarded as legitimate and as compatible with the overriding interests of control. Distinctions were being made between levels of gambling activity and amongst working class gamblers. Specifically, this meant moderate betting by working-class male adults had become acceptable to an extent which would have seemed unthinkable twenty or thirty years before.[3]

This was an accommodation unacceptable to a Labour Party that maintained gambling to be illegitimate in all its forms. Just as the government refused to recognize prostitution, neither

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[1] The extent of its growth was a matter of conjecture; but that gambling had increased was generally accepted. McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class,* 105-110.
[2] Ibid, 298.
[3] Dixon, *From Prohibition to Regulation*, 209.

should it regularize or draw profit from gambling. Churchill described this as 'the doctrine of the unclean thing'[4] and it underpinned Labour's opposition to the Select Committee on Betting Duty, the betting tax, and the Tote Bill – episodes examined successively in sections one, two and three. These debates about administrative regulation took place almost entirely at a parliamentary level and there remains the question of how representative the PLP's position was of wider party opinion. The final section of the chapter suggests that the labour movement as a whole was influenced by the socialist critique of gambling.

1. The Select Committee on Betting Duty

The Chancellor Stanley Baldwin indicated the government's interest in taxing betting during his 1923 budget statement. A Select Committee was to be appointed.[5] The Shadow Chancellor Philip Snowden expressed 'a feeling of dismay amounting to horror that the country should have come to such a pass that recourse should be had to legalizing and making respectable...the second greatest curse of the country'.[6] The connection between taxation and legalization was explicit throughout the Committee's proceedings.[7] It concluded that a tax was 'practicable' and, while the dissolution of Parliament prevented the endorsement of more than the first few sections of the Chairman Henry Cautley's draft report, 'those of its conclusions that were agreed favoured the desirability of a betting tax'.[8] Anti-gamblers actually prevented the Committee from officially declaring a tax 'desirable', but this 'was an empty victory'.[9] The 'Report...was of great significance in placing the substitution of administrative regulation for prohibition on the political agenda. It became a constant point of reference in subsequent debates about the control of betting'.[10]

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[4] HCD: 16 March 1928, vol.214, col.2352. 27 May 1930, vol.240, cols.1182-3.
[5] 16 April 1923, HCD, vol.162, cols.1735-6.
[6] Ibid, col.2107. Quoted in B. Mallet, and C. O. George, *British Budgets: Third Series, 1921-2 to 1932-3* (London, 1933), 69. Snowden's inference being that drink was the greatest curse.
[7] 1923SLC.
[8] Miers, *Regulating Commercial Gambling*, 289.
[9] Dixon, *From Prohibition*, 204.
[10] Ibid, 186.

William Graham, David Grenfell, Morgan Jones, and Cecil Wilson were the Labour members of the Committee. The means by which they were selected as the Party's representatives is obscure,[11] but at all times during the Committee's proceedings they opposed taxation, and the underlying principle of administrative regulation. Three were active Protestants: the fourth, Graham, was an ascetic from a Scottish Protestant background.[12] Grenfell was a former miner and miners' official. Graham and Jones were long-standing ILPers, while Wilson, a Congregationalist who later became a Quaker, had joined the ILP after leaving the Liberal party. Like other Liberals, the Great War had been the occasion of the latter's shift to the Left. In his 'pacifist internationalism', Wilson had much in common with Jones, a schoolteacher who became the first conscientious objector elected to the Commons in 1921.[13]

Graham had previously equated administrative regulation of betting with approval of it.[14] But during the Committee's proceedings he concentrated on trying to establish that betting increased rather than decreased in times of economic distress. That there was little evidence to support this theory did not deter him: his underlying intention was to ventilate the opinion that betting, rather than harmless entertainment absorbing surplus cash, was an activity to which the working classes resorted in financial desperation.[15] Grenfell, Jones, and Wilson's opposition to gambling appeared theological.[16] 'Have you nothing more authoritative than

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[11] Although Graham's eye for detail led to him regularly representing Labour on official committees of enquiry. *DLB*, vol.xi, 65-76.

[12] T. N. Graham, *The Life of the Rt. Hon. William Graham* (London, 1948), 162. Graham was 'intellectually a Radical but with a temperament suitable to a Whig', according to J. Johnson, *A Hundred Commoners*, (London, 1931), 103-5, 105. But see also Sidney Webb's portrait: Graham 'always seems to be resisting and protesting – subconsciously...against any kind of Progressive action. He doesn't really like any Radical or Collectivist proposals which he thinks are insufficiently considered from the standpoint of 'ideal' social philosophy'. Quoted in R. Skidelsky, *Politicians and the Slump: the Labour Government of 1929-1931* (London, 1967), 395.

[13] Howell, *MacDonald's Party*, 62, 310.

[14] While editor of the *Selkirk Reporter* in 1906 he had attacked Horatio Bottomley's proposals for the licensing of cash betting off-course in the following terms: 'He apparently desires the State to support the betting crusade in much the same manner as it runs the Post Office. I wonder how many foolish contradictory folk he will get to support him?' Quoted in Graham, *The Life of the Rt. Hon. William Graham*, 30. For Bottomley's proposals: 31 July 1906, HCD, vol.162, cols.861-4.

[15] 1923SC, para.1126-31, at p.55-6, para.9000-2, at p.513.

[16] Although it is worth noting that the *New Statesman*, for one, did not think that attacks on betting were justified by a close reading of the Bible. 28 July 1923. Quoted in Jones, *Workers at play*, 172. Also interesting in this connection were the subsequent comments of the Labour MP and Free Church Minister Reginald Sorensen. He pointed out 'that there is no Biblical indication of the iniquity of gambling. Before the rise of the Puritans, there was hardly anything said about any moral danger of speculations, though there was on usury.

Herbert Spencer?' Grenfell urged of a Free Church Minister. 'Have you nothing in scripture, or a pronouncement by your Church code upon this?...I want the Church view on this'.[17] Wilson implied that in its promotion of covetousness gambling was a defiance of the Ten Commandments.[18] Jones argued 'that it would [not] be the desire of our common Master that we should indulge in betting either nationally or individually'.[19]

But they, or at least three of them, were also socialists.[20] The importance of political identity was illuminated in an exchange between Grenfell and the Free Church Minister Robert Calder Gillie. Grenfell objected to Calder Gillie's attempt to distinguish capitalism from gambling as a mode of property distribution.

> ***Gillie***: When you have a financial transaction in which one gains money and gives nothing for it in exchange that seems to me economically unsound and nationally anti-social.
> ***Grenfell***: Is not that the basis of every business transaction – one wants to get more than he gives?
> ***Gillie***: I should not have said so. I should have said the carpenter gives his work and gets his daily wage, and that the writer gives his book and gets his remuneration.
> ***Grenfell***: I am referring to transactions in the usually understood sense. A business transaction means that each of the parties is out to get more than he gives?

Grenfell subsequently expanded on his perception that capitalism and gambling were symbiotic in their promotion of disproportionate reward. He explained that 'the very worst elements of private enterprise and of the capitalist world...find their place in gambling. To compromise with gambling is tantamount to assisting in the maintenance of Capitalism in its worst aspects'.[21]

The immorality of gambling has grown up largely with Puritanism and its successor, Nonconformity...'. 18 June 1956, HCD, vol.554, col.1116.

[17] 1923SC, para.6029-30, at p.353. See also Grenfell's interventions, para.1001-2, at p.49 & para.1688, at p.85.

[18] 1923SC, para.6534-5, at p.382. Wilson was sympathetic to analogies drawn between gambling and slavery and gambling and prostitution, para.7143-44, at p.416 & para.7158, at p.417.

[19] 1923SC, para.6712, at p.390. Although Jones was quite prepared to deploy consequential arguments tactically. 1923SLC, para.2129-32, at p.118-9; para.2963-81, at p.176-7; para.6647-704, at p.387-89, para.7649-663, at p.445-6.

[20] The ideological bearings of Wilson, a former Liberal from a family of Sheffield industrialists, were more questionable. *DLB*, vol.vi, 272-5.

[21] *Labour*, May 1934. See also 'Should Betting be Abolished? A Discussion between Brigadier A. C. Critchley and D. R. Grenfell', *The Listener*, 9 (15 March 1933).

Labour's theological and ideological preoccupations conflicted with the Committee's prevailing ethos. The Chairman was keen to prevent exposition of the issue's more abstract dimensions: 'we are not going here into an inquiry into whether betting is wrong or not'.[22] When Free Church witnesses tried to explain that they opposed gambling because it promoted chance, Cautley cut them off. 'That is a philosophical question, which I do not think this Committee can deal with'.[23] As with philosophy so too theology: the Chairman thought it 'rather undesirable to pursue' 'abstruse theological questions'.[24] The Committee's entire proceedings reified the practical and empirical at the expense of the philosophical and ideological. Cautley 'regarded as much more important the fact that most people's actions showed that they did not regard betting as immoral'.[25] As such, he reflected the wider biases of British politics and British intellectual life (as well as his responsibility as Chairman to keep proceedings moving). Morgan Jones challenged him to no avail:

> ***Chairman***: I think it very undesirable in a public committee like this that we should enter into abstruse questions of theological belief or moral code...
> ***Morgan Jones***: How can you approach a question on the ground of morality unless you discuss the moral code...How can you tackle it at all?...
> ***Chairman***: We should be here for ever. It leads to all sorts of casuistry.[26]

The Labour members' objections of principle also encouraged them to deny the bias of the cash betting laws. The Glamorganshire County Police Force informed the Committee that the majority of the public were not opposed to betting: indeed, they sympathized with the law-breaker. Its submission added that the working classes were particularly hostile to the betting laws, which they viewed as discriminatory. Grenfell and Jones repudiated this evidence. Jones claimed that the proportion of the population who bet was 'very small' and denied that the Street Betting Act 'has ever been [even] in a moderate degree cited as evidence of class legislation'.[27] Grenfell agreed that the extent of working-class betting was

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[22] 1923SC, para.5857, at p.342.
[23] 1923SC, para.5898, at p.342. See also para.5571, at p. 319. See also Dixon, *From Prohibition*, 207.
[24] 1923SC, para.6535, at p.382.
[25] Dixon, *From Prohibition*, 206.
[26] 1923SC, para.6735, at p.391-2.
[27] 1923SC, para.5284, at p.305, para.5287-94, at p.306.

greatly exaggerated. He insisted that the 'average, intelligent', chapel-going Welsh working man did not bet. But his definition of a regular working-class man was rather narrow: 'The man who has an interest in public life, who has an interest in public morality, who is generally a useful citizen, [was not] the kind of man who resorts to betting'. Grenfell's distance from the working classes was evident in an exchange with the police witness:

> ***Grenfell***: You happen to know more than I do, and I represent the men and have lived with them all my life?
> ***Supt. Ben Evans***: Well, they do not tell you all, you see.[28]

It was also apparent in his insistence that street betting was a mixed class affair. Grenfell suggested that there were 'people who can afford credit betting who indulge in street betting...The line is not a clear cut line between people with small incomes and people with large incomes, is it?[29] Perhaps significantly, none of the Labour members participated in the cross-examination of a Glasgow bookmaker, a witness whose evidence left the Committee in little doubt about the centrality of street betting to the culture of the working classes.[30]

The Committee's proceedings were truncated by Baldwin's decision to call a General Election in December 1923. Cautley and the Liberal MP Isaac Foot rapidly drafted competing reports.[31] The former was permissive; the latter, actually written by the Free Church Minister Ernest Benson Perkins,[32] was an uncompromising reiteration of anti-gambling. The Labour members supported Foot's draft report,[33] which argued that the limited success of the Street Betting Act was explained by 'inadequate enforcement, the courts' unwillingness to imprison offenders, and Parliament's failure to modernize the law in order to deal with new gambling methods'. It also called for more not less suppression of betting in the form of a ban on the publication of odds, tips, and bookmakers' advertisements.

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[28] 1923SC, para.5421, at p.312. The exchange between Grenfell and Evans is quoted more fully in K. Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation: a history of modern Wales* (Cardiff, 1998), 198.
[29] 1923SC, para.1693, p.86.
[30] 1923SC, para.4563-883, at p.272-88.
[31] Draft Reports, 1923SC, xxii-1ii, lii-lvii.
[32] For details of Benson Perkins' anti-gambling career, see Dixon, *From Prohibition*, 199-200.
[33] Grenfell also supported a Liberal MP's motion calling for the Committee to present no report at all. 1923SLC, p.lviii.

Nor did taxation offer any prospect of reducing the evil, quite the opposite, since it 'necessarily carries in a new and emphatic way the approval of the state for betting practices'. Furthermore, as the history of liquor licensing demonstrated, taxation created 'a new vested interest' opposed 'to the free choice of the state in dealing with a grave social evil'.[34] A defense of the class discriminatory nature of the cash betting laws completed the analysis. In his evidence to the Committee, Benson Perkins explained that

> the poor man ought to be very glad that his interests were being protected in a way that the rich man's were not...you cannot base an argument for general law on certain privileges which may, not rightly but wrongly, belong to the rich...I should be very sorry to think that the privileges that wealth could sometimes obtain were going to be the moral standard for the whole community.[35]

This, *in toto*, was the maximalist case against gambling and against a tax on betting. It came under increasing attack during the 1920s. The Treasury and the Customs and Excise were amenable to taxation and so was the Conservative Party. *The Times* also endorsed a tax on betting.[36] The Church of England, though it opposed the taxation of betting in 1923 and again in 1926, did not do so unanimously.[37] The Church of Scotland actually supported the duty.[38] The *Rainbow Circle,* a significant repository of progressive opinion, also came down in favour of taxation.[39] Though the Liberal Party remained opposed.[40]

Social and intellectual change had altered the political climate. In Dixon's words: 'The debate about poverty, the effects of war, and the acknowledgement of full male adult

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[34] Dixon, *From Prohibition,* 200-1. 1923SC, lii-lvii.
[35] 1923SC, para.5745, at p.334, para.5764, at p.336. Dixon, *From Prohibition*, 201.
[36] *The Times*, 18 April 1923.
[37] In 1923, the Convocation of the Church at York had rejected a tax by just 3 votes. 1923SC, para.6426-30, at p.377. In 1926, the London Diocesan Conference voted against the tax by 119-58. Churchill made great play of the latter vote interpreting it as a sign of shifting opinion. 10 June 1926, HCD, vol.196, 1823-4.
[38] See speech of James Brown MP: 10 June 1926, HCD, vol.196, col.1785-6.
[39] 277th Meeting, 9 April 1924, Paper on 'Gambling as a source of revenue'. 'In the discussion...the Circle shewed (sic) a personal ignorance of the subject wh[ich] might perhaps be accounted unto them for righteousness. Opinion, though not unanimous, inclined in favour of a tax – in the pious but uncertain hope that it w[ould] lead to the diminution of betting the evils of wh[ich] were admitted by all'. M. Freeden, *Minutes of the Rainbow Circle 1894-1924* (London, 1989), 347-8.
[40] See C. Hood, 'The Development of Betting Taxes in Britain', *Public Administration*, 50 (1972), 183-202, 189. The Liberal Party called for the tax's repeal during the 1929 General Election. See *The Times*, 18 Feb 1929.

citizenship by the extension of suffrage' reduced the space for attacks on working class gambling. So too did the development of economic theory. The argument 'that free spending was socially harmful and a derogation of the property-holder's moral duty' was undermined by 'demands that the working class should participate more actively in the market and the circulation of money'.[41] Together these changes ensured that betting

> rather than being seen as a collective problem which the working class posed for the rest of society...was coming to be seen as a potential problem for the individual punter which could worsen poverty and disrupt family life...this was not the same as drawing a simple line of causation between gambling and social problems, as had been done in the past.[42]

However, what Dixon called the 'individualization of gambling problems'[43] had limited impact on Labour's attitude. A series of articles in the *New Statesman* by the socialist and Irish Nationalist Robert Lynd articulated the view that betting brought pleasure and enjoyment into people's lives.[44] But the Party's objections of principle were emphasized during successive Lords debates on the taxation and legalization of betting in 1924, 1925 and 1927.[45] Sidney Arnold led for the Labour Party on the first two occasions. To those who asked why the state's relationship to betting should be any different from the state's relationship to alcohol, Arnold replied that there was

> no real analogy between the taxation of drink and the taxation of betting...The drink trade has been regarded by the State as legitimate up to a point, though requiring a certain amount of regulation and restriction...the attitude of State towards betting has been quite different...[it has] never regarded betting as being fit for legal recognition in same manner as it has regarded the drink trade...[there is a] large and important section of the community which is, and will be consistently and persistently, opposed to any such recognition.[46]

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[41] Dixon, *From Prohibition*, 209.
[42] Ibid, 209-10.
[43] Dixon, *From Prohibition to Regulation*, 209, fn.73.
[44] *New Statesman*, 14 April, 21 July, 1 Sept 1923. See also *New Statesman*, 'The Intellectual Side of Horse Racing', 12 June 1920.
[45] 12 March 1924, HLD, vol.56, cols.679-714. 2 Dec 1925, HLD, vol.62, cols.1059-1100. 19 May 1927, HLD, vol.67, cols.372-404.
[46] 12 March 1924, HLD, vol.56, cols.690-8.

Since Arnold was also a drink prohibitionist,[47] his espousal of this position was perhaps disingenuous. However, it was an argument to which Labour returned repeatedly during debates about administrative regulation. The Lord Chancellor Viscount Haldane, speaking on behalf of the first Labour Government, reiterated that the historical trajectory of the gambling question was in the direction of repression rather than liberalization. 'The whole tendency of our legislation for the last 80 years has been to show that the law does not favour wagering, does not favour betting, and there has been a progressive restriction on anything like betting in the open and a progressive desire to discourage it whenever an opportunity arose'. Taxation involved a reversal of this process and was 'not justified in the present state of public opinion and of the standards of life which ought to obtain'.[48] Earl Russell reiterated that Labour's objection to gambling was ideological: its material consequences were merely 'the incidental and occasional evils of betting'.[49]

Russell, Arnold, and Haldane were former Liberals attracted to the Labour Party by the internationalism of its ethical socialists.[50] But they found Labour's anti-gambling equally congenial. They were comfortable with the emphasis on mutual service and proportionate reward. The basis of socialism, Russell explained, as he outlined Labour's opposition to the licensing of cash betting off-course in 1927,

> is the giving of service...for which you are rewarded with subsistence and the amenities of subsistence...the real evil of betting is that by that or any other from of speculation a man seeks to acquire money and riches without giving corresponding service...[this] undermines and saps the human character [leading the better] into the way of thinking that all life is a speculation to be got through in the easiest possible way, without ever doing honest work for honest pay, that they are to become rich by windfalls, by accidents, by lotteries, by bets, and by all those other things which contravene that principle of payment for honest work done...That is the real principle which betting offends.

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[47] C. Binfield, 'The Shaping of a Dissenting Interest', *Parliamentary History* (Special Issue on 'Parliament and Dissent, 2005), 120-35, 134.
[48] 12 March 1924, HLD, vol.56, cols.707-9.
[49] 19 May 1927, HLD, vol.67, cols.388-94.
[50] For details of their background see P. Williamson, 'The Labour Party and the House of Lords, 1918-31', *Parliamentary History*, 10 (1991), 317-341, 322-4.

He was ready to concede that the 'principle...applies very slightly...in the case where the bet is for an amount that is insignificant...because then he [the better] is not really seeking to acquire wealth but is amusing himself...[the bet] does not change the tenor of his life or of his mind or thoughts'.[51] But this distinction had no effect on the Party's attitude to off-course cash betting. It continued to support prohibition and perceived the taxation of betting as breaching this strategy. This view was most comprehensively expressed in Labour's opposition to the betting tax introduced by the government in 1926. It is to that episode we now turn.

2. The Betting Tax

Churchill's decision to impose a duty on legal betting turnover without legalizing or taxing street betting proved a disastrous failure. As Customs and Excise had feared such a tax proved impossible to collect. A series of concessions were subsequently necessary. The rate of taxation was reduced from 3.5 to 2 per cent in 1928 (and from 2 to 1 per cent on betting on-course). The next year the ad valorem duty was repealed and replaced with a system of bookmaking licences. Plans were also announced at this time for the taxation of both bookmakers' telephones and bets made via the totalisator machines recently installed at racecourses around the country.[52]

The Labour Party opposed the tax at every stage. Not only was it wrong in principle for the state to tax betting, but Labour also assumed, quite reasonably, that taxation was a precursor to the legalization of cash betting off-course. The PLP referred the issue to its Parliamentary Executive on 20 April 1926.[53] The Executive indicated its view that the Labour Party should oppose the planned betting duty. But it did not take a vote and left open the possibility of allowing individual MPs to abstain if they wished to do so.[54] The same day, 21 April, a

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[51] 19 May 1927, HLD, vol.67, cols.388-94.
[52] For details of the tax and its failure see C. Hood, *The limits of administration* (London, 1976), 169-89.
[53] *PLP minutes*, 20 April 1926.
[54] *Parliamentary Labour Party Executive Committee minutes*, (hereafter *Parliamentary Executive minutes*), 21 April 1926. Present at the meeting were William Adamson, William Graham, Arthur Henderson, Tom

Conservative MP introduced a Bill, under the Ten Minute Rule,[55] to legalize street betting and license bookmakers. The House rejected it by 126 votes to 99. The decisive contribution came from the Labour Party. Eighty Labour MPs, more than half the PLP, voted against the Bill.[56] This was an impressive display of anti-gambling in the absence of whipping. The leadership had perhaps resolved upon a show of strength in advance of the forthcoming betting tax debates.

Just two Labour MPs supported the Bill: the veteran Deptford MP C. W. Bowerman, and Martin Connolly, a Newcastle shipyard riveter and Boilermakers' Union sponsored member.[57] But more were uncomfortable with the ideological campaign that the Labour Party subsequently waged against the betting tax. James Sexton, former leader of Liverpool's dockers 'enjoyed a minor reputation as a writer of poetic doggerel under the name of 'Tatters MP'.[58] He used this resource to distance himself from the party leadership. Sexton addressed the Chancellor during the budget debates: 'So he'll now have his fling; Inside Tattersall's ring; On S[tarting] P[rice]s. he'll be telling the story; With winks and with nods; He'll be taxing the odds; So we'll leave him alone in his glory'.[59] Although an austere and authoritarian figure in some ways,[60] Sexton's background was Irish Catholic. He

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Kennedy, H. B. Lees-Smith, Ramsay MacDonald, Robert Smillie, Philip Snowden, Charles Trevelyan, Sidney Webb, Sidney Arnold & Earl De La Warr.

[55] A 'Ten Minute Bill' is another kind of Private Members' Bill in which the mover has ten minutes to make his speech. If the Bill is approved at this stage, it joins the queue of Private Members' Bills awaiting a second reading. Ten Minute Bills rarely become law and are usually used as a means of raising an issue's profile.

[56] 21 April 1926, HCD, vol.194, col.1214-8. Labour had won 151 seats at the 1924 election.

[57] Bowerman had opposed the extension of the 1906 Street Betting Act to cover on-course betting. 1 Aug 1906, HCD, vol.162, cols.1167-70. On the other hand, he had objected to the introduction of premium bonds at the end of the First World War. See pp.69-70, below. His apparently contrary attitude to gambling may have reflected the complexities of his political identity. His *DLB* entry describes Bowerman as 'an advanced working-class radical', Pugh argues that he was a 'rightwinger' in tune with the cultural preferences of the London working classes. *DLB*, vol.v, 29-34. M. Pugh, 'The Rise of Labour and the Political Culture of Conservatism, 1890-1945', *History*, 87 (2002), 514-37, 529. Bowerman's close relationship with B. T. Hall of the Club and Institute Union also demands consideration in the gambling connection. Hall's support had been important in securing Bowerman the Compositors' parliamentary nomination in Deptford in 1903 in the face of a strong challenge from a SDF candidate. *DLB*, ibid.

[58] *DLB*, vol.ix, 253.

[59] 27 April 1926, HCD, vol.194, col.1928.

[60] Howell, *MacDonald's Party*, 174.

admitted to an 'annual flutter',[61] and was no admirer of what he described as Labour's Nonconformist Right.[62]

The former Liberals Frederick Pethick-Lawrence and Arthur Ponsonby were also concerned about Labour's uncompromising approach. Pethick-Lawrence, a Party finance spokesman, declared that he had a more 'open mind' than his senior colleague Snowden. He distanced himself from the betting tax's 'opponents [who] contend that the true comparison is with prostitution and the legalization of immorality'.[63] Pethick-Lawrence warned that a commitment to repress popular betting was hypocritical unless accompanied by a commitment to abolish the Stock Exchange - and Labour had no intention of doing the latter.[64] Ponsonby told readers of the *New Leader* on 30 April that he was 'glad Mr Snowden, in his few remarks, denounced the tax on betting...There can be no question that, as projected, it will stimulate the evils of street betting, the extent of which does not seem to be fully realised'. But by mid-June: 'As to the betting tax, to which we devoted a day, I must confess I feel neither any enthusiasm for it, nor any violent indignation against it. On the whole I mistrust fancy taxes, and I have a suspicion that it will increase the evil of street betting, so I voted with the Party against it'. By the end of July, and in the aftermath of the General Strike, 'even the Chancellor could not make further discussion on the betting tax interesting'.[65]

Pethick-Lawrence and Ponsonby were very much parliamentary figures. They stood at some distance from the wider Labour movement.[66] But in their increasing scepticism about the PLP's approach to the betting tax they reflected opinions being expressed both by Labour voters and the Labour press. At the beginning of April, the *Daily Herald* had published a selection of its readers' views regarding betting. These evidenced little support for

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[61] 19 May 1926, HCD, vol.196, cols.459-60.
[62] Sir James Sexton, *Agitator, the life of the dockers' MP* (London, 1936), 30-2, 81-3, 127-8, 142, 195-6, 272-4.
[63] *Daily Herald*, 28 April 1926. See also his column on 26 April.
[64] 19 May, HCD, vol.196, cols.320.
[65] *New Leader*, 30 April, 18 June, 23 July 1926.
[66] For Ponsonby's distance from the trade unions in particular, see *DLB*, vol.vii, 195.

maximalist anti-gambling.[67] Nor was the paper itself especially hostile to gambling. R. B. Suthers wrote that while he had once believed betting immoral, he no longer did so. If the gaining of unearned income was the main objection to betting, then consistency demanded that anti-gamblers also oppose exchange by means of gift. This he was unable to do.[68] 'From the Workers Point of View', another regular *Daily Herald* column, drew a familiar analogy with the taxation of drink. 'Until we remould society on more rational lines' betting was inevitable. Why should it not be taxed?[69] The *New Leader*, meanwhile, gave short shrift to *Betting Facts*, Benson Perkins' contribution to the debate.[70]

> The estimate of the sums devoted annually to betting is startling, but one's outstanding impression is the absurdity of our present betting laws. Is betting in fact the evil? Is not the real evil the vacancy of mind which craves the excitement it gives? Or, to go a step further back, the industrial system which produces the vacant minds suitable for factory fodder?

It was wrong to ban working-class betting while stock exchange gambling continued unhindered: 'The evil of betting says Mr Perkins, is that it teaches people to expect gain without giving labour of value in exchange. Then is he prepared to clap the gambler in stocks and shares in prison?'[71]

The Parliamentary Executive met again on 27 April. Fourteen members of the Executive were present.[72] Individuals' views were unrecorded. But the Executive recommended by a vote of seven to two that the party oppose the betting duty.[73] The Parliamentary Executive elections of December 1925 had seen a backlash against dissent and the return of a Parliamentary Executive loyal to the leadership. The Party's financial experts Graham and

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[67] *Daily Herald*, 3 April 1926.
[68] *Daily Herald*, 19 May 1926.
[69] *Daily Herald*, 21 April 1926.
[70] E. Benson Perkins, *Betting Facts: being an account of the facts of betting given in evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on a Betting Duty* (London, 1925).
[71] *New Leader*, June 18 1926.
[72] Sidney Arnold, William Adamson, J. R. Clynes, Hugh Dalton, Earl De La Warr, William Graham, Arthur Greenwood, Arthur Henderson, Tom Kennedy, George Lansbury, Tom Shaw, Philip Snowden, Charles Trevelyan, Sidney Webb.
[73] *Parliamentary Executive minutes*, 27 April 1926.

Snowden had placed one and two in these elections,[74] and their objections to the tax presumably carried particular weight.

Possible dissentients from the majority view included Dalton, Webb, and Lansbury. Dalton belonged to a different generation than most members of the Executive (only William Graham and Earl De La Warr were similarly youthful) and, as a Tory Socialist, a different political tradition.[75] He was dismissive of the strand of ethical socialism that insisted on reforming individual behaviour:[76] Snowden's emphasis on the betting tax was specifically, if gently, mocked.[77] Writing in the *New Leader*, under the headline 'The Gambler's Budget', Dalton focused on the tax's administrative complexity and its limited revenue-raising potential. He claimed that lack of space prevented discussion of other 'objectionable' features of the tax.[78]

Webb's attitude to gambling also appeared congruent with support of taxation. *The decay of capitalist civilisation* had approached gambling from what Sidney and Beatrice described as the perspective of the 'economist' rather than 'moralist'. They were unconcerned about 'private' gambling, that is, betting between and among individuals. It 'may or may not be a desirable pleasure'.[79] What the Webbs' objected to was the 'the promotion and organisation

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[74] Howell, *MacDonald's Party*, 36.

[75] A term which Pugh, and Howell before him, have deployed effectively, 'Tory Socialism' denotes that strand of Labour opinion distant from Liberalism, Radicalism, and Nonconformity, and more in tune with (among other things) the cultural and recreational preferences of the working classes. See D. Howell, *British workers and the Independent Labour Party, 1888-1906* (Manchester, 1983), 373-5, 380-1. M. Pugh, 'The Rise of Labour and the Political Culture of Conservatism, 1890-1945', passim. M. Pugh, " 'Class Traitors' ": Conservative Recruits to Labour, 1900-1930', *English Historical Review*, 113 (1998), 38-64. Pugh has argued that three more members of the 1925-6 Parliamentary Executive were 'Tory Socialists': Earl De La Warr, J. R. Clynes and Tom Shaw. Pugh, " 'Class Traitors' ", 44. 'The Rise of Labour and the Political Culture of Conservatism', 518-9, 528-9. De La Warr was a marginal figure in the Labour Party and on the 1925 Executive. Of Shaw's attitude to gambling little is known. He did contrast the Conservative Party's support for the Tote Bill with its uninterest in the more important issue of unemployment. But there was no evidence of hostility to gambling. *The Clarion*, Aug 1928. For a discussion of the limits of Clynes' libertarianism in relation to gambling, see chapter 2, section 1, below. Pugh also characterizes as 'Tory Socialists' other significant Labour figures including C. W. Bowerman, Will Crooks, Jack Jones, J. H. Thomas and Will Thorne. Pugh, 'The Rise of Labour and the Political Culture of Conservatism', passim.

[76] H. Dalton, *Call Back Yesterday. Memoirs 1887-1931* (London, 1953), 172-3.

[77] Ibid, 182.

[78] *New Leader*, April 30, 1926.

[79] This distinction had not been apparent in comments made by Beatrice Webb twenty years earlier. Then she had written of the poorest 'leisure class', usually casually employed or unemployed, whose 'constitutional hatred to regularity and forethought' was expressed in gambling. Those who tried to live by gambling were 'parasites eating the life out of the working class, demoralising and discrediting it'. B. Potter, 'The Docks' in C.

of gambling' for commercial gain. 'The deliberate stimulation and exploitation of the gambling instinct in men, women and young persons, for the purposes of private gain – an industry employing vast capitals – can hardly be accepted as a legitimate utilisation of the nation's capital, brain and labour'.[80] Sidney, in his Fabian tract *National Finance and a Levy on Capital*, had 'endorsed any plan by which working-class luxuries which yield little in subsistence or refinement, could be made the vehicle of any necessary taxation'. Gambling was among the activities for which 'there is good reason for preventing consumption in excess, and even also for restricting consumption in moderation'.[81]

Lansbury appeared at first sight a less likely advocate of taxation. He was an established opponent of working-class betting. Under his editorship the *Daily Herald* had (for at time at least) abolished racing tips. The irrationality of gambling confounded him.[82] Remembering Derby Day as a child, he wrote of how 'we somehow realized how foolish it was for men and women to risk their livelihood and all they were worth in money on an almost blind speculation whether one horse or another would win'.[83] According to his son-in-law Raymond Postgate, 'Lansbury did not only think gambling wrong (he also disapproved of drinking, but did not refuse brewers' advertisements), he thought it grotesquely silly; he could not believe that the workers could really wish to waste their money so stupidly or that the absence of 'tips' could injure the circulation'. Forced to restore betting news to the *Daily Herald*, editor Lansbury 'was never easy in his mind'.

> One sub-editor remembers a repeated scene of those days: Taylor, the long, thin, dark journalist who was 'Templegate' the tipster, rising from his seat as the editor came in

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Booth (ed) *Life and Labour of the People in London*, vol. iv (1902), 31-2. Quoted in Clapson, *A bit of a flutter*, 30.

[80] S. Webb and B. Webb, *The decay of capitalist civilization* (London, 1923), 103.

[81] Quoted in I. Brittain, *Fabianism and Culture: a study in British socialism and the arts* (Cambridge, 1982), 242.

[82] Tanner has argued that Lansbury's Christian beliefs allowed him to recognise 'the importance of the irrational'. But there was no sign of this in his attitude to gambling. D. Tanner, 'Ideological Debate in Edwardian Labour Politics, Radicalism, Revisionism and Socialism', in E. F. Biagini, and A. J. Reid (eds.), *Currents of radicalism: popular radicalism, organized labour and party politics in Britain 1850-1914* (Cambridge, 1991), 271-293, 290. Lansbury's objection to betting, as detailed below, appears more in line with the emphasis he placed on 'intelligence' as the agent of social change. On the latter point, see J. Shepherd, *George Lansbury: at the heart of Old Labour* (Oxford, 2002), 315.

[83] G. Lansbury, *George Lansbury* (Glasgow, 1935), 23.

> and saying, 'Well, G. L., we have five winners yesterday', and being answered 'That's fine brother; I'm very glad', in a tone of great dejection; and those two excellent men looking at each other in distress, each respecting the other, anxious to avoid hurting the other's feelings, desiring nothing so much as the success of the paper, and yet aware of a high fence of misunderstanding between them that nothing could overleap.[84]

However, *Lansbury's Labour Weekly* was relaxed about the betting tax. It was

> a calculated 'stunt'...deliberately raising a storm of controversy. Bookmakers are clamouring that it either wont work, or will ruin them; strait-laced moralists are denouncing the 'raising of revenue from sin' (we wonder if they think that whisky should be tax free?); articles and letters from every angle are flooding the press. Nothing could be more convenient for Mr. Churchill and the Government. To speak plainly and frankly - before imposing a betting tax we ourselves would have chosen many other ways of raising revenue from those who can well afford to pay; at the same time, the whole thing is a relatively piffling matter. To focus criticism on it is to distract attention from the real class issue in the Budget.[85]

Furthermore, Lansbury, when asked by the *Daily Herald* for his immediate reaction to the budget, was conspicuous among Labour MPs in failing to criticise the betting tax.[86]

The Parliamentary Executive's recommendation that Labour oppose the tax was challenged at the PLP. But a motion demanding that MPs be granted a free vote on the issue gained only seven votes. The Executive's recommendation was then endorsed with only three objections.[87] The identity of the dissentients is obscure. Among the most obvious candidates were Ben Tillett[88] and Ernest Thurtle[89] (son-in-law of Lansbury), both of whom were on record as opposing the class bias of the betting laws.[90] So too was George Spencer.[91] The

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[84] R. Postgate, *The Life of George Lansbury* (London, 1951), 142.

[85] *Lansbury's Labour Weekly*, May 1, 1926. Labour made a similar suggestion when another Conservative Government introduced premium bonds in 1956. See chapter 4, section 4, below.

[86] *Daily Herald,* 27 April 1926.

[87] *PLP minutes*, 27 April 1926.

[88] Tillett, of course was the self-styled scourge of Labour's Nonconformists. See, for example, his pamphlet, *Is the Parliamentary Labour Party a failure?* (London, 1908). See also an especially coruscating attack he launched in *Justice*, 10 July 1923.

[89] After being defeated in the 1931 election, Thurtle took a job as a brewer's agent – an unusual decision, even for a former Labour politician in search of work. E. Thurtle, *Times Winged Chariot* (London, 1945), 116-7.

[90] For Tillett, HCD: 27 and 31 March 1924, vol.171, cols.1559 & 1835. For Thurtle: 26 April 1926, HCD, vol.194, col.1749. Thurtle subsequently repeated his objections. HCD: 5 Dec 1926, vol.200, cols.2943. 5 Feb 1929, vol.224, col.1606.

[91] 14 June 1926, HCD, vol.196 col.2005.

Nottinghamshire miners' leader was a 'keen card player and investor in stock markets',[92] though his political style also embraced respectability, 'orthodox views and support of the party leadership'.[93] Other potential critics included Tillett's fellow SDFers Jack Jones and Fred Montague and the Glasgow ILPer George Buchanan. However, even among this group, anti-puritans and working-class libertarians to a man[94] (with the possible exception of Spencer), there was evidence of a struggle to distinguish the betting of the proletarian from the gambling of the capitalist.

Jones, a Catholic who represented Silvertown in East London, combined criticism of the cash betting laws with an attack on the gambling which was the basis of capitalism, and which he wished, as a socialist, to see abolished.[95] Montague, MP for one of the Islington divisions in North London, had 'no use for those teetotal and anti-gambling economics which are those of the old fashioned Liberal party'.[96] He argued that stock exchange gambling was of a different order than working-class betting because it embedded disproportionate reward in every aspect of economy and society. But Montague agreed that all attempts to get 'something for nothing' were deplorable including those of the working class punter. 'Raising the moral tone and standard of the people...[ensuring] that they have a rational sort of life, a decent education, and a chance to look upon life in a well-balanced way' would reduce the 'social evil' of betting.[97] While their support of the Party's position on the betting tax appeared somewhat forced (Montague was against indirect taxation, Jones was protesting against a 'whole system...based on gambling'),[98] libertarian socialists were still socialists: gambling was wrong in principle.[99]

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[92] *DLB*, vol.i, 304-7.
[93] Howell, *MacDonald's Party*, 106, 122-3.
[94] The hedonistic aspect of the SDF's culture was well captured by one of its leading members during the 1920s. Joseph Toole, a Labour MP, recalled in his autobiography how the Salford branch of the SDF gambled away its meagre funds on a 'sure thing'. The horse lost. *Fighting Through Life* (London, 1935), 34.
[95] 19 May 1926, HCD, vol.196, col.329.
[96] 11 May 1928, HCD, vol.214, col.591.
[97] 15 July 1926, HCD, vol.198, cols.733-6.
[98] Montague, ibid. Jones, 10 June 1926, HCD, vol.196, cols.1803-5.
[99] Although Spencer's case demands consideration: expelled from the PLP in 1927, he subsequently backed the the Tote Bill and criticized those, i.e. his erstwhile colleagues in the Labour Party, who opposed it on anti-gambling grounds. *The Times*, 19 July 1928.

The ideological dimension was equally evident in George Buchanan's contribution. Neither his constituency position nor his political style and identity appeared favourable to anti-gambling. He represented the largely Catholic and overwhelmingly working-class Glasgow Gorbals.[100] 'A plain man with the aggressive proletarian character of Glasgow...he was occasionally to be seen returning from Ascot in the Hon. James Rothschild's Rolls-Royce'. Buchanan was also 'an expert poker player' who 'haunted the billiard saloons of Glasgow and played on even terms with professionals'.[101] He counted street bookmakers among his friends.[102] That he thought there 'almost an unanswerable case for legalizing betting in this country'[103] appeared to be in character; what appeared less so was his statement, also during the budget debates of 1926, that there remained a 'very strong case' for the prohibition of all betting.[104]

The complexities of Buchanan's position reflected in part a conflict of styles and identities within the ILP. As its political differences with the Labour Party widened, the ILP sought to construct a closer relationship with the working classes. This process, in its infancy during the middle 1920s, increasingly involved defending popular culture at the expense of its traditional Puritanism.[105] But Buchanan's equivocations were also representative of the Labour Party more widely. George Gillett MP, for example, a discount banker with over forty years experience on Lombard Street, and from a family of Quakers, insisted that he was 'opposed to it', even if 'there is a great deal to be said for legalizing betting'.[106] The Nonconformist Francis Broad found the 'arguments of bishops and bookies mutually destructive', insisted that 'life itself is a gamble' and, as such, was 'inclined to toss a coin' on

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[100] According to an ILP colleague, he was always sensitive to the Catholic views of his constituents. J. McGovern, *Neither fear nor favour* (London, 1960), 170.
[101] K. Middlemas, *The Clydesiders: a left-wing struggle for parliamentary power* (London 1965), 190. For an account of a successful Buchanan trip to the races, see McGovern, *Neither fear nor favour*, 65.
[102] 10 June 1926, HCD, vol.196, cols.1791-5.
[103] 15 July 1926, HCD, vol.198, cols.743-7. Buchanan also commented positively on betting's contribution to the revenue of the Royal Mail. 6 May 1926, vol.195, col.429.
[104] 10 June 1926, HCD, vol.196, cols.1791-5.
[105] Chapter 2, section 4 discusses this aspect of the ILP's development in more detail.
[106] 19 May 1926, HCD, vol.196 col.345. For Gillett see Howell, *MacDonald's Party*, 327, 329.

the issue of the betting tax. However, his attitude remained confused. Shifting position abruptly, Broad deprecated the manner in which gambling 'occupies [the] mind to the exclusion of all else'. It encouraged 'an outlook on life and a philosophy which is harmful' and for this reason any steps toward taxation and legalization were unacceptable.[107]

Parliament reached the Report Stage on the Budget Resolutions by 4 May. Labour forwent detailed opposition to the Budget so that the House could debate the General Strike. At the division the tax passed by 282 votes to 122. Two hundred and eighty one Conservatives and one Liberal voted for the Betting Duty resolution. Eight Conservatives, 17 Liberals and 97 Labour MPs opposed it.[108] More than 50 Labour MPs were absent, some because of the industrial crisis. Parliament returned to the issue during June and July. This time, the vote was much closer, 200 votes to 117. Fifteen Conservatives opposed the duty and 165 abstained.[109] Snowden declared that the government's majority of 79 to be 'the smallest it has ever had on any proposal of importance'.[110]

He had earlier marshalled Labour's objections.[111] Taxation amounted to official approval of betting and greater respectability would lead to an increase in the activity. This was unacceptable since gambling fostered the 'desire to get something for nothing [and] disdain for honest work'. Nor was the first Labour government's failure to legislate against gambling significant: 'if we had the power we would sweep them [betting offices] away'. Indeed, the 'most important of all' objections to the imposition of taxation was that it 'prejudice[d] the full consideration of the relationship of the State to this question of betting'. He had 'no doubt as to what the opinion of Parliament upon this question would be if it could be freely expressed'. He argued that Parliament had 'overwhelmingly rejected' April's Ten-Minute

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[107] 19 May 1926, HCD, vol.196, col.396-7.
[108] C. Hughes, *Bets and the Betting Tax* (London, 1927), 74.
[109] 15 July 1926, HCD, vol.198, col.714-19. This was an unusual expression of intra-party dissent in a Budget vote: Hughes, *Bets and the Betting Tax*, 79-80. Dixon, *From Prohibition*, 287.
[110] Ibid, 287.
[111] 10 June 1926, HCD, vol.196, cols. 1718-27. The following paragraphs quote from this speech.

Bill for the licensing of cash betting off-course, and went on to reject comparisons with the drink issue.

The taxation of liquor had been initiated during less enlightened times; when there had been 'no moral sense...against getting a revenue from taxation of drink'. As a consequence, there now existed vested interests in drink inimical to restriction of the traffic. The revenue from the taxation of alcohol had given the state a financial interest in the industry's success. The respectability afforded by taxation had empowered the brewers socially and politically. 'In the past, it has been exceedingly difficult to dislodge institutions that were revenue producing, however objectionable they might be in themselves', warned the Labour MP and United Free Church Minister James Barr.[112] Considering the matter de novo, implied Snowden, the state would adopt a different approach to alcohol.

This was a difficult argument to maintain on anything other than a priori grounds. There had been a significant decline in alcohol consumption, generally associated with the effects of taxation. Snowden himself had claimed in 1923 that 'the increased taxation on beer has proved the greatest agency of temperance reform that has ever been seen in this country'[113] and continued to support the heavier taxation of drinking on this basis.[114] Recognizing their vulnerability on this point, anti-gamblers emphasized the peculiarity of gambling. Giving evidence to the 1923 Select Committee, Benson Perkins had maintained that 'The purchase of drink is, as an economic transaction, permissible, it is the purchase of a commodity...But a bet...is not the purchase of a commodity; it is the exchange of money outside the range of economic law.[115]

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[112] 10 June 1926, HCD, vol.196, 1810-13.

[113] 16 April 1923, HCD, vol.162, col.2116. See also Mallett and George, *British Budgets*, 69, and Dixon, *From Prohibition*, 189.

[114] Snowden claimed that liquor was in a 'special category' exempted from Labour's general opposition to indirect taxation because revenue gained from a tax on liquor represented 'the appropriation by the State of the rental value of a State-conferred monopoly'. *Daily Herald,* 17 July 1928. As Chancellor, Snowden significantly raised the duty on beer in 1931.

[115] 1923SC, 322. See also appendix iv at p.582.

Gambling & Religion, the foreword to which was written by the Labour peer C. A. Cripps (Lord Parmoor),[116] insisted that while 'in the case of the beer you get some equivalent for your money, indeed, some get too much!' betting ignored 'all legitimate laws of labour and exchange'. A bet often brought you nothing in return.[117] Gambling was exceptional, as Benson Perkins said, it existed 'outside the range of economic law', and one could not therefore assume, as one did for commodities, that taxation would reduce consumption. It might shorten the odds offered to betters, but since the latter were not rational economic actors this would not necessarily reduce betting.[118] Snowden conceded, in practice, that taxation might reduce betting at the margins, but he argued that any decrease would more than be cancelled out by an increase in betting stimulated by new facilities. The notion of state sanction was critical here: bookmaking, by becoming a respectable profession, would attract new entrants and greater supply would then stimulate further demand.[119] 'The result', predicted the Protestant socialist trade unionist and strong anti-libertarian, C. H. Ammon, 'will be to increase betting among poor people in a very much worse form than is now the case'.[120]

The idea that taxation could increase, rather than decrease, consumption of an article appeared counter-intuitive.[121] Labour did not pursue this aspect of the case when demanding the betting tax's abolition during the 1928 budget debates. Moving repeal, James Brown, twice Lord High Commissioner of the Church of Scotland, emphasized that the tax was contrary to the values of 'the British Empire'. He had previously described betting in more

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[116] The father of Stafford Cripps, Lord Parmoor was a defector from the Conservative Party and a High Anglican. Like many Liberal defectors, he was attracted by Labour's internationalism.
[117] J. Glass, *Gambling and Religion* (London, 1924), 73.
[118] For the perception of irrationality in this context see the Liberal MP John Simon's speech: 10 June 1926, HCD, vol.196, cols.1739-44.
[119] Snowden repeated these arguments during the Tote debates. See section 3, below.
[120] 14 June 1926, HCD, vol.196, col.2000. Ammon was 'undogmatic in his advocacy of temperance and even stood drinks for others' according to a biographer. A. Clinton, 'Ammon, Charles George (1873-1960)', DNB, [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/47321, accessed 16 Feb 2006]. But he was a strong opponent of homosexual rights among other things. My thanks to Ross McKibbin for this information.
[121] Though J. M. Keynes appeared to endorse it in his evidence to the 1932-3 Royal Commission on Lotteries and Betting. 1933RC. Minutes of Evidence. 20th day, 15 Dec 1932, at para.7846-50.

socialist terms as 'paralysing' in its promotion of 'something for nothing'.[122] Another Scot, Thomas Johnston, seconded the motion. A parliamentary observer described him as possessing 'an orderly, logical type of mind' a 'strong Puritan sense' and 'mental severity'.[123] Johnston was a secular socialist but Protestantism may have influenced him culturally.[124] He condemned the 'ruin, degradation and misery to millions of our people' caused by gambling. It was as bad as prostitution. The 'State should take every possible step it can to extirpate this business of something for nothing, this business of robbery, cheatery, Sabini gangs [and] racecourse gangs'.[125]

Labour's persistent opposition to the betting tax brought it the support of the bookmakers during several successful by-election campaigns.[126] The Party was even offered 5000 cars for use during the General Election campaign of 1929. It turned down the offer[127] and shrugged off Conservative slurs that it was in cahoots with the bookmakers.[128] 'I have spoken against betting and gambling', reaffirmed MacDonald. 'We fought the betting tax at all its stages, and the Labour Party's position on this matter has always been perfectly clear'.[129] Snowden pledged that he would proceed with neither the licensing system nor the proposals to tax bookmakers' telephones and totalisator bets.[130] The second Labour Government fulfilled

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[122] 27 June 1928, HCD, vol.219, col.644. 10 June 1926, HCD, vol.196, col.1785-6. For Brown see A. Gammie, *The Life Story of James Brown MP* (London, 1931), 43, 101.

[123] Johnston, *A Hundred Commoners*, 156-8. See also the *Christian Weekly's* report on the debate. It described how 'the old issue of morals was raised in the most pointed manner by Labour MPs, all of whom have the outlook of a Puritan'. *Christian Weekly* 5 July 1928.

[124] On this point see G. Walker, *Thomas Johnston* (Manchester, 1988), 15. Johnston had actually attacked Brown's appointment as Lord High Commissioner of the Church of Scotland in 1924. He did not think socialists should be involved in such state flummery. Brown reacted by describing Johnston, privately, as 'a dirty beggar'. R. Galbraith, *Without quarter: a biography of Tom Johnston, 'the uncrowned king of Scotland'* (Edinburgh, 1995), 95. Quoted in R. D. Kernohan, 'Brown, James (1862-1939), *DNB* [http://www.oxforddnb.comview/articles/48835, accessed 16 Feb 2006].

[125] 27 June 1928, HCD, vol.219, col.653. The Sabini gang were Italian immigrants who operated protection rackets in and around racecourses. The bookmaker was their main victim. Chinn, *Better Betting with a Decent Feller*, 201-7. For turf violence during the 1920s and 1930s see also W. Vamplew, *The Turf: a social and economic history of horse racing* (London, 1976), 141-2.

[126] See Hood, *The limits of administration*, 179.

[127] *Minutes of the Labour Party National Executive Committee* (hereafter *NEC minutes*), Feb 1929.

[128] See, for example, the comments of the Conservative Attorney General Sir Thomas Inskip. *The Times*, 18, 26 Feb 1929.

[129] *The Times*, 25 Feb 1929. Labour listed the betting tax under 'Things to Remember about the Tory Government's period of Office'. LPLF. 'Labour Party Pamphlets 1925-29', 6.

[130] 22 April 1929, HCD, vol.227, cols.659-64.

these undertakings.[131] The Conservative MP Walter Elliot asked Chancellor Snowden why, when 'the Lord Privy Seal is struggling with adversity and seeking where he can to raise revenue...in order to employ people in productive work...we should part with a sum which would meet the annual expenditure on a loan that would employ no fewer than 16 000 people?'[132] The answer was a familiar one. The betting tax had 'outraged the moral sense of a large section of the community.' The state should not be associated with the 'great evil' of gambling.[133]

3. The Tote Bill and Racecourse Betting Act

The incoming Labour administration's commitment to repeal the betting tax was not matched by a commitment to abolish the Tote.[134] Neither did subsequent revelations about the Racecourse Betting Control Board's role in encouraging off-course betting, a role strictly at odds with Parliament's intentions, precipitate a reevaluation on Labour's part.[135] This had something to do with the division of departmental responsibilities: while the betting tax was the Treasury's province, the Tote was a matter for the Home Office, which had quickly come to appreciate the regulatory function performed by the RBCB,[136] and which was led by J. R. Clynes, a man who, though critical of gambling in some contexts,[137] lacked Snowden's millenarian hostility. But the government's failure to act against the Tote, also reflected, if in an imprecise way, differences that had been apparent during Labour's time in opposition:

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[131] 3 July 1929, HCD, vol.229, col.89. Snowden had to wait until his first budget to abolish the licence fee. 14 April 1930, HCD, vol.237, col.2671.
[132] 27 May 1930, HCD, vol.239, col.1194. The licence fee had raised £280 000 in the financial year 1929-30. Hood, 'The Development of Betting Taxes in Britain', 200. For further Conservative criticism along these lines see 27 May 1930, HCD, vol.240, cols.1168-1224.
[133] 27 May 1930, HCD, vol.239, col.1171.
[134] Snowden had threatened the Tote but there was no pledge of abolition despite pleas from the Prohibitionist MP Edwin Scrymegeour. 22 April 1929, HCD, vol.227, cols.662, 666-9. The Racecourse Betting Control Board met for the first time on 7 Sept 1928. But the totalisator was first used on 2 July 1929 at Newmarket and Carlisle racecourses. Munting, *An economic and social history of gambling*, 117.
[135] The RBCB had commissioned agents, in the form of a company called the Guardian Pari-Mutuel Company Ltd., to seek off-course credit bets. HCD: 3 April 1930, vol.237, cols.1440-1. 10 April 1930, vol.237, cols.2343-4. 7 May 1930, vol.238, cols.1024-6. Munting has argued that this kind of Tote betting was prohibited until 1931: *An economic and social history of gambling*, 118. But he appears to have described the legal rather than the actual position. See also 1933 RC, para.422-39, at p.123-7.
[136] Miers, *Regulating Commercial Gambling*, 315.
[137] For Clynes attitude to gambling see below, pp.68, 77-82.

simply put, while the betting tax was opposed almost entirely on anti-gambling grounds, the Party's opposition to the Tote Bill also embraced imperatives of politics and class.

The Conservative backbencher Sir Ralph Glyn introduced the Tote Bill in March 1928: he proposed the licensing of the mechanical bookmaker under the auspices of the Jockey Club and National Hunt Committee. These institutions had been lobbying heavily[138] and envisaged the mechanical bookmaker 'raising money for racing through deductions on pool bets placed in special race-course facilities'.[139] The imposition of the betting tax served only to encourage them. In the words of the Turf's leading historian: 'if the government now saw fit to dip its bucket into the ever-flowing stream of gambling, why should not racing, the very basis of gambling, do the same?[140] Furthermore, the government was sympathetic. In the light of its difficulties with the betting tax, Churchill confessed candidly his hope that revenue from licensed totalisators would enable him to discard the former.[141] Initially, however, the government did no more than ensure parliamentary time for discussion of the Bill.[142]

The Tote Bill gained a second reading by a narrow margin (149 votes to 135).[143] It came even closer to being committed to a Committee of the Whole House, a prospect deadly to any Bill's prospects of enactment, and a fate avoided only by 128 votes to 126.[144] Labour's was 'the most unanimous voice' raised in opposition to the Tote Bill.[145] Despite having a free vote on what was still, at this stage, a Private Members' Bill,[146] more than seventy Labour MPs voted against it. Only three supported the Bill. Two were London compositors: C. W.

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[138] For details of this lobbying see PRO file HO45/12940.
[139] R. Munting, 'The Revival of Lotteries in Britain: Some International Comparisons of Public Policy', *History*, 83 (1998), 628-45, 636.
[140] Vamplew, *The Turf*, 225. See also Lord Hamilton of Dalzell, 'The Tote', in H. G. C. L. Harewood and P. Rickets (eds), *Flat Racing* (London, 1940), 379.
[141] *Daily Herald*, 17 March 1928. See also: 18 July 1928, HCD, vol.220, col. 420-2. Dixon, *From Prohibition*, 285.
[142] See *Manchester Guardian*, 28 Nov 1927.
[143] 16 March 1928, HCD, vol.214, cols.2356-62.
[144] *The Times*, 19 March. The Labour MP Thomas Groves had moved this motion.
[145] *Christian Weekly*, 22 March 1928.
[146] *Daily Herald*, 17 March 1928.

Bowerman (one of two Labour MPs to have backed the licensing of betting shops in April 1926),[147] and Thomas Naylor, Chair of the London Labour Party, a SDFer and near syndicalist.[148] The third Labour dissentient was the ex-Liberal Josiah Wedgwood.[149]

Labour's opposition was impressive, and not just because its MPs had a free vote. At this stage, even organs known to be hostile to gambling were keeping an open mind about the Bill in the hope of securing a Tote Monopoly. The *Manchester Guardian* was one;[150] another was the *Christian Weekly* which described bookmakers as 'a disreputable fraternity': 'Ready money betting on racecourses is legal and the question is not sanctioning of something now illegal, but regulation of something which already has state sanction. Since the State imposed a tax on betting, a situation has been created where facts have to be faced as they are'.[151] The French magazine *Le Jockey* suggested that a Tote Monopoly would benefit the Labour party's supporters above all else.

> Qui est-ce qui constitue le poison veritable du turf anglais? Ce n'est pas les gros donneur, 'le leviathan', qui fait des differences enormes avec les 'parieurs chers' mais bien le 'penciller' du silver ring, qui a pour clientele tours les 'electeurs du Labour Party, et qui file avec la recette quand le favori a gagne', le 'welsher' classique qui maintient le deshonneur antique de la profession, et vole le brave ouvrier anglais (auquel il n'est pas question d'enlever son instinct et son gout de parier).[152]

A Tote Monopoly was never likely, though, and even if it had been, it is not evident that this would have softened Labour's attitude to the Bill. Labour's opposition to the Tote was not just a product of anti-gambling (that is, of objections to further state recognition of betting as

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[147] See above, p.33

[148] Naylor had been the SDF candidate Bowerman narrowly defeated for the Compositor's parliamentary nomination in Deptford in 1903. See p.33, fn.57, above.

[149] Wedgwood's autobiography suggests that his Puritanism did not extend to betting. *Memoirs of a Fighting Life* (London, 1940), 204, 239.

[150] 16 March 1928, HCD, vol.214 col.2347. *Manchester Guardian*, 29 Oct 1927.

[151] *Christian Weekly*, 22 March 1928. Although also see the article a week earlier, where the Tote Bill was described as the 'repeal of an important section of the law which limits gaming and wagering...a dangerous precedent, and might logically lead to State Lotteries'. *Christian Weekly,* 15 March 1928.

[152] 'What is the genuine poison of the English turf? It's not the big bookmakers, 'the Leviathan' who set the odds with expensive punters, but it is the 'bookie' of the 'silver ring' whose clientele are all Labour Party voters. He sneaks away with the takings when the favourite has won. That classical 'welsher' maintains the ancient dishonour of the profession and robs the decent English workman (whose instinct and keenness on betting cannot be doubted)'. *Le Jockey* (undated) in file HO45/12940/210025/43. My thanks to Samia Achi for help with this translation.

well as opposition to increased facilities). It also embraced politics - the government was in trouble over the betting tax and Labour was determined to maintain the pressure – and class. The Home Secretary Joynson-Hicks told the King that

> Labour are definitely and desperately obstructing this Bill: not because they object to totes but to the domination of the Jockey Club. They see it as the battle of the bookmakers against the capitalists. This is nonsense, but the bookmaker is a very difficult person, politically speaking, to dislodge. He has enormous influence, and it is being used, relentlessly, against this Bill.[153]

The Home Secretary probably exaggerated the bookmaker's overall influence: he certainly underestimated the extent to which Labour's opposition to the Tote was driven by anti-gambling. One of the Turf's leading figures more accurately described opposition to the Bill as 'a formidable triple alliance, composed of those who were opposed to it on moral grounds as providing fresh facilities for betting, of those who hoped its rejection would increase the embarrassment in which the Betting Duty had involved the Government, and of those who were sympathetic to the bookmaker'.[154] The Labour Party embodied this triple alliance.

W. T. Kelly, Catholic, former Workers' Union official and Labour MP for Rochdale, moved opposition to the Bill's second reading. He described the Tote Bill as a waste of parliamentary time, criticized the bequeathing of a monopoly to the Jockey Club, and claimed that the totalisator 'was calculated to increase betting'. Whether anti-gambling moved him is difficult to say.[155] His colleague Arthur Hayday, MP for Nottingham East, seconded opposition to the Bill. Hayday, an official of the National Union of General and Municipal Workers (GMW) and a member of the TUC General Council from 1922-36 'saw himself as representing the trade union interest within the PLP'. He acted as the parliamentary voice of

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[153] HO45/12940/2310025/65. May 1928. Quoted in Miers, *Regulating Commercial Gambling,* 315. For an example of the bookmakers' campaign literature see HO45/129440. Flyer from the Betting Duty Reform Association, 15 March 1929: 'If the totalisator is permitted it is then but a short step to State Lotteries, Premium Bonds, Casinos, and the whole gamut of gambling media...the country [would be] transformed into a gambling hell'.

[154] Lord Hamilton of Dalzell, 'The Tote', 380.

[155] 16 March 1928, HCD, vol.214, col.2289-94. *The Times*, 17 March 1928.

the TUC during the financial crisis of 1930-1.[156] His background lay in the aggressively proletarian political culture of West Ham: specifically within the SDF and the National Union of Gasworkers and General Labourers. The politics of this union in West Ham were well known for 'a stress on the needs of muscular male workers, a distaste for middle-class intellectuals, a suspicion of all things foreign'.[157] So too, of course were the politics of the SDF.

The *Methodist Times* accused Hayday of supporting brewing interests[158] and his attitude to gambling appeared similarly libertarian. Betting was 'inherent in the British race'. Furthermore, there was 'sometimes a virtue in being able to back your own opinion'. He also identified with the 'battle of wits' between the 'small backer' and the bookie. His objection to the Tote Bill was a class one: the 'sport of kings' and 'millionaire racehorse owners' wished to 'wipe out competition' from the bookmakers, 'mostly honourable men'. He asserted his 'right to protect the living of the bookmaker [just] as hon. Members opposite have to protect the gambler in stocks and shares'. He also deplored the Tote as an encouragement to female betting: the masculine culture of betting with bookmakers having allegedly deterred women from betting.[159] The deployment of this gendered argument probably reflected Hayday's political background,[160] as well as the dominant discourses of parliament and society.

Hayday's political style was more robust than that even of Labour's most celebrated Tory Socialist, J. H. Thomas.[161] Thomas emphasized that Labour had an 'open mind' regarding

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[156] D. Howell, 'Hayday, Arthur (1869-1956)', *DNB* [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article46441, accessed 16 Feb 2006].
[157] Howell, *MacDonald's Party,* 159. For more on Hayday, ibid, 40-1, 158.
[158] 23 Oct 1924, cited in Catterall, 'The Free Churches and the Labour Party in England and Wales 1918-1939', 364.
[159] HCD: 16 March 1928, vol.214, cols.2308-13. 18 July 1928, vol.220, cols.493-503 & col.1770. 19 July 1928, vol.220, col.694-6.
[160] The GMW's masculine politics had made it, for example, one of the fiercest opponents of Family Allowances during the 1920s. Howell, *MacDonald's Party*, 168.
[161] For Thomas's Tory Socialism see Pugh, 'The Rise of Labour and the Political Culture of Conservatism, 1890-1945', 519. D. Howell, "'I loved my Union and my Country': Jimmy Thomas and the Politics of Railway Trade Unionism", *Twentieth Century British History*, 6 (1995), 145-73. P. Williamson, 'Thomas, James Henry (1874-1949)', *DNB* [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36477, accessed 16 Feb 2006].

the Tote Bill.[162] And, speaking personally, he did not think 'it...possible to deal by Act of Parliament with the morals of the people'.[163] Furthermore, his autobiography recalled regretfully how it was

> so difficult to break down prejudices...there is a high standard of honour existing on the turf...I certainly do not take any narrow or prejudiced view about even gambling...nothing in my opinion savours more of hypocrisy than that of folk who will denounce horse-racing and yet have a flutter, themselves, on the Stock Exchange. There is no moral difference between either transaction.[164]

But Thomas added 'that it is not the duty of the State to encourage betting'[165] and he actually voted against the Tote Bill on both readings. It was class legislation insofar as it favoured the Jockey Club over the bookmaker.[166]

Having gained a second reading the Bill went upstairs to Standing Committee. Eleven meetings took place between 9 May and 2 July.[167] Labour's representation on the Committee included both supporters of the bookmaker and committed anti-gamblers, as well as MPs more difficult to locate. While the Labour members united to obstruct the Bill's progress, amendments moved by Hayday and others keen to protect the bookmaker's position exposed the existence of divisions. Joseph Compton of the National Union of Vehicle Builders (NUVB) and the steelworkers' Robert Dennison (Birmingham's first elected Labour MP) backed Hayday. Both were members of Labour's NEC during the 1920s.[168] But the Protestant socialists, anti-gamblers, and drink prohibitionists, David Grenfell,[169] James Barr,[170] Rhys Davies,[171] and James Hudson[172] opposed concessions to the bookmaker.

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[162] 16 March 1928, HCD, vol.214, cols.2305-6.
[163] 18 July 1928, HCD, vol.220, cols.498-500.
[164] J. H. Thomas, *My Story* (London, 1937), 290. For one known to dabble in the Stock Market this was a prudent approach. Howell, 'I loved my Union', 145. Dalton, *Call Back Yesterday*, 156, entry for 29 Sept 1931. For a vivid description of Thomas's love of gambling and how it precipitated his fall in 1936 see T. Williams, *Digging for Britain: the autobiography of Lord Williams of Barnburgh* (London, 1965), 102-3.
[165] Thomas, *My Story*, 290.
[166] 18 July 1928, HCD, vol.220, cols.498-500. Also, *Daily Herald,* 19 July 1928.
[167] 1928STC.
[168] Howell, *MacDonald's Party*, 60. Compton emerges in the next chapter as a strong opponent of gambling. His backing for the bookmaker appears to be an example of class politics intersecting with opposition to the Tote on anti-gambling grounds.
[169] Section one of this chapter discussed Grenfell's views.
[170] Barr emerged briefly in section two of this chapter. I discuss him further at the end of this section.

After four meetings, the Committee had not progressed past line one of the Bill.[173] The House now adjourned and was due to rise for the summer in late July: it appeared likely, according to the *Daily Herald* 'almost...a certainty', that the Bill would run out of time. Dennison told the paper, after the Committee's fourth session, that the Bill's promoters are 'not showing much enthusiasm...only at the last minute did they succeed in securing a quorum'.[174]

Labour's optimism was to prove misplaced. Supporters of the totalisator regrouped and in conjunction with sympathetic elements within the government amended the Bill substantially. Out went plans for a turf-dominated supervisory authority and in came provision for the creation of a state-managed Racecourse Betting Control Board (RBCB). This was a pivotal moment. It satisfied the Government, which believed it constitutionally improper to hand over control of the totalisator to the Jockey Club.[175] However, it outraged the Labour Party. Labour also opposed private management of the race track totalisators, but it did not see the creation of the RBCB as meeting these concerns: rather, the establishment of a statutory authority represented a giant step down the path of administrative regulation.[176] This was an accurate estimation: notwithstanding the current government's desire to privatize it, the RBCB (popularly known as the Tote Board), has proved to be 'an important instance of the nationalization of betting opportunities,'[177] conferring further social legitimacy on

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[171] MP for Westhoughton in Lancashire, Davies had been a NUDAW official before entering parliament. He was a fierce anti-gambler but declared that if forced to choose he preferred the tote to the bookie. 6 July 1928, HCD, vol.218, cols.1753-56. See also *New Leader*, 3 Aug 1928.

[172] Hudson was a stalwart of the Prohibition movement. Imbibing Labour MPs sang ironically about making 'Jimmy Hudson the keeper of the Commons bar'. H. Dalton, *High Tide and After. Memoirs, 1945-60* (London, 1962).

[173] *The Daily Herald* reported on the Committee's aborted first meeting on 7 May. Officials of the Jockey Club and National Hunt Committee were in attendance along with a shorthand typist. 'Some of the Labour members, regarding this as an attempt to dictate, left'. *Daily Herald*, 8 May 1928.

[174] *Daily Herald*, 23 July 1928.

[175] The Cabinet insisted not just on a statutory authority but also on an in-built Government majority on the RBCB, the latter against Home Office advice. Miers, *Regulating Commercial Gambling,* 315.

[176] The opportunism involved in the adoption of this position is discussed over the page.

[177] Dixon, *From Prohibition*, 335. Munting, 'Revival of Lotteries in Britain: Some International Comparisons of Public Policy', 636.

gambling.[178] Labour's claim to have taken took no official line on the Tote Bill had always been a fiction of sorts; it now unravelled rapidly.

To have any chance of gaining a third reading before the parliamentary recess the Tote Bill, now renamed the Racecourse Betting Bill, had to complete its Committee Stage by the beginning of July. The Standing Committee reconvened in early June. The more committed Labour members continued their attempts at obstruction. Hayday accused Lord Hamilton of Dalziel (a prominent member of the Jockey Club) of trying to intimidate Committee members while Rhys Davies and James Hudson complained to the Speaker of the House about the Committee Chair's conduct of business.[179] Yet the Bill's opponents lacked the numbers to seriously impede its progress. *The Times* reported that 'Friday [6 July] is the last day for consideration of Private Members' Bills'. The Tote Bill's 'supporters hope it will complete its Committee stage tonight [Monday, 2 July] and in that case as the bill which has made most progress it will be entitled to first place [on the order paper]'. On the other hand, its 'opponents are equally determined to prevent its passage by every possible means and a lively sitting is expected'.[180] In the event, proceedings were 'comparatively tame'. The meeting finished before 11.30pm: supporters of the Bill enjoyed a final majority of 25 to 8.[181]

This was in some ways the calm before the storm. The previous day, Labour's Parliamentary Executive had recommended the Party oppose any further stages of the Racecourse Betting Bill.[182] The PLP agreed. The Party leader took centre-stage. MacDonald emphasized that every Labour MP who voted on second reading had voted against the Bill on a free vote. 'Since then very material additions had been made to the Bill...the Party had consistently opposed the betting tax and this Bill was an almost inevitable consequence. Moreover the tactics which had been pursued by the promoters to push the Bill through Committee made

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[178] Miers, *Regulating Commercial Gambling*, 306.
[179] *Daily Herald*, 13, 20, 30 June 1928.
[180] *The Times*, 2 July 1928.
[181] *Daily Herald*, 3 July 1928.
[182] *Parliamentary Executive minutes*, 2 July 1928. Present were MacDonald, Clynes, Kennedy, Henderson, Johnston, Dalton, Shaw, Lansbury, Arnold and De La Warr.

some protest absolutely necessary'.[183] The 'whole weight of the PLP' was to be set against the Bill reported the *Daily Herald*. The meeting had been 'unanimous' in its opposition. The paper added that 'many MPs expressed the view yesterday that its chances of becoming law are remote'. Only the 'most dramatic closuring' would enable completion of the Bill's final stages by Friday. It was 'doubtful' whether the government would be willing to find more time for the Bill.[184] *The Times* was unsurprised by Labour's attitude. It would 'prolong its opposition... to the bitter end'. However, it thought the party's position 'transparently dishonest in that it ignores or shirks every argument in support of the measure'. The paper implied that the Labour Party was guilty of political opportunism.[185]

Labour had certainly exploited the latitude afforded by opposition: having damned the Bill for handing control of the tote to private interests, it now damned the Government for restoring public sovereignty. It was also true that the Party leadership wished to exploit the betting tax issue and perceived the Tote Bill as threatening this ambition. Leaflets distributed by supporters of the Tote Bill insisted that Labour was opposing the tote because it believed repeal of the betting tax 'one of their best planks at the next election'.[186] The 'Parl[iamentary] Exec[utive] confronts problem of what a Lab[our] Govt should put in its first King's Speech and do in its first session', recorded Dalton. 'Snowden, Webb, Shaw and Graham to draft a plan...Snowden thinks the repeal of the Betting Tax would be very popular!'[187]

However, this was a peculiar kind of populism. Snowden's target audience was those elements of the electorate opposed to gambling, rather than those who bet. Central to his political identity was the insistence that 'the moral line is the line of success in the long run'. 'If the Labour party wants to gain the support of the best elements in the electorate it will

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[183] *PLP minutes,* 3 July 1928.
[184] *Daily Herald*, 4 July 1928.
[185] *The Times*, 4 & 6 July 1928.
[186] *Daily Herald*, 6 July 1928.
[187] Dalton, *Call Back Yesterday*, 182. For details of this sub-committee see Howell, *MacDonald's Party*, 73.

have to show that it will stand by moral principles regardless of electoral consequences'.[188] The cornerstone of Labour's position remained anti-gambling, bolstered by antipathy to the blue bloods of the Jockey Club and, among a minority, sympathy for the bookmaker.

MacDonald attempted to have the Bill thrown out on Report. His argument was both procedural and ideological. Provision for the RBCB had 'materially' altered the Bill since second reading. A state-managed Tote Board represented a fundamental departure in the state's existing attitude to gambling: changes of such significance could not be smuggled into a Bill during the Committee stage.[189] The Speaker demurred. Labour, displaying 'a certain ingenuity in obstruction which, at least, amused even if it did not adorn the House',[190] tried other wrecking tactics. Rhys Davies attempted to kill the Bill by having it committed to a Select Committee.[191] The trade unionists Joseph Tinker and Compton also moved tactical amendments. Tinker called for the restoration of Jockey Club control, while Compton moved the tote's extension to dog tracks.[192] Since Compton was one of Labour's strongest opponents of dog racing this was especially destructive.[193] The support he drew from the libertarian, class-conscious SDFer Fred Montague[194] illuminated the way in which Labour MPs with different perspectives on gambling found means to unite against the Tote Bill. Montague saw Compton's amendment as an opportunity to attack the elitism of horse racing. He complained that the Bill's purpose

> was to make it easier and nice and delightful for certain polite and well-behaved and self-respecting people to attend racecourses and indulge in betting...if they believe that the introduction of the tote is going to do so much good on racecourses, they should not exclude from the benefits of this machine those very courses where the great masses of the people resort...one kind of racing is suspiciously co-existent with the conveniences and habits of one particular class of the community.[195]

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[188] *The Observer*, 20 Aug 1922. Snowden was writing in connection with Drink Local Option.
[189] 6 July 1928, HCD, vol.219, cols.1743-9.
[190] *The Times*, 7 July 1928.
[191] Ibid, cols.1753-56.
[192] *The Times*, 7 July 1928.
[193] See below, pp.96-7.
[194] Of course, as noted in the previous section, Montague himself had difficulties accepting gambling in principle. But he was less hostile to working-class betting than many Labour MPs. For more on the complexities of Montague's position see p.100, below.
[195] 6 July 1928, HCD, vol.219, col.1815.

Around ninety Labour MPs were present during the debate. This was a sizeable bloc, but well short of the PLP's full strength of 160 MPs. It represented an increase of just twenty votes since second reading. While the *Daily Herald* thought the Commons unusually full for a Friday evening[196] the *Christian Weekly's* perspective was different. Having 'declared war upon' the Tote Bill, the Labour Party did 'not turn up in large enough numbers' to defeat it. Closure of the debate was moved by 146 votes to 113, leaving open the possibility of the Bill returning to the Commons.[197] The *Daily Herald*'s headline 'Tote Bill Defeat' was therefore misleading.[198]

One hundred and twenty MPs from all parties subsequently signed a memorial demanding that the Prime Minister refuse the Bill further time.[199] Labour even threatened to prevent Prorogation if the Bill returned.[200] The government was unmoved. It quickly agreed to assume responsibility for the Bill and was willing to see Parliament sit until the August Bank Holiday if this was necessary to get the Bill through. The House was supposed to rise on 28 July and *The Times* reported that Labour MPs were keenest to return to their constituencies.[201] The Prime Minister told the Commons that the creation of the Tote would enable the government to reduce the betting tax and proceed with the licensing of bookmakers for the first time.[202]

The government's formal support for the Tote Bill altered the political context. It ensured the Bill's passage[203] and at the same time made the issue an officially partisan one. The *Daily Herald* cautioned that "Tory Head Office will proceed forthwith to prepare electioneering literature representing the Labour Party as the political champion of the

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[196] *Daily Herald*, 7 July 1928.
[197] *Christian Weekly* 12 July 1928.
[198] *Daily Herald*, 7 July 1928.
[199] Ibid.
[200] *Parliamentary Committee minutes*, 9 July 1928 'Government to be notified that if further time given to Racecourse Betting Bill it will have a serious effect upon the duration of the session.'
[201] *The Times*, 12 July 1928.
[202] 12 July 1928, HCD, vol.219 cols.2467-8.
[203] It subsequently gained a third reading by the comfortable margin of 218 votes to 122. *Daily Herald*, 20 July 1928.

racecourse 'welsher', by contrast with the pure-minded Tories who seek (in Baldwin's words) 'to cleanse the racecourse'".[204] The paper's parliamentary correspondent offered the opinion of a 'shrewd Tory representative of an industrial constituency [who] confessed to me that he is very uneasy about the reaction of women electors to the Bill'.[205] Labour subsequently addressed female electors directly: the Tote Bill was 'opposed by every anti-gambling association in the country, [and] fought strenuously by Labour MPs'. Furthermore, an 'amendment to exclude altogether young persons under 17 from enclosed places on racecourses for the purposes of betting was moved by Labour and defeated by the Tories'.[206]

A *Daily Herald* editorial insisted that the Labour Party's approach to the Tote Bill was, contrary to Conservative claims, 'actuated, not by any desire to protect the interests of the bookmakers, but by its determination not to support a measure which carries yet further State recognition of betting, and which would associate the Government with a statutory body to run totes, which are, in effect, State betting machines'.[207] A subsequent attack from the Home Secretary was also parried. Joynson-Hicks had criticized the 'unctuous hypocrisy' of the Labour Party. MP after MP had risen to oppose the Tote Bill 'with a New Testament on his lap and the *Daily Herald* in his pocket'. The paper defended itself and by extension the Labour Party: there was no incompatibility between carrying racing news and opposing a 'Deliberate plan for State encouragement of betting'.[208] It insisted that Labour had been provoked into opposing the Bill by the creation of the RBCB.[209] This was a claim repeated by the Party's leadership in the Lords.[210] It was also central to Snowden's case. He claimed that the establishment of the RBCB made the Home Secretary the nation's 'chief bookie'.[211]

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[204] *Daily Herald*, 13 July 1928.
[205] *Daily Herald*, 16 July 1928.
[206] LPLF. *Women and the General Election*, in 'Labour Party Pamphlets 1925-29', 19.
[207] *Daily Herald*, 17 July 1928.
[208] *Daily Herald*, 23 July 1928.
[209] *Daily Herald*, 12 July 1928.
[210] See Earl Russell's speech moving rejection of the Bill: 25 July 1928, HLD, vol.220, col.1314-18.
[211] 18 July 1928, HCD, vol.220, col.721-31.

An overwhelming emphasis on the RBCB had obvious strategic advantages. It enabled Labour to avoid, or at least, deflect, more difficult questions about its attitude to betting. The Party could oppose the Racecourse Betting Bill without having to explicitly defend the Street Betting Act. Snowden's apparent willingness to consider the repeal of the latter might be viewed from this tactical perspective. 'If any form of betting is to be made legal [it should be] cash betting' he volunteered. 'Credit betting was the cause of 'big[ger] crime'.[212] But his departure from the historical position of the Party also reflected growing restlessness inside and outside the parliamentary party.

The *Daily Herald's* position demands consideration. While it shared the political leadership's objections of principle to gambling there were clearly stylistic differences. The paper was much more willing to accept the reality of working-class betting than the PLP. Not only did the *Daily Herald* report large betting wins of working men without reproach[213] but an editorial on the occasion of the 1928 Derby was effusive: 'Moralists may condemn, economists talk of waste, enthusiasts for world reformation groan – but among the flutterers are moralists, economists and enthusiasts! Derby day is a holiday in more ways than one'.[214] The paper's opposition to the Tote Bill was increasingly combined with complaints about the 'inconsistency' of the off-course cash betting laws. 'The whole question of betting and its relation to the state is one that demands the most careful consideration' it warned.[215] Given that the *Daily Herald* was by this stage controlled largely by the trade unions,[216] and given also the need for the paper to somewhat reflect the views of its readers, its greater emphasis on the class bias of the betting laws was perhaps to be expected.

But there were also signs of impatience in the parliamentary party. Hayday's continuing attempts to obstruct the Bill's progress were met by shouts of 'divide' from some Labour

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[212] Ibid.
[213] See for example, front-page story, *Daily Herald*, 29 March 1926.
[214] *Daily Herald*, 5 June 1928. Although class could cut both ways in relation to horse racing. See the paper's attack on the annual Royal Ascot meeting. *Daily Herald*, 20 June 1928.
[215] *Daily Herald*, July 17 1928. Also, 15 March 1928.
[216] H. Richards, *The bloody circus: the Daily Herald and the left* (London, 1997), 46-7, 105-6, 136, 183. McKibbin, *The evolution of the Labour Party,* 233.

MPs.[217] The *Daily Herald* reported that the third reading debate was poorly attended.[218] Speeches against the Tote came increasingly from the same small group of individuals (in particular, James Barr, Rhys Davies James Hudson, Morgan Jones, David Grenfell, Joseph Compton, W T Kelly, Arthur Hayday). Furthermore, when the Racecourse Betting Bill went subsequently to the Lords, Labour peers made no attempt to thwart its progress. The Party did not even bother forcing a division.[219] Catterall's claim that "not all [Labour MPs] were...convinced...that the totalisator was an 'infernal instrument'" undoubtedly has merit.[220]

Ellen Wilkinson was one Labour MP unimpressed by the Party's emphasis on the Tote Bill. She had been 'furious' at the introduction of the betting tax, calling it 'a freak tax', describing betting as 'evil' and claiming that women were especially opposed to it.[221] But by the time that the government came to substitute a licensing system for the tax on betting transactions, Wilkinson's ethical objections to the taxation of betting had disappeared.[222] Her reaction to the Tote was similarly brisk. She expressed her frustration with 'certain members of the Labour Party [who] get so agitated about [the Tote Bill]...They are determined to be carried out exhausted from long sittings rather than permit this monstrosity, to be forced on the British people'. She could not understand their zeal:

> Bookies do not seem to me a particularly admirable class of people. Individuals may be 'good husbands and fathers', but collectively they are parasites. If betting is to be allowed to exist, I should have thought that a mechanical device would, far from encouraging betting, have done away with the subtle encouragements of the bookies, and brought home to people that betting is a matter of mathematics, with the odds against them, and not as they are encouraged to think, an affair of such moment, that

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[217] 18 July 1928, HCD, vol.220 col.768.
[218] *Daily Herald*, 19 July 1928.
[219] *Daily Herald*, 26 July 1928.
[220] P. Catterall, 'The Free Churches and the Labour Party 1918-1939', 371.
[221] 26 April 1926, HCD, vol.194, col.1707. *Daily Herald*, 27 April 1926. *Lansbury's Labour Weekly*, 1 May 1926. A male *Daily Herald* reader ridiculed Wilkinson's gendered argument. From personal experience he believed women bet almost as much as men. *Daily Herald,* 30 April 1926.
[222] *New Leader,* April 19 1929. Wilkinson had appeared an unlikely moralist. She had, for example, moved the amendment on Labour's NEC accepting Henderson's resignation from the General Election Planning Committee in protest at the decision to delete any mention of drink in the manifesto. *NEC minutes*, 21 Dec 1927. See also Dalton, *Call Back Yesterday*, 172-3. Henderson 'was only *just* asked to return': McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class*, 45. (His italics).

> even the solar system can be altered by the inscrutable Fates in order to give them 'tips' or good luck.[223]

Labour MPs keen to defend the bookmaker agreed with her that the totalisator would squeeze out the bookmaker. Anti-gamblers disagreed: increased supply would stimulate further demand for betting. Both tote and bookmaker would thrive. Those opposed to gambling also lacked Wilkinson's optimism regarding the better's capacity for uncoerced enlightenment.

This was evident in Rosslyn Mitchell's contribution. A Presbyterian Glasgow lawyer and MP for Paisley, Mitchell had arrived late in parliament after a distinguished legal career. His intervention against the Revised Prayer Book in 1927 contemporaries widely considered one of the great Commons' speeches.[224] He was opposed to ritualism on grounds scriptural, emotional and intellectual. Too much of a Victorian to describe himself as a rationalist he nonetheless criticised the irrationality of Transubstantiation.[225] He approached gambling in similar fashion. 'The temperament most susceptible to [irrationalism] is that of the gambler. We are too much influenced by the Stock Exchange, the resort of gamblers. A fall in the value of shares, often caused by circumstances or activities apart altogether from the business itself, is accepted as a symptom of collapsing industry and commerce.'[226] He drew no distinction between stock exchange gambling and working-class betting. Opposing the Tote Bill he explained that wagering 'causes the mind to treat success and failure as resulting, not from one's own initiative and energy, but from the chance outcome of an event over which he [the gambler] has no control'.[227]

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[223] *New Leader*, 20 July 1928.
[224] See Johnson, *A Hundred Commoners*, 144-6.
[225] 15 December 1927, HCD, vol.211, cols.2559-2657. See also his speech during the second debate: 13 June 1928, HCD, vol.218, cols.1121-32. For more on the rationalist dimension of opposition to transubstantiation see K. R. Sands, 'The Doctrine of Transubstantiation and the English Protestant Dispossession of Demons', *History*, 85 (2000), 446-62, 455, 458.
[226] R. Mitchell *Impressions* (London, 1932), 237-8.
[227] 20 July 1928, HCD, vol.220, col.752-7. See also Mitchell's piece in *The Listener*, 13 (12 February 1937). Chinn quotes this piece but fails to identity Mitchell either as a Labour politician or indeed as a man. *Better Betting with a Decent Feller*, 210.

Mitchell was not a representative figure in the Labour Party. *Christian Weekly* related how, a week before the introduction of the Tote Bill, he was addressing the Commons on another matter

> when Tom Kennedy, Chief Whip, interjected the words 'lawyers fees'. Immediately Mitchell flushed with anger and in biting tones told him that he hoped that if he again referred to his profession he would do so outside and not inside the House...The incident shows how little the Scottish Labour members have forgiven Mitchell's independence.[228]

His Protestantism was also distinctive. Mitchell was of 'more liberal faith' than the 'bulk of the Presbyterian [Labour] contingent.' He did not adopt the 'atonement centred outlook of evangelical religion'. He advocated 'free thought and a non-dogmatic religion of selflessness [and] humaneness'.[229]

James Barr was the colleague whom he appeared most to resemble. Both were West of Scotland Presbyterians who had excelled at Glasgow University and found a home in the ILP. Barr was equally hostile to the Revised Prayer Book,[230] and both were drink prohibitionists. Uncompromising hostility to drink placed them outside the Labour party mainstream during the 1920s.[231] Uncompromising hostility to gambling did not.[232] Barr's ideological critique of gambling was one with which socialists of all stripes could sympathize. 'It is the surrender of reason in the distribution of property. It is callous selfishness undisguised. It is the enemy of intelligent and disinterested citizenship. It is a gain without direct labour...in the Labour commonwealth we have no room for non-producers and parasites on society.[233] Principle,

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[228] *Christian Weekly*, 8 March 1928.
[229] G. J. Mayhew, 'The Ethical and Religious Foundations of Socialist Politics in Britain. The First Generation and their Ideals 1884-1931' (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of York, 1980), 561.
[230] For Barr's attack on the Prayer Book: 13 June 1928, HCD, vol.218, cols.1270-6. The PLP opposed the Revised Prayer Book by more than two to one. According to Catterall, however, the issue revealed Labour to be a Protestant party 'to a strictly limited extent'. 'The Free Churches and the Labour Party', 354-6.
[231] The views held by men like Barr and Mitchell on 'moral' issues could command respect as well as ghettoize. Barr, for example chaired the PLP-NEC Joint Committee on Party Discipline created in 1931. Howell, *MacDonald's Party*, 26, 47-8.
[232] As late as the 1940s, Barr continued to call for the repression of cash betting off-course. J. Barr, *Lang Syne; memoirs* (Glasgow, 1949), 224.
[233] 10 June 1926, HCD, vol.196, cols.1810-13. See also: 16 March 1928, HCD, vol.214, col.2326-30.

more so than politics or class, accounted for the Labour Party's unity in opposing the Tote Bill and Racecourse Betting Act.

4. The Trade Unions and Betting

The parliamentary party's opposition to the administrative regulation of betting on horses during the 1920s reflected not just the political leadership's view: in a real, if less precise way, it reflected wider Labour sentiment. Gambling was viewed across the labour movement as antithetical to proportionate reward and social solidarity. This was evident in the behaviour of rank and file MPs: even on those occasions when the issue was designated as one of conscience only a handful of Labour MPs were prepared to support reform. Nor was it just a question of low turnout: on these occasions an absolute majority of Labour MPs opposed steps towards the regularization of betting.[234]

It was also evident in the attitude of the trade unions. They acquiesced in an approach to betting predicated on defending the 'blatantly [class] discriminatory' Street Betting Act.[235] This was not just a matter of respecting the autonomy of the parliamentary party. Nor did their passivity simply indicate the marginal importance of the betting issue to an industrially orientated union movement. It also reflected the extent to which leading trade unionists shared the ethical socialism of the political leadership. The Trades Union Congress also objected to disproportionate reward and acquisitive individualism and perceived gambling to promote these values.[236] And while the trade unions were more likely than the political leadership to distinguish working-class betting from stock exchange gambling, the difficulty even the libertarian minded and class conscious had in maintaining this distinction has been a theme of this chapter.[237] Individual unions and union members could defend the right of the

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[234] See pp.32-3, 46, above.
[235] Dixon, " 'Class Law': The Street Betting Act of 1906", 103.
[236] See *TUCACR*, (1909), 174-77; (1917), 55; (1920), 208; (1928), 70. For more on this aspect of trade union thinking see their attitudes to premium bonds, chapter 2, section 1, below.
[237] See pp.38-40, above.

worker to bet;[238] equally there is evidence of opposition to all gambling.[239] It must also be remembered that a large percentage of the MPs who opposed gambling during the 1920s were themselves trade union activists and officials.

Trade union objections to gambling were not just socialist in character. Wagering on luck could also appear antithetical to collectivism in a wider sense. McKibbin's explanation of the failure of trade unionism to penetrate the Edwardian service sector is apposite. Those who laboured there inhabited an 'occupational world of *chance* and quick-wittedness [which] was in many ways absolutely opposed to collectivist politics'.[240] The account that one writer gave of Arthur Henderson's opposition to gambling is also significant in this regard:

> The greatest energies of the Trade Union movement have been devoted to this end of security – that a man's whole livelihood, his comfort, and his happiness should not be made to depend on the chance whim of his employer or the transitory conditions of the markets, but that each individual should be guaranteed permanent employment and security of tenure, so that he may be able to plan for the future.[241]

The extent to which the industrial leadership endorsed received reviews of working-class gambling also demands consideration. Culturally, some trade unions leaders during the 1920s, like Labour's political leadership, had more in common with the middle classes than their own rank and file.[242] In his presidential address to the 1928 TUC Annual Conference the veteran weaver Ben Turner specifically urged trade unionists to reject drink and gambling.[243] He emphasized in his autobiography that 'Labour stands for cleanliness of

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[238] The Post Office Engineering Union, for example protested strongly against the decision of the Postmaster General to prohibit betting by Post Office servants when off duty. *The Journal*, 11 & 21 June 1921; 7 Nov 1924. Quoted in Jones, 'The British Labour Movement and Working Class Leisure, 1918-1919', 223.

[239] See the *Railway Review*: 22 April 1927, 12. 13 May 1927, 14. 20 May 1927, 13-14. 10 June 1927, 13. 17 June 1927, 12. Quoted in Jones, 'The British Labour Movement and Working Class Leisure, 1918-1919', 220.

[240] McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class*, 4. My italics. One might also wish to consider in this connection Howell's emphasis on the distinction which was 'made repeatedly by Labour Leaders in the 1920s and at other times...between steady, unspectacular work and flashy counter-productive [parliamentary] stunts, a juxtaposition that could feed on long-standing fears about the irrational impulses of the masses.' D. Howell, *A lost left: three studies in socialism and nationalism* (Manchester, 1986), 253.

[241] R. C. Mortimer, *Gambling* (London, 1933), 48. This dimension of Labour anti-gambling is discussed further below, p.73-4.

[242] McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class*, 65, 297.

[243] *TUCACR* (1928), 70-1.

mind, body and soul'.[244] Turner's ethical socialism was compatible with an asceticism that reflected bourgeois notions of respectability, or authentically proletarian sentiments, or both.

A wider change in the way that off-course cash betting was discussed during the 1920s also discouraged trade union intervention. The continued growth of street betting, and the emergence of new forms of popular gambling like dog racing and football pools towards the end of the decade,[245] meant that advocates of the prohibition strategy, including Labour, were decreasingly likely to claim that the Street Betting Act was substantially reducing working-class betting: rather, it acted as a bulwark against 'the dramatic increase' which would follow taxation and legalization. These diminished expectations suited the trade unions. The 'image of the gambling laws as a precarious house of cards which would collapse if meddled with at all',[246] was politically more acceptable than the Edwardian Labour Party's millenarian rhetoric about eradicating working-class betting.[247]

J. H. Thomas was the political leader most closely associated with the trade unions during the 1920s. His political identity was constructed in part around 'flamboyant participation in the pleasures and hobbies of the common man – drinking, sports, and gambling';[248] Thomas presented himself, and was represented by others, as the Labour leader most in tune with the working-class voter. In the run-up to the 1929 General Election he betrayed his nervousness at the characterization of the Labour Party as opposed to gambling.

> With regard to press statements which have appeared that the Labour Party intend to interfere with sport and horse racing...this is...merely the political propaganda of our opponents. Surely it will be obvious to you that every form of sport is in the main patronized by the working-class whose interest we especially represent, and to suggest that we are merely a party of kill-joys and not interested in the legitimate relaxation of our people is too absurd for words.[249]

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[244] B. Turner, *About Myself*, 1863-1930 (London, 1930), 169. See also C. Wrigley, 'Turner, Sir Ben (1863-1942), *DNB* [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36580. accessed 16 Feb 2006].
[245] Their growth is discussed at length in the next chapter.
[246] Dixon, *From Prohibition*, 197-8, 191-2.
[247] Dixon, "'Class Law': The Street Betting Act of 1906'', 119.
[248] P. Williamson, 'Thomas, James Henry (1874-1949)', *DNB* [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36477, accessed 16 Feb 2006].
[249] Letter to a constituent quoted in *The Times*, 16 Feb 1929.

The Times interpreted this statement as confirming the existence of tension within the Labour Party. It suggested that Labour was divided on the betting issue: Thomas's views were contrasted with those of Philip Snowden, James Barr, and Rosslyn Mitchell. These ethical socialists appeared 'Strange Companions' for him.[250] Thomas's subsequent approach appeared to support *The Times* assessment. The class bias of the cash betting laws was unacceptable he told the National Government's 1933 Cabinet Committee on Lotteries and Betting: 'all persons should be placed in the same legal position'.[251] Freed from the confines of the PLP's puritanical style it appeared that Thomas was able to articulate his true feelings about betting.[252]

Yet, Thomas' attitude to gambling was more complex than such a narrative allows for. As we have seen, he opposed the Tote Bill on both readings. Nor was this simply a question of maintaining party unity: Thomas emphasized that Labour MPs were unwhipped on the Bill's second reading.[253] Furthermore, the next chapter of this thesis discloses the pivotal role that Thomas played in articulating the Labour Party's opposition to premium bonds, football pools, and dog racing throughout the 1920s.[254]

In a neat piece of symmetry, Thomas' former colleague and successor as leader of the Railwaymen, C. T. Cramp, was the organized working classes' representative on the 1932-33 Royal Commission investigation into Betting and Lotteries. Cramp had been a liberal presence on the Labour Party's National Executive Committee, where he displayed a

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[250] *The Times*, 22 Feb 1929.
[251] CAB27/544. (CLB (33) 1st Meeting, 18 Oct).
[252] Comments of Howell's are suggestive in this regard. He noted that 'Puritanism...had deep roots not just within the ethical socialist tradition...but also in the broader styles of the Labour leadership. Even before 1931 the Wesleyan Arthur Henderson appeared a typical party figure in a way that flamboyant Jimmy Thomas never could.' D. Howell, review of the book 'England Arise', *Parliamentary History,* 15 (1996), 453-4. See also the similar distinction that McKibbin drew between the two men. McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class*, 61.
[253] See p.49, above.
[254] See sections 1-3 of the next chapter.

particular awareness of the Club and Institute Union's position on the drink issue.[255] As a Royal Commissioner, he was sensitive to the issue's class dimension in a way that his Labour predecessors on the 1923 Select Committee on Betting Duty had not been. In an exchange with Archbishop Temple, Cramp demanded to know whether the Church of England was willing to criticize those who organized horse racing rather than just condemn the working-class better.[256] He was also concerned about the distinction between stock exchange gambling and working-class betting tacit in the whole tenor of the enquiry (and explicit in its terms of reference). Irritated by the refusal of a Free Church witness, the Rev S. W. Hughes, to explain the basis of the distinction he drew between the two forms of wagering on luck, Cramp asked him whether 'the people you represent have the backbone to stand up to it [the stock exchange] as an evil, even though it may be backed up by those who bear great names and are in influential positions'.[257] Cramp was among the majority of Royal Commissioners who recommended that consideration be given to the introduction of a limited form of legal cash betting off-course.[258]

But his attitude to gambling was equivocal too. Far from condemning the Street Betting Act, Cramp agreed that, applied equally to all classes, the suppression of betting could enjoy widespread labour movement support.[259] Mary Stocks, the other Labour affiliated[260] member of the Royal Commission, was even firmer in her opposition to gambling. This was especially evident in her cross-examination of Maynard Keynes.[261] She opposed any

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[255] *NEC minutes*, 21 Dec 1927, June 27 1928. At the former meeting, Cramp had seconded the aforementioned (Ellen) Wilkinson amendment accepting Arthur Henderson's resignation from the General Election Programme Committee.

[256] 1933RC. Minutes of Evidence. 11th day, 19 Oct 1932, at para.3799.

[257] Ibid, para.3873-6.

[258] The proposal was that 'a registered bookmaker...be permitted to receive cash bets deposited by the punter in a special letter-box (which, to prevent continuous betting, would be closed during racing hours) at a registered office'. See Dixon, *From Prohibition*, 325.

[259] 1933RC. Minutes of Evidence. 9th day, 13 Oct 1932, at para.3146-52.

[260] She later sat on the Labour benches in the Lords as Baroness Stocks. For her support of the Labour Party and her background in social work see B. Hooper, *Mary Stocks 1891-1975: An Uncommonplace Life* (London, 1996).

[261] 1933RC. Minutes of Evidence. 20th day, 15 Dec 1932, at paras.7845-7869.

significant reform of the cash betting laws.[262] If criticism of the class bias of the betting laws was widespread in the Labour Party by the end of the 1930s (and the next chapter suggests that it was), the attitude of these Royal Commissioners (and in particular that of Cramp, an influential trade unionist),[263] suggested that greater class solidarity did not necessarily translate into support for substantive change. This was evident in views expressed in the *Railway Review* during the late 1930s.[264] It was also evident in the PLP's attitude to the Independent MP A. P. Herbert's Betting & Bookmakers Bill of 1938. This Bill proposed licensed cash betting by post, telegram, telephone, and deposit box with registered bookmakers, along the lines suggested by the Royal Commission. No MP was prepared to support it.[265]

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[262] She was one of three Commissioners who refused to endorse the 'letter-box' option. Her recommendation that postal cash betting be licensed promised to do little to stem illegal street betting. 1933RC, para.311-18, at p.92-94.
[263] Howell, *MacDonald's Party*, 60.
[264] *Railway Review*, 19 March 1937. Quoted in Jones, 'The British Labour Movement and Working Class Leisure', 227.
[265] 13 May 1938, HCD, vol.335, cols.1941-58. A. P. Herbert, *Independent Member* (London, 1950), 67-72.

Chapter Two

Lotteries, football pools and dog racing: reactions to the growth of gambling during the interwar years

Introduction

While debates about the administrative regulation of betting on horses largely dominated the first half of the interwar period, the second half saw lotteries, the football pools, and the dog track take centre-stage. Concern about the growth of lotteries and pool betting on football had been expressed since before the First World War, and during the 1920s began to gain political traction. This was partly a question of their proliferation, but it was also related to the emergence of urban dog racing towards the end of this decade. The construction of hundreds of dog tracks in and around Britain's major cities, which provided the working classes with an opportunity to bet regularly on-course for the first time, raised the political temperature considerably. Attacks on dog racing, lottery gambling, and the football pools reached a crescendo in the early 1930s: the result was the establishment of the 1932-33 Royal Commission into Lotteries and Betting[1]and, subsequently, the enactment of the 1934 Betting and Lotteries Bill, which banned tote clubs, strengthened the law against semi-public and public lotteries, and introduced a system of control over betting facilities at dog tracks.[2]

The Labour Party initially claimed the Bill to be too permissive (the Royal Commission had also recommended the prohibition of football pool betting and dog totes).[3] Subsequently, however, it moved towards a position closer to neutrality. At the end of the 1920s, J. R.

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[1] 7 April 1932, HCD, vol.264, col.290. The immediate catalyst for the creation of the Commission was the emergence of off-course tote betting in social or 'tote' clubs. A legal decision that totalisator betting was not 'betting with a bookmaker' but wagering between individuals and thus neither illegal nor taxable appeared to open the way for wholesale untaxed betting. Anti-gamblers were appalled at the prospect of off-course tote betting all over the country. See, for example, *Christian Weekly*, 8 Nov 1928. Labour concern was reflected in the placing of 'Tote Clubs' among its possible Bills and Motions for parliamentary discussion. *Minutes of Joint Meeting between the PLP and NEC*, 22 Nov 1932.

[2] A useful discussion of the provisions of the 1934 Act is A. Fellows, *The law as to gaming, betting, and lotteries* (London, 1935).

[3] 1933RC.

Clynes, Home Secretary in the second Labour Government, had been unable to see any resolution to the conflict between the popularity of gambling among the masses and the opposition of the professional and administrative middle classes (and the state which these classes controlled during the interwar period):[4] 'Governments have been hard put to defend their action or inaction, for while the gambling spirit appears to be spreading, there are signs which cannot be ignored that enlightened public opinion is alarmed lest the evils associated with gambling should develop into unmanageable proportions'.[5] The political crisis of 1931 altered Labour's perspective: simultaneously eroding its respect for 'official' opinion and strengthening its identification with the working classes. This meant that while socialist objections to gambling remained (in fact, were in some ways strengthened by the Party's greater antipathy to capitalism during the 1930s), hostility was increasingly directed at financial speculation rather than working-class betting. The final section of this chapter discusses these developments in the context of the Party's evolving attitude to the Betting and Lotteries Bill. However, I begin by examining, successively, the Party's reaction to the emergence and growth of lottery gambling, football pool betting, and dog racing.

1. Lotteries Large and Small

During the First World War, and immediately afterwards, there were demands, usually from Conservatives, for the issue of 'Premium' or 'Bonus' Bonds:[6] government securities on which the interest, or a portion of the interest, was redistributed by chance.[7] The argument was that lottery bonds of this type could attract working-class savings.[8] The 1916 Select

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[4] For discussion of these classes and their domination of the state during the interwar period see McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class*, 259-93, 300-2.

[5] HO45/14238/521850/482. Letter from Home Sec to Attorney General, 17 Sept 1929.

[6] For these demands see HCD: 21 March, vol.81, cols.29, 36-7. 28 March, vol.81, cols.556-9. 30 March, vol.81, cols.912-3. 6 April 1916, vol.81, cols.1341-3. 21 Feb 1917, vol.90, cols.1325-6. 2 July 1917, vol.95, cols.751-2. 5 July 1917, vol.95, col.1291. The 1908 Select Committee on Lotteries and Indecent Advertisements had also discussed premium bonds. See, for instance, 1908SC paras.1247-75, at p.97-100.

[7] See Munting, *An economic and social history of gambling*, 60, 83. See also Clapson, 'Revival of the State Lottery in Britain', 325: "The operational definition of Premium Bonds was that they were to be bonds "repayable after a fixed term of years at par plus a moderate rate of compound interest' with a number of draws made annually for payment at a tax-free premium above the issue price".

[8] Clapson, *A bit of a flutter*, 195. Dixon, *From Prohibition to Regulation*, 180-1.

Committee on War Loans for the Small Investor floated the idea,[9] Parliament discussed it,[10] and eighteen months later, at the Coalition Government's behest, MPs appointed a Select Committee of investigation.[11] The Committee examined thirty-five witnesses, the majority of whom favoured premium bonds.[12] However, the hostility of a minority, in particular the opposition expressed by four representatives of labour, C. W. Bowerman,[13] Henry May,[14] J. H. Thomas,[15] and Will Thorne,[16] eventually carried the day.[17]

May was secretary of the Co-operative Movement's newly established Parliamentary Committee and, subsequently, its first candidate.[18] His biographer described him as an 'idealist'[19] and May insisted, at length, that gambling, in its promotion of chance, was antithetical to the Co-op's collectivist, Anglican and Nonconformist traditions.[20] Bowerman, Thomas, and Thorne were Labour MPs and significant trade unionists. Bowerman was secretary of the TUC's Parliamentary Committee. Thomas and Thorne were also members of this Committee: they were the leading political figures in the NUR and GMW respectively. Thorne confessed that the General Council of his union was divided on the merits of premium bonds.[21] Bowerman reported that the TUC had 'no strong opinion...either way'. The Parliamentary Committee 'recognized that there is a section of workmen who delights rather in games of chance'.[22] The personal style and identity of these men also appeared compatible with tolerance of gambling. Thomas was, as we have seen, Labour's leading Tory Socialist; Bowerman and Thorne have also been described as 'right-wingers...well

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[9] Ibid, 182.
[10] During the second reading of the Finance Bill: 18 May 1916, HCD, vol.82, cols.1694-1792.
[11] 13 Nov 1917, HCD, vol.99, cols.237-40.
[12] 18 witnesses favoured premium bonds, 12 were opposed. 5 expressed no preference. Miers, *Regulating Commercial Gambling*, 185.
[13] 1918SC, para.3486-3565, at p.142-5.
[14] 1918SC, para.2082-2292, at p.82-90.
[15] 1918SC, para.2734-2868, at p.109-15.
[16] 1918SC, para.1815-88, at p.73-6.
[17] 1918SC, para.11, at p.v. Clapson, 'Revival of the state lottery in Britain', 326.
[18] At the Prestwich by-election of 1918. He fought Clackmannan at the subsequent General Election. M. Purvis, 'May, Henry John (1867-1939), *DNB* [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/50559, accessed 16 Feb 2006].
[19] Ibid.
[20] 1918SC, para.2098, at p.83, para.2148, at p.85, para.2182, para.2277, at p.89.
[21] 1918SC, para.1815, at p.74.
[22] 1918SC, para.3490, at p.142. See also para.3542 and 3546, at p.144.

attuned...to the views of the London working class.'[23] Yet they, like May, opposed premium bonds.

Their objection was threefold. First, Thorne and Thomas claimed that the working classes would not find any such scheme an attractive investment. Thorne emphasized that because of the irregularities of the working-class economy those he represented needed instant access to their savings.[24] Thomas agreed,[25] and also suggested another reason why the working classes would not go in for premium bonds: namely, that they preferred forms of gambling which involved shorter odds and the deployment of skill.[26] Since the whole case for premium bonds rested on their ability to attract working-class investment, the scepticism of labour representatives carried (and was understood by Thorne and Thomas to carry) particular weight.

Second, there was the question of national prestige. This was the ground on which Bowerman chose to fight. He denied an 'ethical' objection to gambling, nor was he worried about 'the effect of gambling upon character'.[27] His concern was Britain's international reputation. Macintyre has argued of the 1920s that 'most Labour arguments concerning the social and political character of Britain generally turned out to be not materialistic arguments but ones based on an abstract conception of the national character, a capitulation to the dominant images of national identity'.[28] Bowerman evidenced just such a capitulation. Premium bonds 'would lower us in the estimation of other countries from the moral point of view'.[29] He probably took his lead from Thomas. At the height of his political influence as a

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[23] Pugh, 'The Rise of Labour and the Political Culture of Conservatism', 529.
[24] 1918SC, para.1816, p.85. Clapson, *A bit of a flutter*, 198.
[25] 1918SC, para.2867, at p.115. Clapson, 'Revival of the state lottery', 326.
[26] 1918SC, para.2769, at p.111, para.2775-6, at p.112. This point was also subsequently emphasized by Bonar Law: 1 Dec 1919, HCD, vol.122, cols.176-7. There are obvious parallels with McKibbin's explanation of the character of working-class betting. McKibbin, *Ideologies of Class*, 118-26.
[27] 1918SC, para.3503 at p.143, para.3529, at p.144.
[28] MacIntyre, *A Proletarian Science*, 224.
[29] Although Bowerman, straining to remain consistent given his disavowal of ethical objections to gambling, immediately denied that premium bonds were immoral. 1918SC, para.3529-31, at p.144.

"'responsible' national leader",[30] and a man who 'shared conventional imperialist assumptions and enthusiasms',[31] Thomas had told the Select Committee that an issue of premium bonds 'would be an advertisement to the world that our moral standard was considerably lowered'.[32] He would subsequently reiterate this claim in parliamentary debate.[33]

Third, and most fundamentally, there was an objection of principle to gambling. Thorne suggested that it undermined social solidarity. Those who bet 'are not satisfied with what they are getting, and they want to get hold of somebody else's money. It is a gain to nobody, and it produces nothing at all to the nation. It is not a benefit to the community in any shape or form'.[34] Thomas insisted that premium bonds were a form of state lottery and, as such, represented a departure from the state's strategy of prohibiting betting. He warned that there could be 'no half-way house between recognising a state lottery and legalising betting as a whole'.[35] An issue of premium bonds would have to be followed by repeal of the Street Betting Act. This he did not wish to see.[36]

The ambiguity of the Select Committee's conclusions[37] ensured that advocates of premium bonds were not silenced.[38] These included members of the postwar Coalition Government, which subsequently decided to test House of Commons opinion.[39] A debate took place at the end of 1919: on a free vote the motion in favour of premium bonds was overwhelmingly

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[30] P. Williamson, 'Thomas, James Henry (1874-1949)', *DNB* [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36477, accessed 16 Feb 2006].
[31] Ibid.
[32] 1918SC, p.115, para.2851-2.
[33] 1 Dec 1919, HCD, vol.122, cols.151-4.
[34] 1918SC, para.1847, at p.75. See also Thorne's reiteration of gambling's anti-social nature: para.1853, at p.75.
[35] 1918SC, para.2746, p.110. Clapson, *A bit of a flutter*, 199.
[36] 1918SC, p.112, para.2772.
[37] The recommendation against premium bonds 'was made on grounds of expediency rather than principle: anti-gambers had convinced the majority not that state involvement in gambling was wrong, but merely that they were able and prepared to stir up damaging opposition to such involvement [in the midst of war]'. Dixon, *From Prohibition to Regulation*, 183-4. See also Miers, *Regulating Commercial Gambling*, 185.
[38] HCD: 13 Feb 1919, vol.112, col.949. 21 May 1919, vol.116, col.400. 29 Oct 1919 vol.120, cols.795-8, 815, 961.
[39] For indications of the government's interest see HCD: 3 Nov 1919, vol.120, cols.1128-9, 1132. 5 Nov 1919, vol.120, cols.1492-3.

defeated by 276 votes to 84.[40] Bowerman had told the Select Committee that the majority of trade union activists and Labour MPs opposed premium bonds.[41] The PLP's attitude confirmed this. Having been granted a free vote,[42] not one Labour MP backed premium bonds. Thirty-six Labour MPs, half of the PLP,[43] voted against.[44] The PLP had 'Unanimously resolved that a letter be sent to the Government asking them not to resort to Premium Bonds'.[45] The Party's opposition to lottery gambling had also been glimpsed in its reaction to the Lotteries (War Charities Bill). This modest Bill, proposing to legalize fundraising lotteries by registered war charities, was only just rejected by the House in August 1918.[46] Yet, the narrowness of its defeat had nothing to do with the Labour Party: only one Labour MP supported the Bill, while ten Labour MPs opposed it.[47] Furthermore this MP was G. H. Roberts, Minister of Labour in the Coalition Government. He was already estranged from his Labour colleagues, would break with Party following the 'Coupon' Election, and ended his political career as a Conservative.[48]

On the other hand, it seems likely that Labour MPs sympathetic to premium bonds were encouraged by the leadership to absent themselves from the Commons debate. Among those who did not vote were prominent Tory Socialists such as Jack Jones, James O'Grady, Tom Shaw, and Ben Tillett,[49] as well the Chief Whip, Tyson Wilson, who was on record as favouring premium bonds.[50] There had been dissent at the initial PLP meeting and a deal may have been struck whereby Labour took no 'official' position but voted as individuals against premium bonds.[51] The formulation used by Arthur Henderson during his speech was

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[40] 1 Dec 1919, HCD, vol.122, cols.73-182.
[41] 1918SC, para.3555, at p.145.
[42] *PLP Minutes,* 11 Nov 1919.
[43] 63 Labour MPs had been elected at the previous General Election.
[44] 1 Dec 1919, HCD, vol.122, cols.179-82.
[45] *PLP Minutes*, 4 Nov 1919.
[46] By 81 votes to 77. See HCD: 6 Aug 1918, vol.109, cols.1236-82. The Lords had passed the Bill previously. Dixon, *From Prohibition to Regulation*, 184. Miers, *Regulating Commercial Gambling*, 185.
[47] W. C. Anderson, J. R. Clynes, Charles Duncan, Frank Goldstone, Walter Hudson, Fred Jowett, Thomas Richardson, J. E. Sutton, Robert Toothill, Stephen Walsh. 6 Aug 1918, HCD, vol.109, cols.1279-82.
[48] *DLB*, vol.iv., 148-52.
[49] For their Tory Socialism see Pugh, 'The Rise of Labour and the Political Culture of Conservatism', passim.
[50] 18 May 1916, HCD, vol.82, cols.1731-6.
[51] At the PLP meeting on 4 Nov 1919 it had been moved 'That the Party pronounce its opposition now [to premium bonds]'. In response an amendment was moved asking 'That the matter be left open until the attitude

interesting: 'Although I am not speaking for the Labour Party officially, I know where they will be found when the Division is taken.'

Henderson articulated a number of objections to premium bonds. In his view, gambling produced 'a spirit of restlessness and excitement that is altogether antagonistic to that consistent steady toil out of which alone an increased standard of productiveness can be secured'. It was inimical to 'domestic happiness' and, in the form represented by a state lottery (which he took premium bonds to be), also undermined 'national righteousness'. Furthermore, their issue would amount to a breach of the Edwardian consensus that had found its fullest expression in the provisions of the Street Betting Act:

> gambling and betting...has...taken a tremendous hold of the people...our watch committees and our chief constables have a very difficult task imposed upon them to...try and track the gambler...Parliament giving its sanction, even its encouragement to one form of speculation...must inevitably make it more difficult for them to punish the other forms.[52]

To Henderson's arguments, others Labour MPs added collectivist objections to chance and luck. Stephen Walsh rejected Conservative claims that a spirit of adventure and speculation had been central to the success of the British economy.[53] J. H. Thomas likewise denied an analogy between commerce and wagering on luck.[54] George Wardle, MP for Stockport, a war patriot who stayed with the Coalition Government at the end of the war,[55] encapsulated this strand of collectivist politics. Opposing premium bonds in 1916 he insisted that

> the whole basis of civilization rests upon reducing chance to the smallest possible dimensions...as a trade unionist I have always tried to persuade working men of this

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of the Government and the report of any Committee which may be appointed, is ascertained'. The amendment was lost but the original motion was carried only by 13 votes to 9. This was the point at which it was resolved, 'Unanimously', to send a letter to the Government expressing opposition to premium bonds. *PLP minutes*, 4 Nov 1919.

[52] 1 Dec 1919, HCD, vol.122, col.162-5.

[53] Ibid, col.149.

[54] Ibid,151-4.

[55] *DLB*, vol.ii, 373-6.

> country that they should try to eliminate chance from their life as much as possible, and that if they cannot eliminate it they should insure against it.[56]

The parliamentary party and the trade union leadership therefore entered the 1920s opposed to lotteries on principle. However, as the decade progressed, their position was increasingly compromised. Labour's emergence as a national political force had been accompanied by the creation of a systematic network of Local Divisional Labour Parties (DLPs).[57] These parties had to be maintained and organized. This demanded resources. In such a context fund-raising gambling became increasingly attractive. Worley has noted that DLPs displayed 'a particular penchant for the whist drive. Weekly, monthly, divisional, ward and county drives were frequently organized by local parties'. Raffles and sweepstakes were also becoming standard practice during the 1920s.[58] Labour's National Executive Committee urged affiliated organizations to desist from such activities.[59] But in the absence of credible alternatives their pleas were (as the NEC surely knew they would be) largely ignored.[60] Nor were DLPs the only culprits. The trade unions and the *Daily Herald* ran lotteries too.[61]

The Labour Party was far from unique in its resort to lottery gambling. Indeed, the 1920s were characterized by the proliferation of small 'public' lotteries (such as those held at a bazaar or fete), 'private' lotteries (in which the sale of tickets was confined to membership of the organising body) and 'semi-public' lotteries (organized by private institutions but

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[56] 18 May 1916, HCD, vol.82, cols.1717-22. This point was discussed in chapter 1, section 4, above. Note also McKibbin's suggestion that 'gambling affronted at every level the prudent and long term mental environment' that the middle classes wished to 'encourage and perpetuate'. 'Working-class gambling', 176.

[57] The pre-eminent discussion of the Party's new constitution remains McKibbin, *Evolution of the Labour Party*, ch.5. But see also Howell, *MacDonald's Party*, 30-1.

[58] M. Worley, 'Building the Party: Labour Party Activism in Five British Counties Between the Wars', *Labour History Review*, 70 (2005), 73-95, 86. See also S. Ball, A. Thorpe, M. Worley, 'Elections, Leaflets and Whist Drives: Constituency Party Members in Britain between the Wars' in M. Worley (ed.) *Labour's Grass Roots. Essays on the Activities of Local labour Parties and Members 1918-45* (Aldershot, 2005), 7-33. Strictly speaking whist was a form of gaming rather than lottery.

[59] *NEC minutes*, 25 Sept 1923 & 26 June 1933. See also Catterall, 'The Free Churches and the Labour Party in England and Wales 1918-1939', 372.

[60] An exception was the Chepstow Labour Party which complained that the use of lottery gambling to bolster the party coffers was at odds with 'true socialism and comradeship'. Worley, 'Building the Party: Labour Party Activism in Five British Counties Between the Wars', 87.

[61] 1933 RC, para.158, at p.45. See also J. H. Thomas' comments during meetings of the 1933 Cabinet Committee on Lotteries and Betting. (CLB) (33) 3rd meeting, 31 Oct, 7th meeting, 15 Nov, 10th meeting, 28 Nov).

advertized to members of the public). All were illegal. C. L'Estrange Ewen, writing in 1932, claimed that

> It would take a much larger volume than the present to catalogue the illegal adventures which have been set up during the last two decades. Never, of course, called lottery, they appear under such names as Ballots, Tombolas, Competitions of Skill, Forecasts, Pictorial Puzzles, Land Allotments, Football Coupons, Treasure Hunts, Charity Draws, Games (such as 'House'), Bazaar Raffles, Bran Tubs, Lucky Dips, Theatre Gifts, Postcard Chains, Bus Ticket Competitions, and so on. The three elements of the lottery are there, the prizes, the stake, and the chance determination. The prize, being the bait, is never hidden, but the stake is often disguised by coincident purchase, and the chance determination is described as a test of skill.[62]

But Labour's opposition to lottery gambling left it peculiarly open to the charge of hypocrisy. An otherwise sympathetic observer reported that

> On one occasion George Lanbury was speaking to a crowded meeting, and letting out against 'the desire to get something for nothing'. His audience burst into laughter. Lansbury attempted to go on, but the laughter only became more uncontrollable. At last he turned to his chairman, 'What's the matter? Why can't I get it across? The answer was 'Look behind you', and there on the wall above the platform, was a placard: 'Daily Herald, £15 000 for 6d'. No wonder they laughed...Yet the cause of the laughter, the association of a great Labour newspaper with an offer so unsocial, is more tragic than it is funny.[63]

The MP Percy Wells, elected in 1945, recalled that during the interwar period Labour activists like himself 'would preach against something for nothing but would then go to Party whist drives, raffles, thinking we were doing nothing wrong or inconsistent...there was confusion of thought as well as inconsistency of action.'[64]

Labour's opponents were quick to exploit the discrepancy between principle and practice. The National Labour peer Godfrey Elton observed that the *Daily Herald*, 'while rarely

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[62] C. L'Estrange Ewen, *Lotteries and sweepstakes: an historical, legal, and ethical survey of their introduction, suppression and re-establishment in the British Isles* (London, 1932), 313. Even the Protestant Churches were not immune from temptation: G. 1. T. Machin, *Churches and social issues in twentieth-century Britain* (Oxford, 1998), 68.
[63] F. Lenwood, *Gambling – why not?* (London, 1934), 81.
[64] 25 Nov 1955, HCD, vol.546, col.1840.

ceasing to visit unearned income with opprobrium, is itself through these competitions almost weekly creating new owners of them...[it is] simultaneously denouncing the so-called capitalist system and busily organising lotteries to create new capitalists'.[65] Nor was it just a question of organizing lotteries: the *Daily Herald* and the *New Leader* also published the results of other organizations' lottery draws for financial gain.[66]

The evident discomfort of Arthur Henderson, Home Secretary in the first Labour Government, encouraged opposition MPs.[67] As we have seen, he was against all forms of gambling.[68] On entering the Home Office, Henderson insisted that lotteries were a 'very serious evil'.[69] But he was also the Party's critical bureaucratic figure and, as such, could not have been in any doubt of the increasing importance of lottery fundraising. Replying to a complaint from a Conservative MP regarding the Labour press's publication of illegal DLP and trade union lottery results, Henderson pleaded with the Commons: 'it is very difficult to decide where to draw the line as far as newspapers are concerned. There is not a single newspaper in the country that does not today report the result of one of these draws...Am I to be asked to proceed against the whole of these newspapers for announcing that result?'[70] Confronted with further complaints about Labour Party lotteries and sweepstakes,[71] Henderson responded that lotteries in which tickets were sold to the public would not be tolerated.[72] However, 'there was no intention on the part of the Home Office to institute a general ban on charitable lotteries'.[73] Although it was widely recognized that the prohibition

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[65] 1 May 1934, HLD, vol.91, cols.937-8.
[66] In three days, June 2-4 1930, the *Daily Herald* received between £100-200 by publishing advertisements of the results of about 200 draws, most of which were obviously illegal. Ewen, *Lotteries and sweepstakes*, 314.
[67] HCD: 29 May 1924, vol.174, col.578. 16 June 1924, vol.174, cols.1730-1.
[68] See above, pp.4-5, 72-3. See below, p.84. 'Addressing a great meeting of Trade Unionists' , wrote Benson Perkins, Henderson emphasized that 'Gambling is a greater foe to labour than all the forces of capitalism'. According to Benson Perkins's gloss, Henderson 'was saying that the spirit of self-regarding greed found in gambling was in no way different in its character and effects from the selfishness of some forms of capitalism. He implied that if that spirit possessed the trade unions and those who were normally seeking for a better way of life for the people, then they were destroying by their own practices the very purpose they professed'. E. Benson Perkins, *Gambling in English Life* (London, 1950), 61.
[69] 15 May 1924, HCD, vol.173, cols.1621-2.
[70] 5 June 1924, HCD, vol.174, cols.1426-9.
[71] 21 May 1924, HCD, vol.173, col.2198.
[72] 22 May 1924, HCD, vol.173, col.2386.
[73] 6 August, 1924, HCD, vol.176, col.2925.

of small private non-commercial lotteries was incapable of enforcement,[74] the Labour Government's public confession of this reality represented a departure from the position adopted by previous administrations. Henderson's statement was 'astonishing' considering that all lotteries remained illegal.[75]

Law and class complicated matters further. Since all lottery gambling was illegal there was sometimes police intervention in, and occasionally even prosecution of, Labour organizations. This produced claims of bias. To many within the Party it seemed that the authorities intervened against lotteries run by Labour parties and trade unions, while those run by more influential organizations escaped censure. Labour MPs wondered in particular why the Stock Exchange Derby Sweepstake, the largest and most popular semi-public lottery during the interwar period (£1 million was subscribed in 1929), proceeded unmolested.[76] The Home Secretary J. R. Clynes, maintained in private that the difference between the Stock Exchange Sweep and 'many Labour clubs, charities, and the like' was that the latter 'are not acting on legal advice and behave indiscriminately'.[77] However, Clynes asked the Attorney General William Jowitt to advise his brother-in-law (a member of the Stock Exchange Board) that the sale of tickets would have to be more closely controlled.[78] Having received assurances to this effect, the Home Secretary reaffirmed, via a planted parliamentary question, that tickets for the Stock Exchange Sweep were strictly confined to members.[79] The organizers subsequently set a £100 000 ceiling on the Sweep but subscriptions did not even reach that much reduced figure in 1930.[80]

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[74] The 1933 Royal Commission noted that the police, on Home Office advice, did not interfere in lotteries as long as they did not advertise publicly. 1933RC, para. 150, at p.43.
[75] Ewen, *Lotteries and sweepstakes*, 314.
[76] The Tory Socialists Fred Montague and Jack Jones, the Co-operator R. C. Morrison, the former Liberal MP J. M. Kenworthy, and Houdini's former manager Harry Day, were the Labour MPs most prominent in suggesting that the Stock Exchange Sweep received favourable treatment. See HCD: 21 May 1924, vol.173, col.2198. 19 June 1924, vol.174, col.2338. 6 Aug 1924, vol.176, col.2925. 17 Dec 1928, vol.223, cols.2622-3. 25 April 1929, vol.227, col.1028-30. 2 May 1929, vol.227, cols.1689-90. 9 May 1929, vol.227, cols.2304-5.
[77] HO45/14238/521850/482. Correspondence between Clynes and Jowitt: 17 Sept, 1 Oct, 10 Dec 1929.
[78] HO45/14238/521850/476. Correspondence between Jowitt and Clynes: Oct 1 1929 & 6 March 1930.
[79] HCD, 20 March 1930, vol.236, cols.2080-1. See also 1933 RC. Minutes of Evidence. 16th day, 17 Nov 1932 (Statement of evidence submitted by John Hamilton , former organiser of Stock Exchange Sweep).
[80] 1933RC, para.157, at p.45.

Court cases involving the Carlisle Labour Party and the Workers Northern Publishing Company increased the pressure on Clynes. Carlisle's Labour MP George Middleton complained to the Home Secretary about the prosecution of his Divisional Party's 'harmless penny draw for a wireless set'. This had caused 'a great deal of annoyance' and 'the discrimination against Labour has had an unfortunate effect in my constituency'.[81] A Christmas Draw run by the Party's *Northern Voice* publication led to the prosecution of the Labour MP Elijah Sandham, chairman of the Workers Northern Publishing Company. Sandham claimed that the police warning had come to late to stop the lottery proceeding.[82] More likely he calculated that any fine would be far outweighed by the profit.[83] Sandham's involvement in law breaking indicated how wide was the gap between socialism's rhetorical opposition to lotteries and the everyday reality of Labour organization. The Lancashire ILPer, despite a youthful flirtation with Conservatism, 'bore the self-improving and deeply ethical tendencies that were common amongst socialist pioneers', according to his biographer. He was not a libertarian or iconoclast.[84] On the back of this case the *Daily Herald* called on the Labour government to reform the law. 'The Government is removing many anomalies in matters which affect the rights of the people. It might with advantage turn its attention to lotteries. As things are, what is illegal in one place is legal in another'.[85]

The trade unions were also pressuring the Government. Inconsistency in the application of the law and allegations of class bias were resources used by the TGWU leader Ernest Bevin as he negotiated with the Home Secretary over lotteries run by his own union and the *Daily Herald*. Bevin was chairman of the *Daily Herald's* board and suggested that while Labour's newspaper faced prosecution, Conservative papers escaped official action.[86] He bluntly told the Government that 'what is legitimate for the *Daily Mail* is legitimate for other

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[81] HO45/14238/521850/454. Correspondence between G. Middleton and the Home Sec, 27 Jan, 4 Feb, 22 March 1930.
[82] HO45/14238/521850/410. *Manchester Guardian*, 3 March 1930.
[83] The SDF newspaper *Justice*, for example, had been prosecuted on similar grounds in 1924. Its lottery made a profit of £350 out of which it had to pay just £21 in fines and costs. Ewen, *Lotteries and Sweepstakes*, 313.
[84] *DLB*, vol.xi, 222-3.
[85] *Daily Herald*, 3 March 1930.
[86] *The Daily Herald*, *Daily Mirror*, and *The Times* were fined for running illegal Derby lotteries in June 1931. See *The Times* report, 13 June 1931.

newspapers'.[87] The Home Secretary subsequently asked Bevin to explain 'the steps which you propose to take to ensure that the [TGWU] lottery is limited strictly to members of the Union'.[88] The Honorary Secretary of the National Trade Union Club was told that 'discrimination in favour of a sweepstake promoted by the Home Secretary's political friends would place him in an awkward position'.[89]

Clynes has been described as a Tory Socialist sympathetic to popular culture.[90] But like other Labour MPs from this tradition he appeared to have some difficulty distinguishing working-class betting from stock exchange gambling.[91] He told the National Anti-Gambling League (NAGL) that he was 'opposed to gambling in all its forms'.[92] He thought the Lottery Acts serve 'a purpose which commands the support of a large body of wholesome public opinion; they prevent the holding out to the general public of widespread inducements to engage in one form of gambling'.[93] Perhaps this was why he had voted against the War Lotteries Bill.[94] Clynes autobiography recalled that the Labour government was criticized for its

> tendency to check gaming and lotteries. We had most of us been poor men ourselves, and had worked with poor men, and we knew well how easily the British workman will inflict hardship on himself in his passion for a gamble...[Those who were] prevented from losing by a tightening of the law were very ready to heap abuse on me. I received a number of scurrilous letters.[95]

On the other hand, Clynes was prepared to consider some measure of liberalization. In December 1930 the Cabinet 'agreed in principle' to the Home Secretary's proposal that the Government 'set up a Committee to consider' the licensing of charitable lotteries, 'if the

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[87] HO45/14239/521850/593. Letter Bevin to Home Sec, 2 May 1930.
[88] HO45/14239/521850/640. Meeting between Home Sec. and Bevin, 22 July 1930. Letter from Home Sec. to Bevin, 30 July 1930.
[89] HO45/14239/521850/663. 5 Aug 1930.
[90] Pugh, 'The Rise of Labour and the Political Culture of Conservatism, 1890-1945', 518-9.
[91] See above, 38-40. See also below, pp.85, 114-9.
[92] The quote is actually from the NAGL's D. M. Stevenson who wrote to Clynes (following a meeting with the Home Sec.) that 'Most of them [NAGL members] take your view, and are opposed to gambling in all its forms'. HO45/14237/521850/339. 23 July 1929.
[93] HO45/14238/521850/482. Clynes to Jowitt, 17 Sept 1929.
[94] See above, p.72.
[95] Clynes, *Memoirs*, 130.

request were made to them on behalf of any substantial group of existing charities'. Clynes' memo to the Cabinet specifically mentioned the selling of lottery tickets by trade unionists.[96] The Home Secretary informed Parliament that evidence of a general demand for reform would trigger an enquiry.[97] This was a significant departure from the policy of previous governments and the combustible mixture of politics, class and law outlined in the preceding paragraphs was an underlying cause: even if the emergence of the Irish Hospital Sweepstake (IHS) was the immediate catalyst for change.[98]

There was no immediate response from charitable organizations. Clynes had 'seen no evidence' of a general demand for reform by the second half of December and added that 'if the interested parties do not want an enquiry, why should the Government insist on it?[99] He subsequently revealed 'representations from several quarters protesting' against the possible legalization of charitable lotteries,[100] though the Home Secretary also spoke of 'increasing public interest in the matter' and emphasized that 'my mind is not closed'.[101] Labour MPs in favour of reform maintained the pressure,[102] while revelations in the press about the running of lotteries by government departments reminded the Home Secretary of how far out of line with public practice the law was.[103] The *Daily Mail* reported that the announcement of a 'departmental inquiry into sweepstakes' was imminent.[104] Instead the Home Secretary reiterated that although no decision had yet been made the majority of charities from whom he had so far received submissions opposed reform.[105]

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[96] (C(abinet) (P)aper 413 (30), 9 Dec).
[97] 11 Dec 1930, HCD, vol.246, cols.512-14.
[98] 25 Nov 1930, HCD, vol.245, col.1139. 27 Nov 1930, HCD, vol.245, col.1478. The first IHS sweepstake took place in March 1930 and by the end of the year over 9000 letters containing material relating to the IHS had been stopped and returned to addresses in Dublin. Miers, *Regulating Commercial Gambling*, 192-3. See also Clapson, 'The Revival of the State Lottery', 327.
[99] 19 Dec 1930, HCD, vol.246, cols.1625-6.
[100] 9 March 1931, HCD, vol.249, cols.812-14.
[101] 31 March 1931, HCD, vol.250, col. 920-1.
[102] 14 April 1931, HCD, vol.251, cols.20-21.
[103] *Evening News*, 16 April 1931.
[104] *Daily Mail,* 16 April 1931.
[105] 20 April 1931, HCD, vol.251, cols.612-13. The British Hospitals Association's 1931 Conference subsequently passed a resolution distancing itself from the campaign for lottery law reform. 1933 RC, para.459, at p.132.

Parliament's convincing rejection of the Conservative MP William Davidson's Hospital Lotteries (Legalization) Bill ended the possibility of an enquiry. Hospitals had been running lotteries since the early 1920s[106] but Davidson's Bill was rejected by 181 votes to 58 on a free vote.[107] Only 16 Labour MPs supported the Bill,[108] of whom the highest profile supporter of reform was Harry Day.[109] 'One of the *Daily Herald's* favourite Labour MPs' according to Richards,[110] his attitude to lotteries no doubt reflected the views of 'The Man in the Street'.[111] It certainly reflected the *Daily Herald's* view: the paper was running hospital lotteries with a first prize of £20 000.[112] But Day was not a product of the labour movement at any level (as already noted he had been Houdini's manager before becoming an MP) and stood at some distance from the PLP's dominant culture and identity. 'Critics claimed he was available for any party and that he sat on the Labour benches simply because he had secured a nomination'.[113]

Eighty Labour MPs opposed the Hospital Lotteries Bill. Stafford Cripps, one of those to vote against, thought lotteries and sweepstakes 'an abomination' in their promotion of acquisitiveness and disproportionate reward. They were exemplars of the 'vicious gambling capitalistic spirit' to which socialists were opposed.[114] Labour MPs particularly deplored the funding of hospitals in this way, since it suggested that an appeal to altruism or social solidarity was not enough to secure support for essential social services.[115] In the wake of

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[106] 1933 RC. Minutes of Evidence. 6th day, 16 Sept 1932 (Statement of evidence submitted by Lord Luke of Pavenham on behalf of Charities' Association).
[107] Hospital Lotteries Bill, 19 May 1931, HCD, vol.252, cols.1781-92.
[108] C. W. Bowerman, George Daggar, Harry Day, Arthur Haycock, Jack Jones, John McGovern, Leah Manning, James Marley, Hyacynth Morgan, J. J. McShane, Elijah Sandham, J. F. Shillaker, Will Thorne, Joseph Tinker, W. J. Tout, James Walker.
[109] For Day's interventions see HCD: 11 Dec 1929, vol.233, col.486. 5 June 1930, vol.239, col.2360. 11 Dec 1930, vol.246, col.512-3. 19 Dec 1930, vol.246, col.1625. 14 April 1931, vol.251, cols.20-1. 20 April 1931, vol.251, col.613. 4 June 1931, vol.253, cols.330-1. 11 June 1931, vol.253, col.1186.
[110] Richards, *The bloody circus: the Daily Herald and the left*, 116.
[111] 'The Man in the Street' was the pseudonym given to the pro-lotteries position in a 'Questions in Debate' feature which ran in *Labour*, November 1933.
[112] 1933RC. Minutes of Evidence. 16th day, 17 Nov 1932 (Statement of evidence submitted by Sir William Davison MP).
[113] Howell, *MacDonald's Party*, 27.
[114] *Labour*, November 1933.
[115] See, for example, the comments of the Labour candidate the Rev. Rhondda Williams. *Labour*, May 1934. See also Arthur Woodburn's article on why 'Maintenance of Hospitals must not be left to chance', *Labour*, December 1933. See also Catterall, 'The Free Churches and the Labour Party in England and Wales 1918-1939', 373.

this vote, the Home Secretary announced that he was 'not satisfied...that the balance of opinion, whether in Parliament or in the country, is in favour of a revision of the law relating to lotteries and sweepstakes'.[116]

Davidson reintroduced his Bill after the 1931 General Election. Its scope was now wider: he sought to legalize all charitable lotteries. The Bill gained a majority at second reading.[117] Three Catholic Labour MPs supported the Bill (Jack Jones, David Logan, and Joseph Tinker), so too did the ILP MPs David Kirkwood, James Maxton, and R. C. Wallhead. Twenty-five Labour MPs opposed it. This was more than half of the PLP. Socialism combined with Protestantism in many cases. Many of the Labour MPs who voted against the Bill were Protestants.[118] A number of the others were from heavily Nonconformist Wales.[119] When the Lords discussed hospital sweepstakes in November 1933, the Party reiterated its objection of principle to lottery gambling. The Labour peer Harold Furniss, former head of Ruskin College, who sat in the upper house as Lord Sanderson,[120] was 'not troubled with the Nonconformist conscience...but I do feel that the effect of any extension of gambling facilities which the sweepstake idea would involve might have very serious effects on the character of the people'.[121]

Labour's attitude to the Betting and Lotteries Bill reaffirmed its ideological objections. The tightening of the law regarding newspaper forecasting competitions was welcomed by Furniss, who led for the Party. The latter were 'hardly to be distinguished from lotteries on a large scale'.[122] Indeed, the larger the lottery, the greater was Labour's opposition.[123] A

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[116] 11 June 1931, HCD, vol.253, cols.1186-7.
[117] By 176 votes to 123. 22 March 1932, HCD, vol.263, cols.876-888.
[118] Joseph Batey, Rhys Davies, Charles Edwards, Duncan Graham, David Grenfell, George Hall, Morgan Jones, John Lawson, William Lunn, Gordon MacDonald, John Allen Parkinson, Alfred Salter and Harry Twist.
[119] Aneurin Bevan, George Daggar, Sir William Jenkins, David Watts-Morgan, David Williams and John Williams were Welsh. The other Labour MPs who voted against were the Anglicans Clement Attlee and George Lansbury, a Scotsman William Leonard, an Irishman (from a Protestant background) Valentine McEntee, and the Englishmen Thomas Groves and Gabriel Price.
[120] See H. Pollins, 'Furniss, Henry Sanderson, Baron Sanderson (1868-1939)', *DNB* [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33297, accessed 28 Feb 2006].
[121] 30 Nov 1933, HLD, vol.90, col.248-50.
[122] 26 April 1934, HLD, vol.91, cols.793-4.
[123] M. Clapson, 'The Revival of the State Lottery', 328.

National Lottery was anathema.[124] It was in this context that the Labour Party leader George Lansbury reasserted the injustice of disproportionate reward: 'the thing that is wrong with us as a nation, the thing that is wrong with us in the world, is that all of us are trained to think it is better that we should get something for nothing.'[125]

At the same time, there were signs that the labour movement's increasing reliance on fundraising lotteries had begun to soften the position of the parliamentary party. Lansbury explained that while he was against all lotteries, if the private charitable type were to be legalized then organizations that wished to run them must be given the leeway to make them work properly.[126] This meant increasing both the percentage of turnover that operators could deduct in expenses[127] and, as Labour's spokesman Tom Williams emphasized, the maximum prize fund.[128] Self-interest was also evident in the strong support that the PLP gave to an amendment exempting small Christmas Draws from the ban on the public sale of lottery tickets.[129]

The licensing of private charitable lotteries did not go far enough to satisfy C. T. Cramp, the labour movement's representative on the Royal Commission. He had broken ranks with the majority of Commissioners by also recommending the legalization of small semi-public charitable lotteries.[130] It is just possible that Cramp's justification had an intellectual component: he suggested during his questioning of one witness that in man there existed an 'instinct for adventure' 'which is a valuable one in some ways'. 'To repress it absolutely

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[124] 27 Labour MPs voted against an amendment in favour of a National Lottery: 6 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, cols. 999-1002. 31 Labour MPs did so when the issue of large-scale lotteries was raised again at the end of the Bill's proceedings. Although, this time, 7 Labour MPs supported the idea: George Daggar, D. L. Davies, William Dobbie, Jack Jones, Neil Maclean, Valentine McEntee, Will Thorne. 13 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, cols.1853-6. William Glenvil Hall, former MP for Portsmouth and employed in Party HQ believed there was the need for 'greater realism' in this area. *Labour*, Nov 1933.

[125] 6 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, col.986.

[126] 7 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, col.1133-4.

[127] Ibid.

[128] 27 June 1934, vol.291, cols.1152-3.

[129] 22 Labour MPs supported an exemption. 2 opposed it. 12 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293 cols.1623-4, 1631-34.

[130] 1933 RC, para.500, at p.145. The majority had recommended that all public lotteries remain illegal other than those 'incidental to bazaar or sale of work'. 1933 RC, para.504-5, at p.147.

would rather lower that instinct'.[131] From this perspective, lotteries and sweepstakes provided the least dangerous way of indulging the propensity to gamble,[132] a view he shared with John Maynard Keynes.[133] But the interests of the trade unions and Labour Party were surely Cramp's greater imperative. His extensive bureaucratic experience guaranteed familiarity with lottery fundraising's importance to the labour movement. Cramp insisted during a private session of the Royal Commission that the 'police interfere in small lotteries when there is no need to do so'.[134]

2. From Football Pool Betting to the 'Football Pools'.

In 1920 Parliament passed, with Labour support, a Bill designed to prevent the writing, printing, publishing or circulating in the UK of any ready money football-betting coupon. Arthur Henderson had recently denounced this form of gambling, suggesting that the best efforts of the Football Association 'to punish the offenders and to purify the sport' had failed to stem the growth of betting on football. 'During recent years there has been a great development of gambling and betting especially in connection with football...that fine old English sport...it is [not] open betting on the football field. It is the lottery and sweepstake... [which is] more dangerous, because more secret'.[135] Another of Labour's leaders, J. H. Thomas, actually seconded the Ready Money Betting Bill, which received an uncontested second reading. Thomas also emphasized gambling's potentially corrupting influence on British sport – the best in the world in his characteristically patriotic view - and insisted that pool betting was 'demoralising'. He understood that Labour's support of the Bill would be

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[131] 1933 RC. Minutes of Evidence. 22nd day, 12 Jan 1933, para.8419. Though it should be noted that Ramsay MacDonald had conceded something similar in his 1905 essay on gambling while maintaining opposition to all forms of gambling. The 'intellectual appetite for risk...must be satisfied either legitimately or illegitimately...[it has] undoubtedly been, and still is to be, a very important spur to energy, and one of the determining factors in national survivals in the future...it is inseparable from human nature...properly controlled and toned, it gives us the successful man of business, the leader and inspirer of men'. MacDonald, 'Gambling and Citizenship', 129.

[132] 1933RC. Minutes of Evidence. 12th day, 20 Oct 1932, para.4344-5.

[133] 1933RC. Minutes of Evidence. 20th day, 15 Dec 1932 (Statement of evidence submitted by J. M. Keynes, para.4 & 7).

[134] HO45/15218/597570/45. Note of 1933 RC, Private Session, 23 March 1933.

[135] These comments were made during the parliamentary debate on premium bonds: 1 Dec 1919, HCD, vol.122, col.164.

unpopular with some of its supporters. However, 'Popularity must be second to our obvious duty'.[136]

Jack Jones agreed. His autobiography had confided a desire 'to see a little more tolerance, a little more friendliness, a little more understanding, a little more freedom – a little more joy in life'.[137] But his libertarianism did not extend to pool betting. Jones associated himself 'as an ordinary working class representative with the desire of this House to prevent gambling'. He 'support[ed] the proposition so far as it is concerned in limiting the power of those who want to engage in gambling'[138] and subsequently argued that the pools' promoters thrived on 'other people's stupidity and their own cupidity'. It was 'a form of gambling which is worse than all the other forms put together, and although I am not a kill joy nor a spoil sport, I hope that eventually some Government will have the courage to face the whole issue'.[139] This included stock exchange gambling: 'Everybody who takes advantage of other people in order to increase his own profits in a speculative sense is a gambler just the same and ought to be punished'.[140] To let the stock exchange gambler go free was class bias and 'working people...object very much to this kind of cant and humbug about one kind of gambling against another'. Complaints about class bias combined with opposition to all forms of gambling were a feature of his political style: one shared, as we have seen, by other Tory Socialists.[141]

The Ready Money Betting Act proved wholly ineffective in stifling the growth of pool betting on football. Promoters evaded its provisions simply by marking their coupons 'credit only' and having customers always pay a week behind.[142] Indeed, by the mid-1930s the football pools were the most popular form of betting in the country. The pools coupon

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[136] 5 March 1920, HCD, vol.126, cols.866-7.
[137] J. Jones, *My Lively Life* (London, 1928), 153.
[138] 5 March 1920, HCD, vol.126, cols.867-9.
[139] 5 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, col.705.
[140] 5 March 1920, HCD, vol.126, cols.867-9.
[141] See above, pp.38-40, and below, p.100.
[142] N. Fishwick, *English Football and Society 1810-1950* (Manchester, 1989), 119-20. G. Sharpe, *Gambling on Goals: A Century of Football Betting* (Edinburgh, 1997), 45. Clapson, *A bit of a flutter,* 169.

became ubiquitous within working-class communities.[143] Up to ten million people were betting on the pools every week by the latter date.[144] The mass popularity of the football pools would eventually overwhelm Labour objections. Before the decade was over the Party had moved to a position closer to neutrality. But there was little sign of the shift to come during the early 1930s. C. T. Cramp adopted an extremely hostile attitude as a Royal Commissioner. He wanted all betting on football prohibited, fixed odds as well as pool. Cramp attached particular weight to the Football Association's evidence.[145] Furthermore, the Labour Party attacked the football pools strongly during the debates on the Betting and Lotteries Bill of 1934. Distinctions were drawn between the pools and other forms of betting. The Independent MP A. P. Herbert explained why.

> I think it is obvious that in betting proper there are certain automatic safeguards for the backer, certain understandings, though they do not amount to contracts. The backer at fixed odds or starting prices stands to win a fixed sum, or a sum which has some reasonable relation to his stake and judgment. On the other hand, the bookmaker stands to win a fixed sum, or he may lose a sum the amount of which he roughly knows. If he says to six people, 'I will give you sixty to one', it may cost him six sixties. So far as the backer is concerned, apart from the occasional welsher, he has a reasonable security that he will receive the reward for which he stipulated and which he deserves for his skill and judgment. The State does not commend such transactions; but since they seem to be equitable the State stands aside. In pool betting the promoter risks nothing at all except his overhead charges...I do not say there is any hanky-panky, but there is a great opportunity for it. Pool betting is not a sporting event as betting with a bookmaker is. It offers exceptional opportunities for profit to the promoters, and there are exceptional lures for the backer. In fact it has most of the features which induced Parliament to prohibit lotteries...we can found such a prohibition [of pool betting] on the simple ground that it is not socially desirable that private persons for private gain should be permitted to exercise such powers without control. And I am assuming that the State does not desire to exercise control itself.[146]

Labour agreed with this analysis. The frontbencher Tom Williams, who led for the Party during discussion of the Betting and Lotteries Bill, set the tone. He was an enthusiastic

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[143] See, for example, J. Hilton's investigation of their popularity. *Why I Go in for the Pools* (London, 1936).
[144] S. Jones, 'The Economic Aspects of Association Football in England, 1918-39', *British Journal of Sports History*, 1, (1984), 286-99, 295. R. Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History* (Oxford, 1989), 182-3.
[145] 1933 RC, para.339-40, at p.100. There were obvious parallels between Cramp's emphasis on the Football Association's opposition to pool betting, and the views previously expressed by J. H. Thomas and Arthur Henderson. Cramp and Thomas, of course, worked closely together at the top of the National Union of Railwaymen until 1931.
[146] 13 May 1938, HCD, vol.335, cols.1941-58.

supporter of horse racing[147] but the football pools were another matter, 'the most extraordinary form of gambling and legalised swindling in this country'.[148] He had suffered himself at the hands of the pools promoters. Having won at odds of 150 to 1 he was shocked to receive winnings at just 6 to 1.[149] 'The alarming growth of this easy means of swindling the poor', he wrote to the *Manchester Guardian* 'calls aloud for Government action. There is no single redeeming feature in it. The whole business is organized for private gain without a thought for the social consequences'. Rather uncharacteristically, he quoted Kant in support of his position: 'Act only on such a maxim as thou canst will to be a universal law...morality lies in behaving as if it [one's own action] would [decide other men's actions] and having faith that in the long run it will...Don't claim the right to bet unless you not merely are willing that all others should do so, but can wish that they should'.[150]

The specific context in which discussion of the pools proceeded encouraged Labour's offensive. The 1933 Royal Commission had recommended banning pool betting and the National Government originally followed this advice in its drafting of the Bill.[151] However, eventually deciding that the popularity of the football pools precluded this course of action,[152] the Government removed the pool betting clauses.[153] Labour could therefore claim the moral high ground as well as the sanction of the Royal Commission: John Moores, founder of one of the biggest pools companies was a Conservative supporter and parliamentary candidate on more than one occasion,[154] and Labour MPs asked whether the decision to spare pool betting was a consequence of the Government's closeness to the largest pool

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[147] See his autobiography *Digging for Britain: the autobiography of Lord Williams of Barnburgh* (London, 1965), 22, 127, 133, 185.
[148] HCD: 5 Nov 1934, vol.293, 683, 685-6. 7 Nov 1934, vol.293, col.1159. 12 Nov 1934, vol.293, 1585-9.
[149] 27 June 1934, HCD, vol.291, col.1154.
[150] *Manchester Guardian*, 13 Nov 1934. The Kant quote was taken by Williams from Canon Peter Green's widely read anti-gambling tract. P. Green, *Betting & Gambling* (London, 1924).
[151] 26 April 1934, HLD, vol.91, col.425.
[152] The government was under particular pressure from Conservative Associations who appeared to be resolutely against the Bill. Copies of Conservative Association resolutions are in HO45/16317/673073/71. See also *Manchester Guardian*, 3 April 1936 for a retrospective account of the influence of 'Conservative clubmen' in getting the pool betting clauses removed from the Bill.
[153] HLD: 26 April 1934, vol.91, col.779. 30 May 1934, vol.92, col.562.
[154] He stood against Arthur Henderson in the Clay Cross by-election of Sept 1933 and again stood unsuccessfully at Nuneaton in 1935.

companies.[155] Thirty-seven Labour MPs backed the reinstatement of the clauses banning the pools. Just two Labour MPs opposed this amendment,[156] which was overwhelmingly defeated by 250 votes to 68.[157] Labour also turned discussion of the clauses of the Bill pertaining to newspaper competitions into a protest against the government's retreat on football pools.[158]

When it became clear that the government had no intention of reinstating the deleted clauses, Labour became more constructive. Williams endorsed the veteran Liberal anti-gambler Isaac Foot's suggestion of statutory limits on the profits of the pools promoters.[159] So too did Tom Smith (like Williams a Yorkshire mining MP): 'Football pool betting as carried on today is nothing more nor less than exploitation'.[160] But rather than prohibition Smith wanted regulation to ensure that punters got 'a square deal'. If, as the ILP MP John McGovern argued, the Labour Party's attack on the pools was 'narrowed down in every speech to a condemnation of the large amount of profit taken by the pool promoters' then administrative regulation was the obvious solution.[161] Subsequent events certainly suggested a rapid Labour retreat from prohibition.

In the spring of 1936 the Simonite Liberal MP R. J. Russell introduced his Pool Betting (Prohibition) Bill. It was overwhelmingly defeated by 287 votes to 24. Labour's attitude was entirely different to that of eighteen months before. The much larger PLP returned in 1935 displayed no appetite for banning the football pools. This was evident even before the debate took place. The Parliamentary Executive's recommendation that Tom Williams 'watch' the

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[155] HCD: 5 Nov 1934, vol.293, cols.689, 695. Mary Stocks subsequently recalled that the ban on pools was removed from the Bill because of 'well organised financially interested pressure groups'. 19 May 1966, HLD, vol.274, col.1148. In fact, as already noted, it seems more likely that opposition from Conservative clubs and associations persuaded the National Government to drop the pool betting prohibition from the Bill. See, for example, the letter from the Conservative MP John Gretton to the Home Sec. HO45/16318/673073/172, 1 Nov 1934.
[156] These were David M. Adams & Valentine McEntee.
[157] 5 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, cols.711-14.
[158] 7 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, cols.1165-8. See also: 12 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, cols.1585-89.
[159] 12 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, cols.1577-84, 1585-89.
[160] 5 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, cols.695-6. 12 Nov 1934, vol.293, cols.1607-8.
[161] 3 April 1936, HCD, vol.310, cols.2363-66.

debate on the PLP's behalf was overturned on account of his 'strong support' for the Bill. The Party leader Clement Attlee was chosen instead.[162] Sixty-six Labour MPs subsequently opposed the Bill, with only 13 supporting it.[163]

This rump was mostly Protestant.[164] The Bill's other Labour backers were the Anglican George Lansbury, B. W. Gardner, MP for West Ham (though from an ILP rather than SDF background), Tom Williams, and Will Thorne. The Home Secretary John Simon suggested in the football pools connection that to 'regulate the evil [was] distinct from attacking it at the root'. It was a 'very questionable proceeding to go regulating social evils by Government machinery'. Simon asked why the general taxpayer and the machinery of Government [should] be devoted to such things'.[165] The small number of Labour MPs who backed prohibition probably agreed with him and with the *Manchester Guardian* who described administrative regulation as 'official recognition of their [the pools promoters] enterprise'.[166] Socialist objections to gambling were also aired. Lansbury and Rhys Davies cited opposition to disproportionate reward.[167] James Barr and Tom Williams denied that a ban was an infringement of individual liberty. Barr 'thought that in our politics we had abandoned the idea of laissez-faire, and had come to the point where liberty had to be wisely curtailed'. Known for his tendency towards literary allusion,[168] he was

> as Thomas Carlyle said, against 'the liberty to die of starvation', and against the freedom claimed by those so nobly exposed by John Milton, 'That bawl for freedom in theor senseless mood, And still revolt when truth would set them free; Licence they mean when they say liberty, For who loves that must first be wise and good.[169]

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[162] *PLP Minutes*, 1 April 1936.
[163] 3 April 1936, HCD, vol.310, cols.2383-8.
[164] C. H. Ammon, James Barr, Rhys Davies, G. M. Garro-Jones, Duncan Graham, David Grenfell, Alfred Holland, Morgan Jones, Sir Robert Young. Ibid. Cecil Wilson although he did not vote at Second Reading had helped 'bring the Bill in'. 7 Feb 1936, HCD, vol.308, col.502. *Daily Mail*, 24 Feb 1936.
[165] HO16679/673249/105. Minutes of Meeting with Christian Social Council Committee on Gambling, 3 Feb 1936.
[166] *Manchester Guardian*, 4 April 1936.
[167] 3 April 1936, HCD, vol.310, cols.2373, 2382-4.
[168] *DLB*, vol.VIII, 9-14.
[169] 3 April 1936, HCD, vol.310, cols.2332-3. Also quoted in J. Barr, *Lang Syne; memoirs* (Glasgow, 1949), 222.

Williams suggested, in classical Labour fashion, that traditional conceptions of liberty were often no more than a convenient cover for the economic exploitation of the powerless.[170] The *Manchester Guardian* drew a line between economic and social liberty. 'Free trade for gaming schools' was unacceptable.[171]

The Bill's sponsor R. J. Russell placed his opposition to the pools in the context of the economic depression. 'During the time of trade depression and social unrest the amount of money involved has become very great, and the social and individual degradation has corresponded therewith'.[172] The pools' promoters replied that they provided a service which

> has acted as a wholesome distraction in the present times of almost unprecedented stress and strain. Its attractiveness by no means depends on the betting element but is largely due to the interest and pleasure derived from the use of knowledge of the game and the form of the teams, from following their fortune, and from discussions in friendly rivalry of opinion between competitors.[173]

There was more than an element of truth to their claim. James Chuter Ede observed with the benefit of hindsight that 'during the great depression, when hundreds of thousands of people were unemployed with no chance of exercising any real sense of responsibility, they found in the pools an opportunity to assert their individuality and the power of making a choice'.[174]

However, it is doubtful whether many of the 66 Labour MPs who opposed the Bill did so on this basis. Few actively endorsed pool betting.[175] Many more were cognizant of its popularity among their constituents. By the second half of the 1930s the pools were the most popular form of gambling in the land. The *Manchester Guardian* argued that the Bill's 'true concern is not with the man who contributes to the pools but with the man who withdraws

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[170] 3 April 1936, HCD, vol.310, cols.2347-56.
[171] *Manchester Guardian*, 4 April 1936.
[172] HO/16679/673249/99. Copy of letter from R. J. Russell (undated).
[173] HO16680/673249/154. Copy of letter from Football Pools Promoters Association (FPPA), 1 April 1936.
[174] 11 May 1960, HCD, vol.622, col.467. Also quoted by Hill, *Horse power*, 56.
[175] For a partial exception see the libertarian socialist Ernest Thurtle's contribution. 3 April 1936, HCD, vol.310, col.2384-5.

from them, week by week, what seems to him his due and unchallengeable percentage'. It pointed out the extent of the gambling facilities available to the working classes.

> Are poor men denied access to the 'silver rings' of racecourses? Are poor men turned away from dog tracks?...if pools were stopped...would the poor man be denied his older consolation of combination credit betting on football at fixed odds?...though the odds might be less than he deserved he would at least know what they were in advance and the dreamed-of prize would not be a leap in the dark where only the pool-holder is certain of scoring.[176]

But the millions who now filled in coupons each week were hardly likely to be convinced by this argument. Tom Williams informed Parliament that his support of the 1936 Bill had occasioned 'more letters threatening withdrawal of support' than any other issue. His Divisional Labour Party had discussed the issue for two hours before endorsing his position.[177] Williams was certainly more hostile to the football pools than most Labour MPs, but he could afford to be sitting for the Don Valley, an impregnable mining constituency.[178] MPs with smaller majorities, of whom there were many more than in the previous Parliament, were more susceptible to popular sentiment. The Labour Party's support for the Ready Money Betting Act of 1920 had been given at a time when the football pools were only beginning to emerge as a mass form of gambling. Its support for prohibition during the debates on the 1934 Betting and Lotteries Bill had been encouraged by the particular circumstances in which that discussion proceeded. But by 1936 the popularity of the pools made them unassailable.[179] Their rate of growth had accelerated significantly.[180] 'By the late 1930s about 10 million people were on the promoters' books, and about one-third of the whole population at some time returned coupons'.[181] MPs troubled by their conscience could console themselves with the knowledge of the small stakes involved in most pool betting.[182]

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[176] *Manchester Guardian*, 29 Feb 1936.
[177] 3 April 1936, HCD, vol.310, cols.2347-56, 2368. See also Jones's citation of Williams speech: *Workers at Play*, 173. (Though Jones gets the date wrong in his citation).
[178] Williams' majority had been more than 20 000 in 1929. Even in 1931 his majority was 8 000.
[179] This was evident in the popular press' attitude to the Bill. See the series of cuttings in HO45/16680/673249/15A.
[180] Turnover, which was £8m in 1933, was £18m by 1935/6 (and £22m in 1938/9). 1951RC, para.110, at p.31. Also, Munting, *An economic and social history of gambling*, 130.
[181] McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class*, 110.
[182] 1933RC, para.338, at p.99. McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class*, 110-2.

3. Canine Casinos: The Emergence of Urban Dog Racing

Dog racing had roots in working class culture especially in areas like the North of England where 'flapping' tracks and hare coursing were popular.[183] This history encouraged the *Daily Herald* to welcome the arrival of organized urban dog racing. The first track had opened at Belle Vue, Manchester, in the summer of 1926 and others soon followed in all the major cities, especially London. In April 1927, the *Daily Herald* suggested that the sport enabled the greyhound to 'enjoy and exhibit to the full that speed and grace which delight both the runner and the beholder'. Furthermore, it hoped that the modern dog track, with its use of the electric hare, would entirely supplant the 'cruelty' of coursing.[184] The opening of the White City, London track in the summer of 1927 occasioned a front-page story, 'Dog racing has a great start', and was followed up during August by a colour feature.[185]

The *Daily Herald's* optimism soon vanished. By September it had become apparent to the paper that organized dog racing was no more than an opportunity for gambling. 'Only one subject was discussed – the chances of certain dogs and the prices to be offered by the bookmakers'. Questions were being asked about the promoters of these dog tracks, suggested the *Daily Herald*, men 'who gazed with approval on the great oval wall of men and women who represented the half-sovereigns and shillings that matter so much to the track owner'.[186] The paper urged support for the 'commendable' Dog Racing Local Option Bill introduced in March 1928 by the Scottish Conservative MP and novelist John Buchan. The Bill's objective was to give local authorities the power to prohibit dog racing. The *Daily Herald* cited opposition to disproportionate reward as reason to back it.[187] The paper subsequently criticized the Conservative Government's decision not to back the Bill.[188]

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[183] Clapson, A *bit of a flutter*, 143-4.
[184] *Daily Herald*, 26 April 1927. See also 29 March, 2 April 1927.
[185] *Daily Herald*, 21 June, 22 August 1927.
[186] *Daily Herald*, 17 Sept 1927. For a discussion of the paper's attitude to dog racing which covers similar ground see Richards, *The bloody circus*, 117.
[187] *Daily Herald*, 15 March 1928.
[188] *Daily Herald*, 29 Nov 1928.

As attendances surged, and dog tracks sprung up all over the country, the issue appeared an increasingly significant one. A 'Revolt against dog-racing is rising in all parts of England' declared the *Christian Weekly* at the beginning of 1928.[189] Total attendances, 5.6 million in 1927, had surged to 13.7 million a year later.[190] 'Greyhound racing' was added to the list of subjects approved by the PLP for parliamentary debate at the beginning of February.[191] Labour quickly entered the issue into the parliamentary ballot (although it did so under the more prosaic title of 'The Law Relating to Gambling').[192] Two aspects of modern dog racing made it particularly controversial. One was that it provided the working classes with facilities for continuous on-course cash betting for the first time. Tracks were open all year round, many held meetings almost every night, and most were situated in urban areas. According to the *Daily Mail*, the 'principal ground of objection' was that greyhound racing encouraged betting by people who cannot afford it.[193] The *Manchester Guardian* was 'certain that the economic effects of the new pastime have been disastrous, especially in the immediate neighbourhood of the track'.[194]

The other was the absence of any sporting dimension. The urban dog track was merely a place to bet. It was more casino than sporting arena. It had not emerged spontaneously: it was the creation of capitalists seeking profits. *The Times* gave short shrift to the

> specious proposition that dog racing has a right to the same recognition which has been given to horse racing...if dog racing were as much of a sport and as little of a business as horse racing, and if it were a compact and strictly disciplined activity instead of an uncontrolled series of commercial enterprises ramifying away into every large town, there would not be much for Parliament to discuss.[195]

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[189] *Christian Weekly*, 12 Jan 1928.
[190] 1933 RC. Minutes of Evidence. 5th day, 15 Sept. 1932 (Statement of Evidence submitted by Lord Askwith on behalf of the National Greyhound Racing Society).
[191] *Parliamentary Executive minutes*, 6 Feb 1928. *PLP minutes,* 7 Feb 1928.
[192] *Parliamentary Executive minutes*, 15 Feb 1928. This was not the first change of title. 'Dog Racing' had become 'Anti-Gambling' before being changed to 'The Law Relating to Gambling' in the Labour Party's list of potential motions. *Parliamentary Executive minutes*, 14 Feb 1928.
[193] *Daily Mail*, 19 Dec 1927. See also *The Times*, 8 Sept 1927, *Daily Mail*, 27 Oct 1927.
[194] *Manchester Guardian*, 28 Oct 1927.
[195] *The Times*, 15 Feb 1932. The paper had endorsed Buchan's Local Option Bill. *The Times*, 11 May 1928.

Twenty-five thousand pounds had been invested in the first modern dog track at Belle Vue Manchester by its owners. Sixty-two greyhound race companies were registered at a total capital of £7 million a year later. Between 200 and 300 bookmakers could be found at several of the licensed tracks in the early 1930s. Even during the slump, the Greyhound Racing Association (GRA) Trust, which controlled the operation of a number of urban tracks, increased its net profits from £85 519 to £131 867.[196] Evidence submitted to the Royal Commission confirmed that by the end of 1931 there were more than 220 dog tracks around the country.[197]

The Labour Party never adopted an official policy on dog racing. It refused, for example, to participate in a public conference on the dangers of greyhound racing, arranged by the National Emergency Committee of Christian Citizens (NECCC).[198] But many Labour MPs expressed their disapproval of the way in which dog racing was developing. The Protestants C. G. Ammon and Cecil Wilson were Treasurer and Honorary Secretary respectively of the NECCC. Philip Snowden described dog racing as 'demoraliz[ing] the habits of the people'.[199] Its rapid growth encouraged Ramsay MacDonald to return to the themes of his 1905 essay on 'Gambling and Citizenship'.[200] He told a Labour rally in Blackpool:

> You see to-day wealth flaunted about as it has never been flaunted before. You see Paganism which is having an unfortunate effect on our people. It is this moral curse of the plutocracy which is upon us all. It is not only the wealthy people, but the poor. The curse, poison and disease has invaded us all; you see this in the greyhound racing. I am not authorized to talk for my party. I am not talking for my friends or my party. I am talking for myself, and I say that if our people sacrifice strong moral rectitude for the flashy enticements of the day and the hour, as did the people of Rome, then we are ruined as Rome was. My challenge to the poor as well as the rich is: Let us have courage, by solemn and sober lives, to face the problems which this nation has to face if it is to emerge successfully'.[201]

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[196] Miers, *Regulating Commercial Gambling*, 307. S. Jones, *Workers at play*, 40. Holt, *Sport and the British*, 186.
[197] 1933RC, para.142, at p.41.
[198] *NEC minutes*, 7 Feb 1928. Discussed in Jones, 'The British Labour Movement and Working Class Leisure, 1918-1919', 224. Catterall, 'The Free Churches and the Labour Party 1918-1939', 346.
[199] Speech on 22 Nov 1928 quoted in H. Carter, *Facts about Greyhound Racing*, (London, 1928), 15.
[200] MacDonald, 'Gambling and Citizenship', esp., 120-1, 124.
[201] 2 Oct 1927, quoted in T. P. Ritzema, *Decline & Fall: Shall England Share the Fate of Rome?* (Blackburn, 1930), 11.

Opposition to dog racing was expressed via support of Buchan's Local Option Bill. More than 280 backbenchers across the parties signed his motion calling for local authority control of dog track licensing.[202] This included around 100 Labour MPs.[203] More than 80 Labour MPs, around half of the PLP,[204] subsequently voted for the Bill at second reading. Only four Labour MPs opposed it: George Buchanan claimed that the licensing of dog tracks by local government would create a vested interest with serious consequences for the conduct of municipal politics.[205] Josiah Wedgwood was libertarian on gambling,[206] while Henry Slesser, an Anglo-Catholic lawyer and Solicitor-General in the first Labour Government, may have had concerns about the constitutional implications of Local Option.[207] The Independent Methodist Wilfrid Wellock may have been one of the four MPs who, according to the *Christian Weekly*, opposed the Bill by accident rather than design.[208] He subsequently backed the Bill (see below). Some Labour MPs who did not cast a vote probably shared the Glasgow ILPer Campbell Stephen's view that the issue was not an important one,[209] but more agreed with Ellen Wilkinson that

> The Bill [is] badly needed [and] gives the local authority power to refuse licences for greyound tracks, and thus...prevents land urgently needed for housing being bought by the well-filled coffers of this questionable sport. A more drastic bill ought to have been introduced months ago, before powerful vested interests had been allowed to grow up.[210]

The Labour MPs Joseph Compton, Herbert Dunnico, J. H. Thomas and Alfred Salter had helped bring the Bill in and were signatories to it. The first three had also represented the Labour Party when the Home Secretary received a deputation on the issue at the end of

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[202] *The Times & Daily Telegraph*, 31 March 1928.
[203] *Manchester Guardian*, 2 March 1928.
[204] Labour won 151 seats at the 1924 General Election. They gained a further 11 MPs over the course of the Parliament.
[205] 11 May 1928, HCD, vol.217, cols.601-5. Buchanan claimed that drink local option had had exactly these consequences in Glasgow.
[206] See p.46, above.
[207] Home Office officials, for example, were certainly concerned about the devolution of power to local authorities proposed by the Bill. HO45/14222/499193/55. Memo, 15 Dec 1927.
[208] *Christian Weekly*, 17 May 1928.
[209] Quoted by Ellen Wilkinson, *New Leader*, May 18, 1928.
[210] Ibid.

1927.[211] It was Salter though, who was closest to the caricature of a puritan opposed to all forms of pleasure. A Quaker, he was fiercely opposed to drink and attacked the influence of the Club and Institute Union on Labour's policy. He also believed sex outside of marriage to be a sin.[212] But Salter explained his opposition to gambling in socialist rather than theological terms. The latter was 'a characteristic capitalist mentality. Don't organise to secure comfort and decency and a fair share of the world's wealth for all, but gamble in the hope that you may live ever after on the labour of others. It is a doctrine incompatible with socialist philosophy'.[213]

Dunnico, secretary of the Peace Society and a self-improving Baptist Minister close to MacDonald and distant from the trade unions, was far more liberal than Salter on the drink issue. 'He believed in liberty and was opposed to minorities dictating to majorities'.[214] But he also possessed a 'strongly moralistic streak' and 'often made reference in his speeches to the corrupting nature of popular culture'.[215] Dunnico thought dog racing the 'personification of calculating greed and folly...allowed to spread it would become a cancer spreading corruption to every part of the body politic'. The dog tracks were "fleecing the working man, making 'mugs' of them".[216]

Joseph Compton, a National Union of Vehicle Builders' (NUVB) sponsored MP, appeared a less obvious anti-gambler. But he explained that he was

> Opposed to all forms of betting, but especially to this low form of betting, because it draws its chief support from the working classes, and they cannot afford to bet...Wealth galore is squandered in districts full of ill-health, poverty and unemployment, where there are families which do not know where to look for the next meal. Capital is needed for industry. You cannot get it. But you can have money galore for promoting greyhound racing schemes. [We] have to start a crusade against this evil...If we do

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[211] *Daily Express,* 21 Dec 1927. *The Times*, 21 Dec 1927.
[212] F. Brockway, *Bermondsey story: the life of Alfred Salter* (London, 1949), 160, 182-3, 236.
[213] *Labour*, May 1934. Quoted in Jones, 'The British Labour Movement and Working Class Leisure, 1918-1939', 227.
[214] *DLB*, xii, 83-94. His attitude to temperance disappointed the Free Churches. Catterall, 'The Free Churches and the Labour Party 1918-1939', 349.
[215] *DLB*, xii, 83-94.
[216] *Manchester Guardian*, 9 Dec 1927.

> nothing we are going to create a generation of men and women not dissimilar to that which preceded the fall of the Roman Empire.[217]

Compton repeated these economic objections to gambling in his contribution to a debate in *Labour* magazine. He added political arguments: suggesting that working-class betting retarded the organizational development of the working classes. Nor was Compton a supporter of administrative regulation: 'Gambling cannot be made decent by legislation'.[218]

J. H. Thomas's reputation as a gambler and his enthusiasm for horse racing were discussed in the last chapter. None of this inhibited him from emerging as Labour's highest-profile critic of dog racing. Thomas led all-party deputations to the Home Office asking for government action. Men were asking their employers for " 'subs' in advance", Thomas knew of 'instances in which the whole week's wages were mortgaged before Friday night'.[219] 'It is an abominable thing if the Sunday dinner of thousands of children is dependent on the result of a dog race on Saturday night' he declared.[220] The Home Secretary Joynson-Hicks informed the Chancellor, Churchill, of 'Labour sources [who] state that betting on dogs is leading to petty thefts within trade unions'.[221] Thomas was the most likely font of these claims.

His Labour colleague George Buchanan accused Thomas of hypocrisy. He opposed dog racing while at the same time sitting on the board of a newspaper, the *Daily Herald*, which published greyhound tips.[222] He also came under attack from 'A clerk', named A. Davis, who 'with alarm and surprise [noted] that you headed the deputation...asking in effect for the abolition of greyhound racing'. Davis argued that the money bet on greyhound racing was not new expenditure: it was simply diverted from betting on horse racing or football or from

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[217] Ibid. Compton had been elected to Labour National Executive Committee (NEC) in 1925. The Rome analogy appears to have been a popular rhetorical device.
[218] *Labour*, May 1934.
[219] *Daily News*, 21 Dec 1927.
[220] *Daily Express*, 21 Dec 1927.
[221] HO45/14227/499/193/55. Letter, Home Sec to Chancellor, 20 Dec 1927. For examples of theft of this kind see T. Griffiths, *The Lancashire working classes c.1880-1930* (Oxford, 2001), 213.
[222] 11 May 1928, HCD, vol.217, col.604. Thomas had links to the paper but he was not a director. *Daily Herald*, 12 May 1928.

the consumption of alcohol. Not only did the working classes continue to bet in moderation ('I have heard of no single instance of family trouble in the London Dock area caused through greyhound betting'), but the diversion of spending from drink to dog racing had prevented many a man from 'getting loathsomely drunk' and 'becoming a wild beast to his wife and family'.[223]

This view had supporters within official circles. The Home Office, an institution generally hostile to gambling,[224] appeared relaxed about dog racing's emergence.[225] 'Officials were quick to caution against hasty action or, indeed, to adopt a censorious response'.[226] One official emphasized the absence of cruelty as compared to coursing and went as far as to suggest that dog racing was the form of betting 'open to the least objection'.[227] Another noted the existence of a small but lucrative export trade in greyhounds and insisted that dog racing was a spectator sport as well as a medium for betting. As such, it was a favourable alternative to pubs and cinemas: "Good folk should rejoice at a rival attraction, which unlike the films, is wholly British, and 'cheers but not inebriates' ".[228] These views reflected police reports from dog tracks.[229]

Such evidence had little impact on the views of those Labour MPs who opposed dog racing. Their objections were usually a priori. Thomas recalled in his autobiography:

> The only sport (frankly I do not regard it as a sport) that I have resolutely refused to encourage is that of greyhound racing. To be honest I have not attended a single meeting, but I have indisputable information. From the commencement, I was opposed to it, regarding it as demoralizing and calculated to turn the country into a huge casino; nothing that has happened has altered my view.[230]

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[223] HO45/14222/499163/69. Copy of letter, 22 Dec 1927.
[224] Dixon, *From Prohibition*, 197.
[225] See file HO45/14222/499163/16.
[226] Miers, *Regulating Commercial Gambling*, 307-8. The National Greyhound Racing Club (NGRC) claimed accurately that the government had dismissed the case against dog racing. *The Times*, 30 March 1928.
[227] HO45/14222/499163/2. Memo (undated, end of Nov 1926).
[228] HO45/14222/499193/55. Memo, 15 Dec 1927.
[229] File HO45/14709/512758/45 contains summary of Chief Constables' views. See also HO45/14222/499163/11. Memo, 6 Aug 1927.
[230] Thomas, *My Story*, 293.

Neither did he provide evidence for his specific claim that dog racing was usually crooked with chewing gum being put on dog's paws and the like.[231] More credible, if politically controversial, was his insistence that it would be a

> profound mistake to treat horse racing and dog racing on an equal footing: there was no substance in the argument that the former was a rich man's and the latter a poor man's sport. In the main people attended horse races in the country on Saturday afternoons, but dog racing facilities were provided every afternoon and evening in, or close to, urban areas.[232]

Thomas was aware of the political dangers and claimed that 'from the day dog-racing came in he had abstained, so that he might not give the judicious cause to grieve, from attending horse-racing'.[233] This did not prevent a *Daily Herald* reader criticizing his distinction between horse and dog racing.[234] The Home Office also suggested that restricting dog racing 'would inevitably be seen as class legislation'.[235] But few Labour MPs appeared to agree, or at least did not feel strongly enough to criticise the Dog Racing Local Option Bill publicly. Trade unionists like Will Thorne[236] and Joseph Tinker[237] supported the Bill without reservation. ASLEF's senior official, John Bromley, thought the Bill an opportunity to 'put good or evil before money'.[238] Dog racing was sheer capitalism. According to John Banfield, General Secretary of the Amalgamated Union of Bakers, Confectioners, and Allied Workers, it was the apotheosis of 'get-rich-quick' consumption and 'something for nothing'.[239] The Cooperative MP, R. C. Morrison, complained about the practical effects of

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[231] 11 May 1928, HCD, vol.217, cols.567-73.
[232] CAB27/544. Cabinet Committee on Lotteries and Betting, (CLB (33) 1st meeting, 18 Oct 1933).
[233] *Christian Weekly*, 17 May 1928.
[234] *Daily Herald*, 15 May 1928.
[235] Miers, *Regulating Commercial Gambling*, 309.
[236] 20 Feb 1928, HCD, vol.213, cols.1252. 14 March 1928, HCD, vol.214, col.1928. *Daily Herald* 17 March 1928.
[237] 21 Feb 1928, HCD, vol.213, col.1412.
[238] 11 May 1928, HCD, vol.217, col.628. Bromley, a craft conscious trade unionist, 'could appear on the political Left'. Howell, *MacDonald's Party*, 216.
[239] 27 June 1934, vol.291, cols.1228-31.

urban dog racing,[240] but his criticism was underpinned by the perception that dog racing was 'the latest method of swindling the public'.[241]

The SDFers Jack Jones and Fred Montague agreed that dog racing was one of the worst forms of gambling. According to the former, the dog track was 'a gambling saturnalia'.[242] The latter insisted that 'the packing of people together and forcing the most sordid elements of gambling upon their attention is morally harmful and also socially harmful – which is even more important'.[243] Such language brought the working-class libertarian and anti-puritan Montague on to territory generally occupied by fundamentalist anti-gamblers. The National Anti-Gambling League's John Gulland, for example, told the 1932 Royal Commission that 'in the inflammatory atmosphere of a closely packed betting arena, like these [dog] tracks, there is an inducement among the members of the crowd to act more irrationally and recklessly than they would as separate individuals'.[244]

Men like Jones and Montague were careful to combine support for the Dog Racing Local Option Bill with complaints about the wider class bias of the betting laws.[245] But some Labour opponents of dog racing appeared in agreement with Churchill who claimed: 'If there is any subject in the world in which there may be one law for the rich and another for the poor, it is in regard to gambling, since the former gamble with luxuries and the latter with housekeeping money for food and clothing'.[246] Thomas argued that there were 'occasions when we have to protect people from themselves'.[247]

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[240] HCD: 15 Dec 1927, vol.211, cols. 2475-6; 11 May 1928, vol.217, cols. 607-10; 17 Nov & 24 Nov 1927, vol. 210, cols.1091-2, 2036-39.
[241] 'The Dog Racing Swindle', *North Tottenham Citizen*, Feb 1928. Quoted in Jones, 'The British Labour Movement and Working Class Leisure', 220.
[242] 11 May 1928, HCD, vol.217, cols.618-21.
[243] Ibid, cols.589-93.
[244] 1933RC. Minutes of Evidence. 8th day, 30 Sept 1932 (Statement of evidence submitted by NAGL, para.52).
[245] 11 May 1928, HCD, vol.217, cols.589-93, 618-21.
[246] HO45/14222/499193/55. Chancellor to Home Sec, 19 & 21 December, 1927.
[247] 11 May 1928, HCD, vol.217, cols.567-73.

The Dog Racing Local Option Bill gained a second reading by the overwhelming margin of 222 votes to 18.[248] But further progress was not forthcoming. Buchan had recommitted his Bill to a Committee of the Whole House in the hope of expediting its passage before the summer recess. Supporters of dog racing, and the dog track owners, employed wrecking tactics.[249] While several Labour members were detained at an important PLP meeting, opponents of the Bill tried to kill it. The knots in which working-class libertarians like Montague tied themselves over gambling were evident once more. Having supported the Bill at second reading, Montague now seconded the wrecking amendment. The other Labour MPs present (Compton, Dunnico, Tom Williams, J. H. Hudson, Wellock) opposed the amendment and with the vote tied 13-13, the Chair, who happened to be the Labour MP Edward Short, used his casting vote against the motion and it fell.[250] The reprieve was a brief one. Despite the efforts of Herbert Dunnico and others, the Prime Minister confirmed that no time could be found for the Bill before the summer recess.[251]

The government explained that the choice was between the Tote and Dog Racing Bills and it favoured the former. As the *Manchester Guardian* put it, 'to allow the Totalisator Bill to live [the] Buchan [Bill] was allowed to die'.[252] This further antagonized the Labour Party,[253] which had, as we have seen, opposed the Tote Bill.[254] During the summer recess, the Archbishop of Canterbury wrote privately to the Prime Minister asking that the Local Option Bill be given further consideration.[255] However, the Home Secretary now claimed that the popularity of dog racing had passed its peak.[256] *The Daily Herald* noted that the adoption of

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[248] A motion to refer the issue to a Select Committee was rejected by 185 votes to 36. *Daily Herald*, 12 May 1928.
[249] *Daily Herald*, 26 June 1928.
[250] HO45/14222/4999163/210. *The Times*, 18 July 1928. *Daily Herald*, 18 July 1928. *Manchester Guardian*, 27 July 1928.
[251] *Daily Herald*, 29 and 30 June 1928. See also 19 July 1928, HCD, vol.220, cols.602-3.
[252] *Manchester Guardian*, 17 Nov 1932.
[253] See the comments of Joseph Kenworthy, Tom Williams, Will Thorne, Joseph Compton and Wilfrid Wellock. 19 July 1928, HCD, vol.220, cols.602-3. See also the comments of A. V. Alexander, 27 July 1928, HCD, vol.221, col.1656.
[254] See section 3 of previous chapter.
[255] 23 Oct 1928. Copy in HO45/14222.
[256] *Daily Mail*, 28 Nov 1928. *The Times*, 30 Nov 1928.

a declinist perspective provided the government with an excuse to refuse the Bill progress.[257] Its suspicions were justified. John Buchan had actually asked Joynson-Hicks to provide the statement so as to placate supporters of his Bill.[258]

The Government supported a Juvenile Betting (Prevention) Bill as a further sop to opponents of dog racing.[259] J. H. Thomas had demanded legislation to stop children betting at dog tracks.[260] Compton claimed: 'I have stood outside Belle Vue and mixed with the crowd, listening to the views of quite young boys and girls, generally expressed to one another in quite lurid language, on how much they had lost inside'.[261] But allegations of widespread underage betting derived from ideological objections to dog track betting rather than empirical evidence.[262] Compton subsequently admitted the issue to be a red herring.[263] The *New Leader* suggested dryly that banning 'father' from betting might be more useful.[264]

The Labour Government did not pursue the issue after the General Election of 1929. Continuing suggestions that the dog racing bubble had burst were one reason why.[265] Another, more significant one, was the determination of Labour Ministers, whatever their personal views of dog racing, to avoid unnecessary controversy. The Attorney General William Jowitt wrote to the Home Secretary J. R. Clynes informing him that several MPs had complained to him about Sunday dog racing. Jowitt, a former Liberal who, as Howell noted, lacked empathy with the working classes,[266] thought dog-racing 'a mere device by which undesirable people gether (sic) together to engage in an orgy of gambling'. The Home Secretary responded that 'the general question of the evils attendant upon greyhound

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[257] *Daily Herald*, 29 Nov 1928.
[258] HO45/14222. Correspondence between Buchan and Home Sec., 21 Nov & 27 Nov 1928.
[259] HCD: 30 March 1928, vol.215, cols.1555-70 & 22 June 1928, vol.218, cols.1970-95.
[260] *Daily Mail*, 26 Jan 1928.
[261] Compton quoted in H. Carter, *Facts about Greyhound Racing* (London, 1928), 7.
[262] See the comments of the Conservative MP Frank Meyer: 11 May 1928, HCD, vol.217, col.558.
[263] 11 May 1928, HCD, vol.217, cols.552-55.
[264] *New Leader*, 13 Nov 1928.
[265] *Morning Post*, 10 Jan 1929. *Daily Herald*, 5 April 1929.
[266] Howell cites Jowitt's attitude to the 1929 Unemployment Insurance Bill effectively: 'Are we to legislate on the lines that these people should think that they need do nothing themselves; that they should wait at home, sit down, smoke their pipes and wait until an offer comes to them?' *MacDonald's Party*, 204. Also quoted in Skidelsky, *Politicians and the Slump*, 130.

racing...is also one upon which a great deal of controversy exists...it would be quite impossible for the Government to give any encouragement to such a Bill or to devote any Government time to it.[267] The Home Secretary had equally little to say about the (possibly illegal) installation of totalisators on some dog tracks.[268] Backbench MPs, sensitive to Ministers' preferences, did not push their government on the issue.

Only after Labour departed office did the Party revisit the dog racing issue. The frontbencher Tom Williams raised the matter of dog totes repeatedly.[269] The Party supported a Local Option Bill introduced at the end of 1932.[270] Labour's support appeared unanimous at second reading.[271] However, when the Bill returned from standing committee,[272] it became clear that there were dissentients. David M. Adams, Thomas Groves, David Logan and Neil Maclean emerged as defenders of dog racing. They supported an amendment designed to dilute the Bill; subsequently they supported another, which aimed to kill it.[273] Adams, MP for Poplar South, TGWU official, and former soldier, was libertarian on betting.[274] Groves' attitude was more complex. He was on record as opposing the 'pernicious system of gambling' in which 'promoters of racing, whether for horses or dogs, are merely establishing more racecourses in order to amass fortunes at the expense of the financial and moral stability of the people'.[275] However, by the early 1930s Groves had become an advocate for the British Greyhound Tracks Control Society, an organization representing mostly provincial

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[267] HO45/14709/512578/6. Correspondence between Lord Chancellor and Home Sec., 19 & 23 Dec 1930.
[268] 25 June 1931, HCD, vol.254, col.599.
[269] HCD: 25 Feb 1932, vol.262, col.540. 2 June 1932, vol.266, cols.1304-5. 22 June 1932, vol.267, cols.1293-4. 20 Oct 1932, vol.269, cols.301-2. 16 Nov 1932, vol.270, cols.1133-4.
[270] 25 Nov 1932, HCD, vol.272, col.863. Among the signatories to the Bill was the Labour MP Seymour Cocks.
[271] 2 Dec 1932, HCD, vol.272, cols.1151-1201. The second reading was unopposed and Rhys Davies stated that Labour 'have officially and I believe unanimously decided to support the Bill'. Ibid, cols.1181-8. However, I have been unable to find recorded a PLP decision to support the second reading. Two more Labour MPs (Valentine McEntee and Gabriel Price) spoke in support of the Bill and the Party leader Lansbury conspicuously intervened, emphasizing his personal distance from dog racing. Ibid, cols.1192-4, 1199-1200, 1151.
[272] 21 March 1933, HCD, vol.276, col.196.
[273] E. J. Williams also supported the diluting amendment; Tom Griffiths and Will Thorne had supported the wrecking amendment. 28 April 1933, HCD, vol.277, cols.423-6, 461-4. But it is not clear that these Labour MPs were defenders of dog racing. Williams had opposed the wrecking amendment, while Griffiths and Thorne had opposed the dilution of the Bill. There is evidence that Thorne, for one, was concerned about the growth of dog racing. See below, pp.126.
[274] He was one of only two Labour MPs (the other was David Logan) who voted against the 1934 Betting and Lotteries Bill. See below, p.111, fn.335.
[275] 8 Feb 1928, HCD vol.213, col.171. For Groves' background see *DLB*, vol.v, 91-3. For his support of alcohol prohibition: 12 Feb 1931, HCD, vol.248, col.841-2.

tracks.[276] Logan, a devout Catholic of Irish/Scottish extraction would emerge during the proceedings of the 1934 Betting and Lotteries Bill as the strongest defender of dog racing on the Labour benches.[277] Maclean's background was in the Glasgow ILP. Briefly, he sat in the Commons as an independent labour MP (having been denied official endorsement at the 1929 General Election because of a feud within the Workers' Union), and, though he subsequently joined the PLP, and stayed with Labour after the ILP disaffiliated in 1932, his views on gambling reflected the latter's increasingly libertarian stance.[278]

These men were not representative. The PLP continued to support the Local Option Bill.[279] That few Labour MPs saw the emergence of the urban dog track as an enlargement of working class freedom was evident in the Party's approach to the 1934 Betting and Lotteries Bill. Logan attempted to raise substantially the maximum number of annual racing days from the 104 decided by the Government.[280] He also tried to raise the maximum number of races per meeting.[281] These amendments enjoyed negligible support among Labour MPs.[282] Logan was an isolated figure. It was doubtful whether he was any kind of socialist at all. A former pawnbroker and Irish Nationalist he had taken Liverpool Scotland for Labour after T. P.

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[276] HO45/15853/663794/36. Minutes of Meeting, 24 Jan 1934. 'These people have their own form of licensing, and they are orderly and they should not be suppressed', Groves told the government. See also HO45/15853/663794/18. Minutes of meeting with deputation from All-Party Committee on greyhound racing, 8 Nov 1933. In the wake of the 1931 General Election the Greyhound Racing Association apparently 'recruited a number of the unseated Labour members' 'to go around the country addressing meetings and whipping up support'. The London compositor and SDFer William Cluse was one. *DLB*, vol.iii, 32-4.

[277] For example, the Conservative MP Ian Horrobin, discussing his plans to move a restrictive amendment on dog racing during the Committee stage of the 1934 Betting and Lotteries Bill, suggested that it 'would have considerable support on both sides of the Cmte. The only person it would greatly offend would be Logan which is a strong argument in its favour!' HO45/16318/673073/146. Note (undated). For Logan's strong Catholicism, background in Irish Nationalism and career as a pawnbroker see P. J. Waller, *Democracy and sectarianism: a political and social history of Liverpool 1868-1939* (Liverpool, 1981), 323, 499.

[278] Maclean had been one of three Labour MPs (the others were Groves and Aneurin Bevan) to attend the AGM of the National Greyhound Racing Society in Feb 1933. The ILPer John McGovern also attended. *The Times*, 14 Feb 1933. Quoted in Jones, 'The British Labour Movement and Working Class Leisure, 1918-1919', 224. Maclean was subsequently critical of the Attlee Government's restriction of dog racing. POW [Ministry of Fuel and Power] 26/451. Letter from Office of the Lord Privy Seal, 11 March 1947.

[279] 23 MPs opposed the amendment diluting the Bill; 24 MPs opposed the wrecking amendment. 28 April 1933, HCD, vol.277, cols.423-6, 461-4. Lacking government support the Bill was eventually withdrawn. 3 May 1933, vol.277, col.843.

[280] 12 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, cols.1647-9.

[281] 12 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, cols.1701-4.

[282] Only 2 Labour MPs, D. L. Davies and Jack Jones, backed his attempt to extend racing days. 9 Labour MPs opposed it. 12 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, cols.1669-72. Only Jones backed an amendment to increase the number of races per meeting. 7 Labour MPs opposed it. 12 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, cols.1701-4.

O'Connor's death in 1929. 'If I had to run a business, I should not like the State to interfere. It may not be good socialism, but it is sound commonsense', Logan declared at one point during these debates.[283] At another, he happily acknowledged that dog track betting was a matter of sheer luck.[284]

Labour MPs and peers denied Logan's claims that distinguishing between dog racing and horse racing amounted to class bias.[285] Labour's frontbench spokesmen in Lords and Commons (Harold Furniss and Tom Williams) maintained that while horse racing was a sport, dog racing was simply a business the purpose of which was to line the pockets of capitalists.[286] The Labour leader George Lansbury had previously conceded that the Party was divided on the issue of dog totes,[287] but from the frontbench came amendments to ban dog totes completely,[288] separate tote and track ownership,[289] and limit the dog track management's 'take' from the tote to 3 per cent rather than the 6 per cent agreed to by the National Government.[290] Just as dislike of the Jockey Club had encouraged Labour MPs to see bookmakers as the lesser of two evils during the 1920s[291] so did antipathy to dog track capitalists during the 1930s.[292] 'Bookmakers are [not] all scoundrels', stated Williams, as he tried to limit the fee the dog track owners charged them for their pitches.[293] The National Government conceded that the 'multiplication of greyhound racing tracks [has] increased

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[283] 12 Nov 1934, vol.293, cols.1647-49, 1730, 1921.
[284] 15 Nov 1933; HCD, vol.274, cols.1135-8. Logan performed a remarkable u-turn after the Second World War. In 1947, he declared dog racing 'a ramp of money-getting and plucking the public...In every corner I see men congregating instead of being at work, and this kind of thing is going on. If they were as anxious to go to work as they are to go to greyhound racing, it would be an admirable thing for the country...It is the greatest ramp in the country today'. 23 July 1947, HCD, vol.440, col.1557-8. His unassailable constituency position might be considered in this connection: he was one of only three MPs to be unopposed at the 1945 General Election. Waller, *Democracy and Sectarianism*, 347.
[285] 7 Nov 1934, vol.293, cols.1212-15.
[286] 26 April 1934, HLD, vol.91, col.792. 27 June 1934, HCD, vol.291, cols.1155-62.
[287] 15 Feb 1933, HCD, vol.274, col.1135. Lansbury was speaking during the debate on a Conservative motion welcoming the government's decision to delay a decision on whether to license dog totes. Ibid, cols.1094-1146. The PLP had decided, in line with the Parliamentary's Executive's recommendation, that MPs should have a free vote on this motion. *PLP Minutes*, 14 Feb 1933.
[288] 30 May 1934, HLD, vol.92, cols.557-61.
[289] 6 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, cols.908-11.
[290] 30 May 1934, HLD, vol.92., cols.734-6.
[291] See chapter 1, section 3 of this thesis.
[292] For a characteristic attack on the dog track see the piece in *Forward*, 'Going to the Dogs? Greyhound Racing Profits', 8 Aug 1931.
[293] 6 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, cols.927-8.

opportunities for the *organized exploitation* of gambling for *private gain*...the provision of continuous facilities for gambling on these tracks is a source of serious social evil'.[294]

4. The Betting and Lotteries Bill

The Royal Commissioner Mary Stocks[295] addressed the PLP on the eve of Parliament's initial discussion of the Betting and Lotteries Bill.[296] Labour peers were subsequently 'recommended not to oppose the Second Reading since certain of its provisions were worthy of support'.[297] This rather vague formulation was given sharper definition by Harold Furniss. He was a member of Labour's Parliamentary Executive, NEC, and the Party's spokesman in the upper house:[298] he informed peers that the Labour Party supported the further restrictions on gambling proposed by the Bill. Gambling promoted disproportionate reward and destroyed social solidarity. It flourished in a capitalist system underpinned by the 'anti-social notion of tak[ing] each other's money and give nothing in exchange for it'. In a more egalitarian society these vices would diminish. 'The scramble for wealth among all the classes' which encouraged gambling would be replaced by 'a higher social sense'. There was 'much that is good in human nature that is capable of development, especially in a decent environment'. If anything, the Bill did not go far enough to satisfy Labour. Furniss called, among other things, for the restriction of racing news and the banning of newspapers tips.[299]

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[294] HO45/16316/673073/72. Home Sec's Address at Conservative Central Office, 9 May 1934. Italics in original.
[295] For her opposition to gambling, Labour credentials, and membership of the 1933 Royal Commission see chapter 1, section 4 of this thesis.
[296] *PLP Minutes*, 24 April 1934. Also 11 July 1933, for Stocks' request to address Labour MPs.
[297] *PLP Minutes*, 24 April 1934.
[298] See H. Pollins, 'Furniss, Henry Sanderson, Baron Sanderson (1868-1939)', *DNB* [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33297, accessed 28 Feb 2006].
[299] 26 April 1934, HLD, vol.91, cols.789-96.

So far, no different from previous generations of Labour leaders. (Indeed, Furniss actually praised Prime Minister MacDonald's 1905 anti-gambling essay).[300] But two aspects of the speech were more original. First, while Furniss expected that 'there would [be] less desire for betting and less need for it', he did not believe that gambling would disappear entirely under socialism. 'There would still be bets between individuals which perhaps would not do much harm'. What would end was 'organised and systematic betting'.[301] This position had similarities to the one the Webbs' developed in *The decay of capitalist civilization*. They had disavowed objections to gambling as such in favour of an economistic perspective that singularly emphasized the resources absorbed by the modern gambling industry.[302] Furniss did not go that far. But the complexities of his position reflected increasing attempts on the Labour side to denounce gambling without denouncing the (working-class) better.

At the end of May, the government announced that it did not intend to proceed with the prohibition of the football pools. It also declared its intention to increase the percentage that dog track owners could deduct from the totalisator. According to Furniss, these Amendments were 'disastrous...the pressure of those financially interested in dog racing especially, and football pools, seems to have been too strong for the Government'. He reiterated the Labour Party's opposition to gambling. The government's approach 'has had to steer a course between more liberty on the one hand, and more *social order*, for which I and my noble friends behind me stand, on the other'.[303] Furniss's emphases reflected wider sentiment in the PLP. *Labour* devoted its monthly 'Questions in Debate' series to the issue and correspondents were unanimous in their view that all kinds of gambling were inconsistent with proportionate reward and social solidarity.[304]

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[300] Ibid.
[301] Ibid, cols 789-91, 796.
[302] See p.36-7, above.
[303] 19 June 1934, HLD, vol.93, cols.23-27. My italics.
[304] *Labour*, May 1934. The correspondents were the MPs Banfield, Compton, Grenfell, and David Kirkwood; Lord (Harry) Snell, and the Nonconformist minister and Labour activist, Rhondda T. Williams. For similar views see *New Leader*, 8 and 22 April 1932. For an example of a more pragmatic approach see the Labour barrister Alfred Short's comments: *Labour*, Feb 1933. Quoted in Jones, 'The British Labour Movement and Working Class Leisure', 224.

The Bill now came before the Commons for the first time. Labour MPs were advised to support its second reading but were not compelled to do so. Furthermore, it was agreed that Tom Williams, the outspoken critic of dog racing and the football pools, would lead for the Party.[305] He insisted that Labour supported the Bill.[306] Williams was also a member of the Standing Committee to which the Bill was committed after an uncontested second reading. He was joined on this Committee by, on the one hand, Rhys Davies and Edward Williams (who were equally firm opponents of betting),[307] and on the other David Logan, who, as we have seen, was the most outspoken supporter of gambling on the Labour benches.[308] The PLP had agreed that members of the Standing Committee were to 'have a free hand',[309] and Williams, Williams, and Davies opposed attempts to weaken the Bill further.[310] The libertarian Conservative William Davison complained that the Bill was saved time and again in Committee by Labour votes.[311]

At this stage, then, Labour appeared broadly supportive of the Bill. However, during the long summer recess the Party's attitude changed. The pretext was procedural. The government, having seen the Bill make almost no progress in Standing Committee before Prorogation, decided on Parliament's return to expedite its passage. The Bill was subsequently recommitted to a Committee of the Whole House. This was 'almost unprecedented' constitutionally.[312] Labour opposed it.[313] Arthur Greenwood explained that Labour would be voting against the recommitting of the Bill 'as an indictment of the competence of the Government in handling the measure'.[314] The Party's Deputy Leader Clement Attlee claimed that the Bill was too complex to be rushed through the House.[315] But Labour's objection was

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[305] *PLP Minutes*, 26 June 1934.
[306] 27 June 1934, HCD, vol.291, cols.1151-63.
[307] They, along with Tom Williams, would vote for the Bill at third reading when most Labour MPs abstained. 13 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, cols.1927-30.
[308] See above p.103-5.
[309] *PLP Minutes*, 26 June 1934.
[310] 1934STC.
[311] 5 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, cols.701.
[312] HO45/24349. 'Review of 1933 Royal Commission' (undated).
[313] *PLP Minutes*, 30 Oct 1934.
[314] 1 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, cols.408-13, 413.
[315] Ibid, cols.435-8.

also instrumental: the Party wished to communicate a message about its political priorities. The Report from the Commissioner on the Distressed Areas was imminent and Parliament should be concentrating on unemployment argued Greenwood.[316] He had set out Labour's strategy for the coming session in *Labour*. The National Government was to be attacked on a number of grounds, one of which was that it had 'wasted the time of Parliament on relatively minor Bills such as the Betting and Lotteries Bill and ignored the grave economic and social issues which confront the nation today'.[317] Attlee claimed that 'on these benches we are not taking sides on the Bill – personally, I am not interested in the manufacture of totalisators or the running of dogs'.[318]

The distance Labour was now putting between itself and the Bill reflected in part the increasing influence wielded by the Party's second generation. 'The 1931 crisis', as Howell noted, had 'effectively terminated the leadership of the Labour Party's first generation; the initiative passed to those born largely in the 1880s who had established their political reputations after 1918'.[319] Exposed in their formative years to intellectual and social trends that were democratic in their cumulative effect,[320] men like Attlee and Greenwood possessed a greater imaginative sympathy for the working classes than their predecessors. 'Attlee's success in getting on with East Enders', Whiting has emphasized, 'was based on an acceptance of the fundamental equality and respect due to those of another class; indeed, that class's habit of trust and co-operation was superior to middle-class individualism'.[321] Greenwood's personal commitment to social policy research and his conviction that 'the basis of real political commitment [was] living a working class life, rather than observing it' were a distinctive part of his political identity.[322] While the same could not be said of

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[316] Ibid, cols.412-3.
[317] *Labour*, October 1934.
[318] 1 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, cols 435-8. Anti-gamblers claimed Labour's stance put the Bill in jeopardy. See, for example, the Liberal MP Isaac Foot: 1 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, col.414.
[319] D. Howell, 'Morrison, Herbert Stanley, Baron Morrison of Lambeth (1885-1965)', *DNB* [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35121, accessed 18 Feb 2006].
[320] See above, pp.29-30.
[321] R. C. Whiting, 'Attlee. Clement Richard, first Earl Attlee (1883-1967)', *DNB* [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30498, accessed 18 Feb 2006].
[322] R. C. Whiting, 'Greenwood, Arthur (1990-1954)', *DNB* [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33543, accessed 18 Feb 2006].

Stafford Cripps, the first comprehensive biography of this upper middle class recruit to Labour has disclosed a far more tolerant and democratic man than the prevalent caricature of 'austerity Cripps' suggested.[323] Indeed, he was partial to a flutter himself. Following a visit to a Monte Carlo casino, Cripps commented favourably on the 'great fun' of 'seeing the English shocking themselves and feeling obviously frightfully continental and dare devil'.[324] These men, Attlee and Cripps in particular, played a critical role in setting the 'temper' of the 1931-5 parliamentary party.[325]

But the adoption of a more neutral position on the Betting and Lotteries Bill was not just imposed on the PLP by an increasingly influential second generation of leaders.[326] It also reflected the impact of the political crisis of 1931 in more fundamental respect. To the extent that the demise of the second Labour Government brought into disrepute the kind of classless and paternalistic Progressivism associated with 'MacDonald's Party'[327] it inhibited attacks on working-class betting.[328] As Brooke has put it: "'Tales of 'bankers' ramps' and conspiracies of capitalist forces in Britain and throughout the world plotting to overthrow the Labour Government by any means possible resounded throughout the Labour movement. These rumours made a mockery of organic views of social change and social unity'.[329] A watershed for the Party's notion of class,[330] Labour's greater sense of proletarian solidarity encouraged toleration of the working-class better. The bias of the betting laws also loomed larger.

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[323] P. Clarke, *The Cripps Version: The Life of Sir Stafford Cripps, 1889-1952* (London, 2003), 31-2, 91-3.
[324] Ibid, 71, 146.
[325] D. Howell, *British social democracy: a study in development and decay* (London, 1976), 48-9. Greenwood, though less influential, was still a significant figure in the second generation leadership. He played a full role in the review of party policy undertaken after 1931 and wrote parts of the 1935 election manifesto. R. C. Whiting, 'Greenwood, Arthur (1990-1954)', *DNB* [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33543, accessed 18 Feb 2006].
[326] It is worth noting that Attlee and Cripps were themselves implicated in Labour's opposition to some kinds of gambling. Attlee had voted in favour of the reinstatement of the Betting and Lotteries Bill's provisions for a ban on football pools and had voted against charitable semi-public lotteries. HCD: 5 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, cols.711-4. 22 March 1932, vol.263, cols.885-8. Cripps had opposed hospital lotteries in similar fashion. 19 May 1931, HCD, vol.252, cols.1789-92. And he was extremely hostile to lotteries in a wider sense. See above, p.81.
[327] This is the title, of course, of Howell's study of the Labour Party during the 1920s.
[328] For the extent to which Labour accepted received views of working-class betting see McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class*, 136, 297.
[329] S. Brooke, *Labour's War: The Labour Party during the Second World War* (Oxford, 1992), 17.
[330] Ibid, 14.

This was apparent in the parliamentary party's attitude to the Bill's third reading. The Parliamentary Executive had recommended that Labour support it.[331] The Executive's membership included a number of senior MPs opposed to gambling, men who would have had sympathy with the defence of the legislation mounted by the their former leader and Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald:

> the Government's intention is not to interfere with the amusements of working people, but to restrict commercialised exploitation of gambling for profit and prevent some of the abuses that have arisen in connection with it. It will be perfectly well known to you that there is a good deal of what amounts to mere swindling. Moreover, the certain winner out of organized gambling is not the working class who put their shilling into it, but the people in control of the whole system.[332]

But the PLP as a whole were increasingly estranged from the paternalism which was apparent in the second half of the Prime Minister's letter: 'Mr MacDonald wished that working people themselves would take the matter up and tell the middlemen and profiteers to keep their hands off their hard-earned money. At the very least, they should not allow themselves to be beguiled into rallying to the support of these people's profits'.[333] Labour MPs overturned the Parliamentary Executive's recommendation. The PLP insisted on a free vote at third reading.[334] Its ultimate attitude to the Betting and Lotteries Bill appeared to confirm a shift towards neutrality: more than three quarters of Labour MPs abstained.[335]

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[331] *Parliamentary Executive Minutes*, 13 Nov 1934. Present at this meeting were Stafford Cripps, David Grenfell, George Hicks, Morgan Jones, William Lunn, Neil Maclean and Tom Williams.

[332] HO45/16317/673073/61. PM's draft reply to complaints from Conservative Associations about the Betting Bill (undated, 1934). Grenfell, Jones and Williams fit this template. See above, pp.25-8, 86-7, 91, 103, 105. So too, perhaps does Lunn (given his background in Nonconformity, temperance activism and ethical socialism). *DLB*, vol.ii, 253-5. Cripps attitude to gambling was complicated but generally liberal. See above, p.110. Maclean was a staunch libertarian. See above, pp.103-4. Hicks' attitude to gambling is obscure but his political identity and style suggests a proletarianism at odds with attacks on working-class culture. A London bricklayer, first Gen Sec of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers, and a left-wing member of the TUC General Council 1921-40, there was a 'Rabelaisian flavour about Hicks' according to his biographer. E. de Normann, 'Hicks, (Ernest) George (1879-1954)', re. M. Brodie, *DNB* [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33856, accessed 16 Feb 2006].

[333] Ibid. For the wider political importance of MacDonald's exasperation with the working classes and working-class culture, particularly in the context of the 1931 crisis see McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class*, 297. Tanner, 'Ideological Debate in Edwardian Labour Politics, Radicalism, Revisionism and Socialism', 276, 290. Howell, *MacDonald's Party*, 205.

[334] *PLP Minutes*, 13 Nov 1934.

[335] 11 MPs supported the Bill: John Banfield, George Daggar, D. L. Davies, Rhys Davies, William Dobbie, Charles Edwards, Duncan Graham, Thomas Grundy, William Leonard, Edward Williams, Tom Williams. Two voted against it: David Logan and David M. Adams. 13 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, cols.1927-30.

Yet, caveats must be inserted. In the first place, mass abstention on the third reading of the Bill was a strategy that the Labour Party could pursue without consequence: its enactment - and thus the restrictions on popular gambling that had been endorsed by the Party at second reading, in Standing Committee, and even after the Bill's committal to a Committee of the Whole House – was assured by the National Government's enormous majority. Given this, even Labour MPs hostile to betting must have been tempted to stay their hand thereby avoiding a breach with their working-class constituents.[336] Indeed, from such a perspective, the distribution of the thirteen votes cast on third reading retains some significance: the eleven Labour MPs who supported the Bill constituted, it must be remembered, around a fifth of the total PLP.[337]

Moreover, and of potentially greater significance in the long-term, the strengthened sense of class that encouraged Labour to distance itself from the Betting and Lotteries Bill was unaccompanied by a re-assessment of the nature of working-class betting. In principle, it remained of the same order as other forms of gambling. It was wagering on luck. As such, the Party's accommodation to working-class betting was necessarily circumscribed. For Labour's opposition to wagering on luck not only remained after 1931, it had in some ways been strengthened. This was most obviously evident in an increased intolerance of stock exchange gambling.[338] The distinction between legitimate and illegitimate financial speculation that had been made by the Webbs' previously,[339] if tentatively,[340] was one to

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[336] And they were largely working-class: the 1931 General Election having seen Labour's parliamentary representation wiped out in all but the most solid of its heartlands.

[337] Labour had won 46 seats in 1931 (5 ILP candidates and Josiah Wedgwood were also elected), and at the dissolution in 1935 held 59 seats.

[338] The Party's overwhelming conversion to planning also evidenced this trend, if in more abstract fashion. Brooke's explanation of its attraction to Labour is significant. Part of planning's appeal was 'The rational, almost Newtonian spheres of planned production, exchange, and distribution [which] could be placed in stark contrast to the anarchy of the free market'. Planning enabled a Labour attempt 'to impose rationality on the economy'. As Ernest Bevin declared in 1945, 'Labour does not believe in leaving our economy to chance'. Brooke, *Labour's War*, 19-20, 236-7, 324.

[339] The Webbs had insisted in 1923 that 'Some part of [stock exchange] speculation may be defended as an indirect, but we think cumbersome, way of equalising prices.' *The decay of capitalist civilization*, 107, fn.2.

[340] They admitted that illegitimate speculation was becoming an ever greater part of the whole: '...legitimate speculation has in recent years been submerged underneath an elaborate superstructure of commercial gambling...all ways of getting rich often fabulously rich – without producing anything else but the maximum amount of uncertainty in the earnings of all classes of producers and in the prices paid by all classes of consumers'. Ibid.

which the Party was now unreceptive.[341] The labour movement's conviction that its government had been brought down by a conspiracy of bankers and financiers centred in, and around the City of London encouraged a greater emphasis on the evils of stock exchange gambling.[342] Thomas Johnston's history of financial speculation, devoted to exposing the extent to which 'civilisation' was based on the principle of 'something for nothing', exemplified the trend.[343]

Furthermore, the Party's shift away from an ethical, and towards a structural, socialism after 1931[344] ensured that rhetorical attacks on financial speculation were accompanied for the first time by substantial policy proposals. John Maynard Keynes, whose increasing influence on the Labour Party during the 1930s[345] reflected its materialist turn, attacked the more extreme forms of stock exchange speculation ('casino capitalism') in his evidence to the 1932 Royal Commission on Betting and Lotteries,[346] and subsequently in the *General Theory*.[347] Labour by the mid-1930s was demanding the nationalisation of the Bank of England and a National Investment Board; party conference also called for state control of joint stock banks.[348]

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[341] It is likely, for example, that a study such as *The decay of capitalist civilization,* if written a decade later, would have devoted more than just a footnote to the question of financial speculation. Ibid.

[342] The best treatment of this subject is P. Williamson, " 'A 'Bankers' Ramp'? Financiers and the British Political Crisis of August 1931", *English Historical Review*, 99 (1984), 770-86. Nor was this suspicion wholly confined to Labour. See the comments of the National Labour peer Geoffrey Elton: 1 May 1934, HLD, vol.91, col.937. A recent analysis has suggested that some of Labour's claims regarding the events of 1931 were 'not wholly without substance'. R. Boyce, 'Government and City of London relations under the gold standard 1925-31', in R. Michie, and P. Williamson (eds.), *The British government and the City of London in the twentieth century* (Cambridge, 1994), 215-35, 234.

[343] T. Johnston, *The financiers and the nation* (London, 1934), 'Conclusion'.

[344] S. Brooke, *Labour's War*, 20-1. G. Foote, *The Labour Party's political thought: a history* (London, 1985), 151. For an excellent recent discussion of the complexities of the Left's materialist turn in the wake of the events of 1931, see B. Jackson, 'Egalitarian political thought on the British Left, 1910-64', chapters 3 & 4. See also B. Jackson, 'The Uses of Utilitarianism: Social Justice, Welfare Economics and British Socialism 1931-48', *History of Political Thought*, 25 (2004), 508-36.

[345] See, inter alia, Howell, *British social democracy,* 60. Although Howell also emphasized that Keynes's influence should not be exaggerated. Ibid, 70.

[346] 1933RC. Minutes of Evidence. 20th day, 15 Dec 1932 (Statement of evidence submitted by J. M. Keynes, para. 4 and 7).

[347] *The general theory of employment, interest and money* (London, 1935, 1957), 159-60.

[348] P. Williamson, 'The City of London and the government in modern Britain: debates and politics', in R. Michie, and P. Williamson, (eds.), *The British government and the City of London in the twentieth century* (Cambridge, 1994), 5-30, 28. Howell, *British social democracy*, 65-6.

There were other ways in which Labour could have distinguished between the two forms of gambling. It was possible to argue that stock exchange gambling had significant consequences for economy and society in ways that working-class betting did not. The Leader of the Labour Party, George Lansbury, a lifelong opponent of all forms of gambling, appeared to have come around to this view by 1935.

> It is said there is more betting than ever among women and even children. It may be so; there are more of us. Even if there is more, it is done more quietly than thirty years ago. In fact, like everything else, betting has become not a sport but a business. Just as the rich use the Stock Exchange, the poor find a bookmaker and put on a few bob; the wealthier find a stockbroker and gamble on stocks and shares, wheat values, and everything else. This gambling business is now a part of the lives of most of us; but betting on a horse does less extensive damage than gambling in wheat.[349]

Yet Lansbury's subsequent actions – the next year he voted in favour of the prohibition of the most pervasive form of mass betting, the football pools – suggest the extent to which the development of this distinction remained rhetorical rather than substantial.[350] The candidness of the Bakers' leader and Labour MP John Banfield was unusual: he insisted that as far as socialism was concerned stock exchange gambling and working-class betting were in 'vicious principle ...the same' and that, as such, the Party must support the Betting and Lotteries Bill or otherwise leave itself 'open to the charge of hypocrisy and cant'.[351] But his intervention served to illuminate the restrictions that Labour's failure to develop an intellectual distinction between forms of wagering on luck placed on its accommodation with working-class betting.

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[349] Lansbury, *George Lansbury*, 24. For his emphasis on stock exchange gambling see also his address to the TUC in 1933. *TUCACR* (1933), 314-5.

[350] See Lansbury's speech on the Pool Betting (Prohibition) Bill and the subsequent denunciation of his position by son-in-law and fellow Labour MP Ernest Thurtle: 3 April 1936, HCD, cols.2382-4, 2384-5. Lansbury's attitude to this Bill undermines Dixon's conclusion that he had come to view betting and gambling as 'matters of conscience, respected other people's views, and opposed moralistic state intervention'. *From Prohibition to Regulation*, 81. The first two are doubtless true (an emphasis on conscience and tolerance of opposing views were, after all, significant aspects of Lansbury's broader political style). But it did not follow from this that he opposed statutory restrictions and prohibitions. His support for Dog Racing Local Option was also instructive in this regard: 2 Dec 1932, HCD, vol.272, col.1151.

[351] *Labour*, May 1934.

The attitude of the ILP's Parliamentary Group was instructive. Opposing the third reading of the Betting and Lotteries Bill its tiny parliamentary party (George Buchanan, John McGovern and James Maxton) managed to outnumber Labour MPs (David Logan and David M. Adams) in the division lobby.[352] Since disaffiliation in particular, the ILP had been seeking to construct a more intimate relationship with the working-class voter. This strategy involved embracing working-class culture.[353] Buchanan not only admitted to a personal betting habit but also argued that the growth of betting was a positive development insofar as it had replaced drinking and, thus, contributed to a reduction in drunkenness. 'Never was the working man a finer father than he is now'.[354] There were echoes here of the trade unionist A. G. Markham's evidence to the 1902 Select Committee.[355] McGovern was equally forthright: the Betting and Lotteries Bill was 'a disgrace to 'liberty-loving subjects'.[356] The political and cultural libertarianism of the sovereign ILP was emphasized via a comparison with the previous generation: McGovern recalled John Wheatley, his predecessor as Shettleston MP and Cabinet Minister in the first MacDonald Government, chastising a constituent who enjoyed a flutter. Wheatley's admonition had been misguided: liberty demanded tolerance of working-class betting.[357]

However, Buchanan and McGovern's embrace of working-class betting was not as encompassing as this kind of rhetoric implied. Buchanan objected to suggestions that milkmen and tradesmen often acted as betting agents and, more widely, felt it necessary to defend the working classes against imputations that they routinely evaded the cash betting laws.[358] Both men attacked tote betting. 'Leave it to the bookmaker and you will see

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[352] HCD, 13 Nov 1934, vol.293, cols.1927-30.
[353] The success or otherwise of these attempts is discussed in G. Cohen, "'Happy Hunting Ground of the Crank'? The ILP and Local Labour Politics in Glasgow and Norwich 1932-45", in M. Worley (ed.) *Labour's Grass Roots. Essays on the Activities of Local Labour Parties and Members 1918-45* (Aldershot, 2005), 54-78. See also above, p.40.
[354] HCD: 7 Nov 1934, vol.293, cols.1176-7. 12 Nov 1934, vol.293, cols.1641-2, 1913-16.
[355] 1902SLC, p.147, at para.3196. Quoted in McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class*, 125.
[356] 12 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, cols.1619.
[357] 27 June 1934, HCD, vol.291, cols. 1216. It appears that Wheatley's attitude to gambling softened as he got older, at least according to McGovern's account of Wheatley and Buchanan's successful trip to the races in 1929. J. McGovern, *Neither fear nor favour* (London, 1960), 65.
[358] 15 Nov 1933, HCD, vol.274, cols.1110-1.

attendances go down and down...Tote betting grows with people who can least afford it' argued Buchanan.[359] McGovern referred to the 'disgraceful sight' in Parkhead and Bridgeton of 'hundreds of women with children in their arms clamouring outside [the tote clubs]...waiting for the results'. It was 'demoralising in every way'.[360] While the articulation of such sentiments could also reflect law (the criminalization of betting emphasized its lack of respectability), class (the bookmaker was often proletarian, certainly so in comparison to the large financial interests behind tote betting), and gender (female betting was perceived as an increasing 'problem' during the 1920s and early 1930s),[361] the incompleteness of Buchanan and McGovern's accommodation to working-class betting is inexplicable without an understanding of their inability to distinguish unambiguously between forms of wagering on luck.

The meaning of McGovern's insistence, contemporaneous to voting against the Betting and Lotteries Bill, that he remained 'completely against gambling'[362] becomes clearer in this context. It is also provides an interpretive framework for his speech on the second reading of the Pool Betting (Prohibition) Bill. That McGovern opposed the banning of the most pervasive form of mass betting was unsurprising: the Labour Party overwhelming rejected the Bill too. But he began and ended his defence of the football pools by emphasizing that, as socialists, the ILP believed in a 'different system' than capitalism. McGovern's equation of working-class betting with the kind of wagering on luck to which socialists were opposed in its stock exchange form was evident, if implicit.[363]

His fellow Clydesider David Kirkwood, part of the ILP Parliamentary Group until the summer of 1933, articulated the socialist objection unambigously. Kirkwood's style and

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[359] 12 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, cols.1913-16.
[360] 27 June 1934, HCD, vol.291, cols. 1214-18.
[361] *Dixon, From Prohibition*, 210-12. Chinn, *Better Betting with a Decent Feller*, 171-2. A. Melling, 'Licentious leisure and the social control of working-class women in Wigan and St Helens 1914-1930', *Journal of North-West Labour History*, 24 (2000), 30-43 [accessed at http://www.wcml.org.uk/nwlhg/wickedwomen.html].
[362] 12 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, col.1695.
[363] 3 April 1936, HCD, vol.310, cols.2363-66.

identity, which embraced aspects of Puritanism[364] was far removed from the Catholicism of McGovern. He told the Commons that there was 'too much dog and horse racing'[365] and in his autobiography described gambling as 'a fearful blight on the workers today'.[366] But any suggestion that Kirkwood's opposition to betting was largely a product of cultural Protestantism and/or working-class collectivism was refuted by his contribution to a debate in *Labour*. Kirkwood insisted that wagering on luck was incompatible with every aspect of personal development necessary for the emergence of a socialist society. Gambling was at odds with 'Socialist principles [which] are based upon the idea of individuals who are noble, chivalrous, good and true, living in a community regulated by justice, reason, judgment and human kindness'.[367]

From this perspective the Labour Party (and Kirkwood was back in the fold by this stage) could, in principle at least, have no truck with someone like Keynes. Equipped with a greater appreciation of 'the social benefits of acquisitive behaviour',[368] and a more limited notion of what constituted proportionate reward,[369] he was much more comfortable than socialists were distinguishing between forms of wagering on luck. Lotteries (since they lacked even the pretence of skill) were the least dangerous form of gambling in his opinion (he supported a

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[364] D. Kirkwood, *My life of revolt* (London, 1935), Ibid, 56, 192. See also Thomas Johnston's comments on Kirkwood's refusal to speak at licensed Labour Clubs. T. Johnston, *Memories* (London, 1952), 228.

[365] 31 May 1934, HCD, vol.290, col.335.

[366] Though he expected it would 'pass as people grow in intelligence and life grows in interest'. Kirkwood, *My life of revolt* , 269.

[367] *Labour*, 'Questions in Debate', May 1934. The view of the ILP leader James Maxton is difficult to gauge since he never spoke at any stage during the lengthy debates on the Betting and Lotteries Bill. But this silence may itself be suggestive of a disinclination to defend gambling. Maxton was obviously implicated in the ILP's adoption of a more libertarian perspective: in 1928, for example, he intervened on a parliamentary question about whist drives to tell Joynson-Hicks that 'as a result of the many restrictions and interferences' in sport and recreation the Conservative Party was 'regarded as killjoys' and the Home Secretary as 'killjoy Jix'. *Daily Herald,* 17 May 1928. But the defence of popular culture appeared to sit uncomfortably on his shoulders. G. Brown, *Maxton* (Edinburgh, 1986), 51. His political identity was certainly similar to Kirkwood's and he had, like Kirkwood, voted against the Ten Minute Bill for the licensing of cash betting off-course during the 1920s. 21 April 1926, HCD, vol.194, col.1214-8.

[368] Jackson, 'Egalitarian political thought on the British Left, 1910-64', 181.

[369] Keynes's interpretation of disproportionate reward did not extend much further than opposition to 'windfall or unjustified gains and losses'. R. Skidelsky. *John Maynard Keynes: The Economist as Saviour*, (London, 1992, 1994), 223. See also Jackson, 'Egalitarian political thought on the British Left, 1910-64', 179.

national lottery on this basis) but even betting on dogs and horses was preferable to the casino capitalism that he associated with Wall Street and which, as already noted, he denounced.[370]

In practice, of course, Labour's view was not that dissimilar (though the Party diverged completely from Keynes on the question of state lotteries).[371] The impact of 1931 on the Party's attitude to gambling, though contradictory to the extent that it encouraged intolerance of financial speculation as well as toleration of working-class betting, was not neutral: the Party's ultimate attitude to the Betting and Lotteries Bill indicated this. So too, in less qualified fashion, did the 1935-9 parliamentary party's subsequent and overwhelming rejection of the Pool Betting (Prohibition) Bill.[372] A piece written by G. D. H. Cole in the wake of Parliament's rejection of this Bill captured nicely the character of Labour's accommodation to working-class betting. Cole, middle-class socialist and moral reformer,[373] whose objections of principle to gambling were in line with the emphasis he placed on social solidarity,[374] emphasized his 'extreme dislike...of the habit of betting...and...dislike of the gambling type of mind, whether it bets on horses or gambles in stocks and shares, or tries to make a corner in pepper or shellac'. But he acknowledged the Party's stronger sense of class:

> I should need to be shown very strong reasons indeed before I should agree that the State ought to say 'No' to anyone who wants to have a foolish flutter. There are strong reasons why the State should stamp hard on gambling wherever it degenerates into any sort of public swindle, as on the stock and commodity markets it may all too easily do. But, where there is no question of swindling, or stacking the cards, or doing down the outsiders by means of 'private information', and rigging the market, the mere fact that a practice is foolish, or even deleterious, is in my opinion no sufficient reason for suppressing it. When you once start suppressing things on no stronger grounds than these, you never know where to stop...the State ought to be chary of interfering with the bad habits of the poor...[because of] the fact that richer people will be left free to go

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[370] 1933RC. Minutes of Evidence. 20th day, 15 Dec 1932 (Statement of evidence submitted by J. M. Keynes, para. 4 and 7). For his backing of a state lottery see also Downes et al, *Gambling, work and leisure*, 40.
[371] See above, pp.84.
[372] See above, pp.88-91.
[373] For an account which counterposes Cole's moral reformism to the Tory Socialism of Dalton see Pugh, 'Rise of Labour and the Political Culture of Conservatism', 516-7. For Cole's dislike of popular culture see also M. Stears, 'Cole, George Douglas Howard (1889-1959)', *DNB* [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32486, accessed 31 March 2006].
[374] Jackson has observed that 'Cole remained convinced that an egalitarian society would involve a fundamental moral transformation'. Socialists had to "'replace the monetary incentives on which capitalism relies', with an appeal to motives of social service." 'Egalitarian political thought on the British Left, 1910-64', 217.

> on doing much the same things their poorer fellow citizens are not to be suffered to do.[375]

Jack Jones was now closer to the Labour mainstream. This Tory Socialist, distant from the prevailing culture of the PLP,[376] has appeared throughout this chapter (and the last) as an exemplar of the difficulty even working-class libertarian, anti-puritan, Labour MPs had in reconciling themselves to gambling. His position, an awkward mixture of resentment at the class bias of the betting laws and reluctance to dictate to the working classes on the one hand, and on the other, opposition to all kinds of wagering on luck, especially stock exchange speculation, was now one shared by a wide cross section of the Party. Jones had voiced support for the Betting and Lotteries Bill's 'main principles' on second reading.[377] But he abstained (like most of his colleagues) on third reading. Explaining his position Jones illuminated some of the tensions that had come to characterize Labour's approach to gambling by the second half of the 1930s:

> I am not a gambler and do not want to be. I want to get rid of the Pecksniffian cant about gambling. The man is a gambler who takes a commission from an old lady who has been left a widow with thousands of pounds; who takes charge of her property and invests it on something; and who knows as much about the property in which he invests the money as a Connemara pig does about astronomy...I do not gamble. I have never had anything more than 1s. on anything...But I stand for the right of my class to do the same as other people do. They gamble in stocks and shares...[378]

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[375] *Oldham Evening Chronicle and Standard*, 27 April 1936. Clipping in G. D. H. Cole papers, file A1/36/8, Nuffield College, Oxford. My thanks to Ben Jackson for alerting me to this article.
[376] Howell, *MacDonald's Party*, 158-9.
[377] 27 June 1934, HCD, vol.291, cols.1194-6.
[378] 12 Nov 1934, HCD, vol.293, cols.1654-55.

Chapter Three

'Esteem Redistributed', 1940-51

Introduction

In 1949 the Attlee Government appointed a Royal Commission into Betting, Lotteries, and Gaming. The establishment of another Commission, just a decade and a half since the last one had reported, reflected the government's interest in the possibilities of taxing and legalizing cash betting off-course. Gambling had grown rapidly towards the end of the Second World War and its growth accelerated in the immediate postwar period, largely because of the government's decision to remove restrictions on gambling at a time when pent-up purchasing power had few other streams into which to flow.[1] Expenditure on gambling between 1945 and 1947 was two and a half times what it had been in 1939. Even adjusted for inflation, this amounted to a 50 per cent increase. By 1948, the profits of the gambling industry had reached £67.5 million.[2] Across the political parties, there was a feeling that a tax on betting could contribute to the cost of postwar social and economic reform.[3]

However, the financial imperative was a precipitant rather than underlying cause; social change was the sine qua non of the Commission's appointment. Munting suggested that the establishment of the Commission 'indicated a changing political, and possibly public, mood' regarding gambling.[4] We can probably be more specific. A redistribution of social esteem to

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[1] B. De Jouvenel, *Problems of Socialist England* (London, 1949), 108-9. McKibbin, 'Working-class gambling', 157.

[2] 1949 RC, para.74-5, at p.19-20. There was a significant decline in gambling after 1949 as other goods, services, and entertainments became more accessible. De Jouvenel, *Problems of Socialist England*, 203-7. McKibbin, 'Working-class gambling', 157.

[3] Clapson, *A bit of a flutter*, 329. Dixon, *From Prohibition to Regulation*, 329-30. See also J. Chenery, *The Law and Practice of Bookmaking, Betting, Gaming and Lotteries* (London, 1963), 18: 'In the immediate post-war period war gratuities and black market fortunes alike were squandered in a frenzy of gambling that undoubtedly gave economists the impression that here was a source of revenue which only needed tapping to provide a much-needed contribution to the ever-increasing cost of the welfare state'. Quoted in Miers, *Regulating Commercial Gambling*, 295.

[4] Munting, *Economic and social history of gambling*, 43.

the working classes had reduced the credibility of 'official' attacks on popular betting and this paved the way for the establishment of another inquiry. As McKibbin observed,

> This particular stereotype, that betting was a pathological feature of working-class life, was 'true' only so long as the official classes had an unquestioned position of authority over the working classes in the national hierarchy of esteem. The Second World War undoubtedly undermined this stereotype – almost fatally – by redistributing social esteem, by greatly weakening the political and ideological authority of the official classes. Nothing illustrates this more than a comparison of the 'tone' of the 1949 Royal Commission with all its predecessors. Although that commission was unquestionably more technically sophisticated in its presentation and analysis of evidence than the others, that evidence...did not point in an obviously different direction. But the conclusions were utterly different and its Report, written by the same kind of people who wrote all the others, is undoubtedly a product of this wartime redistribution of esteem.[5]

Socialist Commentary observed that 'the facts have not sufficiently changed to warrant another full-dress inquiry'. It pointed out that 'a mere handful of the 1932 Royal Commission's 'numerous proposals' had been implemented and argued that a 'Departmental Committee of the Home Office could bring the facts up-to-date in a few weeks'.[6] But what had changed was the ideological prism through which these 'facts' were filtered. The Labour Government wanted, expected, and got very different answers than had been provided by the previous group of Royal Commissioners.

Disentangling the effect on the Labour Party of the profound social change associated with the Second World War, from its impact upon British society as a whole is a necessary, if difficult task. The previous chapter concluded by suggesting that the generation of Labour leaders that emerged after 1931 was less disposed towards attacking popular gambling than its predecessor. Attlee, Cripps, and Greenwood were discussed specifically, but the same could also have been said of Ernest Bevin and Herbert Morrison. The second generation remained suspicious of financial speculation, in Bevin's case very much so,[7] but they

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[5] McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class*, 130, 290-3, 300.
[6] *Socialist Commentary*, Feb 1949, 38-40.
[7] As 'the Dockers KC' Bevin had targeted 'the capitalist who is manipulating money or handling shares'. P. Weiler, *Ernest Bevin* (London, 1993), 28. At the 1931 General Election he stood unsuccessfully for the usually safe Labour seat of Gateshead on the theme 'Vote Bevin and public control of banking in the interest of trade,

distinguished between stock exchange gambling and working-class betting to a greater degree. This was evident on their entry into the Coalition Government. As Minister for Labour and Home Secretary respectively, Bevan and Morrison were confronted by assertions from Labour MPs that horse racing, the football pools, and, especially, dog-racing were absorbing scarce manpower and resources and, as such, should be banned for the duration of the war. They rejected these demands, recognizing that they derived from ideological objections to gambling rather than from evidence of these entertainments harmful effect on the war economy. The redistribution of social esteem encouraged this ministerial judgment, but it was also consonant with the temperament and inclination of Bevan and Morrison both as individuals and representatives of Labour's second generation.

However, there were limits to this generation's liberalism. Labour had distinguished between types of popular gambling during the interwar period and these distinctions hardened during the 1940s. Dog racing and large-scale lotteries stood at one end of a spectrum ranging from disapproval to approval; betting on horses and the football pools at the other. Section one of this chapter examines the continuing existence of ideological objections to the dog track, and the heavy betting that took place there, among Labour MPs and Labour Ministers between 1939 and 1951. Section two discusses the Attlee Government's complex attitude to lotteries: while demands for a national lottery were rejected, the government was increasingly permissive on the question of lotteries in British overseas territories. Section three examines the football pools during the war and after. Labour MPs became increasingly concerned about its economic consequences and this, as well as long-standing concerns about fraud and profiteering, led to demands for administrative regulation.

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commerce and the people'. According to Potts, 'For Bevin the villains were always financiers'. A. Potts, 'Bevin to beat the bankers: Ernest Bevin's Gateshead campaign of 1931', *Bulletin of the Northeast Group for the Study of Labour History*, 11 (1977), 28-38. During the war, Bevin emphasized that controls on the economy would have to be retained after victory to avoid 'an orgy of speculation, bringing with it all the troubles that arose after the last war'. TGWU, Report of the Biennal Delegate Conference, August 1943). All quoted in C. Wrigley, 'Bevin, Ernest (1881-1951), *DNB* [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/31872, accessed 16 Feb 2006]. See also Brooke, *Labour's War*, 324.

The second half of the chapter examines the process leading to the establishment of the Royal Commission. Section four discusses the Labour Government's decision to tax the football pools and dog totes in 1947. Taxation was an area in which the effects of wartime social change were especially striking. Objections of principle to the taxation of gambling had entirely disappeared. In this context, resolving the legal status of cash betting off-course became the central question. The real money lay there, but could not be taxed while that form of betting remained illegal. Section five argues that the Cabinet agreed to the appointment of another Royal Commission on the basis that it could bring closer the licensing of betting shops. But legalization did not command unanimous support within the Labour Party: indeed, the final section of the chapter suggests that Labour's attitude to the licensing of cash betting off-course remained unresolved on its departure from office.

1. 'Not Workers But Idlers': Disapproval of the Dog Track during the War and After

During the war the Labour anti-gamblers James Barr and Cecil Wilson, who had Protestantism in common, if not socialism,[8] called for a complete ban on betting and betting sports.[9] But they were unusual: to the limited extent that Labour MPs attacked betting between 1939 and 1945, the focus was largely the dog track. Its most prominent critics were the Nonconformist and MP for Colne Valley in Yorkshire, William Glenvil Hall, and the London Co-operator R. C. Morrison:[10] they complained repeatedly that dog racing was encouraging absenteeism and diverting scarce manpower and raw materials away from more important sectors of the economy.[11] Their claims were largely unsupported by evidence but

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[8] Barr was a socialist but, as noted in chapter 1, the ideological disposition of Wilson, a former Liberal, is more contestable.

[9] HCD: 21 Jan 1943, vol.386, col.288. 20 June 1940, vol.362, col.218-9.

[10] Morrison was from a Protestant background but his attitude to gambling was complex. He favoured liberalization of the small lotteries laws during the 1920s and in the 1940s praised the football pools. See above p.77, fn.76. See also, 24 July 1946, HLD, vol.147, col.1360.

[11] For Glenvil Hall see HCD: 30 May 1940, vol.361, cols.657-8. 26 March 1942, vol.378, col.2220-1, 2124. 3 July 1940, vol.362, cols.829-30. 13 June 1940, vol.361, cols.1369-70. 18 July 1940, vol.363, col.381. 25 July 1940, vol.363, cols.1006. 17 March 1942, vol.378, col.1320-1. 22 March 1944, vol.398, col.861. For Morrison see HCD: 11 Dec 1941, vol.376, cols.1660-8. 25 June 1940, vol.362, cols.299-90. 27 Nov 1941, vol.376, cols.890-1. Morrison had been a critic of dog racing during the interwar period. See pp.99-100, above.

Hall and Morrison were supported by a number of other Labour MPs who were either Protestants (C. G. Ammon,[12] Rhys Davies,[13] James Griffiths),[14] or based in and around the strongly Nonconformist Durham coalfields (Emmanuel Shinwell,[15] and the MFGB President Will Lawther),[16] or both (John Lawson[17] and Joshua Ritson).[18] The way in which ideological objections to dog racing were couched in the language of economic consequences was illuminated by a letter from a London TGWU Branch Secretary to the Minister of Transport:

> Men and boys will not work on Saturday afternoons when the racing track is open...buses are filled with dog-fans just at the time when the factories are opening their gates for the workers...If the worker has a little more money than he knows what to do with, I can assure them that National Savings is more adaptable than giving to a Bookmaker. I am asking that you will take this matter up on a point of urgency and find the promoters of these Tracks a job more compatible with winning the War instead of hiding behind the name of 'sport'.[19]

The writer J. B. Priestley, a prominent public figure during wartime, represented this strand of socialism: 'If I thought for a moment that the people were...fighting the war only to get back to the drivel [of the tabloids] and dog-racing...I would not be writing these pages' he confided in *Out of the People*.[20]

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[12] HCD: 3 July 1940, vol.362, col.830. 18 July 1940, vol.363, cols.413-4.
[13] HCD: 20 Jan 1944, vol.396, col.398. 7 Dec 1944, vol.404, col.768.
[14] 12 March 1942, HCD, vol.378, col.1179. Griffiths's insistence that the 'people who go there [to the dog track] in their thousands... are not workers but idlers' provides the title of this section.
[15] 11 Dec 1941, HCD, vol.376, cols.1667-8.
[16] Lawther was not an MP of course. 'I am not a spoil-sport, but I would be a dictator in this matter and stop it. It is amazing that even at this hour some people do not realize the menace confronting the nation', he told a Labour Party meeting at Durham Miners Hall in June 1940. HO186/739. Clipping from the *Northern Voice*, 22 June 1940.
[17] HCD: 25 June 1940, vol.362, col.289-90. 26 Nov 1941, vol.376, cols.762-3. Lawson was a Wesleyan lay preacher. For his recognition of the dangers of betting more generally see his autobiography *A Man's Life* (London, 1932), 76.
[18] Ritson was a Wesleyan and denounced the continuation of dog racing on grounds that the petrol expended in transporting the crowd 'might be badly needed in the defence of the country'. HO186/739. Clipping from the *Northern Voice*, 22 June 1940.
[19] HO186/739. Letter from Secretary of TGWU Branch 1332 to Minister of Transport, 10 Feb 1941.
[20] J. B. Priestley, *Out of the People* (New York, 1941), 42. Quoted by C. Waters, 'J. B. Priestley: Englishness and the Politics of Nostalgia' in P. Mandler and S. Pederson (eds.), *After the Victorians: Private Conscience and Public Duty in Modern Britain* (London, 1994), 209-226, 220.

Elements within the Coalition Government shared this disapproval of dog racing.[21] In the summer of 1940, at a time when the war appeared to be going especially badly, midweek meetings were banned (other than on early closing day). The National Greyhound Racing Society (NGRS) was informed by the Home Office (and the formulation is illuminating) 'that there is evidence of a substantial body of *opinion* that in these times the men attending in the afternoon might be otherwise employed to better advantage'.[22] By 20 June, the government was insisting that 'in view of the growing tide of public *opinion* the only alternative to complete closing down would be a drastic reduction in the number of meetings...greyhounds were fed on bread and people were embarrassed by crowds going into meetings'.[23] Weekend meetings were subsequently reduced from two to one per week. The Home Office continued to give weight to the small number of Labour MPs (and the even smaller number of Conservatives) who opposed dog racing: it insisted that if the feeling in the House remained 'we shall not be able to hold the present position'. A total ban might be necessary.

The Home Secretary was Sir John Anderson, a man who in his previous career as Permanent Under-Secretary had 'helped to consolidate the thoroughly conservative Home Office orthodoxy on gambling law'.[24] But Anderson publicly claimed to defer to the judgment of the Minister of Labour Ernest Bevin on the issue of restricting sports and entertainments.[25] There was no evidence that dog racing was having a deleterious effect on the war economy and the Ministry of Labour appeared to agree that the NGRS had a 'genuine grievance':[26] it was subsequently agreed that dog racing meetings could resume on weekday afternoons at tracks where the 'appointed [racing] day' was not Saturday or early-closing day.[27]

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[21] The following paragraph draws on a large file HO186/739.
[22] My italics.
[23] My italics.
[24] Dixon, *From Prohibition*, 193, 276.
[25] HCD: 30 May 1940, vol.361, cols.657-8. 13 June 1940, vol.361, cols.1369-70.
[26] HO186/739. Letter, Home Office to Ministry of Labour, 6 Sept 1940.
[27] HO186/739. Memo, 13 Sept 1940.

Herbert Morrison replaced Anderson as Home Secretary in October 1940. The former's biographers have described how the 'Home Office under Morrison was a liberal influence in Government'. He 'was not politically authoritarian' and 'always happier dealing with institutions or broad policies in a political context than with individual behaviour in a social or moral context'.[28] Throughout his time at the Home Office, Morrison rejected the demands of those Labour MPs who were opposed to dog racing. He recognized their claims to be ideologically motivated: 'Puritanism' had led Shinwell and Morrison 'to confuse their objection to a particular form of entertainment with their views on absenteeism' he insisted at the end of 1941.[29] Even when dog racing began to attract criticism outside of this small circle, Morrison refused to give ground. The Labour MPs William Leach and Will Thorne expressed concern about the growth of dog track betting during the second half of the war and Thorne specifically asked the Home Secretary to gather official statistics on the turnover of dog track totes.[30] Morrison refused to do so. It would be a diversion of resources from more important work.[31] The Home Secretary continued to caution against Labour MPs 'exploit[ing] the war situation for furtherance of peacetime policy'[32] and insisted that such restrictions as were imposed on dog racing had the objective of securing economies in manpower and fuel rather than reducing betting.[33]

This was the government's justification for the restriction of dog racing to one Saturday meeting, announced in February 1942. It was part of a wider restriction of midweek sporting events. Horse racing meetings had been reduced to about 20 per cent of the pre-war figure, and further restriction was forthcoming, Morrison informed MPs. The same was true of football, which, 'has been largely confined to Saturdays, public holidays and local early closing days'. Yet some midweek football and horse racing would continue: as such, Morrison, who insisted that the government's approach to issue was governed by the 'belief

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[28] B. Donoughue and G. W. Jones, *Herbert Morrison: portrait of a politician* (London, 1973), 306, 308.
[29] 11 Dec 1941, HCD, vol.376, cols.1660-8.
[30] HCD: 17 March 1942, vol.378, col.1332. 1 April 1943, vol.388, col.326-7.
[31] HCD: 15 Oct 1942, vol.383, col.1787. 5 April 1944, vol.398, cols.1995-6.
[32] 11 Feb 1943, HCD, vol.386, vol.1434.
[33] 25 Feb 1943, HCD, vol.387, col.284.

that, within reason, popular entertainments act as a lubricant rather than a brake on the war machine', could hardly deny that dog racing was being treated somewhat differently.[34]

The Conservative MP Sir William Brass alleged bias. He directed the Home Secretary to his own statement about dog racing's negligible effect on absenteeism.[35] The NGRS also complained that the ban on midweek meetings 'indicate[d] possible discrimination between one form of entertainment and another'.[36] This formulation neglected the distinction that the government drew between spectator sports and purely betting events like dog racing. Perhaps the NGRS should have been satisfied that the Home Secretary did not view the dog track as he did commercial gaming parties. Outlawing the latter in April 1943, the Home Secretary had emphasized his determination to eliminate 'this kind of parasitical growth on the war effort'[37] by 'those who make profits out of providing facilities for gambling'.[38] A similar indictment of dog racing was certainly possible. The Labour MP and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of War Transport Philip Noel Baker did everything possible to distance himself from this 'entertainment' (he did not think it deserved the designation 'sport'), without actually departing from the government's policy.[39]

Dog racing's accelerated growth during 1945 and 1946 encouraged disapproval. The dog totes turnover, £40 million in 1939, was £200m by 1946,[40] when total profits were estimated at £14.75m. Adding on-course betting with bookmakers, overall turnover was somewhere between £300-400m in the latter year. It was not just a matter of increased turnover. Attendance reached thirty million in 1946 (though this was largely the result of repeated

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[34] 12 March 1942, HCD, vol.378, cols.1178-9.
[35] HO186/739/140/25 (Part 1). Letter from W. Brass to Home Sec., 27 Feb 1942 and reply from Home Sec., 12 March 1942 Brass was referring to Morrison's statement of 11 Dec 1941: HCD, vol.376, cols.1660-8. Discussed on previous page, above.
[36] HO186/739/140/25 (Part 1). Letter to Home Sec, 26 Feb 1942.
[37] 1 April 1943, HCD, vol.388, col.326-7.
[38] 5 Feb 1942, HCD, vol.377, col.1262. Complaints about gaming clubs had become common during 1942 and 1943. Will Thorne was particularly vexed by gaming. HCD: 16 Dec 1941, vol.376, col.1808. 22 Jan 1942, vol.377, cols.448-9. For other interventions on the subject of gaming see HCD: 5 & 19 March 1942, vol.378, cols.784-5, 1653-4. 14 April 1942, vol.379, col.34. 19 May 1942, vol.380, col.35. 18 June 1942, vol.380, col.1661. 20 Oct 1943, vol.392, cols.1393-4.
[39] 5 May 1944, HCD, vol.399, cols.1673-4.
[40] 1951RC, para.103, at p.29.

visits by around half a million regulars), and in 1947 sixty thousand people attended the White City Derby.[41] But the Attlee Government initially brushed aside complaints from Labour MPs.[42] Again, it was when the economic situation worsened that attacks on the dog track gained traction. Just as the Coalition Government had restricted meetings ostensibly on economic grounds, but actually because of hostility to the dog track, so too did the postwar Labour Government. Dog racing was, at the height of the fuel crisis, prohibited entirely. Thereafter, it was substantially restricted.

A Statutory Order prohibited the use of fuel by dog-tracks between 12 February and 14 March 1947.[43] Since neither the hare nor the tote could be operated without electricity, this decision brought organized dog racing to an immediate and complete halt. Twelve hundred races had been postponed by the time the total ban was lifted[44] and replaced by another Statutory Order restricting tracks to one Saturday meeting a week.[45] This, in turn, was rapidly superseded by the Dog Racecourse Betting (Temporary Provisions) Act, which provided for two meetings every Saturday after 1pm, plus four Bank Holiday meetings (thus enabling the 104 meetings per annum laid down by the 1934 Betting and Lotteries Act).[46]

Ministers denied bias. The severe weather had demanded the initial prohibition, while the Dog Racecourse Betting Act's provisions were necessary to cut absenteeism. Midweek professional football and rugby matches were also to cease on this basis, and the Jockey Club had pledged to reduce further the number of midweek race meetings.[47] Nor should anything be read into the decision to legislate in the case of dog racing: statutory provision was

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[41] Baker, 'Going to the Dogs – Hostilty to Greyhound Racing in Britain', 97-8.
[42] HCD: 1 August 1946, vol.426, col.221. 26 Nov 1946, vol.430, cols.1409-10. 28 Nov 1946, vol.430, col.1755. 12 Dec 1946, vol.430, col.270.
[43] S. R. & O.1947, No.252, 12 Feb 1947. Control of Fuel (Dog Racecourse) Order.
[44] Baker, 'Going to the Dogs', 103-4. Shinwell announced the lifting of the ban on 13 March 1947: HCD, vol.434, cols.1482-3. This decision had been endorsed by the Cabinet earlier that day. CAB124/1060. (C[abinet] M[inutes] (47) 28th, 13 March 1947).
[45] S.R.& O.1947, No.446, 14 March 1947.
[46] 27 March 1947, HCD, vol.435, cols.1419-22. Tracks situated outside industrial areas could apply for an exemption but they were rarely granted. By the end of January 1948, 105 applications for exemptions had been received: 85 were rejected, 16 granted, 2 pending, 3 lapsed. HO45/23517. Briefing note, 23 Jan 1948. See also Dept. of Economic Affairs Memo on 'Midweek Racing'. 16 March 1948. (Same series).
[47] 13 March 1947, HCD, vol.434, col.1496-7.

necessary to override the Betting and Lotteries Act, which prevented Saturday racing on tracks for which Saturday was not already an appointed racing day.[48]

The decision to treat horse racing differently was defensible.[49] But the government's unwillingness, or inability, to stop obvious breaches of the midweek football and rugby bans rapidly undermined the credibility of the government's dog racing policy. Four months of midweek football fixtures were scheduled for 1947-8, 'as much midweek football as we ever had' according to the Labour MP Harry Hynd.[50] More fundamentally, evidence of dog racing's contribution to absenteeism was unforthcoming. The connection was asserted but never proved. Yet, it was April 1948 before the prohibition of midweek dog racing was lifted. Having received a deputation of (mostly Labour) MPs calling for the removal of the ban,[51] the Chancellor Stafford Cripps told the government's Production Committee that he

> was impressed by the deputation's attempts to show the difficulty of making a convincing case for continuance of the ban in the absence of any concrete evidence to show that a slight relaxation would be likely to have adverse effects on production. No such evidence had hitherto been forthcoming from the Production Departments, and special reports from the Regions had similarly failed to produce any material useful for proceedings in the Dog Racecourse Betting Bill.[52]

The Production Committee therefore agreed that one midweek evening meeting per week should be conceded.[53] Even then, the government agreed only to the substitution of one

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[48] (CM (47) 28th, 13 March 1947). See also: 21 March 1947, HCD, vol.435, col.766.

[49] Midweek meetings were relatively scarce and most racecourses distant from industrial areas. (P[roduction] C[ommittee] (47) 5th, 12 Dec 1947). There was also the familiar argument about the economic benefits of the horse-breeding industry. CAB 124/1060. (CP (47) 86, Home Sec's Memorandum) discussed at (CM (47) 28th, 13 March 1947).

[50] 23 July 1947, HCD, vol.440, cols.1553-64. Hynd was persistent critic of the restriction of dog racing: see also, for example, HCD: 22 May 1947, vol.437, cols.278-9. 26 June 1947, vol.439, col.654-5.

[51] Note on Meeting, 17 March 1948. HO45/23517. See also *The Times* report, 18 March 1948.

[52] CAB134/636. (PC (48) 6th Meeting, 22 March 1948). The Cabinet Office briefing paper prepared for Cripps in advance of this meeting prefigured the government's shift of position. HO45/23517. 'Origins of Restrictions', draft and revised memo, 15 and 16 March 1947.

[53] (PC (48) 6th Meeting, 22 March 1948). The Parl. Sec. to the Minister for Fuel & Power (Alfred Robens) had come away from the 17 March meeting, 'strongly opposed to the maintenance of this ban if there is virtually no evidence to show a negative effect on production'. POWE 20/133. 18 March 1948.

midweek meeting for one Saturday meeting.[54] It was April 1949 before two midweek meetings were once again possible.[55]

Norman Baker has argued that the treatment of dog racing between 1947 and 1949 amounted to discrimination. 'Key government ministers' were influenced by 'a philosophy of sport' that condemned dog racing because of its 'overwhelming association with gambling', lower-class urban origins, and encouragement of passive leisure. 'Government was not on a mission to destroy the dogs. Rather, what were perceived as redeeming qualities that led ministers to moderate policies towards other sports did not exist in the case of dog-racing'.[56] This is a persuasive argument in its fundamentals. But aspects of Baker's account are more contestable. Of particular interest to this thesis is his overwhelming emphasis on the role played by the Home Secretary James Chuter Ede.[57]

Baker contends that Ede, a Nonconformist, was both architect of the Attlee Government's dog racing policy,[58] and, subsequently, its principal opponent in Cabinet.[59] The latter is certainly true. Baker provides substantial evidence of the Home Secretary's increasing exasperation with a policy based on supposition. Ede, having become aware that that the policy lacked an evidential base during the passage of the Dog Racecourse Betting Act[60] insisted on exemptions to the Act so 'as to allow meetings to be held during the week in holiday resorts and other areas where it was clear that midweek racing would not interfere

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[54] CAB 134/636. (PC (48) 6th Meeting, 22 March 1948). The concession was to permit one midweek meet at each track after 7.30pm providing all tracks in a given area raced on the same night. HO45/23517. 16 March 1948

[55] (PC (49) 6th Meeting, 2 March 1949). For background see HO45/23517. Memos of 4, 5 & 14 Jan 1949 & draft letter, Home Sec to Chancellor, 25 Jan 1949 & Chancellor to Home Sec, 14 Feb 1949.

[56] Baker, 'Going to the Dogs', 119, 101, 98.

[57] A Cabinet colleague described Ede as 'puritanical in outlook and habits...an upright Free Churchmen'. Dalton, *High Tide and After*, 297. But Dalton added that 'though not superficially a sporting type, [Ede] often boasted that he seldom missed the Derby', ibid, 297-8.

[58] 'Going to the Dogs', 108, 110.

[59] Ibid, 115-6.

[60] 21 March 1947, HCD, vol.435, cols.765-816. Ede informed the Prime Minister testily that the production departments, contrary to instructions, had not provided 'him with definite evidence that the holding of dog-racing meetings during the week involved a loss of industrial production'. CAB124/1060. Home Sec to PM, 22 March 1947.

with industrial production'.[61] He subsequently refused to consider renewing the Act,[62] and argued at Cabinet for all tracks to be allowed at least one midweek meeting.[63] The Home Secretary's repeated requests for evidence of dog racing's impact on absenteeism continued to yield nothing from the Economic Ministries[64] and he subsequently told a Labour-dominated deputation of MPs that 'Production Ministers had satisfied the Government that greyhound race meetings, even in the evenings, were detrimental to production and, if MPs thought the contrary they would have to persuade the Minister concerned'.[65]

Where Baker is less convincing is in his argument that the Home Secretary had been the initial architect of these restrictions on dog racing. It is true that Ede, during a meeting of the Cabinet's domestic policy sub-committee late in 1945, suggested that dog racing be restricted on 'grounds of public policy'.[66] It is also true that Ede refused at all times to describe dog racing as a sport: he notably preferred terms such as 'entertainment' and 'pastime'.[67] To this charge sheet can be added his subsequent actions as chair of the Cabinet Committee on Betting: the Home Secretary pushed hard for tighter restrictions on dog racing meetings.[68] Baker is certainly correct to characterize Ede's attitude to dog racing as a perennial contest 'between principle and pragmatism'.[69]

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[61] CAB124/1060. (CM (47) 32nd, 25 March 1947). Ede had undertaken to consider exemptions at Bill's 2R: 21 March 1947: HCD, vol.435, col.814. An amendment to this effect was introduced on 26 March 1947: HLD, vol.146, cols.807-18. *The Star* celebrated the Home Secretary's concession: 'this ill-conceived and panicky gloom measure is being whittled way...it has never been proved that midweek sport could inflict serious damage on industrial production'. 27 March 1947.

[62] CAB124/1060. (PC (47) 5th, 12 Dec 1947) discussing Home Sec's Memo (PC (47) 21).

[63] CAB 124/1060. (CP (47) 338, Home Sec.'s Memo) discussed at (CM (48) 1st, 6 Jan 1948). The Home Sec said that it would be possible to secure this year an agreement by which each track would hold one meeting on Saturday and one on another weekday after 7pm. If this was not regarded as satisfactory the Govt spokesman would have to be able to show that even if midweek meetings were held only after 7pm production would be affected adversely'.

[64] Home Office to Fuel & Power. POWE20/133. 6 Jan 1948. Fuel & Power had been further pressured to deliver the Home Office 'facts and figures' by the Cabinet Office. POW20/133. Memo, 9 Jan 1948.

[65] HO45/23517. Cabinet Office memo on 'Origins of Restrictions', 16 March 1948.

[66] CAB71/19. (L[ord] P[residents Committee] (45) 39th, Oct 26 1945). Baker, 'Going to the Dogs', 109.

[67] Baker, 'Going to the Dogs', 108. HCD: 13 March 1947, vol.434, col.1500. 21 March 1947, vol.435, col.765.

[68] CAB134/43. B(etting) L(otteries) G(aming) Committee, 1951.

[69] Baker, 'Going to the Dogs', 116.

However, I would suggest that 'pragmatism' always had the upper hand. At least it did in terms of the midweek racing issue. In the first place, the Home Secretary had made clear during the spring and summer of 1946 his view that restrictions were unnecessary and likely to be ineffective in discouraging absenteeism.[70] Second, he had supported, perhaps even initiated, Statutory Order 446, which, by enabling one Saturday meeting, ended the brief prohibition of dog racing.[71] Furthermore, a commitment to fair and reasonable treatment was in line with Ede's political persona in a wider sense. His time as Home Secretary was characterized by impartiality irrespective of his own personal or political views.[72] Notoriously, he insisted on pushing ahead with the redistribution of parliamentary constituencies despite evidence of its political cost to the Labour Party.[73]

More fundamentally, an emphasis on Ede's role in the construction of the government's dog racing policy neglects the extent to which the locus of power lay elsewhere. The rationale for the restriction of dog racing was economic and the policy of restriction actually originated in the Fuel Committee; the Production Committee and the Ministerial Committee on Economic Planning (MCEP) subsequently defended it. Emmanuel Shinwell, Minister of Fuel & Power, was architect of the initial, complete, ban. Baker rightly identifies him as a rational recreator,[74] and stresses his complaints about dog-racing's effect on production during 1945

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[70] CAB124/1060. Memo, Home Sec. to Lord President, 20 March 1946. CAB132/1. (LP (46) 148, Home Sec's Memorandum 14 June 1946) discussed at (LP (46) 15th, 3 May 1946). HO45/25176. Home Sec.'s letter, 27 July 1946.

[71] CAB124/1060. (CP (47) 86 Home Sec's Memo) discussed at (CM (47) 28th, 13 March 1947). Ede told parliament that the Statutory Order was 'passed with my knowledge; I might almost say at my request. It enabled me to help the greyhound people until I could get this [Dog Racecourse Betting] Bill'. 21 March 1947, HCD, vol. 435, col.805.

[72] Ede's distance from the culture and institutions of the Labour Party played a part here. He rarely attended Party Conference and Brooke characterizes him as not "privy to the councils of the inner-circle of the Labour leadership. His true milieu seems to have been local Surrey politics and the world of the Commons back benches. Politically, he 'was somewhere to the Right of the Labour Party', as he admitted in 1942". Brooke, *Labour's War*, 189. See also K. Jefferys, *Labour and the wartime coalition: from the diary of James Chuter Ede, 1941-1945* (London, 1987).

[73] Dalton insisted that this decision cost Labour a working majority at the 1950 General Election. Dalton, *High Tide and After*, 297. See also K. Jeffreys, 'Ede, James Chuter Chuter-, Baron Chuter Ede (1882-1965)', *DNB* [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32414, accessed 28 March 2006].

[74] He quotes a speech by Shinwell on the need to encourage proper use of leisure. See *The Times*, 30 June 1947. 'Going to the Dogs', 109.

and 1946.[75] In fact, as we have seen, and despite his background as a mining MP, Shinwell had been demanding action on dog racing since the early 1940s.[76] The coercive aspects of his socialism - during the war he campaigned vigorously for more comprehensive government intervention in the economy[77] - extended well into the personal sphere. His autobiography asserted ominously that after the material wants of society had been satisfied attention should turn to 'tackling' the 'problems of the mind and spirit'.[78] The fuel crisis encouraged his authoritarian streak. On 10 February 1947, the Cabinet agreed that Shinwell 'should take steps to prevent the use of electricity by greyhound-racing tracks'.[79] Two days later, at the first meeting of the newly constituted Fuel Committee,[80] he secured agreement for an absolute prohibition of the use of fuel at dog tracks.[81] Chaired by the Prime Minister, its other members were the Ministers of Labour (George Isaacs), Transport (Alfred Robens) and the President of the Board of Trade (Stafford Cripps).[82]

Shinwell soon came under considerable pressure. The popular press reacted angrily to the ban, which they perceived as part of a broader, and worrying, tendency towards austere authoritarianism.[83] The usually supportive *Star* bemoaned 'a punitive Sabbatarianism that would make the workers miserable by Order'. The prohibition would prove counter-productive since 'the essential will to work harder cannot be stimulated by a petty restriction that is already seen to be incapable of rigid enforcement'.[84] The *Sporting Life* and *Daily*

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[75] For his complaints about dog-racing: CAB71/19. (LP (45) 39th, Oct 26 1945; CAB132/1. (LP (46) 15th, 3 May 1946). (LP (46) 22nd, 21 June 1946). He also complained about horse racing. Ibid. See also: CAB132/1. (LP (46) 13th, April 12 1946).

[76] See above, pp.124, 126.

[77] E. Shinwell, *Conflict Without Malice. An Autobiography* (London, 1955), 145, 150-3.

[78] Ibid, 245.

[79] CAB124/1060. (CM (47) 19th, 10 Feb 1947).

[80] The Fuel Committee's task being 'to co-ordinate overall fuel and power policy and thereby replace the more narrowly defined Coal Committee', during the fuel crisis it 'virtually put in commission the Office of the Minister of Fuel and Power and with Attlee as Chair few decisions had to be referred to the full Cabinet'. B.W.E. Alford & N. Rollings, *Economic Planning 1943-51: a guide to documents in the Public Record Office* (London, 1992).

[81] CAB124/1060. (FC (47) 1st, 12 Feb 1947).

[82] Attlee had not been privy to the decision, having left the room beforehand. CAB124/1060. Memo to PM, 5 Jan 1948. The Paymaster-General and the Lord President later joined the Committee.

[83] Baker, 'Going to the Dogs', 110-1, 113. The rest of this paragraph draws on Baker's research.

[84] *The Star*, 14, 17, 19 March 1947.

Express took a similar line.[85] Supporters of dog racing organized themselves under the umbrella of the 'National Greyhound Patrons Association': this group organised two well-publicized London demonstrations against the prohibition.[86] Labour MPs were also critical,[87] and the Prime Minister was pressuring Shinwell.[88] His wider handling of the fuel crisis was being heavily criticised (and would eventually cost him his job).

The Minister of Fuel and Power rapidly executed a tactical retreat. Shinwell implied that the total ban on dog racing had been an unintended consequence of the fuel prohibition. His objective had been only to halt evening racing,[89] because of 'the undesirability, during the acute electricity crisis, of having such large-scale outdoor gatherings after dark, with the brilliant lighting involved'.[90] He told MPs that the lifting of the ban was 'under consideration', and that he had 'in mind' the popularity of dog racing among Labour supporters.[91] Shinwell twice tried to persuade his colleagues on the Fuel Committee to lift the ban.[92] On the latter occasion he claimed:

> This absolute prohibition, which is subject to no exceptions and is not specifically linked to electricity (as are all the other 'crisis' restrictions, both statutory or otherwise) has in fact singled out this form of entertainment for specially severe treatment – and has elicited many protests for this reason. In fact, dog tracks do not consume any large quantities of electricity...many indoor entertainments consume as much, or more – and have not been interfered with...I feel strongly that the time has now come when this

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[85] 'You cannot force Englishmen to work but they will work hard enough so long as they are given the opportunity to play hard': *Sporting Life,* 11 March 1947. 'Leisure emptied of ordinary pleasure is no way to full production': *Daily Express*, 8 March 1947. See also *Daily Express*, 12 March 1947.

[86] The first took place outside Whitehall while the Government met with sports authorities on 11 March, followed by a rally in Hyde Park the next week. (The latter was foreshortened by bad weather). *Manchester Guardian*, 12 March 1947. *Daily Express*, 12 and 17 March 1947.

[87] See, for example, HCD: 27 Feb 1947, vol.433, col.2269. 13 March 1947, vol.434, col.1482. See also Home Office's retrospective comments on the heavy criticism. HO45/25097. 24 October 1947.

[88] The PM 'thinks that it is very probable that questions will be raised about this and he would like to know if we have got a good answer'. POW26/451. Memo, Cabinet Office to Fuel & Power, 19 Feb 1947.

[89] POW26/451. Memos, 20 & 21 Feb 1947.

[90] Baker has observed that dog racing alone of the major sports used floodlights, while dance-halls, cinemas and the like were "less 'public' than dog-racing". 'Going to the Dogs', 104.

[91] 27 Feb 1947: HCD, vol.433, col.317.

[92] CAB124/1060. (FC (47) 4th, 21 Feb 1947). CAB124/1060. Memorandum (FC (47) 21) discussed at (FC 47, 8th, 28 Feb 1947). Baker does not discuss these attempts. He notes merely that Shinwell had, by late summer 1947, moderated his position such as to preclude supporting a ban on all midweek sport. Neither does he examine why the FC rejected Shinwell's requests for concessions. Baker, 'Going to the Dogs', 117.

> Order should be revoked, in the light of the return of industry to work and the general easing of the crisis.[93]

Shinwell's arguments were rejected. Senior Economic Ministers had become concerned about absenteeism as the economy deteriorated. Originally relaxed about midweek sport,[94] the Treasury dominated Ministerial Committee on Economic Planning (MCEP) had recently been tasked with investigating measures to reduce midweek sport's impact on production.[95] As the Ministry of Fuel and Power noted: 'Fuel saving was not the only reason, or indeed the main reason, for retaining the ban. It was considered necessary in the interests of production'.[96]

But was it? Since football and horse racing took place on midweek afternoons and attracted huge crowds the Economic Ministries had grounds for suspecting that they increased absenteeism.[97] But most dog-racing meetings took place in the evenings,[98] and the introduction of shift working which the Production Departments originally emphasized, never happened to any significant degree.[99] It rapidly became clear the economic case for the Dog Racecourse Betting Act was entirely based on claims about absenteeism emanating from the National Coal Board (NCB) and the Regional Boards of Industry in Scotland, Wales, and the East and West Ridings: claims that were never accompanied by evidence, statistical or otherwise. These Industrial Boards, operating in areas where Protestantism was historically strong, assumed the worst of dog racing. 'The divergence of views between the [Industrial]

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[93] Memo (FC (47) 21).

[94] CAB 124/1060. Memo to Lord President (discussing attitudes to midweek sports of Labour, Supply, Agriculture, Works, Trade & Home Office), 20 March 1946. A half-hearted decision to seek a voluntary stoppage of midweek football was later taken. CAB 132/1. (LP (46) 22nd, 21 June 1946). (LP (46) 218, 30 July 1946). (LP (46) 29th, 2 Aug 1946). See also HO45/25176. 'Minute of Meeting', 31 July 1946. The Labour Ministry did not think any restriction necessary and none materialized. HO45/25176. Memo, 23 July 1946.

[95] The MCEP was a creature of the Treasury and the *Socialist Leader* reported that the Chancellor was the architect of the subsequent restrictions. *Socialist Leader*, 12 May 1947. The Official Steering Committee on Economic Development subsequently took responsibility for producing the report on midweek sport restriction. CAB124/1060. (OSCED (47) 4th, 3 Feb 1947). See also letter in the same series, Sir Edward Bridges (Treasury) to Sir A. Maxwell (Home Office), 4 Feb 1947.

[96] POW26/451. Memo, 7 March 1947.

[97] HO45/23517. Memo on the 'Origins of Restrictions', 9 March 1948.

[98] POW20/133. Home Office to Fuel & Power. 6 Jan 1948.

[99] Memo from the Office of Economic Affairs on the 'Origins of Restrictions', 16 March 1948. See also draft memo, 7 March 1948. (Copies in HO45/23517). See also Home Sec's letter to Chancellor, 25 Nov 1949. (Same series).

Boards does not spring from any difference in industrial conditions in their Regions, but merely from their opinions', observed the Office of Economic Affairs subsequently.[100] The NCB's position was no more credible. It believed a resumption of midweek dog racing would have 'a bad effect' on attendance at the mines, but this 'was not capable of statistical proof'.[101]

The Production Committee referred to 'the accepted fact' of its impact on absenteeism in the mines.[102] The Minister of Labour asserted speculatively that, on racing days, absenteeism rose by between 5 and 10 per cent.[103] The Ministry of Fuel & Power found 'it difficult to believe that evidence would be hard to come by...of significant increases in absenteeism on days or during weeks when midweek racing was allowed at these tracks'.[104] Even after it became clear that their reports contained 'not a shred of evidence' the Production departments continued to give credibility to the views of the NCB and the hostile Regional Boards.[105] The Cabinet as a whole proved no more robust,[106] despite the Cabinet Secretary's warning that continuing the ban demanded 'a strong and carefully prepared case'.[107] The Racecourse Betting Act had been recommended to the Commons by Ede on the grounds that 'the Ministry of Fuel & Power and Ministry of Supply have been told by the people who represent them in the different parts of the country that midweek sport does tend to interfere with production. I think it goes without saying that, when we have some of these huge crowds that attend this and similar sports, it must inevitably be the case'.[108] The Lord Chancellor William Jowitt was even more candid about the basis of the restriction: 'There

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[100] Memo from the Office of Economic Affairs on the 'Origins of Restrictions', 16 March 1948.
[101] POW20/133. NCB to Fuel and Power, 28 Jan 1948. This was confirmed by the NCB's subsequent study of West Midlands' pits. POW20/133. 3 March 1948.
[102] CAB124/1060. (PC (47) 5th, 12 Dec 1947). CAB124/1060. (PC (48) 3rd, 11 Feb 1948). Ede made similar comments about the reports received from the industrial boards. See Baker, 'Going to the Dogs', 117.
[103] HO45/23517. 'Note of Meeting' with deputation of MPs and NGRS officials, 26 January 1948.
[104] POW20/133. Memo, 2 Feb 1948.
[105] POW/20/133. Memos, 2 Feb % 3, 13, & 16 March 1948.
[106] CM (48) 1st, 6 Jan 1948). The fact that late shifts were being worked in mining areas made it impossible to contemplate any arrangement under which midweek greyhound-racing might be allowed after 7pm'. Restrictions should continue and the 'possibility of imposing restrictions on greyhound-racing after 30 June 1948 by use of powers contained in the Supplies and Services (Transitional Powers) Act, 1945' explored.
[107] CAB124/1060. Letter, Home Sec. to PM, 5 Jan 1948.
[108] 21 March 1947, HCD, vol.435, col.797.

were no statistics to prove that greyhound racing does interfere with production...[but] we [have] had repeated representations from people who know, that when [greyhound racing] takes place in midweek it does have an adverse effect on production by encouraging absenteeism'.[109] The Home Office concluded that 'the only argument in favour of discrimination appears to be that complaints were made by the Production Departments as to effects of greyhound-racing, whereas they were not in the case of other evening sports'.[110] Several Labour MPs, as well as the Conservative party, criticized the government for relying on hearsay.[111]

Ministers persistently denied dog racing's overwhelming association with gambling influenced policy. But the evidence suggested otherwise. In advance of the Cabinet's discussion of the Dog Racecourse Betting Bill, the Prime Minister was advised of dog-track betting's particular dangers: 'The undesirability of betting on dog tracks, as distinct from off-the-course betting on horse-racing, is that the succession of events affords an opportunity for betting on an extensive scale'.[112] Ministers were concerned that allowing two Saturday meetings 'would encourage those who attended to risk more money than they could afford'.[113] Production Ministers alluded to the psychological effects of gambling. 'It would be most undesirable to take any action at this stage which might be interpreted as an encouragement to relaxation of effort'.[114] This argument was repeated in an attempt to secure a continuation of the ban.[115] What the National Greyhound Breeders and Owners Association called the 'betting bogey'[116] was evident in the Home Secretary's observation that 'Greyhound racing can take place every night in the week if there is no betting...It is entirely the question of betting that has brought it within the purview of legislation at

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[109] 26 March 1947, HLD, vol.146, col.810. Baker, 'Going to the Dogs', 115.
[110] HO 45/23517. 'Note for meeting with deputation', 23 Jan 1948.
[111] 21 March 1947, HCD, vol.435, cols.770-97, 799-811. Four Labour MPs later accompanied a NGRS deputation to ask for the lifting of the ban. HO45/21932. Note of meeting, 14 July 1947.
[112] CAB124/1060. Cabinet Secretary's Memo, 12 March 1947.
[113] CAB124/1060. (CM (47) 28th, 13 March 1947).
[114] (PC (47) 5th, 12 Dec 1947).
[115] (PC (48) 3rd, 11 Feb 1948).
[116] HO45/21058. Letter to the Home Office, 30 July 1947.

all...The people who go to Epsom Downs to see the Derby, who do not bet but have a little family party on the Downs – that type of person is entirely absent from greyhound racing'.[117]

The Conservative MP, Osbert Peake, a Home Office Minister in the Coalition Government, remembered Emmanuel Shinwell's hostility to dog racing during the war. He accused the Minister of Fuel and Power of being responsible for Labour's inability to disentangle the economics of the issue from the ethics. The ban on midweek dog racing 'was based solely on ethical objections to gambling'.[118] Peake was largely correct, though wrong to see Shinwell as the fulcrum of these ethical objections. As we have seen, they permeated rather more widely. This was evident during the proceedings of the Cabinet Committee set up in 1951 to consider the report of the Royal Commission. Ministers drew a distinction between most forms of popular gambling, which were moderate and irregular,[119] and dog racing which they associated with heavy betting by a limited number of serious gamblers in an undesirable environment.[120] They associated the dog track with 'spivery' to a greater degree than other sites of betting.[121]

A precipitous slump in attendances and receipts subsequently drew the sting from the issue. The decline in dog racing's popularity which had begun in the late 1940s, picked up such pace during the next decade[122] that the question of further restrictions became moot. At the

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[117] 23 July 1947, HCD, vol.440, cols.1562.
[118] 21 March 1947, HCD, vol.435, cols.770-9.
[119] The Royal Commission had provided support for this distinction. 1951 RC, para.105, at p.30.
[120] (BLG 51, 2nd Meeting, 23 July). (BLG 51, (12), Draft Report, 17 Aug). McKibbin has described dog racing as 'really serious wagering' and noted that while 44% of the adult population bet on horses, only 4.1% bet on dogs. *The Ideologies of Class*, 110.
[121] The term 'spiv' originally denoted 'one who makes a living on the racecourse without having to work for it'. D. Hughes, 'The Spivs' in M. Sissons and P. French (eds.), *Age of Austerity 1945-51* (London, 1963), 83-100, 85. Specific connections between spivishness and the dog track were perhaps most famously made in two of the most important postwar British films: *Brighton Rock* (1947) and *The Blue Lamp* (1949), with its famous denouement at White City. For the former see N. Freeman, 'That was business - this is personal: professions of violence in English cinema from Brighton Rock to the Krays', pt.1, *Electronic Journal of British Cinema*, [accessed at http://www.shu.ac.uk/services/lc/closeup/krays.htm]. The corruption of the Labour Minister John Belcher was said to have included 'frequent visits to the dog track'. L. Baston, 'Belcher, John William (1906-64)', *DNB*, [http:www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/62279, accessed 16 Feb 2006]. For the kind of social research that encouraged Ministers' disapproval of the dog track see also Clapson, *A bit of a flutter*, 148-50.
[122] In 1948, attendance stood at 25 million and receipts £94m. By 1967, attendances were 10 million and receipts just £70m. This was before any adjustment for inflation. See also Miers, *Regulating Commercial Gambling*, 314. Clapson, A *bit of a Flutter*, 154-5. Munting, *An economic and social history*, 49.

end of the 1960s the Labour peer George Lindgren proposed easing the restrictions on dog track betting. He wished to amend the 1934 Betting and Lotteries Act by giving the tracks more flexibility in fixing their racing days, as well as increasing their maximum take from tote receipts. The Labour Government agreed that these restrictions were out of date. But it declined to support any change in respect of racing days. While the government claimed to be neutral, Lindgren more accurately described its position 'as neutral with a bias [against change]'. The Home Office Minister Victor Stonham explained that giving dog tracks greater flexibility over racing days would be 'highly controversial'. Suspicion of the dog track lingered in Labour circles. Lindgren could only get his Bill through by dropping all reference to racing days.[123]

2. State Lotteries at Home and Abroad under the Attlee Government

The postwar period saw a campaign in favour of state lotteries. The Attlee Government rejected its demands. Ministers had no inclination to challenge the 'official' view of the Treasury and the Bank of England, the Anglican Churches, and the National Savings Movement; these institutions argued that large lotteries were harmful on both economic and ethical grounds and that the state should not be involved in directly stimulating demand for gambling. However, there were signs of increasing pragmatism elsewhere in government. The Colonial Office's policy regarding overseas lotteries liberalized significantly under successive Labour secretaries of state. Blanket refusal of requests from the colonies to institute lotteries was replaced gradually by a policy that left the decision in local hands.

Advocates of a domestic lottery insisted that the idea went with the grain of British public opinion. Opinion polls recorded large and consistent majorities in favour. In March 1948 the British Institute of Public Opinion found that 60 per cent of the public approved of state lotteries as a means of raising revenue. Only 23 per cent disapproved (17 per expressed no

[123] Betting, Gaming & Lotteries (Amendment) Bill. HLD: 11 March 1969, vol.300, col.398-406. 15 April 1969, vol.301, cols.10-15, 656-59. 16 May 1969, HCD, vol.783, col.1868.

opinion).[124] While a later *Daily Express* poll reported that fully 90 per cent of the public were in favour,[125] a survey by Mass-Observation suggested support running at around 70 per cent.[126] And though around a quarter of the public (23 per cent) were against the idea, this opposition was soft ('only one person in twenty appears to express complete and dogmatic disapproval of the idea of national lotteries' and 'for the most part disapproval indicates simply unconcern rather than active hostility'). Furthermore, the 'very small degree of moral opposition' discovered by Mass-Observation was itself largely confined to Nonconformists and Church of Scotland members – a third of whom opposed a lottery. Even within these denominations more than 60 per cent were in favour, a figure rising to 70 per cent among Anglicans (27 per cent of whom disapproved).[127]

Although Labour supporters were slightly more likely to approve of lotteries than Conservatives,[128] Mass-Observation concluded there to be 'few regional, area or political differences' in levels of support. A stronger, if complicated, correlation existed between attitude and income. Support was allegedly weakest among the poorest sections of society.[129] Disapproval of lotteries was also strong among the wealthiest.[130] Middle-income groups, especially skilled workers (who were, as the 1951 Royal Commission noted, the biggest betters) appeared most enthusiastic about the idea. This was reflected in the support that some trade-union organizations gave to the campaign for a national lottery.[131]

But the 'official' triumvirate of the Treasury and the Bank of England, the Established Church, and the National Savings Movement, continued to oppose large-scale lotteries as

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[124] *News Chronicle,* 11 March 1948.
[125] Quoted in Arthur Dickinson, Major Dennis Eric Smith & E.P. Smith: 'British National Ballot: The Case for a Government Sponsored and Guaranteed Lottery'. Copy in file HO335/24.
[126] 1951RC. Minutes of Evidence. 17th day (Memorandum submitted by Michael Horseley).
[127] 62 per cent of both denominations being in favour. Ibid.
[128] 78% of Labour supporters were in favour and 19% against. Figures were 70% and 26% for Conservatives. Ibid.
[129] 42 per cent of those with earnings of less than £3 a week were opposed, with a bare majority - 52 per cent - in favour. Ibid.
[130] Among those earning more than £10 per week, 31 per cent were opposed, 61 per cent in favour. Ibid.
[131] HO335/25. 'Resolutions on a British National Ballot'. Also file on the 'Evidence presented to the Royal Commission by supporters of a National Lottery'. HO335/24.

inimical to the work ethic and its ideal type, the rational, hard-working and thrifty citizen.[132] 'Lotteries of any sort are still considered vaguely unmoral and wicked', observed the *People*, on the eve of the 1949 Royal Commission's proceedings.[133] The Commission subsequently dismissed the case for large public lotteries.[134] The Labour government had no inclination to challenge this 'official' view. Indeed, it shared it.[135] Labour's promotion of austerity merged with official orthodoxy in Chancellor Cripps plea to E. P. Smith MP, a prominent Conservative supporter of a National Lottery:

> We have got to save ourselves by our own hard work and we cannot do it by any form of gambling – of that I am convinced. It would be a very great pity if the concentration upon increasing our production were now to be disturbed by the idea that there was 'easy-money' to be picked up in the way you suggest which would save us from our own efforts. I believe that such publicity would be thoroughly bad and most unfortunate.[136]

Cripps, as discussed in the previous chapter, had opposed a national lottery on socialist grounds during the 1930s: as the acme of disproportionate reward and selfishness state lotteries were 'an abomination'.[137] The issue's ideological dimension was evident in submissions to the 1949 Royal Commission. E. P. Smith devoted a significant part of his memorandum to a meditation on the role of luck in human existence. He attacked the 'philosophical fallacy' of those who held that the distribution of property by chance was

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[132] See joint letter from Archbishop of Canterbury, Moderator of the Free Church, and Chairman of the Churches Committee on Gambling. *The Times*, 23 January 1948, and further correspondence, 30 Jan & 10 Feb 1948. The Lambeth Conference of 1948 also passed a strongly worded resolution deprecating state lotteries and sweepstakes. For Bank of England, see its Governor's comments. T233/155. 2 Feb 1948. For the National Savings Movement, see its Chairman's comments. T233/155. 12 Feb 1948.

[133] *The People*, 30 Jan 1949.

[134] 1951RC, para.379-92, at p.117-20. The Commission argued, surprisingly given the evidence put to it, that there was no evidence of genuine public support for a national lottery. What it meant was that there was no 'official' support. The conflation of 'public' and 'official' attitudes was largely discarded by the 1951RC but this was one area in which the notion of the 'public' remained circumscribed. The issue's economic and financial dimension partly explains this: the Bank of England and the Treasury's insistence that a national lottery would damage Britain's financial prestige was influential.

[135] T233/155. Memos, 23 Jan and 16 Feb 1948. See also (BLG 51 (5), Home Sec's Memorandum) & (BLG (51) 12, Draft Report) para.31

[136] T233/155. Chancellor to E.P. Smith, 17 Feb 1948. This letter was provoked by Smith's declaration (letter to Chancellor, same series, 16 Feb 1948) that he proposed to undertake a public agitation in favour of a state lottery. Treasury Ministers claim to 'an open mind on the moral issue' can be discounted as tactical. See Fin. Sec's Memorandum. T233/155. 12 Feb 1948.

[137] *Labour*, Nov 1934. See above, p.81. An insistence on a close relationship between effort and reward was an important aspect of Cripps's personal and political identity. Clarke, *The Cripps Version*, 32-3.

wrong. Chance was 'a definite part of the scheme of life itself', the 'most impartial determinant in the world', which enabled the 'honest and arbitrary allocation of advantage or the reverse'.[138]

While the government remained implacably opposed to a UK lottery it was less prescriptive in respect of the colonial territories. Policy in this area liberalized significantly. The Treasury noted in 1948 that

> Until recently the moral objection was sufficiently strong to prevent the Government from endorsing proposals for State Lotteries outside the UK...But in the last three years, lotteries, or loans with lottery prizes, have been allowed, and indeed encouraged in several colonies...on the argument that in these places the over-riding need was to counteract inflation and these places were not equipped to use the remedies we use in the UK, taxation in particular. In addition, it was held that their moral standards were different, and the cleavage of public opinion expected here, would not arise there.[139]

The colonies were therefore not expected to maintain the same standards in public finance and morals as Britain. If public opinion in these territories overwhelmingly favoured lotteries then permission could be granted. An emphasis on self-determination gathered pace in March 1949 when the Colonial Secretary Arthur Creech Jones agreed that lotteries should be allowed wherever a majority of the local legislature was in favour. However, this relaxation did not enjoy complete support among officials,[140] and it was not until James Griffiths took over as Colonial Secretary in 1950 that it was implemented fully. As an ethical socialist and Nonconformist, Griffiths had 'objections of principle to the legalisation of gambling',[141] and did 'not like lotteries as a way of raising Public revenue'.[142] Indeed, he had resolved to 'discourage the introduction of lotteries in Colonial territories as far as it is politically prudent to do so'.[143] But Griffiths was also a man committed to colonial self-government. This, in

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[138] 1951RC. Minutes of Evidence. 17th day (Memorandum submitted by E. P. Smith). See also T233/155. Letter from E. P. Smith to the Chancellor, 3 Jan 1948.
[139] T233/155. 'Notes on the 'British International Lottery', 23 Jan 1948.
[140] For details on this shift in policy and the uncertainty it created: CO852/1072. Memo, 6 March 1950.
[141] CO852/1072. Memo, 28 July 1950. See also memos, 27 June and 5 July 1950 [Same Series].
[142] CO852/1072. 22 April 1950. See also his favourable comments on the Malayan Labour movement's campaign against lotteries. CO852/1072. 27 July 1950.
[143] CO717/205. Letter from the Colonial Office to the Malayan High Commissioner. 19 August 1950.

the end, outweighed his dislike of gambling.[144] His Minister of State John Dugdale also appeared to be a liberal influence.[145] On becoming Secretary of State, Griffiths had declared of the lottery issue that 'I do not want to make trouble – or to be old-fashioned'. He did not and was not. [146] Expediency, or at least public opinion, thus reigned abroad, if not yet at home.

3. The Football Pools: Towards Administrative Regulation

The previous chapter suggested that by the end of the 1930s the football pools were largely unassailable. The industry's confidence was reflected in its wartime attitude to state intervention. Having agreed to suspend operations on the outbreak of war (because of the burden the pools placed on the Post Office),[147] promoters were announcing within months their intention to resume normal service. The National Government, aware of public support for the pools, urged them to do so in the form of a single 'Unity' pool. However, some promoters, refusing to relinquish either their independence or their profit margins, refused to do so. It was only at this juncture that the Government placed Unity Pools on a statutory footing.[148] For the remainder of the war the pools industry operated on a substantially reduced basis.

Labour Ministers in the Coalition Government subsequently defended the pools against criticism. The Home Secretary Herbert Morrison noted that the amount staked on pool betting in 1941-2 was 80 per cent less than it had been in 1938-9. [149] He was dismissive of the suggestion that the pools' absorption of paper, manpower, and disposable income justified

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[144] CO852/1072. 5 July 1950 & 28 July 1950. See also: CO1031/908. 13 Feb 1952.
[145] Dugdale supported the construction of casinos in the UK as well as overseas. CO852/1072. 26 June 1950. This view placed him at the permissive extreme of Labour Party opinion on gambling.
[146] CO852/1072. 28 July 1950.
[147] The substantial public support enjoyed by the pools precluded any ban on moral grounds. See, for example the discussions at the (H[ome] P[olicy] C[ommittee] (39) 4th meeting, 27 Sept 1939) discussing Paymaster General's Memo (HPC (39) 29).
[148] The Government's eventual course of action involved giving the Post Office authority to refuse transmission of packages containing pools coupons. This took the form of a Defence Regulation announced on 20 Dec 1939. For details see the discussions of the Home Policy Committee in late 1939. (HPC (39) 4th Meeting, 27 Sept 1939). (HPC (39), 11th, 25 Oct 1939). (HPC (39), 21st , 13 Dec 1939). (HPC (39), 22nd, 19 Dec 1939).
[149] 30 July 1942, HCD, vol.382, col.681-2.

a total stoppage. 'I hardly think these are sufficient grounds to single out this particular amusement for repressive measures'.[150] The Minister of Labour Ernest Bevin, a key figure, reiterated that the pools were not damaging the war economy.[151] The Greenock MP Robert Gibson was alone among Labour MPs in demanding further restrictions.[152] Evelyn Walkden, MP for Doncaster, was much closer to the PLP mainstream in his suggestion that 'the people or organisations who desire to abolish football pools...be informed' that the pools benefited the government financially, did not divert manpower away from more important sectors of the economy, and, most importantly, were 'popular with the workers'.[153]

Unity Pools did not last beyond the war. The pools' promoters restored the status quo ante before the beginning of the 1946 football season and the industry grew rapidly in the midst of the wider betting boom.[154] The public completed 5.75m pools coupons in 1946, 6.5m in 1947, and 7.5m in 1948.[155] It has been estimated that close to half of the adult population bet on the pools by 1950.[156] Accusations of profiteering were heard for the first time since the 1930s, while the assertion that the pools' were doing damage to the national economy enjoyed greater traction in a post-war period dominated by the need for increased production. Will Nally, Labour MP for Bilston, was the leading post-war critic. Described as a 'working-class pragmatist' by Richard Crossman,[157] Nally attacked the pools promoters rather than gambling or the gambler.[158] The industry, guilty of absorbing scarce economic resources,[159] was 'an expression of pure, undiluted, private enterprise' characterized by fraud, corruption

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[150] 30 July 1942, HCD, vol.382, col.1938-9.
[151] HCD: 4 & 6 Aug 1942, vol.382, col.870, 1161. 16 Nov. 1944, vol.404, col.2129.
[152] 4 Aug 1942, HCD, vol.382, cols.870.
[153] HCD: 15 & 16 Nov 1944, vol.404, cols.1969-70, 2129.
[154] The actual amount gambled on the pools remained small in comparison to the sums wagered on dogs and horses. Official figures are hard to come by because most pools companies failed to publish accounts. William Glenvil Hall, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, estimated that of the £650 million pounds gambled in 1948, between £60 and 61m was bet on football pools. 22 June 1949, HCD, vol.460 col.359. The Royal Commission calculated turnover to have peaked at £64m in 1948 before falling to £58m in 1949 and £52m in 1950. 1951RC, para.110, at p.3
[155] HCD: 7 Feb 1947, vol.432, cols.401-2. 2 Dec 1947, vol.445, cols.56-7. 24 Nov 1948, vol.458, cols.117-18.
[156] McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 373.
[157] J. Morgan (ed.), *The Backbench Diaries of Richard Crossman 1945-55* (London, 1981), 64.
[158] That Nally was no puritan appeared evident in the central role he played in restoring provision for alcoholic licenses to the Civic Restaurants Bill. *PLP Minutes*, 23 Jan 1947.
[159] For his claims about waste of resources see, for example, HCD: 18 July 1946, vol.425, cols.1363-4. 19 Dec 1947, vol.445, cols.447-8. 25 Jan 1949, vol.460, cols.99-100, 109. 8 Feb 1949, vol.461, col.43.

and chicanery.[160] 'It is the fervent hope of every small time spiv in the back street that his son will grow up to become a great football promoter like Mr. Moores and Mr. Sangster, and get into the ranks of high super-spivery'.[161] Nally demanded administrative regulation whether in the form of a special tax on profits,[162] or the restoration of Unity pools.[163]

Some Labour MPs agreed that the new government should tax pool betting, largely on the grounds that it could contribute to the cost of social reconstruction.[164] But the pools had grown less rapidly than dog racing and the small stakes associated with pool betting also insulated them from criticism.[165] Most importantly, they were enormously popular. Nally's attack on 'millionaire promoters, bookmakers and the strongly organised groups in the gambling industry'[166] therefore lacked resonance - at least it did until the economy deteriorated. Views then became more negative. Even the *Socialist Leader*, generally opposed to interference in working-class recreations, agreed that though likely to be unpopular, 'the grave economic crisis demands a plan that should include preventing concerns of little or no social or industrial importance (e.g. betting pools) from employing more than a limited number of workers'.[167] The Government placed further restriction on the pools' use on paper[168] and its demands on labour[169] (although whether it ever viewed the

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[160] 12 Feb 1947, HCD, vol.433, cols.493-4. For examples of Nally's complaints about the secrecy surrounding the pools' profits, expenses, and the percentage of turnover returned in winnings see HCD: 18 November 1947, vol.444, cols.1101-8. 30 July 1946, vol.426, cols.121, 126, 248. 18 Feb 1947, vol.433, cols.148-9. 16 March 1948, vol.448, cols.223-4. 24 May 1949, vol.465, col.68-9 & 109-10.

[161] 18 November 1947, HCD, vol.444, col.1101-8.

[162] 11 Feb 1947, HCD, vol.433, cols.189-90.

[163] 18 November 1947, HCD, vol.444, col.1101-8.

[164] Arthur Lewis MP: 4 Feb 1946, HCD, vol.418, col.1360. Percy Daines: 7 May 1946, HCD, vol.422, col.68. R. C. Morrison: 24 July 1946, HLD, vol.147, cols.908-12. Attlee told Lewis that the pools could not be dealt with in isolation from other forms of betting.

[165] The Royal Commission noted 'abundant evidence' that pool betting stakes were small. 1951RC, para.120, at p.36.

[166] This was how Nally described his campaign against the pools respectively: 18 Feb 1955, HCD, vol.537, cols.836-7.

[167] *Socialist Leader*, 22 March 1947.

[168] The pools' paper allocation had been fixed at 2.5% of its pre-war level since 1940. In the course of 1947 it was reduced to just 1% of pre-war levels. HCD: 7 May 1947, vol.437, cols.65-66. 9 July 1947, vol.439, col.226. 15 July 1947, vol.440, cols.21-2. 5 Nov 1947, vol.443, col.216. 25 Jan 1949, vol.460, col.99-100.

[169] At first this agreement was an informal negotiated one. HCD: 11 March 1947, vol.434, cols.1154-5 & 17 April 1947, vol.436, cols.33-34. The government later introduced a 'Control of Engagement' Order which enabled the requisitioning of those employed in the gambling industry. CAB128/10 (CM (47) 77th, 25 Sept).

industry's absorption of manpower as damaging to the economy appears doubtful).[170] The Chancellor also located the tax on the pools in this context, even if the financial imperative was much stronger than the desire to reduce its demands on 'manpower, paper, and postage'.[171]

At the beginning of 1948, 150 Labour MPs signed a Nally motion expressing 'anxiety' about 'the uncontrolled growth in recent years of the gambling industry as particularly evidenced by the football pools', and 'alarm' at 'the absence of adequate protection against profiteering and malpractices'.[172] The Lynskey Tribunal's subsequent revelations (a junior minister at the Board of Trade, John Belcher, had been corrupted by pools' promoters and others associated with the gambling industry)[173] ensured that criticism endured, even after the economy began to recover, and despite the creation of the Royal Commission in 1949.[174] In 1950 (and following a campaign by the *Evening Standard*) a cross party group of MPs introduced a Bill that would have forced pools companies to publish their accounts.[175]

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[170] The Minister of Labour George Isaacs questioned whether the pools actually employed many people suitable for transfer to essential industries. He praised them for employing many disabled persons who otherwise would have struggled to find employment. 17 April 1947, HCD, vol.436, cols.33-34. The 'Control of Engagement' Order was almost never utilised. *The Times*, 10 Feb 1948. See also 1951RC. Minutes of Evidence. 2nd day, 21 July 1949 (Memorandum submitted by the Ministry of Labour and National Service). The Labour Ministry's evidence encouraged the Royal Commission to conclude that the manpower issue was not significant. 1951RC, para.124-5, at p.37, and para.167, at p.47.

[171] 12 Nov 1947: HCD, vol.444, col.407. The financial dimension of the tax question is discussed in section 4 of this chapter.

[172] 5 Feb 1948: HCD, vol.446, cols.1912-13. See also his retrospective comments 22 June 1949: HCD, vol.466, col.376. For further examples of Labour criticism along these lines see HCD: 30 Jan 1947, vol.432, 1109-10. 12 Feb 1947, vol.433, cols.485-98. 13 June 1947, vol.438, cols.1552-62.

[173] The Lynskey Tribunal was appointed at the end of October 1948. 27 Oct 1948, HCD, vol.457, cols.87-94. Justice Lynskey's report was published on 21 Jan 1949. It was subsequently debated in the House of Commons: 3 February 1949, HCD, vol.460, cols.1849-1962. The debate was preceded by John Belcher's personal statement: ibid, cols.1844-9. For analysis of the Tribunal and its revelations regarding football pools promoters see, J. Gross, 'The Lynskey Tribunal' in Sissons and French (eds.), *Age of Austerity,* 255-75, esp., 259-60. M. Roodhouse, 'The 1948 Belcher Affair and Lynskey Tribunal', *Twentieth Century British History*, 13 (2002), 384-411. Roodhouse describes it as 'One of the more serious episodes of political corruption in twentieth-century Britain', ibid, 385. Morgan argued the affair amounted to no more than 'the most minor of scandals in high places': K. O. Morgan, *Labour in Power: 1945-51* (Oxford, 1985), 298.

[174] For continuing Labour criticism of the pools see, for example, Arthur Symonds: 21 June 1949, HCD, vol.466, col.30-31; 22 June 1949, vol.466, cols.383-86. James Glanville: 22 June 1949, HCD vol.466, col.373. William Keenan: 1 June 1949, HCD, vol.451, cols.919-20; 22 June 1949, vol.466, cols.403-6.

[175] Three Labour MPs, two Conservatives, a Liberal, a National Liberal, and the Labour MP turned Independent Raymond Blackburn, sponsored the 'Pool Betting (Accounts) Bill'. Its first reading took place 28 Nov 1950, HCD, vol.481, cols.953-6. The scheduled second reading never happened: 8 Dec 1950, HCD, vol.482, col.776. The government did not oppose the Bill in principle but the details were unacceptable. HO335/21. 'Minutes of Joint Meeting of the Companies Act Consultative Committee & Accountancy Committee held on 21 Dec 1950', 7 Jan 1951.

This was as far as most of the Labour party were prepared to go. An appreciation of the punter's view had been apparent towards the end of the 1930s:[176] the wartime redistribution of esteem to the working classes ensured that filling in a pools coupon was now almost universally seen as a harmless 'flutter' in which the whole family could engage.[177] Montgomery Follick was alone among Labour MPs in continuing to advocate the pools' prohibition.[178] Ness Edwards, Parliamentary Secretary at the Department of Labour, appeared to rule out restrictions on libertarian rather than class grounds,[179] but the *Socialist Leader* was more candid in the wake of Lynskey.

> The arithmetic is easy: and if arithmetic ruled human affairs it would be reasonable for the Government to impose severe restrictions against the pool betting industry. Unfortunately, other influences have to be considered. One is that the Government would lose a large measure of its present support at the next election if it attempted to put pool betting out of business...over 7 million coupons are sent to the various pools each week and at this stage it would require a great deal more than the eloquence of politicians to convince the pool betting section of the electorate that it is in the national interest that the pool industry be closed down.[180]

Socialist Commentary argued that the 'existing situation, which permits something akin to a public lottery to be run for private profit, should not be...allowed to continue' but neither of its alternatives, nationalization or a state lottery to provide competition,[181] were attractive to

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[176] See above, pp.90-1.

[177] See, for example, the Labour peer R.C. Morrison's speech: 24 July 1946, HLD, vol.142, col.910. Even Seebohm Rowntree recognized that prohibition was impossible. S. Rowntree & G.R. Lavers, *English Life and Leisure* (London, 1951), 137, 153-6.

[178] He called for the circulation of betting information by post to be prohibited. 13 June 1947, HCD, vol.438, cols.1552-56. Nonconformity was historically strong in Loughborough CLP. See Wilfrid Winterton, *Harvest of the Years* (London, 1969).

[179] 12 Feb 1947, HCD, vol.433, cols.496-7. Edwards was apparently a keen better. See G. Wigg, *George Wigg*, *Lord Wigg* (London, 1972), 257. See also the similar tone adopted by John Belcher, Parliamentary Secretary at the Board of Trade. 13 June 1947, HCD, vol.438, cols.1567-60.

[180] *Socialist Leader*, 5 Feb 1949, 3.

[181] 'Gambling and the Government', *Socialist Commentary*, Feb 1949, 38-40. This article was unusual to the extent that it explicitly deprecated the absence of skill involved in pool betting. The rising popularity of permutation systems had 'destroyed much of the skill which was formerly required for successful pools forecasting', while the pools' promoter were contrasted unfavourably with the independent bookmaker. The latter often 'lived on his wits and courted losses by offering fixed odds and starting prices'; the former 'determine their odds after deducting a proportion of the money staked to cover costs and profits, take comparatively few risks and generally make large profits'.

the Labour Government.[182] Administrative regulation was therefore the only realistic alternative to inaction and the Royal Commission made a number of recommendations in this area.[183]

4. The Partial Betting Tax

Dog totes and football pools were taxed as part of the Supplementary Budget of November 1947. The policy of austerity associated with Cripps actually began with this budget, which was designed to cut domestic consumption and reduce inflationary pressures in the aftermath of the convertibility crisis.[184] While the primary objective of the betting tax was to raise money, the government also claimed to be concerned about gambling's use of scarce resources.[185] Munting has argued that the 'new betting taxes...did not represent any liberalisation of policy towards popular gambling'.[186] This is evidently untrue. As detailed in chapter two, the ideological opposition of the Labour Party to gambling had precluded the taxation of gambling throughout the inter-war period. This was not the case by the end of the Second World War. What was striking about the taxation debate during the late 1940s was the almost total absence of objections of principle.[187] Gambling was increasingly categorized as 'entertainment': as such, its escape from the taxman appeared anomalous. To the extent that there remained scepticism about taxing betting, this derived from concern about whether any kind of betting tax was administratively workable. Furthermore, and significantly, the Attlee Government was not among the sceptics.

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[182] Nationalization was seen as direct state involvement in the stimulation of the demand for gambling. (BLG (51) 3rd Meeting, 31 July 1951). (BLG (51) 4, Home Secretary's Memo). For Labour's opposition to a national lottery see section 2 of this chapter, above.

[183] 1951RC, para.321, at p.97-8. Section two of the next chapter discusses these proposals.

[184] Morgan, *Labour in Power,* 187.

[185] 12 Nov 1947, HCD, vol.444, cols.405-8, 411.

[186] Munting, 'The Revival of Lotteries in Britain', 637.

[187] For an exception see a reader's letter in the *New Statesman*, 22 Nov 1947. Gambling promoted a haphazard distribution of wealth at odds with socialism. To make the state complicit in this 'would nullify socialism with progressive seriousness'. The letter ending with the implication that bookmakers were morally akin to brothel-keepers.

The Independent A. P. Herbert, who had fought a lone battle in favour of taxation during the 1930s,[188] now found his arguments[189] gaining supporters on both sides of the House.[190] Opinion polls suggested that a clear majority of the public favoured taxation. The *News Chronicle* reported towards the end of 1946 that 58 per cent of the public favoured a comprehensive betting tax, and also broke down the levels of support among various section of society. The young and the poor were more opposed to taxing gambling than the older or wealthy, indeed, a large majority of the latter supported its taxation.[191] The conclusions of a *Daily Express* poll were similar. While 57 per cent of people backed a tax on horse and dog racing, support for a tax on the football pools was 10 percentage points lower, apparently because of a feeling that the pools were the working man's 'little flutter'.[192]

The Chancellor of the Exchequer Hugh Dalton initially rejected a tax on administrative grounds. He emphasized the difficulty of taxing illegal off-course cash betting,[193] and argued that a partial betting tax was unacceptable: 'we stand, and most of all the Labour Party stands, for justice; and to tax 'totes' and pools alone, and let the bookmakers go free, would be wrong, it would be unjust, it would be repudiated by all right-thinking men and women'.[194] The *New Statesman* disagreed.

> There may be disappointment that the Chancellor has decided not to tax betting...If it be conceded that all forms of gambling should attract taxation, we question whether strict regard for equity should stand in way of applying tax in fields where they cannot be evaded, especially since a wholesale switch from one form of gambling to another would be unlikely. After all, what fiscal purist would refrain from taxing some luxuries simply because others are beyond the scope of practicable taxation.[195]

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[188] For his support of a betting tax in the 1930s see chapter 1, section 4 of this thesis.
[189] HCD: 6 March 1946, vol.420, col.68. 16 May 1946, vol.422, cols.2153-58, 2240-1. See also his subsequent interventions: 25 Nov 1947, vol.444, col.1849-54. 2 Dec 1947, vol.445, col.289-90.
[190] See the comments of the Conservative MPs Malcolm Bullock & Bob Boothby. HCD: 7 May 1946, vol.422, col.68 & 22 Oct 1946, vol.427, col.1482. See also the interventions of the Labour MPs Alfred Edwards & Percy Daines. 16 May 1946, HCD, vol.422 col.2264.
[191] *News Chronicle*, 31 Oct 1946.
[192] *Daily Express*, 25 Nov 1946.
[193] 'In order to cope with the very serious difficulties of collecting a tax on bets placed with bookmakers I should need to divert a number of trained Excise officers from the collection of other existing taxes, and so should lose revenue'. 15 April 1947, HCD, vol.436, col.79.
[194] Ibid, col.78.
[195] *New Statesman*, 19 April 1947. The article drew a distinction between the 'sporting' and the 'stock exchange' gambler, though it felt both should be taxed.

The Labour MP Woodrow Wyatt provided, via the pages of that publication, a realistic assessment of popular gambling. He exposed the failure of anti-gamblers to differentiate between turnover and profit. Cognisant of the fact that 'one of the chief attractions of betting is not merely the hope of return but the fact of return' he explained that of the £800m he estimated to have been gambled in 1946, around £700m was returned in prize money. He therefore was not perturbed by Mass Observation's conclusions that nearly 60 per cent of working-class men gambled, and that only 23 per cent were formally opposed to gambling.[196]

Wyatt favoured nationalization of the entire industry. The replacement of bookmakers by state-run totes both on and off-course, state control of the pools, and the introduction of a national lottery would raise £150 m per annum in taxation and reduce by a third (to around 150 000 he estimated) the full-time labour employed by the gambling industry. He recognized that these were radical proposals, unlikely to gain acceptance other than in the long term. Wyatt therefore endorsed immediate and heavy taxation of gambling. But he was not overly optimistic on this front either. He expressed frustration at the 'myopia' of politicians, who, having been persuaded by anti-gamblers 'that gambling is of the devil and its money too tainted for the State to touch, agree that it would be politically impossible to sponsor gambling or gather revenue from it'.[197]

In fact, Dalton had been interested in a betting tax since assuming office.[198] The obstacle was the misgivings of Customs and Excise and the Home Office. These departments were concerned about the politics and administration of a selective duty respectively. The Home Office, rattled by the fierce criticism that had followed the restriction of dog racing,[199] was worried about further claims of class bias. It argued that a tax on dog totes and football pools was open to 'devastating' attack, since 'it hits two of the poor man's favourite betting facilities, while leaving untouched horse racing (represented with some degree of truth as

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[196] Wyatt, 'The State and Gambling I and II', *New Statesman*, 1 and 8 Nov 1947. See also Wyatt's reiteration of some of the essay's major points. 25 Nov 1947: HCD, vol.444, cols.1854-7.
[197] Wyatt, 'The State and Gambling II'.
[198] CUST118/450. Letters from the Treasury, 31 Oct, 7 & 28 Nov 1946; 17 Jan 1947.
[199] See section 2 of this chapter.

being more the rich man's sport) and the credit bookmaker, who serves the rich while the poor man's off-course bookmaker is harried by the police'. A comprehensive tax covering bookmakers' illegal off-course earnings was preferable to any selective duty.[200]

Proposals of the latter kind confirmed Customs and Excise's worst suspicions. Its fear was that the injustice of taxing some kinds of betting but not others, the inevitable leakage as punters switched to the untaxed bookmaker, and (though this went unsaid) the Treasury's desire to maximize revenue, would inevitably generate demands for the extension of a selective tax to illegal cash betting off-course. This was not something Customs and Excise looked forward to in light of previous experience.[201] Its view was that

> a betting tax which applies to football pools alone would appear to discriminate against this form of gambling in comparison with (say) totalisator betting at dog races which is in some respects analogous. A tax on dog racing totalisators would presumably have to be extended to include the totalisators at horse races, and it would then become a tax on totalisators generally, which might be regarded as an unfair handicap on this section of the industry in competition with the bookmakers. To meet the latter point by extending the scope of the tax still further to bring in the many thousands of small bookmakers would re-create the administrative difficulties which led to the abandonment of the 1926 betting duty. A primary consideration, therefore, is whether it would be politically feasible to draw the line anywhere within this scale and to defend the discrimination between different kinds of betting which this would involve.[202]

As the likelihood of a selective tax grew, so did Customs' opposition.

> If the Chancellor should come to the conclusion that he must impose a betting duty this year (which I very much hope he won't) it would be far preferable to cover the whole field and have some sort of heavy licence fee for the bookmaker, whether on or off the course, crude though this would invariably be...It seems, at all events at the present time, most undesirable to impose a duty which would be generally unpopular and produce the most violent controversy in certain quarters with the prospect of little or no benefit to the Exchequer for some time to come.[203]

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[200] HO45/25097. Memo on the Betting Tax. (Undated, November 1947).
[201] The failure of the 1926 betting tax was legendary within Customs. See Sir James Crombie, *Her Majesty's Customs and Excise* (London, 1962), 121. Quoted in Hood, 'The Development of Betting Taxes in Britain', 183.
[202] PRO CUST 118/450. Note discussing Lord (R. C.) Morrison's proposal (undated, second half of 1945). This argument was repeated in a later Memorandum (undated but between 6 March and early May 1946).
[203] PRO CUST 118/450. Letter, 24 Jan 1947.

Customs and Excise denied that any kind of betting tax, even one which included illegal off-course cash betting, could produce the £15-20 million per annum the Chancellor was demanding. In fact, since Customs officers at present engaged in the administration of the purchase tax would have to be diverted to the betting tax, there 'might be...a net loss of revenue in the end'.[204] The spectre of moral outrage was also raised. 'It would be necessary to face vehement protests from the various religious and other bodies who hold that a tax on betting would amount to state connivance at what they regard as a grave social evil'.[205]

These arguments held good until the autumn of 1947 when, in the grip of a worsening economic crisis, the government's 'big five' (Attlee, Bevin, Cripps, Dalton, and Morrison), meeting at Chequers, resolved that betting should be taxed. Having decided to exempt horse racing totes since their proceeds were ploughed back into the sport,[206] and excluding on-course bookmakers because of administrative complications, the tax was confined to dog totes and football pools.[207] The Chancellor hoped a duty of 10 per cent would raise £3 million in the remainder of the financial year, and £15 m. in a full year.[208]

5. Towards the Royal Commission

The Conservative Party attempted to make political capital of the Chancellor's u-turn.[209] But neither it nor anyone else objected in principle to the taxation of betting.[210] There was, however, considerable dissatisfaction at the tax's partiality. Of the 23 backbench Labour MPs who addressed the issue during the budget debates, 21 wished to see the tax extended,[211]

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[204] PRO CUST 118/450. 'Budget 1947, Notes of discussions' (undated).
[205] PRO CUST 118/450. Letter, 11 October 1947.
[206] Hood has described this as 'an odd argument possibly less inspired by logic than the fact that the MP for Epsom was the Home Secretary'. Hood, 'The Development of Betting Taxes in Britain', 190. He referred to James Chuter Ede, of course; but Ede, though born in Epsom and MP for Mitcham during the 1920s actually represented South Shields.
[207] Treasury's note of discussions with PM, Lord President, Foreign Sec., and Minister of Economic Affairs, 20 Oct 1947. (Copy in CUST118/450). For Chequers reference see HO45/25097. Note, 22 Oct 1947.
[208] 12 Nov 1947, HCD, vol.444, cols.405-8, 411.
[209] The Conservative Treasury spokesman Oliver Stanley was 'rather shocked that within 6 months he should introduce a tax which he himself had condemned, quite gratuitously...he had gone out of his way to explain to us that he had considered and rejected this tax because it was unjust'. 2 Dec 1947, HCD, vol.445, cols.297-9.
[210] The exception was the Labour MP Hyacynth Morgan. 25 Nov 1947, HCD, vol.444, cols.1899-1900, 1927-8.
[211] Herschel Austin, William Carmichael, Ronald Chamberlain, Adrian Crawley, Percy Daines, Walter Scott Elliot, Henry Goodrich, George House, Henry Hynd, William Keenan, John Lewis, Marcus Lipton, Gilbert

one wished to see the level of the duty raised,[212] and one was content with the tax as it stood.[213] Nor was there any sign of popular opposition to the taxation of betting,[214] further increases in tobacco and beer duties attracting greater hostility.[215]

The AEU official and Labour MP George Pargiter set the tone, demanding the immediate licensing of dog track bookmakers who were in competition with dog totes,[216] and calling in the longer term (since he could see 'no ethical difference' between on and off-course betting) for the legalisation of cash betting off-course.[217] The Glasgow Rutherglen MP, Gilbert McAllister, was optimistic on this score. The tax was a piece of 'kite-flying' designed to gauge the reaction of the Protestant Churches, 'the possibility of such an outcry had been an argument against a betting tax from time immemorial'. Their quiescence encouraged him. McAllister insisted that mass betting was admirable: 'Betting is one way in which the people of this country can take a chance, and it shows that they like to do so, and are not always looking for security and safety, but are willing to take a certain risk'.[218]

William Keenan, Percy Daines, and James Carmichael covered similar ground. Daines, MP for East Ham, attacked 'this humbugging hangover from Victorian morality, which said that because ethically they did not agree with betting, therefore, it did not exist'.[219] Keenan, member for Liverpool Kirkdale, estimated that 90 per cent of the public 'believed' in betting but that 'hitherto everyone has tried to avoid' the issue, 'because of the volume of public

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McAllister, Maurice Orbach, Reginald Paget, Arthur Palmer, George Pargiter, Edward Shackleton, John R. Thomas, George Wigg, Woodrow Wyatt. These contributions were made over the course of the budget and finance bill debates. HCD: 12, 13, 17, and 25 Nov 1947, vol.444, cols.391-495, 558-673, 830-941, 1807-1940. Also 2 and 9 Dec 1947, vol.445, cols.286-305, 856-922.

[212] Walter Monslow. 12 Nov 1947, HCD, vol.444, col.475.

[213] Harold Lever. He was relieved that the Chancellor had not heeded calls for the nationalization of the pools. 12 Nov 1947, HCD, vol.444, col.468.

[214] The Tory *Daily Express* had come out against a betting tax on populist grounds. 5 December 1946. The government had apparently expected some opposition from working-class punters. See CUST 118/450. 'Note from the Budget Committee' (undated, but October 1946).

[215] See, for example, *Socialist Leader*, 17 & 24 April 1947.

[216] He proposed a graduated licence duty. This idea, also known as a 'stand' tax, had been around for some time, and it was a variation on this scheme that was included in the 1948 Budget.

[217] 12 Nov 1947, HCD, vol.444, col.438.

[218] 25 Nov 1947, HCD, vol.444, cols.1899-1900.

[219] 12 Nov 1947, HCD, vol.444, cols.442-5.

opinion against it in different religious bodies'.[220] Carmichael, MP for Glasgow Bridgeton, proposed the legalization of betting shops along Irish and continental lines.[221] These were men comfortable defending working-class betting. Keenan was a former mayor of Bootle and TGWU official, while the Labour Party acclaimed Daines for his straightforward manner and appeal to working-class electors.[222] Carmichael, though he had rejoined the Labour Party by this stage, won his seat in 1946 (following Maxton's death) as an ILP candidate: a party that, as we have seen, increasingly styled itself as defender of proletarian culture and sensibilities.[223]

This 'type' of Labour MP was more numerous after the Second World War. William Blyton (Houghton-le-Spring) and Leslie Hale (Oldham), MPs at opposing ends of the ideological spectrum[224] portrayed the dog-track bookies operating in their constituencies as decent, working-class men, making a legitimate living.[225] This view would have been largely unthinkable before the war. They and other Labour MPs[226] perceived the singling out of dog totes and football pools as class bias. Ronald Chamberlain (Norwood) demanded that the 'class-discriminatory' tax be withdrawn, pending the introduction of a 'fair, equitable and

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[220] Ibid, cols.456-8.
[221] Ibid, cols.448-50.
[222] Labour's Head of Publicity said admiringly of Daines that he 'went down very well' with the average voter because he was 'able to place himself on the audience's intellectual and financial level', with 'nothing "superior" in his attitude'. L. Black, *The Political Culture of the Left in Affluent Britain, 1951-64* (London, 2003), 23. Daines's address to his electors in 1945 appropriated aspects of the Tory Socialist tradition. It emphasized his Britishness, patriotism and toughness. D Weinbren, 'Sociable Capital: London's Labour Parties 1918-45', in M. Worley (ed.) *Labour's Grass Roots. Essays on the Activities of Local Labour Parties and Members 1918-45* (Aldershot, 2005), 194-216, 201.
[223] See chapter 1, section 2 and chapter 2, section 4 of this thesis.
[224] Blyton was a leading figure in the Northern group of MPs who backed the Gaitskellites during the 1950s. Hale was a member of 'Keep Left'. *DLB*, xii, 'Special Note: Keep Left', 154-67.
[225] 1 June 1948, HCD, vol.451, cols. 925-6, 947-9.
[226] See, for example, the speeches of George House: 12 Nov 1947, HCD, vol.444, cols.491-2. Henry Goodrich: 2 Dec 1947, HCD, vol.445, col.299. John R. Thomas: 12 Nov 1947, HCD, vol.444, col.453. George Wigg: 12 Nov 1947, HCD, vol.444, cols.478-9. John Lewis: 17 Nov 1947, HCD, vol.444, cols.894-6. Reginald Paget defended the different treatment of dog totes and horse totes. 2 Dec 1947, HCD, vol.445, col.293.

properly balanced' measure.[227] The Conservative Party agreed: the tax was unjust as it stood, and the Opposition expected its rapid extension to off-course cash betting.[228]

The style and identity of the Chancellor fuelled such expectations. His Tory Socialism was discussed in chapter two, as was his exasperation at a Labour leadership who opposed the taxation of betting on ideological grounds during the 1920s.[229] '(C)onsciously a traitor to his class', Dalton was also a man who 'delighted in infuriating gentlemen with his vulgarity', and 'appealed broadly to the bohemians and iconoclasts of all classes'.[230] A more suitable man to cast off the shackles of 'official' and Labour hostility to popular gambling it is hard to imagine.

However, when Dalton was obliged to resign immediately after 'leaking' a detail of the Supplementary Budget of 1947 an apparently very different character entered the Treasury. If Dalton was, to adopt Marquand's terminology 'a bookie', Cripps 'was pre-eminently a bishop'.[231] Personal austerity, moral rectitude, and High Anglicanism characterised Stafford Cripps. He also had form as an opponent of lottery gambling.[232] Yet we have also noted the existence of another, less puritanical Cripps, a man who liked to gamble himself.[233] As Chancellor he would also play pivotal role in removing the ban on midweek dog racing,[234] and in fact Cripps had been keen on a betting tax in his previous post of Minister of Economic Affairs.[235] 'Like most things, I believe it is a mistake to take up the view that it [gambling] is forbidden, far better to try and inculcate a spirit of control and restraint,' Cripps had confided to his diary during the 1930s.[236] As Chancellor, Cripps advanced the cause of

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[227] 2 Dec 1947, HCD, vol.444, cols.300-02. See also his earlier comments: 25 Nov 1947, HCD, vol.444, cols.1829, 1832-33

[228] See the speeches of the Conservative Treasury spokesman Oliver Stanley. HCD: 13 Nov 1947, vol.444, col. 565. 9 December, vol.445, cols.865-7. Tory backbenchers also believed a comprehensive tax imminent. HCD: 12 Nov 1947, HCD, vol.444, cols.454-5. 2 Dec 1947, vol.445, cols.299-300.

[229] See above, p.36, p.53.

[230] Halsey and Dennis, *English ethical socialism*, 212.

[231] Marquand, *The Progressive Dilemma*, 92.

[232] See above, p.81.

[233] See above, p.110.

[234] See above, p.129.

[235] CUST118/450. Letter from Treasury, 13 Oct 1947.

[236] Clarke, *The Cripps Version*, 71.

licensed betting shops significantly. His advocacy culminated in the appointment of the 1949 Royal Commission.

Cripps' first step was to explain that the Government was proceeding cautiously with the betting tax because of the memory of Churchill's ill-fated duty.[237] A week later, closing the debate on the Second Reading of the Finance Bill, the new Chancellor was more expansive. He went out of his way to paint the selective tax as the beginning of a *process*.

> It is rather remarkable that there has not been a single speech which I at least have heard this evening in which there has been an objection expressed on principle to this tax. That being so, I think that it would be generally agreed, and it has been generally agreed indeed, that this is a desirable object of taxation. The complaint that has been made is that we have not gone far enough, which is not the usual complaint made against taxation. My justification of the steps we are taking is that we are at least making a good beginning, and that it is just as well, when starting a new tax, not to encounter all the difficulties at the same time. If one gets a tax established on a certain basis, one can always extend it to a wider basis later.[238]

But there remained the question of opinion outside Parliament. 'This is not an occasion when anybody would expect us to review the whole law of betting. That would not have been an appropriate subject matter for an interim Budget of this kind. It may be that one day someone will undertake that task. I think they may have a rather stormy passage when they try it out'.[239]

In the meantime, Cripps acknowledged that the decision to tax dog totes but not dog track bookmakers had made a 'leakage' of revenue inevitable, as punters switched to bet with the untaxed bookmaker. The Chancellor committed the Government to ending this anomaly.

> this is an emergency Budget, in which we cannot expect to go completely into all the details of a new tax such as this one. The object of the tax is to make an immediate collection of money, which does not need a very complicated machinery in order to attain it...I would ask the Committee, in view of what I have been able to say about the matter, to let us have this Clause as the initiation of a new type of taxation for an

[237] 17 Nov 1947, HCD, vol.444, col.939.
[238] 25 Nov 1947, HCD, vol.444, col.1917.
[239] Ibid, col.1918.

> emergency purpose, and to give us time to work out the sequel in the light of what happens, so that we can get a sound method to apply to the [on-course] bookmakers'.[240]

The press speculated about the government's intentions. The *News Chronicle* reported strong public feeling that the tax should be extended to 'bookmakers and racecourse totes'. 'None of the persons interviewed argued that taxation should not be imposed because in doing so the state 'condoned' the social evil of gambling'.[241] The *Western Mail* revealed that 'one group of MPs are calling for a thorough investigation of betting and gambling anomalies with a view to a comprehensive measure of reform. Another group are pressing the desirability of premium bonds'.[242] According to the *News of the World*, 'another attempt will be made to raise the whole question of the state control of betting. It is said that two cabinet ministers and about 150 MPs are in favour, but there is known to be a large block of opinion against it'.[243] The *Evening News* reported that 'a tax on bookies is virtually certain if a suitable system can be devised. Ministers admit that it cannot be done effectively without legalising betting with the bookmaker...Whether the Government are prepared to take the political risk of legalising betting is another matter'.[244]

In his first budget, Cripps pronounced the taxes on dog totes and pools successful,[245] and announced two extensions. The duty on football pools was to be doubled to 20 per cent and, fulfilling his promise, a tax imposed on dog-track bookmakers operating in competition with the tote.[246] Even more significantly, Cripps acknowledged the House of Commons' desire to see off-course cash betting taxed. But 'deep differences of opinion among the public' would first have to be overcome.[247] This was almost certainly an allusion to the position of the Protestant Churches. Although they had not criticized the taxing of dog totes and football

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[240] 2 Dec 1947, HCD, vol.445, cols.295-7.
[241] *News Chronicle,* 8 Jan 1948.
[242] *Western Mail*, 4 Feb 1948.
[243] *News of the World,* 11 Jan 1948.
[244] *Evening News*, 3 Feb 1948.
[245] It had raised nearly £3.75 million (£2m. from dog totes, £1.5m. from pools) in the 3 months since January. 6 April 1948, HCD, vol.449, col.50.
[246] They were to pay an annual licensing fee. Cripps predicted the extensions would bring in an extra £11 million per year. Ibid, cols.66-7.
[247] Ibid.

pools, the Churches Committee on Gambling (CCG) had reacted with dismay when the Northern Ireland Betting Laws Committee recommended the licensing of betting shops in 1947. The CCG at this stage described off-course cash betting as 'anti-social', and its legalization as potentially 'a moral and social calamity'.[248]

Other strands of respectable opinion were more circumspect. The *Newcastle Journal* believed gambling to be 'anti-social' and worried that 'such oblique official approval might remove the scruples of many who do not now bet and, so, raise gambling from the level of a mischief to that of a menace'. At the same time, the paper admitted that support for gambling was such that it could not be stopped. In these circumstances, taxation might reduce the volume of gambling.[249] The Conservative MP Captain Harry Crookshank identified a change in the political atmosphere:

> Up to recent years, there has not been unanimity on that [a betting tax]; a great many people in this country would not consent at all to a tax being levied on anything so evil and wicked as betting. Possibly, now public opinion has changed; possibly, owing to the growth of the evil, people who before would not touch the dirty thing, now think that it is so bad that it had better be touched before it makes more trouble. There is a different atmosphere for dealing with the problem now than there was 10 or 20 years ago.[250]

Cripps agreed. 'I think there have been great changes in public opinion in this matter in the last fifteen years', he told the Cabinet in November 1948, 'and I believe that there will be less opposition to-day than previously on the part of the churches to some attempt to grapple with this thorny subject'.[251] The Chancellor proposed the appointment of a new Royal Commission to pave the way for the taxation and legalization of cash betting (although his

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[248] The Ulster Unionist MP Samuel Houghton chaired the N. I. Betting Laws Committee and he described the CCG's response. 25 Nov 1947, HCD, vol.444, cols.1858.
[249] *Newcastle Journal*, 4 Feb 1948.
[250] 1 June 1948: HCD, vol.451, cols.939-42.
[251] (CP (48) 256, 5 Nov 1948, Chancellor's Memorandum on 'The Amendment of the Gambling Laws').

memorandum also justified a fresh inquiry on grounds of the substantial growth of the football pools and ongoing evasions of the statutory limitations placed on dog racing).[252]

The Home Office accepted that public opinion had shifted. But it opposed the Cripps memorandum. Licensing betting shops would increase betting and 'divert further manpower and resources into the betting industry' at a time when this 'could not be justified'.[253] The Cabinet sided with the Chancellor: 'Changes in public opinion since 1933 and the recent growth of the football pools' justified a new inquiry.[254] The Home Office's concern about timing was acknowledged. It had worried that 'a commission...set up now...would be likely to report in about a year's time and betting might well become an election issue which would be extremely undesirable'.[255] The Cabinet decided to delay an official announcement until the New Year.[256] Behind the scenes, the Chancellor continued to play a dominant role. He wanted to see the Commission begin as soon as possible[257] and moved quickly to ensure that the terms of reference excluded taxation but included lotteries and gaming.[258] This was designed to ensure the Treasury maximum room for manoeuvre.[259] Attlee confirmed the government's intentions at the end of January,[260] and on 10 February 1949 the Prime Minister formally announced the creation of the Royal Commission into 'Lotteries, Betting and Gaming' under the chairmanship of the former Conservative Minister Henry Willink.[261] That

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[252] Ibid. The reference to football pools and dog racing can be characterized as perfunctory. The Home Office, for example, noted that Cripps's comments regarding dog racing described 'the legal, not the actual, position as at present betting days are restricted, in the interest of production, by voluntary arrangements with the greyhound tracks'. PRO HO45/24348. 'Amendment of the Betting Laws: Comments on the Chancellor's Memorandum' (undated).

[253] Heavy taxation would not solve this problem since bookmakers would engage in illegal street betting if the tax was too high. Ibid.

[254] (CM (48) 73, 15 Nov).

[255] HO45/24348. 'Amendment of the Betting Laws.' (undated).

[256] (CM (48) 73, 15 Nov).

[257] HO45/24348/925790. Letter from Sir Edward Bridges to Sir Frank Newsam, 2 Dec 1948. See also, HO45/24348. 'Memo to the Home Secretary', 31 Jan 1949.

[258] Munting is not therefore strictly correct when he writes that the Royal Commission 'set out to consider the possibility of raising revenue'. 'The Revival of Lotteries in Britain', 638. See also Miers, *Regulating Commercial Gambling*, 295.

[259] HO45/24348. Memo, 31 Jan 1949. The Scottish Office wanted to confine the inquiry to betting but Cripps wanted 'the whole field examined' according to the Home Office. HO45/24348. Letter, 'Scottish Home Department to Home Office', 20 Dec 1948.

[260] 26 Jan 1949, HCD, vol.460, col.919.

[261] 10 Feb 1949, HCD, vol. 461, col.527.

its title was subsequently amended, becoming an inquiry into 'Betting, Lotteries and Gaming', perhaps indicated what the government expected from the Royal Commission.

6. The Report of the Royal Commission

The Royal Commission reported in April 1951. The recommendation that there should be legal betting shops has ensured it a liberal reputation.[262] However, its other conclusions revealed the limits of official permissiveness. Stricter regulation of the football pools industry, the maintenance of the law against all kinds of lotteries (including small charitable ones), and further restriction of dog racing were all recommended.[263] Distinctions had always been drawn between different types of gambling, in the post-war period these distinctions became sharper. Off-course cash betting on horses, although illegal, was increasingly acceptable to 'official' opinion. So too was football pool betting, even if this was largely because the football pools were too popular to restrict in any meaningful way. But large lotteries and dog racing continued to be viewed with disapproval.

The Attlee Government referred the Royal Commission to a Cabinet Committee, which met three times during June and July.[264] Chaired by the Home Secretary Ede, its other members were the Government law officers (Lord Advocate John Wheatley and Attorney General Frank Soskice), the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Douglas Jay), Secretary of State for Scotland (Arthur Woodburn) and the Ministers of Education (George Tomlinson), and Agriculture (Tom Williams). The latter continued to combine an enthusiasm for horse racing with strong disapproval of the commercialization of gambling. During the war Williams had apparently played a role in preventing a total ban on horse racing,[265] yet he opposed the licensing of betting shops throughout the Committee's proceedings.[266]

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[262] See, inter alia, Dixon, *From Prohibition*, 329-36.
[263] 1951 RC.
[264] (BLG 51, 1st, 2nd, 3rd Meetings, 19 June, 23 July, 31 July).
[265] T. Williams, *'Digging for Britain': the autobiography of Lord Williams of Banburgh* (London, 1965), 133-4. Another Labour MP, George Wigg, also, if less credibly claimed credit for this decision. See Hill, *Horse power*, 56.
[266] He believed betting would increase and street betting continue. (BLG (51) 1st). (BLG (51) 12, 'Draft Report'), para.12.

He was the lone dissentient. 'The manifest failure of prohibitory legislation and the lack of an alternative other than administrative regulation'[267] were emphasized by the Committee,[268] so too was the police's desire for change.[269] The state's increasing incursions into the field (by means of taxation and the RBCB) had also made the prohibition of one particular form of betting appear increasingly anachronistic, [270] though Ministers did not acknowledge this explicitly. The erosion of the issue's ethical and moral dimension was evident in the Committee's assumption that off-course cash betting was to be judged primarily on 'social and economic' grounds.[271] Ede, himself a Congregationalist, dismissed the Free Churches opposition to betting shops as unrepresentative.[272]

The Committee was much more concerned about the views of the Established Church. Ede, following private conversations with the Archbishop of Canterbury, informed his colleagues that the Church of England did not oppose the licensing of betting shops.[273] This was backing enough for the Committee.[274] As such, its deliberations offered general support for Hall's argument that 'no significant shift in the moral economy by which such behaviour in our society is regulated can occur without a corresponding movement in religious ideology', and specific evidence for his suggestion that it was "the more 'established' religious affiliations – those closely interwoven with the state and the law, with middle-class or 'gentry' society – which moved with the times".[275] The Committee's draft report was written up in August 1951 and an inter-departmental working party created to consider the practicalities of licensing betting shops.[276]

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[267] Dixon, *From Prohibition to Regulation*, 333-4.
[268] (BLG (51) 10, Home Sec's Memorandum, 25 July) & (BLG (51) 3rd Meeting).
[269] (BLG (51) 1st). (BLG (51) 10, Home Sec's Memorandum). (BLG 'Draft Report' para.10).
[270] Dixon, *From Prohibition to Regulation*, 335.
[271] (BLG (51) 1st). (BLG (51) 2, Home Sec's Memorandum, 25 May). (BLG (51) 12, 'Draft Report').
[272] (BLG (51) 3, Home Sec.'s Memorandum, 6 July).
[273] (BLG (51) 2nd). The Archbishop subsequently backed the case for reform publicly in the *Diocesan Gazette*, 1 July 1951.
[274] (BLG (51) 12, 'Draft report'), para.6-9.
[275] S. Hall, 'Reformism and the Legislation of Consent' in National Deviancy Conference (ed.), *Permissiveness and control: the fate of the sixties legislation* (London, 1980), 3-43, 5-6.
[276] (BLG (51) 12, 'Draft Report'). HO320/10. First Meeting of Working Party on Off-the-Course Cash Betting, 19 Sept 1951.

However, the issue never reached full Cabinet. The Labour MP Geoffrey de Freitas subsequently recalled that the Royal Commission's report had been 'considered carefully and in detail; but it is fair to say we did not reach any conclusion and we did not come to this House saying we would introduce legislation'.[277] Ede subsequently confirmed that De Freitas's interpretation of events.[278] It appeared that with a General Election pending the Government wished to shelve the issue. But the continuing prevalence of Labour objections to gambling cannot be discounted: the Party, as discussed in the next chapter, proved unwilling to endorse betting shops throughout the 1950s.

[277] 29 Jan 1954, HCD, vol.522, col.2124.
[278] 12 Feb 1954, HCD, vol.523, col.1581.

Chapter Four

Continuity and Change, 1951-1970

Introduction

Between 1951 and 1970 the politics of gambling were dominated by demands for liberalization of the lottery and off-course cash betting laws. Taking up where the previous chapter left off, I begin by examining Labour's attitude to the most important reform undertaken during this period: the licensing of betting shops in 1960. Substantial pressure for change was generated during the 1950s by the Royal Commission's recommendation in favour of the legalisation of off-course cash betting. But little of this pressure came from the Labour Party. Less than one fifth of its MPs supported the licensing of betting shops. More voted against, and the majority abstained. Section one examines the PLP's continued reluctance to support the legalization of cash betting off-course.

Sections two and three examine successively Labour's support of the Pool Betting Act of 1954 and the Small Lotteries and Gaming Act of 1956. These Acts originated in Private Members Bills sponsored by the Labour backbenchers Fred Mulley and Ernest Davies. But the PLP supported them. The Pool Betting Act amounted to the administrative regulation of the football pools, which many Labour MPs had been demanding since at least the 1940s.[1] Labour was even more enthusiastic about the Small Lotteries and Gaming Bill. It enabled charitable and non-commercial organisations to legally sell tickets to the public – a reform that had been endorsed by the Attlee Government's Betting Committee.[2] Local Labour parties, working men's clubs and trade unions relied heavily on such lotteries and the Act removed the legal uncertainty that surrounded so many of these undertakings.

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[1] See ch.3, section 3, above. For earlier intimations of Labour support for administrative regulation see above, pp.88-9.

[2] (BLG (51) 12, Draft Report, 17 August 1951).

Labour's support for the licensing of small public lotteries during the 1950s ran alongside continuing opposition to large public ones. Section four examines the Party's attack on the premium savings bond (PSB) scheme announced by the Conservative Government during 1956. Labour's objection was the same as it had been at the end of the First World War: premium bonds were a form of state lottery.[3] Opposition to the PSB became the leitmotif of the Party's budget response; of its assault on the acquisitive individualism which it accused the Conservatives of promoting. Labour's hostility to premium bonds was an intimation of its discomfort with the politics of consumerism and affluence that increasingly structured party politics during the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Sections five and six examine interventions in the gambling sphere by the 1964-70 Labour Governments. The former details the failure of the Chancellor Roy Jenkins to gain the parliamentary party's support for the creation of a national lottery. The latter discloses a debate within the Wilson Government about the future of the Grand National steeplechase. Senior ministers, including the Prime Minister, determined that Aintree not be sold off to property developers, favoured underwriting the municipal purchase of the racecourse. Ministers hostile to betting disagreed. That those who wished to secure the future of the Grand National prevailed reflected as much Wilson's support as it did the balance of opinion in the government. A brief conclusion - section seven - reiterates the limits of Labour's accommodation with gambling between 1951 and 1970.

1. Shunned Not Confronted: The Licensing of Betting Shops

The previous chapter ended with the Labour government shelving the Royal Commission's report in the run-up to the 1951 General Election. The Conservative Party had been equally cautious: its Research Department advised parliamentary candidates to remain non-committal, cautioning that the Church of England, as well as the Free Churches, was

[3] See above, p.71.

unsympathetic to the licensing of betting shops.[4] That the issue was not a priority for the incoming administration was signalled by the demise of the inter-departmental working party on off-course cash betting created during the last days of the Attlee Government.[5]

The introduction of the Pool Betting Bill at the end of 1953 renewed interest in the Royal Commission's report.[6] The Home Secretary, David Maxwell Fyfe, asked the Cabinet to sanction exploratory talks with the Opposition regarding cash betting off-course.[7] These took place late in March 1954.[8] The Labour deputation was led by James Chuter Ede. Its other members were the former Agriculture Minister Tom Williams, the former Attorney General Frank Soskice, (both of whom had served with Ede on the Attlee Government's Betting Committee),[9] Robert Mellish, a working-class trade unionist, and Geoffey de Freitas, a Christian socialist QC.[10]

The government was not prepared to commit itself to specific proposals beyond recognition that any scheme 'would need to include the registration of all bookmakers', or to a particular timetable. Its preferred approach involved a Lords debate

> in which the Government would indicate its general acceptance of the Royal Commission...[and] say that if it was assured that there was a general feeling for a change in the law...and that people of all political parties would be willing to co-

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[4] M. Francis, ''Set the People Free?' Conservatives and the State 1920-60', in M. Francis and I. Zweiniger-Bargielowska (eds.), *The Conservatives and British Society 1880-1990* (Cardiff, 1996), 58-78, 69. The Church of England's National Assembly had refused to endorse its Social and Industrial Commission's conclusion that moderate gambling was not an evil. The inter-denominational Churches Committee on Gambling (CCG) also opposed the Royal Commission's conclusions about off-course cash betting. For details see Machin, *Churches and social issues in twentieth-century Britain*, 147.

[5] See file HO320/10 for details.

[6] See for example, A.P. Herbert's article in *The Star*, 29 Jan 1954. For discussion of the Pool Betting Act see section 2, below. The TUC had suggested taxing winnings from gambling as short-term capital gains in its evidence to the Royal Commission on the Taxation of Profits and Income. *TUCACR* (1952), 272.

[7] CAB128/26. (C[abinet] C[onclusions] (53) 68th, 21 Nov) & (C (53) 317, Home Sec's Memo). CAB128/27. (CC (54) 11th, 24 Feb) & Home Sec.'s Memos (C (54) 41) & (C (54) 68). Maxwell Fyfe wrote to James Chuter Ede requesting a meeting with a Labour deputation. HO320/11. Letter, 6 March 1954. Not all members of the Cabinet were as enthusiastic as Maxwell Fyfe about betting reform. See P. Catterall (ed.), *The Macmillan Diaries: the Cabinet years, 1950-57* (London, 2003), 274.

[8] HO320/11. Minute of Meeting, 29 March 1954.

[9] See section 6 of previous chapter for details of this Committee's proceedings.

[10] Defreitas's brand of ethical socialism was illuminated by his centrist location within the Right/Left debates of the late 1950s. He called for the 'materialism of Clause IV' to be replaced by an emphasis on the 'brotherhood of man'. *The Times*, 3 March 1960.

operate to find a solution to these very difficult problems, then the Government would be willing to see whether it was possible to work out a scheme which might form the basis for legislation.

In advance of the Lords debate, it requested 'a statement on behalf of the Opposition', 'indicating that they would welcome such action'. The government wished to be 'reasonably satisfied that [off-course cash betting] would not prove controversial in a Party sense'.[11]

Labour's response was cool. Ede, speaking on the deputation's behalf, 'did not think the views of the Bishops were the most important factor and he thought it might be important that the view should be heard of certain sections of Church opinion which were not well represented in the Lords'.[12] This position was precisely the opposite of that adopted by the Attlee Government's Betting Committee: with Ede in the chair it proceeded on the basis that the Church of England's attitude was the critical factor. The views of Nonconformity had been dismissed as unimportant.[13] The Labour deputation subsequently reported back to the government in less than encouraging terms: 'the issues...will have to be examined with care...most...will arouse strong and diverse feelings'.[14] This was the last communication from the PLP: promptings from the government failed to elicit any further response.[15]

The Conservative Party Conference endorsed the licensing of betting shops in both 1954 and 1955.[16] Lord Willink, Chairman of the 1949 Royal Commission, complained in a letter to *The Times* that the great and good would not continue to serve on public bodies if the government ignored their endeavours.[17] Within months of his intervention, both Houses of Parliament had discussed cash betting off-course. Labour members initiated both debates. In the Commons, Arthur Lewis, MP for West Ham North, and a strong supporter of dog racing,

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[11] H0 320/11. Note for Meeting with Labour deputation, 26 March 1954. See also, memo on the 'Report of the Royal Commission on Betting (undated).
[12] HO320/11. Minute of Meeting, 29 March 1954.
[13] See section 6 of previous chapter.
[14] HO320/11. Letter from Chuter Ede to Home Sec, 4 April 1954.
[15] HO320/15. Memo, 13 July 1954.
[16] Francis, 'Set the People Free', 69.
[17] *The Times*, 6 Dec 1955.

saw an opportunity to highlight horse racing's untaxed status.[18] In the Lords, Lewis Silkin argued that the sheer size of the betting industry undermined ethical objections to refrom. Not that the case for betting shops convinced him. He implied, and this would become a popular claim among those opposed to betting shops, that they would encourage more betting, especially among women.[19] The Bevanite Gavin Faringdon felt betting wrong even in moderation. But since the public thought differently he agreed liberalisation was necessary.[20] The devout Catholic Frank Pakenham believed gambling worse than even excessive drinking but better than prostitution:

> To put it a little crudely, I think we have to decide between these two things: whether to place betting on the level of drink or on the level of prostitution...I place betting slightly nearer drink than prostitution, but slightly lower than alcoholism in this sense: that I think this country would be a somewhat worse place without alcohol and a somewhat better place without betting...I join with those who do not approach this problem as they would approach an attempt to restrain prostitution.[21]

Fred Mulley (responsible for the Pool Betting Act of 1954) claimed that a free vote in the Commons would produce a substantial majority in favour of betting shops.[22] Ernest Davies (sponsor of the Small Lotteries and Gaming Act of 1956) also made the case for administrative regulation.[23] James Chuter Ede emphasized that he had supported the licensing of betting shops when Home Secretary. Ede suggested a free vote and asked for co-operation between the government and opposition - a request at odds with Labour's attitude during the previous parliament.[24] Another member of the Labour deputation of 1954, Robert

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[18] 9 March 1956, HCD, vol.549, cols.2487-2501. During the 1950s Lewis asked a barrage of parliamentary questions regarding the taxation of dog-racing vis-à-vis horse-racing. He later moved an amendment to the Betting Levy Bill drawing attention to the unfair treatment of the dogs. 5 Dec 1960, HCD, vol.632, col.924-9.
[19] 8 Feb 1956, HLD, vol.195, cols.803-11.
[20] Ibid, col.830.
[21] 27 June 1956, HLD, vol.198, cols.116-7. This was during a second Lords debate initiated by supporters of a Tote Monopoly.
[22] 9 March 1956, HCD, vol.549, cols.2531-9.
[23] Ibid, cols.2517-24. See also the reiteration of his case: 28 Feb 1957, HCD, vol.565, cols.1391-2.
[24] 9 March 1956, HCD, vol.549, cols.2555-9.

Mellish, praised the character of bookmakers in his Bermondsey constituency.[25] Marcus Lipton averred that public opinion had advanced significantly.[26]

To the bookmakers 'it appeared that both sides of Parliament were broadly speaking in favour of betting shops'.[27] This judgement demands qualification in the case of the Labour Party.[28] The extent of Labour support for reform was exaggerated because its anti-gamblers, lacking a constructive alternative to betting shops, were happy to hold their fire until definite proposals emerged from the government.[29] The anti-gambling peer George Mathers (twice Lord High Commissioner of the Church of Scotland, and the PLP Deputy Chief Whip in 1945 and 1946) was exceptional in that he was prepared to confront the logic of his position. He favoured 'the present unsatisfactory position [rather] than add to the harm done by gambling by making it respectable or attractive in any way'.[30]

Anthony Greenwood, MP for Rossendale, and son of Labour's former deputy leader, was more representative. Greenwood acknowledged the overwhelming logic of the case for regulating off-course cash betting. He observed that support for the Royal Commission's conclusions had been almost unanimous. Greenwood concluded that it was incumbent upon the government to bring forward a Bill for the licensing of betting shops. But the government should not expect him to vote for it. He found it difficult to remain 'objective' about gambling. It was a 'growing social problem' and he disliked it 'intensely'.[31] Greenwood

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[25] Ibid, cols.2568-72.
[26] Ibid, cols.2575-8. Lipton pressed again for reform during the debate on the 1958 Address. 28 Oct 1958, HCD, vol.594, col.42.
[27] National Bookmakers Protection Association (NBPA) Executive Committee, 6 April 1956. Quoted in Hill, *Horse power: the politics of the turf*, 16.
[28] The Conservative Government did accept the case for licensing betting shops. 9 March 1956, HCD, vol.549, col.2548-55. Conservative MPs subsequently formed a gambling committee that campaigned for betting shops. C[onservative] R[esearch] D[epartment] 2/44/15. Minutes, 18 June & 2 July 1956.
[29] The Conservative Research Department recognized that while the licensing of betting shops appeared to benefit Labour's core vote anti-gambling remained significant in the PLP. CRD. 2/44/15. Memo, Sept 30, 1957.
[30] 9 March 1956, HCD, vol.549, cols. 829-30.
[31] Ibid, col.2542-7.

subsequently voted against the 1960 Betting and Gaming Act on both second and third readings.[32]

There were other indications of unease. George Wigg warned presciently that betting shops encouraged the concentration of bookmaking in a few, large, firms.[33] This would become a familiar refrain among Labour MPs. So would his suspicion of the Jockey Club's role in debates about reform of the betting laws.[34] Its elitism antagonized the Labour Party,[35] as did its close links to the Conservative party, particularly since these links apparently gave the Jockey Club an effective veto over the Betting and Gaming Bill.[36] The Jockey Club's central role in the debate encouraged Labour MPs to approach the issue through the prism of class. This eventually manifested itself in a parliamentary campaign for the licensing of the street bookmaker instead of, or alongside, betting shops.

The government came close to introducing legislation during 1957. In the end, a lack of enthusiasm among its backbenchers, as well as the complications arising from the conflicting interests of horse racing and the bookmakers, persuaded it to drop the idea.[37] However, both major parties entered the 1959 General Election committed to reform of the cash betting laws.[38] Leisure and social reform emerged as political battlegrounds during this campaign. Labour was under pressure from the *Daily Herald* and *Daily Mirror* who wished to see an end to 'fuddy-duddy' and 'damn silly' laws, including the Street Betting Act.[39] The policy document *Leisure for Living* was the Party's response. Labour claimed that 'no British

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[32] HCD: 17 Nov 1959, vol.613, cols.1112-4. 11 May 1960, vol.622, cols.491-4. For a discussion of Greenwood's anti-gambling in a Ministerial context, see section 6 of this chapter.
[33] 9 March 1956, HCD, vol.549, cols.2508-14.
[34] Ibid, col.2513.
[35] Labour's attitude to the creation of the Tote thirty years before had been coloured by similar suspicion of the Jockey Club. See chapter 1, section, 3, above.
[36] Hill, *Horse power*, 65. See also HO 295/1/LIQ/1/3/23. Memo, 2 March 1959.
[37] For details of the government's change of mind see M. Jarvis, *Conservative governments, morality and social change in affluent Britain, 1957-64* (Manchester, 2005), 66.
[38] Labour Party, *Britain Belongs to You* (London, 1959). Jarvis, *Conservative governments, morality and social change,* 71.
[39] The *Daily Herald*, for example, claimed credit for *Leisure for Living*. 26 Aug 1959. See the *Guardian's* analysis of this tabloid pressure. 26 August 1959. The paper had dropped the 'Manchester' from its title in August 1959.

political party has ever before tackled the problem of leisure so imaginatively and thoroughly'.[40]

The *Guardian* was more sceptical. Labour's NEC remained 'more orthodox than the bench of bishops'.[41] Of *Leisure for Living* it noted that the 'law reform section' (dealing with gambling, licensing and Sunday opening) was very brief and 'out of context' with the document's general focus on the arts and leisure, giving 'the strong impression of having been added as an afterthought'. The paper also recognised that 'particularly definite commitments are less in evidence than broad expositions of the party's attitude'. In terms of betting, the document 'merely notes that the government have done nothing' to implement the changes recommended by the Royal Commission.[42]

Leisure for Living actually referred to the 'archaic and undesirable class character' of the cash betting laws and insisted that 'it it is high time the present anomalies were removed'.[43] This Labour's manifesto promised to do so.[44] But the *Guardian* was correct in identifying a certain vagueness. There was no specific commitment to the licensing of betting shops. Furthermore, Labour promised a free vote on any Betting Bill.[45] This was an acknowledgement of continuing divisions within the party. Roy Jenkins, in his pre-election statement of Labour's intent regarding law reform, had conceded that MPs from the 'Celtic fringe' represented an obstacle to change.[46]

According to the *Guardian's* parliamentary correspondent, the problem was less the personal views of Scottish and Welsh MPs ('the general temper at Westminster is gradually changing') than the balance of opinion in their constituencies. The 'militant left-wing' views

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[40] Labour Party, *Leisure for Living* (London, 1959).
[41] *Guardian*, 26 Aug 1959.
[42] *Guardian*, 31 August 1959.
[43] *Leisure for Living*, 5-6.
[44] Labour Party, *Britain Belongs to You.*
[45] Ibid.
[46] R. Jenkins, *The Labour Case* (London, 1959), 139-140. For an earlier iteration of some of Jenkins's themes, including reform of the betting laws, see Douglas Jay's article in *Forward*, 17 May 1957.

of constituency activists were not the product of 'Marxist materialism' as many 'intellectual socialists' (i.e. Gaitskellites) assumed. Rather, the abiding influence was 'Methodist' and revealed itself in the activists' attitudes to the 'triumvirate' of betting, licensing and Sunday Observance.[47] This inheritance contributed to the unease felt on the Left at the priority given to social and cultural reform during the General Election campaign. Barbara Castle (whom Crossman described as possessing 'this right-and-wrong attitude to life'),[48] in her Chair's speech to the post-election Labour Conference insisted that it was fallacious to believe

> that you can separate moral issues from economic ones. We are not prigs in the Labour party, of course we believe that people should have a good time, but we also believe deeply and enduringly in the good life. And we have spent fifty years of political life proving to the people of this country that economic and social morality go hand in hand.[49]

Labour MPs were subsequently granted a free vote on all stages of the 1959-60 Betting and Gaming Bill, which provided for licensed betting shops.[50] Seventy-five Labour MPs opposed the Bill at either second or third reading.[51] Fifty-two Labour MPs supported it on one or other of these divisions.[52] The majority of Labour MPs abstained. There were Labour MPs favourable to liberalization in theory that abstained because of specific disquiet about

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[47] *Guardian*, 31 August 1959.

[48] R. H. S. Crossman, *The diaries of a Cabinet Minister*: vol.i-iii (London, 1975-77), vol.iii, 417. (Hereafter *Crossman Diaries*).

[49] *LPACR* (1959), 84. Castle returned to some of these themes in the run-up to the 1970 General Election. 'We believe in human society, not the 'permissive' society...This [permissiveness] is the product of a commercialised society in which the questions people ask themselves are 'Will it pay?' and 'Can I get away with it?'...It is the Tories who are the permissive in society today for they subordinate moral imperatives to economic ones'. *Richmond and Barnes Clarion*, April 1970. Quoted in P. Thompson " 'Labour's Gannex Conscience'? Politics and Popular Politics in the 'permissive society', in R. Coopey, S. Fielding, N. Tiratsoo (eds.), *The Wilson Governments 1964-70* (London, 1993), 136-50, 140. But her opposition to acquisitive individualism was not strong enough to override constituency interests: she had lobbied for the construction of a casino in Blackburn the previous year. " 'They have just got this splendid new town centre with a smart restaurant, a band and dancing and what they want is a little bit of gaming as well. That would really make it. This is what we could do to revive the North'. Barbara, infatuated with her own constituency, was all for gambling in Blackburn". *Crossman Diaries*, vol.iii, 736. Crossman's musings on Castle's personality, 'prissy rigour, combined with an extraordinary power of self-deception' might have explanatory value in this context. *Crossman Diaries*, vol.iii, 417.

[50] *PLP Minutes*, 5 and 11 Nov 1959. A meeting to decide the PLP's attitude was held on 12 Nov but I have been unable to find a record of it. *The Times*, 13 Nov 1959, reported on 'Labour's Decision on Betting Bill. Free Vote for MPs'. Also quoted by Chinn, *Better Betting with a Decent Feller*, 252, fn.208.

[51] HCD: 17 Nov 1959, vol.613, cols.1112-4. 11 May 1960, vol.622, cols.491-4. 51 Labour MPs voted against the Bill at second reading. 43 Labour MPs did so at third reading.

[52] 43 Labour MPs voted in favour at second reading, this fell to 18 at third reading.

betting shops.[53] Others took the view that off-course cash betting was, to the extent it remained controversial, the new government's problem.[54] The 'apolitical limbo' to which sections of the post-war left consigned issues of personal behaviour encouraged such an assessment.[55] So too did the fierce faction fighting which broke out immediately after Labour's heavy General Election defeat. Complaints about the government's failure to make the issue one of conscience were one way in which the Labour Party could avoid engagement with a divisive issue and maintain unity.[56] Another was to cast doubt on the motives of the government and the Home Secretary in particular. Labour implied that R. A. Butler had no real interest in the gambling issue. His real concern was in entering 10 Downing Street. To that end, he wished to sweep gambling under the carpet, off the streets, and out of the public eye.

Labour MPs drew a parallel with Butler's attitude to prostitution. Anthony Greenwood, then the party's Home Affairs spokesman, had indicted the Street Offences Act for making 'vice more discreet, probably more profitable and almost certainly more corrupt'.[57] Marcus Lipton subsequently spoke of the government's 'itch to clear the streets' of betting.[58] Horace King complained that betting shops amounted to 'removing...[betting] out of the sight of people who are annoyed by it. This is what the Victorians did'.[59] The Party's current Home Affairs spokesman, Patrick Gordon Walker argued similarly.[60] They appeared to be kicking against the policy of maintaining public order and decorum which was the other side of the liberalism first articulated by the Wolfenden report on prostitution and homosexuality.[61]

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[53] The Labour MP Alice Bacon stated that some of her colleagues 'not firmly opposed to betting as such' had abstained on second reading because 'they did not think the government had made a good case [for betting shops]. 1959STC, cols.102-3.
[54] *The Times* noted that 'most Opposition members stayed in their places when the Division Bell rung'. 18 Nov 1959.
[55] Thompson, " 'Labour's Gannex Conscience' ", 140.
[56] *The Times,* 13 Nov 1959. Gaitskell and Bevan were among those who demanded that the government make the Bill an issue of conscience. Ibid.
[57] 22 April 1959, HCD, vol.604, col.534.
[58] 17 Nov 1959, HCD, vol.613, cols.1058-62.
[59] 10 May 1960, HCD, vol.623, cols.471-6.
[60] Hill, *Horse power*, 44. The peers Lewis Silkin and Victor Stonham maintained this line of attack: 23 May 1960, HLD, vol.223, cols.1140, 1165.
[61] S. Hall, 'Reformism and the Legislation of Consent', passim.

Another key charge was that betting shops would become the preserve of big business. 'Gambling empires' might emerge. The Macmillan government's 'peculiar openness to commercial suggestion'[62] encouraged this line of attack.

Labour critics of betting shops could count on a measure of support from the Nonconformist and Anglican Churches. The Bishop of Carlisle was unusual among non-Catholic clergy in expressing support for the Bill before its second reading.[63] The Archbishop of Canterbury only came out in favour of shops after the Bill's overwhelming second reading and he did so while appearing to make an analogy between betting and prostitution.[64] In a last ditch attempt to prevent betting shops being licensed the British Council of Churches endorsed the 'letter-box' option which had been recommended by the 1933 Royal Commission.[65] The Baptist Union's tortuous formulation summed up Protestant ambivalence. It continued to 'oppose betting shops in principle' but could, possibly, 'accept them in practice' if they were hedged around with restrictions.[66] A. V. Alexander, prominent Baptist and Labour's leader in the Lords,[67] embodied the reluctance of both Protestants and socialists to endorse betting shops. He thought they would increase gambling. His demands for further restrictions went unheeded. But Alexander did not in the end oppose the Betting and Gaming Bill.[68]

Frank Soskice did. Considered by Crossman to be a man of 'exquisite liberal conscience', [69] he later became Home Secretary. As one of the Attlee Government's legal officers he had endorsed the 1951 Royal Commission's conclusions regarding off-course cash betting.[70] However, he now declared a 'prejudicial distaste for betting shops'. They were 'indecent and

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[62] Downes et al, *Gambling, work and leisure*, 41.
[63] He did not think gambling intrinsically wrong and hoped regulation could diminish its 'economic and social' consequences. *The Times*, 4 Nov 1959.
[64] *The Times,* 20 Nov 1959.
[65] *The Times*, 28 Jan 1960. The 1933RC had suggested that bookmakers' offices be licensed to accept cash bets during racing hours via deposit boxes located on their premises.
[66] *The Times*, 18 Nov 1959.
[67] D. Howell, 'Alexander, Albert Victor, Earl Alexander of Hillsborough (1885-1965), *DNB* [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30368, accessed 16 Feb 2006].
[68] HLD: 23 May 1960, vol.223, cols.1173-80. 31 May 1960, vol.224, col.129-30.
[69] *Crossman Diaries*, vol.ii, 170.
[70] See section 6 of previous chapter.

improper'. Indeed, he confessed his relief that that the government proposed to call them betting 'offices'. Soskice admitted his was 'a purely emotional reaction' – as such, though, it exposed a strand of opinion that acknowledged the case for betting shops in principle, but recoiled from them in practice.[71] The former Home Secretary, Maxwell Fyfe (enobled as Viscount Kilmuir) had identified this mood during the previous parliament:

> A number of people accepted that betting shops were better than street betting and the illegality, but when they had to face up to the number of betting shops in London running into more than four figures, they got rather a shock...there was rather a revulsion when the extent to which they would be necessary was realised.[72]

Soskice voted against the Betting and Gaming Bill on both readings.

The complexities of his position were not unique. *The Times* observed the 'abundance of constructive, contradictory and heteredox criticism' directed at the Bill during its second reading. Both anti-gamblers (worried that betting shops would encourage betting) and class-conscious MPs (concerned about the fate of the small bookmaker) were attracted, for example, to the 'letter-box' idea recommended by the 1932-33 Royal Commission. The High Anglican Eric Fletcher, number two in Labour's Home Office team, supported it on the former basis.[73] Fred Mulley on the latter, though he did imply that large bookmakers would make greater efforts to stimulate the demand for gambling than small ones.[74] The Party's senior Home Affairs spokesman, Patrick Gordon Walker wove these strands together. He led for Labour on the second reading of the Betting and Gaming Bill and made the surprising claim that the 'Royal Commission of 1933 was in many respects wiser and better balanced than that of 1951'. He endorsed its 'letter box' proposal. In this way, the 'dangers of great abuse in continuous betting' were mitigated and the " 'small man' back[ed] against the big bookmaking chain".[75] Questions of practicality aside, the 'letter-box' scheme suffered from

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[71] Soskice suggested the licensing of street bookmaking or cash betting via 'letter-box' as alternatives. 17 Nov 1959, HCD, vol.613, cols.1092, 1095-6.
[72] 16 Dec 1958, HLD, vol.213, col.385-6.
[73] 1959STC, cols.1349-50.
[74] *Daily Herald*, 3 Nov 1959. 16 Nov 1959, HCD, vol.613, cols.854, 859-60.
[75] Ibid, col.823-34.

a glaring weakness: it offered no protection against under-age betting. In the search for an alternative to the government's proposals it was quickly superseded by other proposals: in particular by demands for the licensing of street betting.

The extent to which betting shops already operated illegally across the country probably made a system based around licensed street betting 'redundant and unrealistic'.[76] Nor did there appear to be an enormous demand for it among those who bet. In early November, only 38 per cent of *Daily Herald* readers favoured legalising street betting. However, large and small bookmakers alike preferred it to betting shops.[77] So too did some Conservative MPs.[78] *The Times* was also notably sympathetic.[79] Labour MPs like Robert Mellish claimed that the working classes preferred to bet in this way. He was a Catholic and libertarian on the gambling issue. (If there were to be betting shops, he demanded they be 'gayer, happier, cheaper' facilities than the government's plans suggested. He appeared to have read the closing chapter of the *Future of Socialism*).[80] More surprisingly, perhaps, the former Home Secretary James Chuter Ede agreed. Street betting was the favoured form of betting among Southern English 'manual workers' and therefore deserved legal recognition.[81] To not do so constituted an attack on the 'proletariat' and their culture. The Bill was 'class legislation'. In a remarkable reinterpretation of *Love on the Dole*, Ede argued that the character Sam Grundy was not a parasite on the working classes. He represented, rather, the 'remarkably close social relationship' between the street bookmaker and punter. An 'accepted code of honour' governed relations between the two.[82] The libertarian-minded George Chetwynd disclosed

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[76] Chinn, *Better Betting with a Decent Feller* 276. See also Hood, 'The Development of Betting Taxes in Britain', 192.
[77] For details of the bookmakers' views see Hill, *Horse Power*, 44-5.
[78] CRD. 2/44/15. Minutes of meeting of the Conservative Home Affairs Committee, 3 Dec 1959. See also HCD: 5 May 1960, vol.622, cols.1318-19, 1333-4. 10 May 1960, vol.623, col.447-51.
[79] *The Times,* 18 Nov 1959. The *Daily Telegraph*'s racing correspondent 'Hotspur' also attacked the idea of betting shops. (He was a Tote Monopolist). *Daily Telegraph*, 14 Nov 1959.
[80] HCD: 17 Nov 1959, vol.613, cols.1045-52 & 5 May 1960, vol.622, cols.1312-18.
[81] On the difference between betting patterns North and South see Hood, 'The Development of Betting Taxes in Britain', 191. Chinn argues that was no substantial geographical differences in betting patterns. *Better Betting with a Decent Feller*, 274-7.
[82] Ede reiterated his argument on a number of occasions. HCD: 17 Nov 1959, vol.613 col.989-1000. 5 May 1960, vol.622, col.1301-11, 1398. 11 May 1960, vol.623, cols.460-7. 23 May 1960, vol.624, cols.79-83. 1959STC, 28 Jan 1960, cols.152-60. For the dominant interpretation of Sam Grundy see Chinn, *Better Betting with a Decent Feller*, 181-4.

the excitement he felt in betting illicitly and argued that the working classes would not use shops.[83]

Suburbanisation, the construction of high-rise tower blocks, and mass immigration into the older inner-urban areas were transforming the working-class communities in which street betting flourished.[84] It is tempting to place Labour's defence of street betting and street bookmakers in this context: to see it both as a reaction to, and an acknowledgement of, the decline of traditional working class culture.[85] The arguments of Ede and Mellish certainly possessed an elegiac quality. So did the contributions of Labour peers Lewis Silkin and Victor Stonham. The former spoke of the 'melancholy position' of the street bookmaker,[86] the latter praised his generosity of spirit.[87] But George Wigg and Reginald Paget's backing for street betting was less sentimental: Labour's present and past representatives on the Tote Board were worried that the licensing of betting shops would lead to the emergence of a small number of powerful bookmaking firms able to dictate terms to the turf.[88]

The clamour grew louder as the government initially failed to rule out significant changes to the Bill.[89] The *Daily Herald* endorsed street betting in December.[90] Paget tried to amend the Bill in Standing Committee.[91] Ede and Mellish did the same in the House of Commons. Twenty-five Labour MPs voted in favour of their amendment to license street bookmakers. Among them was Gordon Walker. Having rejected the case for licensed street betting during his second reading speech, the Party's Home Affairs spokesman now described street betting

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[83] 1959STC, col.275. 17 Nov 1959, HCD, vol.613, cols.1023-9.
[84] For a recent analysis of this process see M. Clapson, *Invincible green suburbs, brave new towns. Social change and urban dispersal in postwar England* (Manchester, 2003), 63-76. See also Cronin *Labour and society in Britain*, 163-4.
[85] For the decline of this culture during the 1950s see, inter alia, Hobsbawm, 'The Making of the Working Class 1870-1914', 57-8. Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*, pt.2.
[86] 14 July 1960, HCD, vol.225, col.317.
[87] 23 May 1960, HCD, vol.223, col.1163.
[88] HCD: 5 May 1960, vol.622, col.1319-26. 17 Nov.1959, vol.613, cols.1110-18.
[89] *The Times*, 18 Nov 1959. Dennis Vosper, the junior Home Office Minister in charge of the Bill told Conservative MPs in December that 'it might well be that the betting office would not become the principal item' in the Bill. CRD. 2/44/15. Minutes of Meeting of H[ome] O[ffice] A[ffairs] C[ommittee], 3 Dec, 1959.
[90] *Daily Herald*, 10 Dec 1959.
[91] The vote was lost 24-14. *The Times*, 5 Feb 1960.

as a reasonable and harmless 'social habit'. The government should not coerce punters into betting in shops.[92]

Eric Fletcher, the deputy Home Affairs spokesman, disagreed. He maintained that 'fundamentally...the street is not the right place for betting'. He opposed the Ede/Mellish amendment and was joined in doing so by fellow anti-gambler W. R. Williams.[93] In the Lords a dozen Labour peers supported an amendment from their colleagues Francis Douglas and Ambrose Woodhall, which attempted to delete the Bill's provision for factory runners.[94]

The failure to license street bookmakers contributed to the collapse in Labour support for the Bill between second and third reading.[95] But even at second reading only 43 Labour MPs had backed the Bill. This amounted to just one sixth of the PLP's total strength. At all stages more Labour MPs opposed than supported the Betting and Gaming Bill. Hardly a ringing endorsement of betting shops, then, and one which casts doubt on Hood's suggestion that the delay in licensing off-course cash betting was almost entirely due to 'hostility within the racing and betting world to the introduction of betting shops'.[96] It also complicates Dixon's conclusion. He is probably right that the general decline of Nonconformity found specific expression in a 'reaction against Puritanism among the Labour leadership' (he means in practice the Gaitskellites), such as to ensure that the Party did not oppose off-course cash betting on a party basis during the 1950s.[97] But it is equally important to note (at least for a study of Labour attitudes to gambling) that many rank and file Labour MPs remained opposed to gambling in principle.

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[92] 5 May 1960, HCD, vol.622, cols.1334-6.
[93] 5 May 1960, HCD, vol.622 col.1349-52.
[94] 31 May 1960, HLD, vol.224, cols.123-38.
[95] As already noted, 43 Labour MPs had voted in favour at second reading, but this fell to 18 at third reading. Four Labour MPs who opposed the Bill on third reading had actually supported it on second. These were Robert Mellish, Sir Leslie Plummer, Bernard Taylor and J. B. Symonds. Mellish certainly did so in protest at the treatment of the street bookmaker. It seems likely the others' reasoning was similar.
[96] Hood, 'The Development of Betting Taxes in Britain', 192. This argument is also central to Hill's analysis of the politics of the turf: *Horse power*, esp., 60-3.
[97] Dixon, *From Prohibition to Regulation*, 338.

Douglas Houghton was one. A member of the Rationalist Press Association and the National Secular Society, he was a confirmed Humanist. On entering the Lords, his coat of arms bore the motto 'bear no base mind'.[98] Cruelty to animals, the subjugation of women, and gambling, all were anathema to a man determined 'to try and make the world a more 'civilised' (one of his favourite words) place'.[99] He was opposed 'to speculative enterprise...in any shape or form, whether it is on the Stock Exchange, in property, take-over bids, football pools, or anything else'.[100] He thought betting shops were 'not really a mark of a civilised society'.[101] This otherwise progressive and constructive Labour MP[102] preferred that betting be shunned rather than confronted.[103]

Freed from the imperatives of government the PLP as a whole exhibited a similar tendency. The ninety hours of parliamentary time expended on discussion of betting shops, the thousand columns of *Hansard* filled during the Committee Stage alone[104] - Labour MPs played the major part in both instances. Nor, it is important to note, was the Party's reluctance to endorse betting shops, Labour's determination to elongate the debate, necessarily inconsequential in the wider sense: Hill has suggested that the tortuous progress of the Betting and Gaming Bill led the Home Secretary to consider abandoning it.[105]

2. The Pool Betting Act

The football pools industry continued to grow - especially in the second half of the 1950s. Sixty eight million pounds in 1955, the pools' turnover had reached £98m by 1959, a rise of

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[98] Obituary by Tam Dalyell in *The Independent* quoted in Lady Houghton et al, *Lord Houghton of Sowerby 1898-1996. A memorial tribute to his life and* work (London, 1998), 5.
[99] Ibid.
[100] 12 Feb 1954, HCD, vol.522, col.1602.
[101] 17 Nov 1959, HCD, vol.613, cols.909-11.
[102] A Cabinet Minister and mainstream figure in the parliamentary party of the 1950s and 1960s, his career culminated in the chairmanship of the PLP between 1967 and 1974. As such, it is somewhat surprising that Houghton lacks an entry in the new *DNB*.
[103] Houghton had grown up in an active Nonconformist home and in his preoccupations he appeared an example of the process by which Protestantism became a screen for rationalism. See, inter alia, K. Thomas, *Religion and the decline of magic: studies in popular beliefs in sixteenth and seventeenth century England* (London, 1971), 79. For a more recent analysis see P. Ghosh, " 'Max Weber's idea of 'Puritanism': a case study in the empirical construction of the Protestant ethic", *History of European Ideas*, 29 (2003), 183-221, esp., 216-7.
[104] Hill, *Horse power*, 44, 56.
[105] Ibid, 41.

almost 50 per cent.[106] However, its spectacular growth attracted little adverse comment. The Pool Betting Act, introduced late in 1953, and which became law during 1954, drew the remaining political sting from the issue. Based on the recommendations of the 1951 Royal Commission, this Act provided the greater transparency in the operation of the industry that Labour MPs had been calling for since the 1940s. Promoters had to provide a weekly statement regarding their expenses and commission and publish annual accounts. The practice of collapsing one pool competition into another was prohibited: this prevented promoters moving money from one pool to another in order to vary the dividend payable to successful bettors. The Act also legalized cash betting on the pools by post – thereby repudiating the Ready Money Betting Act of 1920.

The Labour backbencher, and future Cabinet minister, Fred Mulley was the Act's sponsor. He introduced it as a Private Members Bill in November 1953. A graduate of Ruskin College, and a Cambridge philosopher before entering parliament, Mulley was a Gaitskellite with close links to the revisionist *Socialist Commentary*. He had no ethical objections to gambling.[107] Neither, it appeared, did the eight Labour signatories to his Bill (William Blyton, J. P. W. Mallalieu, Ian Mikardo, G. R. Mitchison, Will Nally, Walter Padley, Fred Peart, and Robert Winterbottom). Mikardo was representative. Just as Will Nally had attacked the pools industry but not pool betting during the 1940s,[108] so did Mikardo during the 1950s. The House of Commons bookie,[109] he also wrote a largely tongue-in-cheek *Tribune* pamphlet about gambling entitled *It's a Mug's Game*[110] and believed the pools to be 'by...far the most innocuous form of gambling', since there was 'virtually no incentive to

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[106] Sharpe, *Gambling on goals*, 58.
[107] He explained his position in two articles: *Socialist Commentary,* March 1954, 69-71; *New Statesman*, 20 Feb 1954.
[108] See above, pp.144-6.
[109] I. Mikardo, *Back-bencher*, (London, 1988), 128-9. Mikardo claimed that he donated any profits from his amateur bookmaking to *Tribune*. Ibid. For a recent airing of Mikardo's role as House of Commons bookie by one of his successors in that role see the *First Report of the House of Commons Select Committee on Standards and Privileges, 2000-2001* (Complaint against Frank Roy MP), annex L, Letter from Frank Roy MP to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, 16 Nov 2000 [accessed at http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200001/cmselect/cmstnprv/49/4916.htm].
[110] I. Mikardo, *It's A Mug's Game. A light-hearted treatise* (London, 1951).

increase [one's] stake'.[111] The industry, however, was a licence to print money held by potentially unscrupulous businessman who returned less than half of the money staked in the form of prizes, and used their large profits to diversify into more respectable sectors of the economy. Mikardo even suggested that collusion between the pools promoters kept 'dividends', that is, prize money, at an artificially low level.[112] This perspective was widely shared: the Labour Party's General Secretary, Morgan Phillips believed that the pools were 'a mammoth private industry operating with public money for purely private gain'. Phillips proposed that a non-profit board assume control of its operations.[113]

Suggestions of this kind perturbed the pools industry. Its nervousness had been increased by claims from the Free Churches that Mulley's rather modest proposals were a first step towards prohibition.[114] The Football Pools Promoters Association (FPPA) mounted a high profile campaign of petitioning and letter writing against the Bill. This campaign was ineffective. The Bill enjoyed widespread support. As *Socialist Commentary* commented, if the pools' promoters 'decline the opportunity offered to establish their bona fides, they must not be surprised if their clients draw certain, and possibly, wrong conclusions from this reluctance'.[115] The *Evening Standard* summed up the popular case for administrative regulation:

> This secrecy has, until now, been guaranteed by law designed to exempt the small family business from the requirement to publish accounts. But...a £65 million a year industry drawing revenue from the majority of all the families in the country cannot be bracketed with a home-made bun shop, however flourishing. This Bill deserves Parliamentary time and all-party support. The country eagerly desires its passage into law, impatient as people are for the gratifying moment when the discovery is made that all one's worst suspicions were unfounded.[116]

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[111] 1954STC, col.2202.
[112] Ibid, col.2167-8.
[113] *Sunday Pictorial*, 28 February 1954. The headline was '1 2 X Sensation'.
[114] 29 Jan 1954, HCD, vol.522, cols.2125-6.
[115] *Socialist Commentary*, Jan 1954, 39-40.
[116] *Evening Standard*, 12 March 1954.

There were, nonetheless, parliamentary attempts to thwart the Bill's progress. The Hull Labour MP Captain Mark Hewitson talked out the first attempt at a second reading.[117] Angry Labour colleagues accused him of being in the pay of the pools industry[118] and they were probably right.[119] When the Bill came back to the House of Commons with government support,[120] the Liverpool Labour member Bessie Braddock tried the same trick. Her city was home to some of the biggest pools companies and she attempted to read out a lengthy statement on behalf of the pools promoters. She succeeded merely in antagonizing Labour colleagues.[121] The Bill went through without a division.[122] The pools promoters recognized that the Bill was unstoppable and dropped their opposition in return for several technical amendments.[123]

The Pool Betting Bill enjoyed an uncontested third reading in early May. A tiny rump of Labour anti-gamblers did try to remove the Bill's cash betting clause but this had as much to do with concern about the precedent the clause set at a time when the issue of off-course betting on horses remained unresolved, as with objections to the pools.[124] In CLPs where nonconformity remained pervasive, such as Darlington, there remained resistance to pool betting,[125] while the Labour peer Ambrose Uvedale subsequently attempted to limit the

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[117] 29 Jan 1954, HCD, vol.522, cols.2109-34

[118] Ibid, col.2133.

[119] Hewitson was the bookmakers' parliamentary spokesman during the debates on the 1960 Betting and Gaming Act.

[120] HO320/17. Memo on the 'Report of the Royal Commission on Betting'. (Undated). See also, the government's statement that it was 'considering' assisting the bill. 4 Feb 1954, HCD, vol.523, col.63. Mulley suggested that the government had given the Bill its 'qualified blessing'. *Socialist Commentary*, March 1954, 69-71.

[121] 12 Feb 1954, HCD, vol.523, cols.1582-92.

[122] Ibid, cols.1579-1607.

[123] See joint statement from Mulley and the FPPA. *The Times,* 12 March 1954.

[124] Six MPs voted for the amendment. Five were Labour, four of whom were anti-gamblers: Douglas Houghton, Clifford Kenyon, W.R. Williams and W.T. Williams. The fifth was Mikardo. 7 May 1954, HCD, vol.527, cols.761-806. The Labour peer C.H. Ammon attempted to have the clause removed in the Lords. June I, HLD, vol.187, cols.1037-44.

[125] L. Black, " 'Still at the Penny-Farthing Stage in a Jet-Propelled Era': Branch Life in 1950s Socialism", *Labour History Review*, 65 (2000), 202-26, 217.

maximum prizes offered by the pools.[126] But Labour MPs critical of the pools subsequently confined their complaints to the effectiveness of administrative regulation.[127]

3. The Small Lotteries and Gaming Act.

The legal status of non-profit semi-private lotteries became an issue of public concern during 1953 and 1954. There were three reasons for this. In the first instance, there had been a further proliferation of these kinds of lotteries since World War Two. Political parties, sporting clubs, and churches (especially the Catholic Church) were increasingly dependent on funds raised in this way. *The Daily Herald* estimated that twenty million people bought £1m of lottery tickets weekly during 1953. Second, lotteries did not merely proliferate in number; they had also grown bigger and more visible. This made it all the more difficult for the authorities to continue to turn a blind eye: the result was increased police intervention and several high-profile prosecutions during 1954. These cases, involving sporting clubs, attracted significant publicity, most of it hostile to the existing law.[128] Third, public disquiet coincided with, and was reinforced by, the introduction of the Pool Betting Bill. The public were confronted with the contrasting treatment of two forms of lottery gambling. On the one hand, there was the pools, a vast legal lottery on which private enterprise made huge profits; on the other, small lotteries for charitable and sporting causes which faced the prospect (and in some cases during 1954 the reality) of prosecution. The juxtaposition was stark, and supporters of small public lotteries were quick to exploit it.

The Labour Party was among the strongest of these supporters. Small non-profit public lotteries had been the sole issue on which the Attlee Government's Betting Committee had departed from the recommendations of the 1951 Royal Commission. The Commission, though admitting that the law was out of line with public practice, rejected the case for

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[126] 2 June 1960, HLD, vol.224, col.348-54.

[127] Leo Abse and Reginald Paget, for example, claimed that independent auditing of the pools companies' books was not taking place as laid down by the Act . HCD, 3 March 1959, vol.601, cols.1639-43. 10 May 1960, vol.623, col.218-20.

[128] Quoted in Churches Committee on Gambling (CCG) briefing paper, "'Small Pools' and Lotteries, etc, and the National Association of Sports and Welfare Clubs", April 30 1954. Copy in CRD 2/44/15.

licensing small charitable public lotteries on grounds of administrative complexity.[129] But the Attorney General Frank Soskice argued that the legal position was so far out of line with popular practice that it could not be enforced. As such, repeal was necessary: the government otherwise risked a general deterioration in respect for the law. The Committee agreed that such lotteries should be allowed to sell tickets to the public.[130] Labour now returned to the issue: Soskice was dispatched by the PLP to argue the case with the Home Secretary. He told Maxwell Fyfe that 'it was very wrong that the law should not be strictly enforced...although he was not personally in favour of gambling he recognised that the promotion of lotteries was popular and that it was not practicable to prevent it'.[131]

The lottery laws *were* widely derided, and more importantly, widely ignored. But it is hard to imagine that respect for the law was Labour's primary concern. Soskice's argument applied with at least equal force to the case for reform of the cash betting laws: the Street Betting Act, had long been recognized to be unenforceable, and had done much to erode the working-classes' respect for the law. Yet Labour generally remained ambivalent about legalising cash betting. And Soskice personally voted against betting shops.[132]

On the other hand, inconsistency, contradiction, and even hypocrisy, have been our companions throughout this thesis. Furthermore, there were reasons why defiance of the law regarding small lotteries might have appeared especially troubling. There was the question of visibility: public lotteries were in the public eye more than off-course cash betting, which took place largely in self-contained urban working-class areas. Indeed, a broader class dimension was also in evidence: the middle classes were much more likely to fall foul of the ban on public lotteries, whether as organisers or as ticket-buyers, than of the cash betting laws. And middle-class grievance was a powerful political force. There was also a religious dimension: many Church of England parishes ran lotteries, while the Catholic Church, with

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[129] 1951RC, para.394-400, at p.121-2.
[130] (BLG (51) 5, Home Sec's Memo). (BLG (51) 3rd meeting, 31 July 1951). (BLG (51) 12, Draft Report, 17 August 1951).
[131] H320/11. Note of Meeting, 29 April 1954.
[132] See section 1 of this chapter, above.

closer links to the working classes and to Labour, was dependent on this means of fundraising for its schools and other community projects.[133]

This being said, the most compelling explanation of Labour's interest in licensing small lotteries was rather more self-interestedly financial. The Party depended increasingly heavily on lotteries as a means of fundraising, particularly at the local level.[134] By the 1950s they were often 'the most regular form of contact between the party and the majority of its members'.[135] Although this could appear at odds with Labour's professed commitment to the political education of its members,[136] as well as contrary to its attitude to gambling, there was never any real possibility of a significant reduction in their role. In July 1950 the Party's National Agent informed the NEC 'of a considerable extension of the practice of raising funds through regular weekly lotteries'. Many of these were illegal, he added, and could only be made legal (to the letter if not the spirit of the law) by the selling of tickets through 'Labour Party Supporters Associations'. The National Agent asked for the authority to form such 'lottery clubs'. The NEC granted it, even as it attempted to distance itself from the project.[137]

It was exactly these kinds of supporters clubs' lotteries that came under legal attack during 1953 and 1954.[138] They were declared illegal in 1955.[139] One Labour response involved switching Party fundraising efforts from lotteries to pool betting. Clarion Services Ltd. had inaugurated Clarion Pools, in effect a national Labour Party pool competition, in 1951. (Its emergence had conformed to the pattern described above: the National Union of Labour Organisers and Election Agents (NULOEA) sponsored its creation; the party bureaucracy

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[133] On the Catholic dependence on lotteries see New Statesman, 7 Jan 1950. Also Benson Perkins, *Gambling in English Life*, 94. Chinn, *Better Betting with a Decent Feller*, 215-6.
[134] For the origins of this reliance on lotteries see chapter 2, section 1, above.
[135] Black, *The Political Culture of the Left in Affluent Britain.* 59.
[136] *Labour Organiser,* 33 (Feb 1954), 32-3; *Labour Organiser* 36 (Oct 1957), 197. Quoted in Black, "Still at the Penny-Farthing Stage in a Jet-Propelled Era", 217.
[137] *Minutes of the Finance and Organisation Sub-Committee,* 19 July 1950.
[138] On June 22, 1954, for example, Gloucester City AFC was found guilty of selling lottery tickets illegally via a 'Supporters Club'. CCG 'Occasional Memorandum (No.2), 1 Sept 1954'. Copy in CRD 2/44/15.
[139] The crucial decisions were Maynards v. Williams and Pearse v Hart. For details, see Miers, *Regulating Commercial Gambling*, 195.

denied any involvement).[140] Three years later, in the midst of the crackdown on lotteries, Labour re-launched Clarion Pools.[141] Again, the central party organisation denied responsibility: responding to a letter from the Churches Committee on Gambling (signed by the anti-gambling Labour peer C. H. Ammon among others), Labour HQ claimed that it had neither been consulted, nor considered, such methods of fundraising.[142] Yet by the end of 1954, and despite some Labour activists' objections, 301 local Labour parties had joined Clarion Pools.[143] Labour subsequently tried unsuccessfully to have non-commercial pool betting competitions exempted from taxation.[144]

The other aspect of Labour's strategy involved legislation. Ede told the Home Secretary that 'the difficulties confronting quite well-meaning citizens who participate in such affairs call for a treatment which would bring the law into line with what is obviously the state of public opinion'.[145] The Conservative Government had no objection in principle to legalization. Nonetheless, it viewed off-course cash betting as the more important issue: the government's initial preference was to deal with the two issues together, as part of a comprehensive gambling bill.[146] Public opinion (and also the receding possibility of a Betting Shops Bill),[147] encouraged a reassessment. Disquiet at the prosecution of non-commercial organisations had been widespread, and even led to the formation of a pressure group committed to reform of the lottery laws: the National Association of Sports and Welfare Clubs (NASWC).[148] This

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[140] Labour's Gen. Sec. Morgan Phillips emphasized that the NEC had 'unanimously declined' a NULOEA request that the Party provide two trustees. *Methodist Recorder*, 16 Dec 1951.
[141] *Daily Herald*, 27 July 1954.
[142] CCG, 'Occasional Memorandum (No.2), 1 Sept 1954'. CRD 2/44/15.
[143] *Guardian*, 'The Future of the Labour Party: a stocktaking', 1955, 14-16. Quoted in Black, *Political Culture of the Left*, 60. Clarion Pools was wound up during 1957 amid some acrimony. More than one CLP asked party HQ to help in the recovery of monies owed to it by Clarion Services Ltd. The NEC was 'greatly disturbed' and informed Clarion that 'legal action...if taken, will reflect on the Labour party'. LPLF. GS/CLAR/1-12.
[144] Fred Mulley moved an amendment to the 1954 Finance Bill: 7 July 1954, HCD, vol.529, cols.2194-200. The Home Secretary had previously indicated the possibility of such an amendment to the law. HO320/11. Note of Meeting, 29 April 1954.
[145] HO320/11. Letter, Ede to Home Sec., 4 April 1954.
[146] HO320/11. Minute of Meeting, 29 March 1954.
[147] See section 1 of this chapter.
[148] CCG Memo, " 'Small Pools', and Lotteries, etc, and the National Association of Sports and Welfare Clubs", April 30 1954. Copy in CRD 2/44/15.

organisation grew quickly, attracted significant press coverage, and drew support from the Catholic Church.[149]

At the end of April 1954, the Home Secretary conceded that there was 'considerable' public interest in the issue; by mid-May he was informing the PLP that he 'share[d] the feeling that the lottery law is unsatisfactory'.[150] In July, a draft Bill was prepared. 'The present restrictions on this very minor form of gambling' suggested Maxwell Fyfe, 'seem to many people unreasonable and, to judge from the reception given in parliament to the Pool Betting Bill, there would be little opposition'.[151] The objections of the Protestant Churches could be discounted.[152] The support of the police, and the Labour party was emphasised. The draft Bill excluded whist drives, for example, on the grounds that Labour's attitude to this form of gambling remained unclear.[153] 'We all hope that it will be possible', the Home Office Minister Lord Balniel informed a Conservative colleague in late October, 'for the government to announce in the forthcoming Queen's speech legislation legalising small lotteries'.[154] As a signal of intent (the Prorogation of Parliament was imminent), the Conservative backbencher Anthony Barber placed the Bill before the House: it 'authorise[d] the conduct by registered societies of small lotteries for raising money for charitable, sporting and other purposes'.[155]

But the momentum rapidly disappeared thereafter. The government's legislative programme omitted any mention of small lotteries. In the run-up to a General Election and with the Protestant Churches mobilising against change,[156] the government increasingly favoured

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[149] *Catholic Times*, 6 Aug 1954. For a review of these developments: CCG, 'Occasional Memorandum (No.2), 1 Sept 1954'. CRD 2/44/15.
[150] HO320/11. Note of Meeting, 29 April 1954; Letter to Frank Soskice, 12 May 1954.
[151] (H[ome] A[ffairs] (54) 78, 7 July, Home Sec's Memo) discussed and accepted at (H[ome] A[ffairs Committee] (54) 19th, 23 July).
[152] HO320/15. Note of meeting of Working Party on Lottery Bill, 27 July 1954.
[153] (L[egislation] C[ommittee] (54) 12th, 21 Oct 1954)
[154] CRD 2/44/15. Letter to Harry Mackeson MP, 26 Oct 1954.
[155] 3 Nov 1954, HCD, vol.532, cols.379-82.
[156] The Archbishop of York predicted 'vehement' opposition to a Small Lotteries Bill and reminded peers that the 1951 Royal Commission had, 'deliberately and emphatically', rejected liberalisation of the laws on small public lotteries. 11 Dec 1954, HLD, vol.190, cols.67-9. The Archbishop of Canterbury was also ambivalent. See Machin, *Churches and Social Issues*, 148-9.

discretion. 'Active government support' is 'not politically very wise, although it is in conformity with today's public opinion', explained the Conservative Research Department.[157] Additional parliamentary time was subsequently denied to the Bill in its Private Members form.[158]

The Labour Party's disappointment was evident. The store that it had set by the licensing of small lotteries was such that the Party Leader felt moved to intervene. Replying to the Queen's Speech at the end of November 1954, Attlee referred to a 'general expectation' that the government would move to tidy up the law. The current legal position was embarrassing to both the public and the police.[159] Yet it is difficult to imagine that Labour would have acted any differently in the final parliamentary session before a General Election. The Party's evident financial interest in reform would have been embarrassing; furthermore, when the Conservative backbencher Sir Eric Errington re-introduced the Small Lotteries Bill in February 1955,[160] it had been the Protestant Labour MPs Horace Holmes and Somerville Hastings who talked it out.[161]

The lesson for the Labour leadership was simple: if the law was to be reformed it would have to do it itself. This, in the end, was what happened. Immediately after the 1955 General Election the Shadow Chancellor, Harold Wilson, publicly indicated the Labour Party's support for the licensing of small public non-commercial lotteries.[162] Chairman of the Committee on Labour Party Organisation, he wrote its report which was published in the autumn of 1955 (and discussed at that year's Party Conference) and which is remembered for its famous description of Labour's 'penny-farthing' political organisation.[163] Wilson's

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[157] CRD 2/44/15. Memo on 'Betting and Lotteries', 17 Dec 1954.
[158] Memo, 'Report of the Royal Commission on Betting' (undated, probably summer 1955). For this Private Members Bill see next paragraph.
[159] 30 Nov 1954, HCD, vol.535, col.17.
[160] 18 Feb 1955, HCD, vol.537, cols.814-840.
[161] 18 Feb 1955, HCD, vol.537, cols. 839-40.
[162] 23 June 1955, HCD, vol.542, cols.1493-4.
[163] The official title was 'The Interim Report of the Sub-committee on Party Organisation' but it became known as the Wilson Report despite being officially co-authored by John Cooper, Margaret Herbison and Arthur Skeffington (the other members of the Sub-Committee). For a discussion of the report in the context of a decrepit Labour Party organisation see Black, 'Still at the Penny-Farthing Stage in a Jet-Propelled Era', passim.

travels around the country[164] gave him a good insight into the culture and practice of local parties:[165] as such, he would have been aware of the extent to which local parties depended on lottery gambling. The report ignored this dependence as one might expect,[166] but, realistically, there was little prospect of substituting other forms of fundraising for lottery gambling.[167] In November, having gained a high place on the Private Members Ballot, the backbench Labour MP Ernest Davies introduced his Small Lotteries and Gaming Bill.[168] Enjoying the support of the government as well as the Labour Party[169] the Bill was unopposed at second and third reading.[170] The 'Right to have a flutter is coming back' predicted the *Daily Herald*.[171] Amendments were confined to efforts to restrict the size of the prizes.[172]

'I do not suggest for a moment that we, on this side of the House, are at all interested in raising money for our political objects by this means',[173] claimed Davies as his Bill completed its third reading. His tongue was firmly in cheek. The Bill's objective was to place on a legal basis the kind of lotteries vital to the financial viability of local Labour Party branches and workingmen's clubs.[174] The care with which the party bureaucracy dissected the details of the Act testified to this.[175] By 1960, a nationwide Party tote was being run by

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[164] See B. Pimlott, *Harold Wilson* (London, 1993), 193-6.
[165] D. Howell, "Wilson and History. '1966 and All That' ", review essay, *Twentieth Century British History*, 4 (1993), 174-87, 182.
[166] *LPACR* (1955), 63-105.
[167] Wilson's constituency situation should also be noted. He represented a predominantly Catholic constituency and had a good relationship with the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool. *Crossman Diaries*, vol.iii, 410. Wilson emphasized Catholic backing for the reform of the lotteries law: 25 Nov 1955, HCD, vol.551 col.629. 10 July 1956, HCD, vol.556, col.355. At the same time he also claimed that the Orange Lodges supported the licensing of small lotteries. This was untrue and Wilson was forced to retract this statement. 13 April 1956, HCD, vol.551, col.629.
[168] 25 Nov 1955, HCD, vol.546, col.1803-10. Conservative MPs suggested, no doubt correctly, that Davies was taking orders from more senior figures in the Party (Fred Mulley was mentioned specifically). CRD 2/44/15. Note of Meeting on Small Lotteries Bill, 12 April 1956.
[169] Hugh Lucas-Tooth, Joint Under-Sec of State at the Home Office, welcomed the Bill. Wilson responded by describing the government's position as one of 'helpful and benevolent neutrality'. 25 Nov 1955, HCD, vol.546, cols.1847-50.
[170] 25 Nov 1955, vol.546, cols.1803-71. 13 April 1956, vol.551, cols.
[171] *Daily Herald*, 14 April 1956.
[172] 13 April 1956, HCD, vol.551, cols.566-82
[173] 13 April 1956, HCD, vol.551, col.622.
[174] The Club and Institute Union did much of the backstairs lobbying for the Bill. See Clapson, *A bit of a flutter*, 193.
[175] *Labour Organiser* (Oct 1956), 190-1; *Labour Organiser* (Oct 1957), 197. Quoted in Black, *Political Culture of the Left*, 60. See also LPLF. GS/Law/178 & GS/Ent/185.

Robert Maxwell's Buckingham CLP.[176] In the meantime, however, and within days of the Small Lotteries Bill's uncontested third reading, a much greater controversy involving lottery gambling was underway.

4. 'A Squalid Raffle': the Premium Savings Bond

In the budget following the 1955 General Election, the new Chancellor Harold Macmillan announced the government's intention to introduce a Premium Savings Bond (PSB) scheme. The 'affluent society' of the late 1950s and early 1960s was not yet a reality and the Chancellor hoped to encourage saving at a time when inflationary pressures made reducing consumption a priority. The Chancellor claimed that his scheme was not gambling since the investor's initial stake was secure and could be reclaimed at any time.[177] This was disingenuous to the extent that the interest accruing on each bond was pooled and redistributed by lot. Previous governments had rejected premium bonds on the basis that they amounted to a form of state lottery[178] and the Government actually had to insert a special clause into the Finance Bill exempting its scheme from the laws against large-scale lotteries.[179] Insofar as the Premium Savings Bond involved the government in the direct stimulation of the demand for gambling for the first time, it represented a major departure in the state's attitude to gambling.

The Anglican and Protestant Churches opposed the scheme on this basis. The Archbishop of Canterbury criticised the proposal in the House of Lords and the Free Churches were also hostile. The inter-denominational British Council of Churches also came out against premium bonds.[180] So too did the Labour Party. Its attack on the scheme doubtless possessed more than an element of opposition for the sake of Official Opposition: the issue arose in the

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[176] Black, *Political Culture*, 60.
[177] 17 April 1956, HCD, vol.551, cols.879-80. See also T172/2127. Letter from the Chancellor to the Chairman of the National Savings Committee, 26 March 1956.
[178] For discussion of premium bonds and their rejection during and after World War One see chapter 2, section 1, above.
[179] 18 June 1956, HCD, vol.554 col.1050.
[180] See Machin, *Churches and Social* Issues, 148-9. See also *Daily Herald*, 26 and 27 April. The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool declared that premium bonds did not offend the moral sense of Catholics. PRO/NSC/45/3, 'Finance No. 2 Bill, note on Clause 35'.

partisan context of budgetary and financial debates and this framework encouraged Labour to oppose premium bonds on a party basis. Nor did its objection, Clapson observed, 'constitute anything approaching a concerted campaign to prevent the introduction of the bonds'.[181] Furthermore, a significant section of the PLP was unhappy attacking the scheme and it appeared that the Party had been rather bounced into opposition by the Shadow Chancellor Harold Wilson, supported by a relatively small group of Labour MPs.

Wilson, in his reply to the budget, denounced premium bonds as 'a squalid raffle'.[182] The Labour Party maintained its opposition to the scheme on all stages of the Finance Bill.[183] Labour's determination to exploit the issue was suggested by its Party Political Broadcast of May 1956. Labour told the nation that:

> Macmillan's new Budget comes straight from the gutter,
> We'll all soon be solvent by having a flutter,
> Who cares if the Bishops are now heard to mutter,
> Time that you told them to go.[184]

In Wilson's hands the resort to gambling became a metaphor for the broader failures of Conservative political economy. The pre-election budget of 1955 was a recent memory. The first occasion on which the budget had been used as an electoral device, 'the shibboleths of Conservative individualism can hardly have been so openly, opportunistically and damagingly pandered to as in th[is] infamous budget'.[185] The Shadow Chancellor perceived premium bonds to be an extension of this philosophy. The Conservatives were creating an acquisitive society, and a 'Windfall State' in which the disproportion between effort and

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[181] Clapson, *A bit of a flutter*, 202.
[182] 18 April 1956, HCD, vol.551, col.1014.
[183] Nor did hostility disappear completely afterwards. See the comments of the Labour MPs Margaret Herbison and John Cronin: HCD: 12 Nov. 1956, vol.560, col.609-10. 16 Nov 1959, vol.613, col.864. 17 July 1957, vol.573, col.1123.
[184] Extract from Labour Local Election Party Political Broadcast, 9 May 1956. This verse was part of a longer rhyme entitled was 'Oh Dear! What can the matter be'. See *Daily Herald*, 10 May 1959.
[185] S. Hall, 'Reformism and the Legislation of Consent', 29. For more on the controversial nature of the 1955 budget see M. Pinto Duchinsky, 'Bread and Circuses: the Conservatives in Office 1951-64' in V. Bogdanor and R. Skidelsky (eds.), *Age of Affluence* (London, 1970), 55-77, 65-8.

reward was growing ever wider.[186] 'Our main criticism is that the [Finance] Bill does nothing to damp down the free-for-all atmosphere which we believe has been created largely by this Government. It is in this setting that we have the most doubts about the Premium Bond proposal', emphasized the Labour MP Arthur Blenkinsop.[187]

The symbolic and ideological significance of premium bonds did not stop here. The Labour Party during this period was characterised by a 'conviction that economic stagnation and unemployment were imminent'[188] as well as the perception that a successful response to this forthcoming economic crisis depended upon a continuation of the personal restraint and self-discipline promoted by the last Labour government.[189] In this context, premium bonds evidenced the Conservatives' inability to recognise the extent of the country's economic problems, or their reluctance to be honest with the electorate about the necessity of further austerity measures, or both. As Wilson put it: 'This national economic crisis which has been with us for 11 years can only be solved by hard work, by restraint, and above all, by the sacrifice of self-interest to the national restraint...there is no short cut to national economic solvency except by the practice of those very serious virtues to which I have referred'.[190]

This peculiar mixture of ideology and austerity was indigestible to some. A body of Labour opinion, particularly, though not exclusively, associated with the revisionist wing of the Party, was unhappy with the Shadow Chancellor's emphasis on premium bonds. *Forward*,

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[186] 18 June 1956, HCD, vol.554, col.1087. This term was later to be deployed by Douglas Jay to denote, specifically, large fortunes accruing to small numbers of shareholders via capital gains. D. Jay, *Socialism in the New Society* (London, 1962), 207-15. See also B. Jackson, "Revisionism Reconsidered: 'Property-owning Democracy' and Egalitarian Strategy in Post-war Britain", *Twentieth Century British History*, 16 (2005), 414-40, 431-4. During the premium bonds debate Wilson used the term 'Windfall State' in both the narrower sense favoured by Jay but also more loosely: as shorthand for the increasingly disproportionate relationship between effort and reward.

[187] 9 May 1956, HCD, vol.552, col.1291.

[188] The Labour Party's 1953 programme, *Challenge to Britain*, reflected this mentality. See Black, *The Political Culture of the Left*, 130, 132.

[189] M. Francis, 'The Labour Party: Modernisation and the Politics of Restraint', in B. Conekin, F. Mort and C. Waters, (eds.), *Moments of Modernity: Reconstructing Britain 1945-64* (London, 1998), 153-70. See also C. Ellis, 'Total Abstinence and a Good Filing System? Anthony Crosland and the Affluent Society' in L. Black and H. Pemberton (eds.), *An Affluent Society? Britain's Post-War 'Golden Age' Revisited* (Aldershot, 2004), 69-84, 72. I. Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain: rationing, controls, and consumption 1939-55* (Oxford, 2000), passim.

[190] 18 June 1956, HCD, vol.554, col.1086.

which had recently become the mouthpiece of the Gaitskellites,[191] suggested that Labour's opposition to premium bonds was wrong as a matter of tactics and principle. The scheme was a Conservative trap designed to divert attention from issues of real importance: 'All the evidence is that Harold Macmillan deliberately used a device which he regards as frivolous and unimportant in order to distract attention from the vacuity and viciousness of his Budget'.[192] Moreover, to oppose premium bonds, was to expose Labour to the charge of hypocrisy. The Attlee Government had breached the principle of state involvement by taxing betting; the Labour Party was also the main sponsor of the Small Lotteries and Gaming Bill. The Conservative Party was not slow to point this out[193] and *Forward's* political correspondent Hugh Pilcher agreed that Labour's attack on premium bonds was 'a masterpiece of unconscious hypocrisy'. More substantially, the proposed scheme was popular with the public[194] and to oppose it placed the Party at odds with the electorate. Pilcher excoriated 'the appalling ignorance of people who seek to dictate their own 'moral' taboos to others'. The younger generation 'whether or not some of our oldsters like it, do not share the selective taboos imposed by traditional morality'.

> Premium Bonds as such are only a trifle. But as a test case of the Labour Party's good sense, tolerance, and vitality, they are important. A few more episodes like this will combine to give the impression that Labour means dreary repression of harmless amusement. Surely that was the last thing the pioneers intended when they glimpsed a socialist utopia.[195]

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[191] P. Williams (ed.), *The diary of Hugh Gaitskell 1945-56* (London, 1983), 414. According to Douglas Jay the paper was 'dictated down the phone from London to Glasgow'. D. Jay, *Change and fortune: a political record* (London, 1980), 252. For a negative assessment of the revisionist takeover of *Forward*, see Wigg, *George Wigg*, 175.

[192] *Forward*, 28 April 1956. Lansbury's Labour Weekly had said something very similar about Churchill's betting tax in 1926. See above, p.38.

[193] See, for example, HCD: 23 April 1956, vol.551, col.1516-7, 1570. 18 June 1956, vol.554, col.1093.

[194] Support was running at between 60 and 75% in opinion polls. The lowest support found was in a *News Chronicle* survey where the split was 59-31% in favour. 23 April 1956. The extent of public support can be gauged by the National Savings Movement's (NSM) strong support for the scheme. Its Secretary reported that 'of many thousands of letters received only twenty had been against the scheme. Local opinion was invariably favourable also'. NSC45/3. 3 May 1956. The National Savings Assembly endorsed the scheme in mid-May. See *The Times,* 18 May 1956.

[195] *Forward*, 16 June 1956.

The public tone adopted by several MPs associated with the revisionist right was subtly and, sometimes not so subtly, different from that adopted by Harold Wilson and others who criticised the premium bonds scheme. Hugh Dalton[196] and Frank Tomney[197] (who was a right winger rather than an ideological revisionist) were not prepared to engage in 'moral' criticism of premium bonds. Nor was Fred Mulley who admitted to abstaining on the relevant clause of the Finance Bill.[198] Roy Jenkins, who closed for Labour during the first day of the budget debates, conspicuously avoided any mention of the scheme at all.[199] Douglas Jay (Wilson's deputy in the Treasury team) also shunned attacks on gambling. He suggested the premium bonds were designed to divert the public's attention from the deteriorating economy and that 'much of the money subscribed to these lottery bonds will simply represent a switch out of existing savings, and not the creation of new ones'.[200] Patrick Gordon Walker claimed that the Labour case was not based on an 'absolute moral objection'.[201]

The revisionists' emphasis on individual liberty and reaction against Puritanism[202] made them particularly uncomfortable with Wilson's approach. But MPs from the centre[203] and the left[204] also distanced themselves from the Shadow Chancellor. Indeed, it was a left-winger, Kenneth Robinson, who attempted to reverse the Party's course. At a PLP meeting on 31 May he moved that MPs be granted a free vote on Clause 35 of the Finance Bill – the

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[196] 23 April 1956, HCD, vol.551, col.1554.
[197] 9 May 1956, HCD, vol.552, cols.1314.
[198] 13 July 1956, HCD, vol.556, col.788.
[199] 18 April 1956, HCD, vol.551, cols.1126-35.
[200] *Forward*, 21 April 1956. 23 April 1956, HCD, vol.551, cols.1459-60.
[201] 13 July, HCD, 1956, vol.556, col.746. See also Gordon Walker's previous speech: 19 April 1956, HCD, vol.551, col.1214.
[202] See, inter alia, Hall, 'Reformism and the Legislation of Consent', 26-27, 31-35, 38. Ellis, 'Total Abstinence and a Good Filing System', passim. M. Francis, 'Mr. Gaitskell's Gannymede', *Contemporary British History*, 11 (1997), 50-64, 59-61. Francis, 'The Labour Party: Modernisation and the Politics of Restraint', 169. Thompson, ''Labour's Gannex Conscience'?, 138-9.
[203] See, for example, the speeches of Fred Blackburn and G. R. Mitchison. HCD: 17 April 1956, HCD, vol.551, col.930. 18 June 1956, vol.554 col.797.
[204] Ian Mikardo: 9 May 1956, HCD, vol.552, cols.1324-5. George Pargiter: 18 June 1956, HCD, vol.554, col.1169-70. Kenneth Robinson (see below). These three were among the 50 most leftwing members of the PLP during the 1955-59 Parliament. S. Finer et al, *Backbench Opinion in the House of Commons 1955-59*, (Oxford, 1961), 58.

premium savings bond clause.[205] Labour had been attacking the scheme for six weeks and a reformulation of Labour's position at this stage would have represented, and been represented by others, as an embarrassing u-turn: especially embarrassing for the Party's newly appointed Shadow Chancellor who had led the assault on premium bonds. That the motion was defeated only by 31 votes to 18, on a turnout of less than one fifth of Labour MPs, suggested a widespread lack of enthusiasm for Wilson's position. In the wake of this PLP meeting, *Forward's* correspondent reported that 'many Labour MPs who vote against Premium Bonds will do so reluctantly. Some tell me they may abstain. We are likely to see another of those discreditable division results in which a Tory majority is swollen by Labour absenteeism'.[206] The Shadow Chancellor subsequently acknowledged the existence of dissent, conceding that 'though we shall be dividing to some extent on party lines, very different personal approaches are possible [to premium bonds]'.[207]

MPs passed the relevant clause of the Finance Bill by 252 votes to 199. There was no obvious sign of widespread Labour abstentions.[208] But the circumstantial evidence suggests that Labour's opposition to premium bonds started with the Shadow Chancellor and was actively supported by a relatively small group of MPs of whom a disproportionate number were Nonconformists or Scottish Protestants. Wilson possessed significant resources that enabled him to, if not exactly dictate Labour's approach to the budget, certainly edge it in the direction he favoured. Political capital was one: he had just been appointed to the position of Shadow Chancellor at a time when Gaitskell and his supporters were keen on an amicable relationship. Substantial autonomy was another: the PLP appeared to give Wilson a free hand in his reply to the budget.[209] A third was the size and composition of the PLP meetings at which premium bonds was discussed. Only eighteen MPs contributed to the debate on

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[205] *PLP minutes*, 31 May 1956.
[206] *Forward*, 16 June 1956.
[207] 18 June 1956, HCD, vol.554, col.1075.
[208] 18 June 1956, HCD, vol.554, col.1171-4.
[209] *Labour Party Parliamentary Committee minutes*, (hereafter *Parliamentary Committee minutes*), 17 April 1956. *PLP minutes*, 18 April 1956.

premium bonds held on 31 May. A number were outspoken anti-gamblers.[210] However, even this attendance appeared respectable alongside that of the meeting convened immediately after the Government's budget statement. Only eleven voices were raised at this meeting.[211]

Nearly half of the Labour MPs who opposed premium bonds on ideological grounds were members of the Free Churches or the Church of Scotland.[212] Socialists of this kind appeared especially disposed towards associating gambling, even in the mild form represented by premium bonds, with acquisitiveness and disproportionate reward. The Protestant dimension was evident in the attitude of the Conservative MPs Cyril Black[213] and Cyril Osborne.[214] Shorn of the egalitarian sentiment, these Protestants could agree with the 'vision of society in which income is the return for work and service', such as was outlined by their fellow Nonconformist, the Labour MP for Meriden, Reginald Moss.[215]

What they did not, as Conservatives, share was the commitment of Protestant socialists to a society in which Progress was measured by the development of reason. The Welsh Labour MP and Nonconformist J. Idwal Jones denied that gambling was instinctive, indeed he denied, or wanted to deny, the whole concept of instinctive behaviour.

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[210] *PLP minutes*, 31 May 1956. Sidney Dye, James MacColl, Emmanuel Shinwell and Reg Sorensen were the outspoken opponents of gambling. While John Rankin, W. A. Wilkins and Ben Parkin voted against the licensing of betting shops in 1960. The other speakers were George Darling, Charles Gibson, Harry Hynd, Douglas Jay, Roy Jenkins, Frank McLeavy, George Lawson, E. C. Redhead, Joe Reeves, Kenneth Robinson, and Harold Wilson himself.

[211] Austin Albu, Ernest Davies, Harold Davies, James Chuter Ede, Ernest Fernyhough, James MacColl, Ian Mikardo, George Thomas, William Warbey, Llewellyn Williams, Arthur Woodburn.

[212] More than thirty Labour MPs spoke against premium bonds during its passage through the Commons. See Budget debates, 17, 18, 19, 23 April 1956, HCD, vol.551, cols.852-978, 1014-1136, 1183-1305, 1453-1578. See also Finance Bill: 9 May 1956, HCD, vol.552, cols.1227-1364. 18 June 1956, vol.554, cols.1050-1174. 13 July 1956, vol.556, cols.734-805. Nonconformist or Church of Scotland Labour MPs who spoke against included Sidney Dye, James Chuter Ede, Arthur Henderson Jnr., Margaret Herbison, J. Idwal Jones, Horace King, Dickson Mabon, Reginald Moss, William Ross, C. J. Simmons, Reginald Sorensen, George Thomas, and W. T. Williams. The Anglicans Horace Holmes and James MacColl, men definitely on the Church of England's Protestant wing, also spoke against.

[213] 18 June 1956, HCD, vol.554, cols.1090-3.

[214] Ibid, cols.1109-10.

[215] Ibid, col.1161-4. See also Moss' previous contribution: 17 April 1956, HCD, vol.551, cols.941-2.

> It is argued that the game of chance is a social instinct. We are playing very lightly with words when we talk about instincts. It may be a social habit; it may be a social spirit, but it certainly is not a social instinct, and, even, if it were, I would suggest than no State has the right to exploit that instinct. The only thing that the State can do with any instinct is to inhibit it. When there has been an evolution of morals in any country, the State has always made an advance when it has inhibited instincts rather than exploited them. If there is a national instinct of gambling, the State is doing wrong if it ventures to exploit that gambling instinct. It has only the right to inhibit that instinct and to direct it to good channels.[216]

His colleague Reginald Sorensen, a Nonconformist minister as well as a Labour MP, insisted that civilization was to be measured in terms of the diminution of chance and the enlargement of reason: as such, premium bonds gambling was regressive.

> Although there is a great deal of chance in life, a great deal which is fortuitous and accidental, and we are all involved more or less, what we are or should be trying to do is to introduce more prudence, planning and forethought, both individually and socially. Therefore, when the State itself in spite of all efforts being made by sociologists, politicians and moralists to introduce this new principle of responsibility in place of chance, deals those efforts a sweeping blow by encouraging again the primitive and natural principle or element of chance, then we must oppose that to the best of our ability...I admit that chance is undoubtedly an element in our lives...but the whole significance of human life is that it tries to replace apparently instinctive chance by deliberation, forethought and a sense of personal responsibility. That is precisely the quality the Chancellor is not encouraging – an evolving sense of personal responsibility in place of chance.[217]

Sorenson and Idwal Jones were unusual in the explicitness with which they associated Progress with reason. But the underlying assumptions of many Labour MPs were similarly rationalistic.[218] If the Party's opposition to premium bonds owed much to the Nonconformist influenced socialism of the Shadow Chancellor, and represented, more widely, a last gasp of

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[216] 18 June 1956, HCD vol.554, col.1112.

[217] ibid, cols. 1118-1119. Sorensen had previously developed this argument in *Socialist Commentary*. He emphasized the evolving nature of human consciousness and the shift away from 'blind instinctive law'. (Note the similarity to Idwal Jones' speech). 'No moral assumption is sound that is not comprehensive and dynamic', argued Sorensen. 'The general socialist mind is not even half-formed...fear and pecuniary reward still remain as dominant incentives, and altruistic service is scornfully poor'. The popularity of gambling evidenced this in particular: 'An evening with one's fellow human beings at the local dog-track is a salutary experience for those who over-estimate the immediate strength of their own lofty idealism...revealing [is] the fact that half the population spend far more of their leisure filling in their football coupons than they do on reading socialist literature'. *Socialist Commentary*, Jan 1952, 6-7.

[218] And many activists too: see S. Fielding, "Activists against 'Affluence': Labour Party Culture during the 'Golden Age', circa 1950-1970", *Journal of British Studies*, 40 (2001), 241-267.

political Nonconformity, it is also as well to remember that objections to disproportionate reward and acquisitive individualism existed independently of Protestantism. Thus, while many of the Nonconformist Labour MPs who led the charge against premium bonds were elderly, and would depart Parliament in 1959 or 1964, it was not inevitable that their successors would adopt a more relaxed approach to gambling. True, subsequent generations of Labour MPs were less likely to be religious, less likely to be autodidacts. They were more likely to be liberal on issues related to personal behaviour.[219] But as long as the Labour Party retained its socialist character there remained significant potential for hostility towards gambling.

5. Labour in Government I: a National Lottery?

In his first budget as Chancellor, delivered on 19 March 1968, Roy Jenkins announced that the government was considering the merits of a state lottery. He suggested the opposition of a small minority was not sufficient reason to thwart the wishes of the majority.[220] To this end, Clause 50 of the Finance Bill asked simply whether the House of Commons approved, in principle, of a state lottery. A 'no' vote would end the matter. A 'yes' vote, and the government intended to return with a detailed scheme in the not-too-distant future.[221]

Backing from the PLP appeared very likely, if not quite a formality.[222] Only weeks before, a Private Members Bill providing for a national lottery had attracted the support of 55 Labour MPs. Just 7 Labour MPs opposed it.[223] But when the vote on Clause 50 eventually took

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[219] On the greater liberalism of the generation of Labour MPs who entered Parliament after 1959 see P. Thompson, 'Labour's Gannex Conscience', 138, 140.

[220] There had been strong public support for state lotteries since the 1940s at least. See chapter 3, section 2 of this thesis. An *Evening Standard* commissioned poll in 1967 recorded support for National Lottery, whether the money went to good causes or not, by a 62%-32% margin. Support was as high as 79% if proceeds were to go to good causes. 24 Nov 1967. The *Daily Express* had previously found 88% support for a State Lottery in aid of the NHS and medical research. 11 March 1965. A *Daily Herald* readers' poll had registered 85% in favour of a state lottery at end of the 1950s. 3 Nov 1959.

[221] 19 March 1968, HCD, vol.761, cols.272-3. See also T326/747. 'Press Brief on National Lottery' (undated).

[222] *Financial Times,* 20 March & 30 April 1968. *Daily Express*, 29 June 1968.

[223] The Bill's sponsor was the Labour MP for Cleveland James Tinn. It got its second reading by 69 votes to 17. 2 Feb 1968, HCD, vol.757, cols.1799-1802. Tinn's was only the latest in a line of such proposals. See, for example, HCD: 17 March 1967, vol.743, cols.919-40 & 29 Nov 1967, vol.55, col.451.

place more Labour MPs voted against (68) than in favour (62).[224] Since the Conservative Party opposed the Clause on tactical grounds it fell comprehensively by 166 votes to 76.[225]

The arguments in favour of a state lottery had not changed since the late 1940s.[226] It could 'attract net additional finance for the government away from consumption'[227] at a time when 'further revenue was required for socially desirable objects'.[228] 'A Lottery', added the Financial Secretary to the Treasury Harold Lever, 'was preferable to...the socially unjust method of indirect taxation'.[229] The politics of the issue were more complicated. Treasury officials appeared less worried about the principle involved than the political embarrassment of 'a sudden volte-face'.[230] Labour's opposition to premium bonds was uppermost in their minds.[231] In addition, and at a time of economic difficulty, the government was particularly vulnerable to the moral arguments of 'a small but vocal and influential minority'.[232] There was also the symbolism involved. 'The whole question of lotteries touches on the Government's image in the widest possible sense'. [233] Some officials were more positive:

> Public opinion has changed considerably in the last eleven years. Increased travel to the Continent has accustomed growing numbers of people to the idea of a State Lottery. We get more letters in the savings field, advocating such a Lottery, than on any other subject; these letters come from people in all walks of life and the number is steadily increasing.[234]

However, even the most optimistic officials favoured a gradual reorientation of the government's position.[235] It was 'for Ministers to say whether they would be prepared to defend so radical a departure from our national habits and customs.'[236]

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[224] 1 July 1968, col.767, cols.1156-1242. Division list at cols.1239-42.
[225] The Conservatives opposed Clause 50 largely on political grounds: they suspected the Chancellor was trying to dig the government out of its financial hole: 1 July 1968, HCD, vol.767, cols.1190-1.
[226] See previous chapter.
[227] T326/746. Memo, 4 Jan 1968.
[228] (H (68) 26, Fin Sec's Memo, March 1 1968).
[229] Ibid.
[230] T326/746. Memo, 25 Jan 1968.
[231] Ibid.
[232] T326/746. Memo, 4 Jan 1968.
[233] Ibid.
[234] T326/746. Memo 3 Jan 1968. See also, memo, 15 Jan 1968.
[235] T326/746. Memo, 4 Jan 1968.
[236] T326/746. Memo, 15 Jan 1968.

The Chancellor and the Financial Secretary were prepared to do so. Together they made clear that a lottery was 'a serious candidate' for inclusion in the forthcoming Budget.[237] Jenkins suggested that officials exaggerated the extent of opposition to a lottery.[238] During the second reading of Tinn's Private Members Bill, Lever, speaking for the government, explained that the government was neutral on the issue.[239] This represented a shift from the government's previous position of outright opposition.[240] A shift engineered by Treasury ministers.[241] At the beginning of March, Lever asked the government's Home Affairs Committee to support the establishment of a National Lottery. He conceded that 'the Labour party is associated in many people's minds with opposition to the Premium Savings Bond'. On the other hand, 'there have been increasing signs that public opinion has changed in the last few years. Although a small but highly vocal minority would still bitterly resist a National Lottery, the indications are that the majority would be in favour'.[242] This was the crux of his, and the Chancellor's case.[243] The HAC agreed, with one proviso: the demonstration of 'an overwhelming majority in the Commons'.[244]

The Treasury had effectively wrested control of the issue from the Home Secretary, who was currently engaged in pushing through a restrictive Gaming Bill. Callaghan had a reputation for social conservatism,[245] and his attitude to gambling fits this profile.[246] Jenkins (with the authority of one who had drafted it) told the Cabinet that there was no policy conflict between the Gaming Bill and his plans to test opinion regarding lotteries: the former dealt not with the

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[237] T326/746. Memos, 19 Jan 1968 & 22 Jan 1968.
[238] T326/746, Brief for Parliamentary Question on State Lottery (undated, before Jan 23 1968).
[239] 2 Feb 1968, HCD, vol.757, col.1761-9.
[240] See the comments of the Home Office Minister Victor Stonham: HLD, 16 March 1965, vol.264, cols.327. See also HO320/20. (LC (65) 33), Home Sec's Memorandum, 26 Feb 1965) discussed at (LC (65) 8th, 2 March 1965). The Treasury had also argued in 1965 that 'in spite of (or perhaps because of) the great increase in various kinds of gambling over recent years, this view [against a state lottery] is still likely to command wide support in the country, on economic as well as on moral and social grounds'. T227/2336. Note discussing Home Sec's Memorandum (undated, 1965).
[241] T326/746. 'Brief for Legislative Committee', 26 Jan 1968. (LC (68) 3rd Meeting, 30 Jan).
[242] (H (68) 26, Fin Sec's Memo, 1 March).
[243] T326/748. Letter to Home Office, 17 April 1968.
[244] CAB 134/2859. (H (68) 6th, 1 March).
[245] P. Thompson, ' 'Labour's Gannex conscience'?, 141. S. Hall, 'Reformism and the Legislation of Consent', 38-9.
[246] *Crossman Diaries*, vol.iii, 666, 736. See Callaghan's comments on the 1968 Gaming Bill. 11 June 1968, HCD, vol.766, cols.67-72. See also section 7 of this chapter, below

morality of gambling, only with the prevention of abuses.[247] He accepted that in the context of the budget 'a National Lottery might be criticised as an attempt to escape serious economic difficulties by an irrelevant or even disreputable fiscal device'. However, he rejoined that 'many people would regard a National Lottery as a popular means of raising revenue, preferable to the alternatives of even higher taxation'.[248] The Chancellor carried the day. Cabinet agreed to the testing of parliamentary opinion.[249]

Protestant opinion now appeared the major obstacle to Jenkins's plan. While the Church of England was generally silent on the issue,[250] the Church of Scotland and the Free Churches had reiterated their objections to a national lottery.[251] The Cabinet secretary Burke Trend advised the Prime Minister to consider

> whether the support of the public at large will be sufficient to outweigh predictable opposition, particularly from those in Scotland and Wales, who will oppose on religious grounds and whose opposition may feed the nationalist argument that Westminster pays insufficient attention to the views of the Scots and Welsh.[252]

The three members of the Cabinet who subsequently voted against Clause 50 were Nonconformists: Welshmen George Thomas and Cledwyn Hughes and an adopted Welshman Jim Callaghan – a Baptist who sat for a Cardiff constituency. Of the 68 Labour MPs who in total opposed Clause 50 of the Finance Bill, 19 were Scottish and eight were Welsh.[253]

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[247] This was an accurate assessment. On the 1968 Gaming Bill and its origins, see Miers, *Regulating Commercial Gambling*, 81-9. Gaming has been largely outside this thesis' scope. This is because it was politically uncontroversial. All agreed that commercialized gaming should be prohibited as far as possible.
[248] PREM 13/2418. Chancellor's Memo (C (68) 53, 5 March 1968).
[249] (CC (68) 19th, 12 March). Also (CC (68) 20th, 14 March).
[250] *Daily Telegraph*, 1 July 1968.
[251] 1 July 1968, HCD, vol.767, col.1201-3. Machin, *Churches and Social Issues*, 183.
[252] PREM 13/2418. Memo from Cabinet Sec. to PM, 6 March 1968.
[253] 1 July 1968, col.767, cols.1239-42. 5 Scottish MPs and 4 Welsh MPs voted in favour. A 1962 survey in New Society had found that more than half of the PLP had a Protestant background. Two-thirds of respondents had described themselves as religiously active. *New Society*, 11 (13 Dec 1962), 111-4. Also quoted in Black, *Political Culture of the British Left in Affluent Britain*, 14.

But a secular socialist critique of gambling was also in evidence. Leo Abse deplored 'entering into the gambler's world, where the impossible, where everything that challenges causality, everything that is absurd, is greedily believed'. A national lottery was 'an attempt to institutionalise irrationality...an attempt to activate a primitive mode of thinking among the community'. The development of the 'voice of reason, of the intellect' rather than 'fantasy worlds and fantasy thinking' was integral to his vision of progress.[254] Peter Jackson opposed a national lottery on similar grounds.[255] Frank Hooley, meanwhile, combined rationalism with hostility to the funding of public services out of general taxation. He was disturbed by the government's suggestion that a portion of the revenue from any lottery should go directly into the Consolidated Fund. 'For anyone to suggest' funding social services 'in a magical manner by the institution of gambling is, to me, fantastic', he declared.[256] The implication that altruism and social solidarity were not enough to secure support for essential social services had always been part of the socialist objection to a national lottery.[257]

This combination of influences proved enough to thwart the ambitions of the Chancellor. Jenkins's distance from the Labour mainstream was an increasingly significant aspect of his political identity: from this perspective, his interest in a national lottery can be seen as another way in which he misjudged the Party. Only three Cabinet Ministers other than the Chancellor supported Clause 50 at the parliamentary division and two of them, Richard Crossman and Anthony Crosland, were, as we shall see in the next section, undoubtedly members of what might be described as Labour's 'libertarian fringe'.[258] So too was Harold Lever, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, and the man to whom Jenkins delegated much of the responsibility for this issue. Lever was a businessman and an enthusiast for wider share ownership, an approach that, as Whiting has argued, amounted to encouraging the working

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[254] Ibid, cols.1223-9.
[255] Personal conversation with author, 7 July 2001. Also, 1 July 1968, HCD, vol.767, col.1205.
[256] Ibid, cols.1232-5.
[257] See p.81, above.
[258] The other Cabinet Minister who voted in favour was Fred Peart, although Patrick Gordon Walker also appeared supportive. PREM 13/2418. Letter, Sec. of State for Education and Science to PM, 11 March 1968

classes to 'swap...one form of gambling for another'.[259] This approach distanced Lever from all but a small (revisionist) section of the Labour Party.[260]

6. Labour in Government II: Saving the Grand National

The owners of Aintree racecourse were threatening to sell out to property developers when Labour came to office in 1964. There was agreement that this would spell the end of the Grand National: the unique steeplechase could only be run at Aintree. Key ministers were determined to avoid this outcome. Although some within the government dissented, largely on anti-gambling grounds, the pro-Aintree view prevailed. That the government's attempts to secure the race's long term future failed was not due to any lack of enthusiasm on its part: rather 'the past and current complexity of the issue, and not least the twists and turns of local party attitudes, both in Lancashire and Liverpool' prevented a successful resolution of the issue.[261]

'Almost the first thing' the new Prime Minister Harold Wilson did after entering Number Ten was to ask his trusted political lieutenant, Paymaster-General George Wigg, to investigate means by which the Aintree Grand National could be preserved. A Turf enthusiast, who would later become Chairman of the Horse-Racing Betting Levy Board, Wigg convened exploratory discussions with leading turf figures and local politicians. He reported that a consortium led by, or including Lord Derby, might buy Aintree.[262]

There was little sense of urgency at this stage, though. There were significant obstacles to a sale of Aintree for housing development. In the first instance, the terms of conveyance stated

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[259] R. C. Whiting, 'The City and democratic capitalism 1950-70' in R. Michie, and P. Williamson, (eds.), *The British government and the City of London in the twentieth century* (Cambridge, 1994), 96-116, 101, 105, 112.
[260] Whiting notes just two more Labour advocates of wider share ownership: the MPs Joel Barnett (a personal friend of Lever's) and Douglas Jay. Ibid, 101. For Jay and the revisionists' interest in widening share ownership see R. Toye, 'The Forgotten Revisionist: Douglas Jay and Britain's Transition to Affluence 1951-64' in L. Black and H. Pemberton, *An Affluent Society? Britain's Post-War'Golden Age' Revisited* (Aldershot, 2004), 53-67, 58-9. See also Jackson, "Revisionism Reconsidered: 'Property-owning Democracy' and Egalitarian Strategy in Post-war Britain", passim.
[261] PREM 13/3290. Note to the Prime Minister, 2 June 1970.
[262] PREM 13/3290. Letter, Lord Wigg to PM, 7 Jan 1968.

that the land must be used for the purpose of racing, and the surrounding land for agriculture. Aintree's previous owner, Lord Sefton, was therefore able to obtain an injunction preventing the sale of the racecourse for housing development. Topham's, the current owners, had lodged an appeal, but this was sure to be a lengthy process, and even if successful there remained the question of planning permission.[263] This was the second obstacle: a final decision on planning permission rested with the Minister of Housing and Local Government.[264] The Joint Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Home Office, Victor Stonham confirmed that the government would not be disposed to grant such a request. The Grand National

> engages the excited interest and admiration of virtually the whole nation and a good deal of interest also in other countries. It would be regretted by almost everyone in this country if it were threatened...apart from the British people themselves there are powerful public bodies interested in preserving the course. Government have no direct knowledge of what they may intend, or whether any direct approach is likely to be made in the matter. There is, in our view, no reason to believe that if the threat to Aintree should become real, or imminent, means will not be found to preserve it.[265]

During the 1966 General Election campaign, the High Court threw out Topham's appeal. They in turn threatened to serve the municipal authority with a purchase notice on the ground that 'reasonably beneficial use' of the land could not be derived from racing. Such an appeal had a significant chance of success.[266] In these circumstances, the National's future would be uncertain. Mrs Mirabel Topham's age was also an issue. The owner of Aintree was in her mid-eighties, and if she died before an agreement to purchase the racecourse had been reached the land would apparently be sold off to the highest bidder.[267] This would have certainly spelled the end of the Grand National. Horse-racing was not a viable option for

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[263] 16 March 1965, HLD, vol.264, col.296.
[264] PREM 13/3290. 13 April 1966.
[265] 16 March 1965, HLD, vol.264, cols.323-4. Stonham was speaking for the government during a debate on Lord Jessel's Sweepstakes on Horseraces (Authorisation) Bill. It called for a public lottery on the Grand National with the proceeds used to secure the future of the race. Government opposition doomed the Bill; but not before it enjoyed a second reading by the Lords. Ibid, cols.329-332.
[266] CAB 134/2860. Report of the Working Party on The Future of Aintree (annexed to Memorandum (H (68) 29), 12 March)).
[267] *Crossman Diaries*, vol.ii, 730.

commercial buyers - two weeks of racing per year not being able to generate anything close to an 'economic' rent.[268]

On his return to office, Wilson's determination to save the race was clear. After consultations with Wigg, the PM wrote to the Minister of Housing and Local Government, Richard Crossman, asking him to take responsibility for the issue.[269] Crossman's options were limited. The Turf authorities did not have the financial means to purchase Aintree.[270] Mirabel Topham's preferred option – that central government buy the racecourse directly – was never considered seriously (although the fact that it was never entirely discounted by the government indicates the extent to which attitudes to gambling continued to evolve).[271] The only viable option, from the government's point of view, was the municipal purchase of Aintree. The Wilson government was prepared to underwrite the sale - at an initial cost to the taxpayer of around £1 million.

This was where things became complicated. Although municipal responsibility for Aintree lay with Lancashire County Council, Liverpool City Council considered itself to have a legitimate interest in the future of the racecourse and the surrounding land. Even when both authorities were Labour controlled, as in the mid-1960s, their competing claims and interests proved to be an obstacle to a successful resolution. Lancashire initially favoured the continuation of the Grand National and Aintree's development as a Regional Sporting Centre (in line with central government sports policy). Liverpool apparently had close links with the property developers thwarted by the High Court.[272] But these positions shifted as the

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[268] CAB 134/2860. 'Report of the Working Party'.

[269] PREM 13/3290. Personal Minute. No. 17/66, 18 April 1966. The PM's declaration that 'the future of the race is a matter in which we need not concern ourselves very closely' can be discounted. As Denis Howell (Parl. Under-Sec. at the Department of Education and Science with special responsibility for sport) noted, Wilson's letter to Crossman 'clearly indicates his resolve to save the Grand National'. ED 196/126. 31 Jan 1967.

[270] PREM13/3290. 'Note of Meeting at MHLG', 26 April 1966.

[271] Topham proposed that the race be 'nationalised' and a sweepstake be organised on the race to cover expenses and provide funds for hospitals. HLG 144/101. 'DES note for supplementary questions', 4 July 1967. In response to an earlier suggestion that the government buy Aintree, Denis Howell had minuted 'Some Hopes!'. ED/196/126. Note to Home Secretary (Roy Jenkins). But the DES continued to list it as an option as did the Working Party considering Aintree's future. HLG 144/101. 'DES note for supplementary questions', 4 July 1967. 1st Meeting of Working Party on The Future of Aintree, 16 June 1967. (Same series)

[272] *Crossman Diaries,* vol i, 507.

political complexion of the Councils changed. Labour's loss of control in Lancashire in 1967 ended its interest in purchasing Aintree.[273] Thereafter, Liverpool City Council was the more likely buyer.

Ministers suggested that the state had a financial interest in the race. The National brought in up to half a million pounds in betting tax,[274] as well as a 'very large amount of foreign currency from visitors from abroad, particularly from America'.[275] Mirabel Topham attempted to exploit the financial dimension. She told Denis Howell (Under-Secretary at the Department of Education and Science (DES), with special responsibility for sport) 'that as the Government now has a vested interest in the betting tax, the expenditure of the purchase price to keep the chief betting event of the year going could be more than justified'.[276]

Crossman noted this aspect of the issue[277] but he and the government as a whole were more concerned about public opinion, as well as the prestige that the world's pre-eminent steeplechase conferred on the nation. Crossman and Wigg agreed that it was a 'unique' event, 'a race of supreme international importance' according to the latter.[278] Howell described the race as 'a feature of national life' that the Government had a 'responsibility to preserve'.[279] 'Posterity', as well as the public, he insisted, would be critical of the Government if it allowed the National to end.[280] Crossman wrote that the public would not forgive the government.[281]

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[273] ED196/126. Note of Meeting with Lancashire County Council, 25 April 1967.
[274] (HAC (68), 8th Meeting, 22 March 1968). This was Howell's figure. In the previous year, the estimate had been £0.25m. PREM 13/3290. Howell to PM, 18 Dec 1967.
[275] PREM 13/3290. Letter, Wigg to PM, 7 Jan 1968.
[276] ED 196/26. Letter, M. Topham to Howell, 27 April 1967.
[277] *Crossman Diaries*, vol.i, 507.
[278] *Crossman Diaries*, vol.ii, 730. PREM 13/3290. Note of Meeting at MHLG. 26 April 1966. Also, Wigg to PM, 7 Jan 1968 (Same series).
[279] PREM 13/3290. Letter, Howell to PM, 18 Dec 1967.
[280] T227/3119. DES draft memo, (undated, but early March 1968). Also CAB 134/2860. Memo (H (68) 29), 12 March 1968).
[281] *Crossman Diaries,* vol.i, 507.

These Ministers, as well as the Secretary of State for Education and Science, Anthony Crosland[282]were individually sympathetic to working-class mores. Wigg latterly described himself as a 'High-Tory socialist',[283] and he and Howell were genuinely proletarian politicians instinctively supportive of the culture from whence they came.[284] If more cerebral, the libertarianism of the Oxford dons Crossman and Crosland was equally firm The former described himself (and the parallel with Wigg is interesting) as 'a rather slapdash unliberal conservative socialist'.[285] In defending the Grand National steeplechase he found common ground with the libertarian socialism famously espoused by Crosland.[286] The Prime Minister did not belonged in either of these camps. His flat refusal to consider attending the Grand National was perhaps suggestive of his personal feelings.[287] But Aintree's proximity to his parliamentary constituency encouraged recognition of the race's popularity.

However, as the issue dragged on, and the composition of the government changed, a challenge to the pro-Aintree policy emerged. The crucial change was at the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHLG), where Anthony Greenwood replaced Crossman in August 1966. Greenwood was hostile to gambling.[288] So was his Parliamentary Under-Secretary, James MacColl.[289] Crosland had also moved on, becoming President of the Board of Trade in 1967. Wigg too, though as chairman of the Tote Board he continued to be intimately involved in the Aintree issue. The Prime Minister and Denis Howell were the only significant protagonists who remained in situ.

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[282] Crosland was not involved directly. But the DES under-secretary Denis Howell's vigorous promotion of the Aintree cause presumably reflected not just his own views but those of his Sec. of State.
[283] Hill, *Horse power*, 119.
[284] See their respective autobiographies: Wigg, *George Wigg*, and D. Howell, *Made in Birmingham: the Memoirs of Denis Howell* (London, 1990).
[285] *Crossman Diaries*, vol.ii, 663.
[286] As part of his wider attack on 'puritanism and paternalism' Crosland criticized the 'moral ascetics...conviction that the working class wastes all its higher income on alcohol, tobacco and gambling'. *The Future of Socialism* (London, 1956, 1964), 220. 'If I suddenly had a large increase in income, I have no doubt that I should spend a large part of it on smoking, eating, drinking, gambling and similar deplorable recreations; and I decline to debase myself morally on that account' he had insisted. *The Listener*, 31 (8 Dec. 1955).
[287] PREM13/3290. Wigg to PM, 8 Aug 1966. (Wilson's negative reaction was scribbled on this letter).
[288] See above, p.168-9.
[289] See MacColl's intervention on premium bonds. 18 June 1956, HCD, vol.554, cols.1105-7. Crossman, when Minister of Housing and Local Government, described MacColl, his parliamentary secretary, as ' prim, prissy' and 'High Church'. *Crossman diaries*, vol i, 48-9. My thanks to Martin Ceadel for this reference.

Greenwood had objective grounds for complaint. The Treasury had made clear at the end of 1966 that the 'public expenditure on a very large scale' necessary to secure the race's future would have to come from existing departmental allocations.[290] As the department responsible for Aintree, the MHLG would have to bear the bulk of the cost. Furthermore, by the time the issue came to a head, in 1968, there had been a significant reining in of public spending. 'Severe restrictions' had been placed on the MHLG's capital expenditure budget.[291] Greenwood complained that the £1 million needed to secure the Grand National

> would finance the construction of eight to ten small public swimming pools or the purchase of land for fifteen to twenty golf courses. Many local authorities are anxious to pursue projects of this kind...and have been disappointed in the last year or two by having had loan sanction for swimming pools, recreational centres, etc, refused; they would have strong grounds for complaint if Liverpool [City Council] were allowed to buy Aintree at this juncture.[292]

The Treasury agreed that the Aintree purchase did not meet the criteria by which other proposals within the same category were judged.[293]

On the other hand, Greenwood's own officials had made clear that the costs of purchasing Aintree could easily be borne by the MHLG. 'We are running far short of our ceiling and there is plenty of room in the planning allocation of the current financial year to bear this expenditure'. They suggested that it would be better to do so now, since there could be no guarantee of a similar outlook in the next financial year.[294] MHLG officials were acutely aware that the PM favoured this outcome.[295] So was Greenwood.[296] Nonetheless, he continued to resist. He told the Home Affairs Committee (HAC) that sanctioning the

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[290] HLG144/101. 30 Dec 1966. T227/3119. 6 March & 2 May 1968. CAB134/2860. Report of the Working Party on The Future of Aintree.
[291] HLG144/10I. 14 March 1968.
[292] CAB134/2859. (H (68) 34, Minister of Housing and Local Government's Memo, 12 March).
[293] T227/3119. Memo (undated, probably March 1968).
[294] HLG144/101. See Memos, 1, 2, 3, 4 Jan 1968.
[295] HLG144/101. 1 Jan & 26 Feb 1968.
[296] HLG/144/101. Note from Office of the Minister of Housing and Local Government, 1 March 1968.

purchase of Aintree would suggest to 'many people...that the Government's....social values were wrong'.[297] According to Crossman:

> The debate started with Tony Greenwood who for the first time in my experience was speaking to Cabinet with something like fervour. He thought it was wicked for socialists to put our money into horse-racing. Many people objected to the Grand National and one just couldn't justify spending the huge sums required for compulsory purchase and rebuilding. He just wasn't going to permit the money normally allocated for planning and development and parks and recreation grounds to be spent on such activity.[298]

Disapproval of gambling underpinned Greenwood's position. However, his commitment to animal welfare also demands consideration. The cruelty of the Aintree fences was infamous[299] and Greenwood was a patron of the National Council for the Abolition of Cruel Sports.[300] Crossman noted that the cruelty of the Grand National offended some Ministers.[301] Numerically, the HAC appears to have divided evenly at the key meeting on 22 March 1968. Those supportive of government intervention included Crossman, Howell, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury Harold Lever, and, despite his moral objection to gambling, the Nonconformist Deputy Chief Whip Charles Grey. 'Against us', recorded Crossman, 'were ranged the anti-blood sports league, the Lord Chancellor [Gerald Gardiner], thin-lipped and implacable, and of course the Welsh and the Scots'.[302] However, the pro-National forces clearly possessed the greater *authority*. Neither Greenwood nor the Lord Chancellor possessed Crossman's political clout. Leader of the House was a more powerful position then than now, and Crossman was personally and politically close to the Prime Minister. Furthermore, the 'Welsh and Scots' to whom Crossman referred were very junior members of

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[297] 134/2859. (H (68) 8th, 22 March).
[298] *Crossman Diaries*, vol.ii, 730.
[299] 'The Turf authorities, while accepting as part of the Aintree tradition the difficulties and dangers these fences represent, would not be prepared to licence another racecourse to provide similar obstacles'. CAB134/2860. Report of the Working Party on The Future of Aintree (annexed to DES Memorandum (H (68) 29, 12 March 1968)
[300] Greenwood had sponsored an anti-hunting Bill as far back as 1949. See K. O. Morgan, 'Greenwood, Arthur William James, Baron Greenwood of Rossendale (1911-1982)', *DNB* [http://oxforddnb.com/view/article/31169, accessed 18 Feb 2006].
[301] *Crossman Diaries*, vol.ii, 731. For a much earlier example of such concern, see the Labour MP Herbert Dunnico's complaint after the 1928 Grand National. *The Times*, 31 March 1928.
[302] Ibid.

the Government: the Under-Secretaries: Ifor Davies (Welsh Office) and Bruce Millan (Scottish Office).

The HAC postponed a final decision pending written confirmation of some of the details of Howell's submission.[303] However, the outcome was not in doubt. Greenwood did not even bother attending the subsequent HAC meeting: he sent his under-secretary James MacColl instead. The Committee concluded 'that negotiations should be opened for the purchase of the site...and that the public expenditure should be accommodated within the allocation of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government'.[304] The Minister of Sport, Denis Howell, announced the Government's decision to underwrite municipal purchase in the House of Commons on 2 July 1968.[305] But with Tophams' holding out for a higher price, negotiations dragged on before eventually breaking down completely on the eve of the General Election in 1970. Only when the bookmakers Ladbrokes bought the track from the Topham family in 1983 was the future of the Grand National secured.[306]

7. Accommodation Incomplete

Labour's attitude to gambling liberalized further during the 1950s and 1960s. Greater tolerance was initially evident in the parliamentary party's support for the Pool Betting and Small Lotteries Acts – even if, as in the latter case, self-interest was an overwhelming imperative. It was subsequently apparent in the consideration that leading figures in the second Wilson Government gave to the causes of a national lottery and the Grand National steeplechase. Suggestive too was Labour's subdued response to the backlash against gambling that emerged in the wake of the 1960 Betting and Gaming Act. Net expenditure on gambling had increased at a faster rate than on tobacco, alcohol, and general entertainment in the two decades following the Second World War[307]and this growth, together with the arrival

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[303] (H (68) 8th, 22 March). Crossman claims he insisted on this because 'Denis Howell is a great fiction writer. There really was no reason to believe that his statements of fact were true'. *Crossman Diaries*, vol. ii, 731

[304] CAB 134/2859. (H (68) 12th, 3 May).

[305] HCD, vol.767, cols.1318-23.

[306] Hill, *Horse power*, 256.

[307] Quoted in Munting, *An economic and social history of gambling*, 51. Although Munting suggests that 'the rate of increase suggested by these figures is exaggerated'. Ibid, 50-1.

on the nation's high streets of 15, 000 betting shops,[308] and organised crime's penetration of London's gaming industry,[309] generated a 'moral panic' about Britain becoming 'a nation of gamblers' during the second half of the 1960s.[310] The Home Secretary James Callaghan expressed his concern at the end of the decade: 'We now have fifteen hundred gambling clubs and thousands of these damned betting shops and it is really becoming an addiction that I don't think we ought to encourage any more'.[311] But his adoption of 'a social attitude on this matter', that is, Callaghan's view that gambling was 'not a socially desirable way of spending leisure,'[312] smacked of an authoritarianism with which some Labour MPs were increasingly uncomfortable.

The Under-Secretary of State at the Home Office Dick Taverne, a revisionist who would subsequently end up in the Conservative Party, captured better the direction in which opinion appeared to be moving. Defending the 1968 Gaming Bill, a piece of legislation that involved, for the first time, the administrative regulation of gaming,[313] he suggested both 'that we should not aim to make people good and [that]...it would not be an altogether profitable aim to make people rational'.[314] The philosophy behind the Bill reflected the distinction that another revisionist, Fred Mulley, had drawn at the end of the 1950s between gambling as the embrace of chance (which he claimed no-one could now object to) and gambling as big business, cupidity, and the exploitation of weakness.[315] James Tinn, the Labour backbencher who most strongly advocated a state lottery agreed that gambling involved an irrational redistribution of wealth to the few entirely by chance; but like Mulley he was untroubled by

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[308] Hood, 'The Development of Betting Taxes in Britain', 192.
[309] Munting, *An economic and social history of gambling*, 48-9. Miers, *Regulating Commercial Gambling*, 87-9.
[310] Downes et al, *Gambling, work and leisure*, 41. Dixon, *From Prohibition*, 339. Newman, *Gambling: Hazard and Reward*, 5-6.
[311] *Crossman Diaries*, vol.iii, 736. Entry for November 1969.
[312] 11 June 1968, HCD, vol.766, cols.67-72.
[313] The Bill's objective was 'to control and reduce the volume of commercial gaming...[it aims] to put an end to the profiteering and racketeering too often associated both with gaming clubs and with supply of gaming machines; but the restrictions are relaxed for bingo clubs operating on a local basis for moderate prizes'. *LPACR* (1968), 86. Some Labour MPs had been keen to protect the position of bingo. See also Munting, *An economic and social history*, 47. Miers, *Regulating Commercial Gambling*, 89.
[314] 13 Feb 1968, HCD, vol.758, cols.1181-91, 1270.
[315] 16 Nov 1959, HCD, vol.613, col.854.

this.[316] The sheer size of the gambling industry also undermined objections. Albert Murray, the Labour MP for Gravesend claimed at the end of the 1960s that 'Gambling is now part of our way of life. Even in Eastern European countries, operating under Marxist principles, where no-one should gain anything for which they do not work, gambling in one form or another has been accepted'.[317]

And, yet, what has also emerged strongly from this chapter is the persistence of Labour objections to gambling. If the *direction* in which Party opinion was moving was clear – towards an accommodation with working-class gambling – there remained some distance to be travelled. The PLP's refusal to endorse the licensing of betting shops, its attack on premium bonds, MPs' ultimate opposition to the national lottery scheme suggested by their own Chancellor, and the disagreement which existed within the Wilson Government regarding the future of the Grand National: all suggested Labour's continuing reluctance to accept the reality of popular gambling. This is a theme developed further in the final section of the thesis.

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[316] 2 Feb 1968, HCD, vol.757, col.1716.
[317] 13 Feb 1968, HCD, vol.758, col.1246.

Conclusion

The Labour Party's dislike of gambling softened across the period 1918-70; and it became increasingly tolerant of working-class betting. A number of significant aspects of this change have become apparent in the preceding pages.

The first is that, to the extent that it occurred, the Party's accommodation with gambling was inevitable. As Labour established itself as one of the two governing parties, and as the country to be governed became socially more democratic, it was unthinkable that, whatever some of its activists may still have wanted, the Labour Party would persist in opposing outright such an integral aspect of the culture of the class which was not only the most numerous but the one to which it was most intimately connected. Two decisive moments in the social democratization of Labour opinion have been identified: the political crisis of 1931 and the Second World War. Both strengthened the Party's sensitivity to working-class opinion, and, as such, circumscribed attacks on working-class betting.

But, and this is the second significant feature, Labour's accommodation to working-class betting continued to be somewhat grudging and limited. The socialist critique of gambling, which held that it promoted disproportionate reward and acquisitive individualism, enjoyed purchase throughout. While the Party increasingly directed its criticism at stock exchange gambling,[1] the distinction it developed between that form of gambling, and the forms practised by the working-class better, was never precise. The Party might have argued that working-class betting was not really 'gambling', that is, that it involved a significant skill

[1] 'The City', as Whiting observed in his study of the relationship between Labour and the stock exchange during the 1950s and 1960s, was 'threatening in Labour's own version of its history...perhaps the worst of capitalism's institutions; it did not actually produce anything tangible and merely traded on the work of others'. Whiting, 'The City and democratic capitalism 1950-70', 100.

dimension, or it could have argued that working-class betting, though similar in principle to stock exchange speculation, was, in practice, much less harmful. But the former argument was one Labour hardly ever made, while the latter remained underdeveloped.

Labour only very rarely acknowledged the skill involved,[2] or thought to be involved, in many forms of working-class gambling.[3] Even after the Second World War, recognition of this aspect of betting was generally confined to 'experts' like Reginald Paget, turf enthusiast, member of the Tote Board and, as such, unrepresentative of the Labour Party as a whole.[4] The distance of many Labour politicians and activists from the class they claimed to represent was important here, but so too was the rationalist strand of socialist politics, which remained significant during the 1950s and 1960s,[5] and which inhibited an acknowledgement of what

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[2] J. H. Thomas's evidence to the 1918 Select Committee on Premium Bonds was exceptional in this regard. See above, p.70-1 *Socialist Commentary's* article on the eve of the appointment of the 1949-1951 Royal Commission constitutes the only other significant engagement with the skill dimension. See above, p.147. Will Thorne, in his (confused) evidence to the 1918 Select Committee also acknowledged the skill dimension, but he suggested that skill-based betting was a worse form of gambling than those, i.e. lotteries, based wholly on chance. 1918SC, para.1848-53 at p.75. Keynes argued something similar in his evidence to the 1933RC. See above, p.84.

[3] The question of whether betting involves skill is an extremely complex one, of course. For a discussion of some of the issues involved see A. W. Peterson, 'The Statistics of Gambling', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society. Series A (General)*, 115 (1952), 219-28, 206-9. The Liberal activist and statistician Hubert Phillips had given detailed evidence to the 1951 Royal Commission, of which Peterson had been secretary, purporting to prove that the football pools, contrary to the claims of the promoters, were pure chance, i.e. a form of lottery. Phillips replied to Peterson's paper. Ibid, 212-3. The Royal Commission's refusal to endorse his argument also provoked Phillips to subsequently publish a book on the subject: H. Phillips *Pools and the Punter* (London, 1956). See also Munting's discussion of whether gambling can be skilled and, more widely, his treatment of betting's 'rationality': *An economic and social history of gambling*, 191-5. For a strong endorsement of the rationality of working-class betting see E. Hobsbawm, *Worlds of Labour* (London, 1984), 188, 215.

[4] For Paget's insistence on the skill involved in betting, 'One wins...by confining bets to the occasions when the odds are leaning one's own way', see 13 Feb 1968, HCD, vol.758, col.1240.

[5] Rationalism was central to the politics of both the Gaitskellites and the Bevanites. For the former see B. Barker, reviewing T. Jones, 'Remaking the Labour Party: from Gaitskell to Blair', S. Fielding, 'The Labour Party: 'socialism' and society since 1951', and M. Francis, 'Ideas and Policies under Labour 1945-51: building a new Britain', *Parliamentary History* 17 (1998), 284-5. For Gaitskell in particular see Marquand, *Progressive Dilemma*, 135. Gaitskell's famous rejoinder to Jean Monnet is discussed, inter alia, by B. Brivati, 'Hugh Gaitskell and the EEC', *Socialist History*, 4 (1994), 16-32. For the Bevanites see Pimlott, *Harold Wilson*, 217, 275. See also Bevan, *In Place of Fear*, passim; and his 1959 Party Conference Speech: 'we must organise our economic life intelligently and not abandon our main case that it is impossible to get rational order by leaving things to private economic adventure'. *Daily Herald*, 30 Nov 1959. See also Barbara Castle's suggestive description of Michael Foot as the carrier of a 'basic rationalist liberalism'. Quoted in K. O. Morgan, *Labour People: Leaders and Lieutenants, Hardie to Kinnock* (Oxford, 1987, 1992), 278-9. For the rationalism of the Labour Party as a whole see Francis, 'The Labour Party: Modernisation and the Politics of Restraint', passim. Fielding, "Activists against 'Affluence': Labour Party Culture during the 'Golden Age' ", circa 1950-1970', passim. Black, *Political Culture of the Left in Affluent Britain*, ch.5, ch.7.

the working-class better would have described as gambling's skill dimension.[6] Thus Ian Mikardo's pamphlet *It's a Mug's Game*: the House of Commons' unofficial bookie was a politician socially and culturally in touch with his electorate,[7] but he was also 'fascinated by the mathematics of probability',[8] and if in admittedly light-hearted fashion, poked fun at those 'mugs' who believed gambling was a matter of skill rather than luck.[9]

Nor was the more promising argument from a socialist perspective, that working-class betting was a harmless recreation, while stock exchange gambling was an activity that distorted economy and society in significant ways, ever developed in any sustained fashion. In the wake of the 1931 political crisis, as the Party claimed that a 'banker's ramp' had brought down the second Labour Government, the development of such an analysis appeared possible. But it never materialized at an intellectual level. The Party instinctively disliked the Stock Exchange and the gambling that went on there: but a systematic critique of the City was unforthcoming. Whiting has noted that this institution remained 'mysterious' as well as threatening to Labour during the 1950s and 1960s; Michie has observed that the Party oscillated between hostility and indifference to the stock exchange during the second third of the twentieth century.[10] This lack of clarity had consequences: if the ways in which the gambling of the banks, stockbrokers and financial houses undermined the nation's political economy were rarely spelled out by Labour, it became that much more difficult to explain why this financial speculation was more harmful than those forms of wagering on luck practised by its supporters in the working classes.

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[6] After all, even McKibbin, the leading exponent of the view that working-class betting was 'rational', emphasized that 'over the long term gambling never makes sense for the individual gambler...only when the return on outlay is understood to be immediate, instead of being almost indefinitely postponed, can be betting be regarded as [it was by the working classes] a surrogate of saving'. *The Ideologies of Class*, 116.

[7] T. Dalyell, 'Mikardo, Ian (1908-1993)', DNB [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/52289, accessed 12 April 2006].

[8] Ibid.

[9] Mikardo, *It's a Mug's Game*, passim. Clapson makes the same point about this pamphlet, *A bit of a flutter*, 207.

[10] Whiting, 'The City and Democratic Capitalism 1950-70', 100. Michie, *A history of the Stock Exchange*, 371.

As such, and this is a third interesting feature of the thesis, Labour never found a way of justifying intellectually the distinction which it increasingly drew *in practice* between stock exchange gambling and working-class betting. 'Most socialists...have always been against gambling, have always been against the idea of getting rich quick whether it be by pools, the Stock Exchange or any other form of gambling' insisted Margaret Herbison in 1956;[11] and, as a matter of principle, she was largely correct. A *Daily Herald* reader, opposing betting shops in 1959-60, was in no doubt that working-class betting remained antithetical to proportionate reward and social solidarity: 'You can't teach the young the idea of service to others and at same time permit a betting system based on large gains for small efforts'.[12]

The partial nature of the Party's accommodation to working-class betting was evident in Labour's response to the 'affluent society'. Affronted by the emergence of a consumerism that it associated with disproportionate reward and acquisitive individualism, the growth of popular gambling was not just deprecated by Labour; it actually became a metaphor for the consumer society's wider attrition of the values of equality and community. The *New Statesman* described the 1950s as a decade in which Britain had become 'a...national casino with loaded dice'.[13] *Tribune* likewise derided the creation of a 'casino society'.[14] *Socialist Commentary*'s assessment of the 1959 General Election manifestos was also indicative: 'What it comes to is this. The Tories are fighting on chance and luck; Labour is fighting on a carefully planned and morally based programme'.[15] Fielding's audit of the Party's reaction to social and cultural change disclosed the similar emphases of constituency activists. The secretary of Warwick & Leamington Spa CLP in 1959 characterized socialism as 'an

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[11] *Forward*, 28 April 1956.
[12] *Daily Herald*, 3 Nov 1959.
[13] *New Statesman*, 2 Jan 1960. Also quoted in Black, *Political Culture of the Left in Affluent Britain*, 125.
[14] *Tribune*, 16 Oct 1959. Also quoted in Clapson, *A bit of a flutter*, 202. Black, *Political Culture*, 126.
[15] *Socialist Commentary*, Oct 1959, 3.

alternative to the way that glorifies the money lender and the gambler'.[16] A teenage Labour activist criticised his peers four years later for 'working all day for money and then making gambling their main hobby for more'.[17] Millie Miller, Chair of the National Conference of Labour Women in 1967, asked delegates 'Was it so that people should spend their leisure time in gaming clubs that our early pioneers looked forward to universal free education?'[18]

Such allusions could sometimes appear rhetorical - Douglas Jay, the main proponent of working-class share ownership[19] and a man who had endorsed the reform of the off-course cash betting laws,[20] subsequently criticised 'a decade of Premium Bonds, take-over bids, betting shops, hire purchase frauds and all the rest'.[21] And while his inconsistency on the betting shops question[22] might be interpreted as an indication of the difficulty even socialists apparently comfortable with gambling sometimes had in accepting its reality, it is certainly the case that acceptance of working-class betting was least qualified among that small group of revisionists with whom Jay is particularly associated: namely Crosland,[23] Jenkins[24] (and, though he has not appeared during this study, Gaitskell).

Their revisionism rejected the interpretation of equality and community that was central to the socialist critique of gambling. Crosland's, Gaitskell's, Jenkins', and Jay's socialism accepted (a degree of) disproportionate reward and (an even greater degree of) of acquisitive individualism. Impatient of the utopianism which remained a significant aspect of Labour's

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[16] S. Fielding, *The Labour Governments 1964-70. Vol.I. Labour and cultural change* (Manchester, 2003), 71.
[17] Ibid, 69.
[18] Ibid, 24.
[19] See p.202, above.
[20] Indeed, Jay had anticipated the 1959 Party Manifesto in this respect. See his article in *Forward*, 17 May 1957.
[21] Quoted in R. Toye, 'The Forgotten Revisionist: Douglas Jay and Britain's Transition to Affluence 1951-64', 61.
[22] Ibid, 63.
[23] See p.206, above.
[24] See chapter 4, section 5, above.

identity during the 1950s and 1960s,[25] this small group of revisionists urged an explicit and substantive accommodation with capitalism. They insisted that 'there was nothing necessarily unsocialist about competitive market relationships'[26], and were 'sceptical of *any* ambition to alter individual attitudes toward the common good'.[27] Indeed, such was their marginalizing of the value of community in particular that Jackson, in his recent treatment, has been moved to describe Crosland, Jenkins, Jay, and Gaitskell as 'egalitarian libertarians' in contradistinction to the rest of the Party, including other revisionists, which, in its continuing commitment to the ordinal importance of social solidarity, he characterized as 'egalitarian communitarians'.[28]

Richard Crossman's permissiveness on the gambling question can also be approached from this perspective. His common ground with the revisionists has been noted before,[29] and Crossman's scepticism about community appears to justify a comparison with the 'egalitarian libertarians'. 'Towards a Philosophy of Socialism', Crossman's contribution to the *New Fabian Essays* which he edited in the wake of the Attlee Government's defeat, was generally uncompromising in its rejection of socialist assumptions about man's potential for altruism and social co-operation. Only a minority of the population were capable of such behaviour – the job of this minority was to protect the majority from themselves.[30] Indeed, Crossman insisted that 'we should regard exploitation and slavery as the normal state of man'.[31] This

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[25] For a good discussion of Labour's 'lingering utopianism...with its vague aspirations of fundamental transformation', see Howell, *British social democracy*, 287-305.
[26] Jackson, 'Egalitarian political thought on the British Left, 1910-64', 303.
[27] Ibid, 280. Italics in original.
[28] Ibid, 284.
[29] 'Crossman was a revisionist in many respects...His credentials as a leftwinger are much as Kingsley Martin's – he was troublesome and defied neat categories. Crossman's role was messy, changing and does not fit neatly into theorizing'. B. Brivati, reviewing R. Desai, "Intellectuals and Socialism: 'Social Democrats' and the Labour Party", *Socialist History*, 9 (1996), 109-14, 110.
[30] R. H. S. Crossman, 'Towards a New Philosophy of Socialism' in R. H. S. Crossman (ed.), *New Fabian Essays* (London, 1952), 1-33, 11. For an earlier iteration of some of these themes see his Fabian tract, *Socialist Values in a Changing Civilisation* (London, 1950).
[31] 'Towards a New Philosophy', 8-9.

was the background to Crossman's characterization of his socialism as 'unliberal', indeed 'conservative'[32]: an interpretative framework in which his subordination of social solidarity can be placed suggestively alongside his scorn of those government ministers who argued that socialists, as a matter of principle, should be opposed to horse racing.[33]

All this being said, and though thus generally predictable, the process and extent of Labour's accommodation to gambling has not been understood in terms solely ideological. It also, and this is the fourth significant feature of the thesis, reflected the personal styles, identities, and, in some cases at least, the idiosyncracies of significant Labour politicians: for example, J.H. Thomas, Tom Williams, James Chuter Ede, and Harold Wilson, whose approach to gambling differed significantly from that of Aneurin Bevan and Michael Foot, with whom Wilson shared an ideological affinity.

J.H. Thomas was prominent throughout the first half of the thesis. An opponent of premium bonds, football pools and dog racing during the 1920s,[34] he also opposed the establishment of the Tote.[35] While his position on the Tote Bill might be characterized as a reflection of fidelity to the Party leadership (although given that the whips were not on during the second reading of the Tote Bill this explanation is contestable), Thomas's interventions against these other forms of popular gambling were surprising given the dominant interpretation of his political identity. An active Baptist faith had quickly evaporated[36] and he presented himself, and was represented by others, as the Labour leader most in sympathy with working-class culture. Thomas was the Party's leading Tory Socialist.

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[32] See above, p.206.
[33] See above, p.208.
[34] See chapter 2, sections 1-3, above.
[35] See above, pp.49-50.
[36] P. Williamson, 'Thomas, James Henry (1874-1949)', *DNB* [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36477, accessed 16 Feb 2006].

There are two possible explanations of Thomas's opposition to working-class betting. The first is that he accepted, at some level, aspects of the socialist critique of gambling. This appears unlikely. The designation Tory Socialist has been used historically to indicate a distance not just from the tradition of liberalism and Nonconformity, but in Pugh's hands at least, also from socialism itself.[37] While this thesis has suggested that Tory Socialists such as Jack Jones and Fred Montague articulated an opposition to gambling consonant with the mainstream Labour view,[38] evidence that Thomas did likewise is limited, though not entirely absent.[39]

More promising is an explanation that places weight on Thomas's desire to satisfy respectable opinion. Pugh has observed that Thomas, by the end of the First World War 'had, in effect, become a bridge linking the labour movement and the political establishment'.[40] This strategy had obvious political advantages as Labour sought to establish itself as a credible alternative to the Conservatives and Liberals. But it perhaps also had a more personal dimension: Beatrice Webb damned Thomas, among other things, as 'a social climber';[41] Howell, though cautioning that Thomas 'fitted perhaps too easily into the classical account of the Labour traitor – the trade union official corrupted by wealth and ambition, his weakness for alcohol and gambling exploited by the rich and the powerful, until his usefulness was exhausted',[42] has agreed that his 'enjoyment of the benefits that came with his social mobility was unusual in its lack of inhibition'.[43] From this perspective, his opposition to premium bonds, football pools, and dog racing, and the distinction he drew

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[37] Pugh, 'The Rise of Labour and the Political Culture of Conservatism', 516.
[38] See above, pp.38-40, 119.
[39] See part of his objection to premium bonds during and after the First World War, p.73, above.
[40] Pugh, 'The Rise of Labour and the Political Culture of Conservatism', 520.
[41] Quoted in Howell, " '1 loved my Union and my Country' ", 145.
[42] Ibid, 146.
[43] Howell, *MacDonald's Party*, 10.

between these forms of popular gambling and horse racing (days out at which were a significant aspect of his uninhibited social mobility), could be seen as an attempt to align Labour with the views of the 'official' classes, or a reflection of a hitherto under-explored snobbishness in Thomas, or both. In these aspects of Thomas's style and identity, rather than in his unsubstantiated allegations about its material consequences for the working-class family, one might find the genesis of his vehement opposition to dog racing, an overwhelmingly proletarian form of betting which Thomas continued to oppose even after leaving the Labour Party.[44]

The miners' MP Tom Williams shared Thomas's love of the turf. (Indeed, his autobiography actually contained a sympathetic account of Thomas's love of gambling and how this led to Thomas's demise).[45] Williams spent his honeymoon at the St Leger, where he 'wagered and lost a modest part of my tiny savings,'[46] subsequently acted as a steward at both Brighton and Doncaster racecourses;[47] and, while serving in the wartime Coalition Government soldered a 'special bond' with his departmental colleague the Duke of Norfolk through their shared love of horse racing.[48] Furthermore, Williams claimed a significant amount of credit for the continuation of race meetings during the war. His account is worth quoting in full for the profound sympathy it suggests for horse racing and the working class better.

> In the summer of 1940, we had to decide whether the Derby should be run or not. Four ministers spoke strongly in favour of cancelling...I waited for a senior Minister to speak. None did, so I entered the breach myself...to cancel the race would be a great psychological error. For good or ill, millions of our people regarded horse-racing as their chief pastime...The pleasure comes from spending the evening finding winners and the mornings backing losers. The loss of production could not therefore be great.

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[44] See his contributions to the following: CAB27/498. Cabinet Committee on Greyhound Racing Totalisators: (GRT (32) 1st meeting 17 Jan). (GRT (32) 2nd, 24 Jan 1933). Cabinet Committee on Lotteries and Betting: (CLB (33) 2nd meeting, 26 Oct). (CLB (33) 3rd, 31 Oct). (CLB (33) 8th, 20 Nov).
[45] Williams, *Digging for Britain*, 102-3.
[46] Ibid, 22.
[47] Ibid, 127, 185.
[48] Ibid, 127.

> But at present the people whose pleasure this was were being asked to work full-time overtime and all the time. They would naturally resent any interference with their pastime. While I was speaking, the Minister of Labour, Ernest Bevin, entered the room. He immediately came down heavily on my side, backing his arguments with all his immense knowledge of the working classes. The Derby was run...[49]

How to reconcile this Tom Williams with the man who during the 1930s was a leading opponent of dog racing and the football pools? One might emphasize the differences between these forms of popular gambling. Williams insisted that dog racing and football pools lacked any sporting dimension: they were solely mediums for betting the purpose of which was to make profits for capitalists.[50] There was evidently some truth in this argument. Furthermore, the 'newness' of dog racing and the football pools might also be considered relevant: especially in comparison to horse racing which had a long history and was firmly entrenched in the country's recreational culture. But as an account of Williams' position such lines of reasoning can only ever be partly satisfactory. They do not explain why a man so sympathetic to betting on horses refused to support the licensing of betting shops after the Second World War. Williams, by this stage in the Cabinet, was the only member of the Attlee Government's Betting Committee to refuse to endorse the conclusions of the 1949-51 Royal Commission. His explanation for doing so, that betting shops would encourage betting (on horses), only adds to the complexity.[51]

James Chuter Ede, Home Secretary between 1945 and 1951, chaired the Attlee Government's Betting Committee. He has been a significant figure during the second half of the thesis. Ede's attitude to gambling also had its inconsistencies. He was, like Thomas and Williams, a devotee of horse racing and an opponent of dog racing. Ede was closely associated with Epsom Downs, where he was born and brought up and which formed part of the Mitcham

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[49] Ibid, 122.
[50] See above, 86-7, 90, 105.
[51] (BLG (51) 1st Meeting). (BLG (51) 12, 'Draft Report'). See above, p.160-1.

constituency that he briefly represented during the 1920s. He took every opportunity while Home Secretary to distance horse racing from dog racing; the former was a sport, the latter existed only for the purpose of betting. While I have cleared Ede of primary responsibility for the restriction of dog racing between 1947 and 1949,[52] his hostility to the dog track was evidently strong.

Ede remained a prominent figure in the gambling field during the 1950s. An advocate of betting shops as Home Secretary, he subsequently repudiated them in favour of the licensing of street bookmakers. Indeed, Ede emerged during the debates on the 1959-60 Betting and Gaming Bill as the leading advocate of street betting. This involved a complete reversal of the position he had adopted at the Home Office and was accompanied by the development of a class analysis. Ede insisted that street betting was the traditional and favoured method of betting among the Southern English working classes and claimed that to deny it legal recognition amounted to an assault on their culture.[53] He insisted that the relationship between the street bookmaker and his clients embodied the mutuality and shared respect of working-class life. Unforgettably, and in a manner suggesting he had never actually read *Love on the Dole*, Ede characterized Sam Grundy as the archetype of the 'remarkably close social relationship' that existed between bookmaker and better. This was not a perspective one would immediately have associated with a man universally characterized as austere and serious-minded, a 'nonconformist liberal of the old school' according to his biographer.[54]

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[52] See chapter 3, section 1, above.

[53] The debate over the 1959-60 Betting and Gaming Bill was characterized by "a widespread assumption that 'so far as the betting habits of the nation go England is not one but two countries and the dividing line, broadly speaking, can be taken as the River Trent'. North of this barrier, it was felt that betting shops were common, while south of the division, it was believed that street betting was in the ascendancy. This was a massive simplification of betting patterns in England". Chinn, *Better Betting with a Decent Feller*, 274.

[54] K. Jeffreys, 'Ede, James Chuter Chuter-, Baron Chuter Ede (1882-1965)', *DNB* [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32414, accessed 28 March 2006]. Although it should be noted that Ede had a longstanding suspicion of the Jockey Club, something common among class-conscious Labour MPs. Hill, *Horse power*, 74-5.

Furthermore, the determination of the MP for South Shields to defend the (supposed) betting habits of the Southern English working classes appeared somewhat peculiar.[55]

Harold Wilson was a substantial presence in the final third of the thesis. He took a leading role in supporting the Small Lotteries and Gaming Act of 1956: a position I have suggested was connected to his knowledge, via the chairmanship of the Labour Party Committee on Party Organisation, of the extent to which local Labour parties relied on lottery fundraising.[56] However, at the same time as Wilson was backing the legalization of small public lotteries, he was leading opposition to a larger one: the Premium Savings Bond.[57] Wilson would also go on to vote against the licensing of betting shops in 1960.[58] Again, though, there was evidence of a countervailing tendency: as Prime Minister he actively sought to secure the long-term future of the Aintree Grand National on the basis that the race's disappearance would have been unacceptable to public opinion.

One can accuse Wilson of inconsistency, even hypocrisy. But personal hypocrisy is often unavoidable in the profession of politics.[59] That political calculations drove his support for small lotteries, and explained his determination to save Aintree is an explanation not an indictment. Indeed, from this perspective, it is Wilson's opposition to premium bonds and betting shops that demands an explanation: his position on these issues was at odds with popular opinion and Wilson was not a politician given to courting unnecessary unpopularity. But in these instances, objections of principle prevailed. As Shadow Chancellor he persistently attacked the City's 'Casino mentality' and described the Stock Exchange as a

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[55] For the various dimensions of Ede's position on the 1959-60 Betting and Gaming Bill see above, pp.175-6.
[56] See above, pp.187-8.
[57] See chapter 4, section 4, above.
[58] He voted against the Betting and Gaming Bill on third reading. 11 May 1960, HCD, vol.622, cols.491-4.
[59] A good discussion of this subject is D. Runciman, 'Institutional Hypocrisy', *London Review of Books*, 27 (April 2005), 3-7.

'spiv's paradise'.[60] He objected to individuals 'enjoy[ing]' substantial accretions to their spending power for very little effort by the means of a speculative Stock Exchange flutter'.[61] His Prime Ministerial address to the TUC in 1966 conflated off-course cash betting, criminal involvement in London's casinos, and financial speculation.

> Our balance of payments problem has been an index of a deeper malaise...the development on an organised basis of the gamblers' economy, which at its least harmful leads to loafing round betting shops, at its worst is one step away, if that, from syndicalised crime. When this summer we produced our measures to deal with the emergency, the attack on the seamier side of gambling was an essential corollary – and this is to follow when the legislative proposals are brought forward by the Government after the relevant discussions.[62]

Wilson appeared to have difficulty in distinguishing working-class betting from stock exchange gambling. As such, of course, he was representative of much of the Labour Party. But while some of those who shared his views had decided, certainly by the 1950s and 1960s, that discretion was the better part of valour, Wilson had little compunction in publicly attacking popular gambling. This aspect of his political style reflected, perhaps, his distance from the organized (and, even more so, it follows, the unorganized) working classes[63] and also, more widely, the influence of provincial Nonconformity. Wilson was, by his own lights, the 'last Nonconformist Prime Minister' and though this was, at one level, a throwaway line, at another it had some significance: he retained the 'moral structure of a Nonconformist Boy Scout' according to Crossman.[64] Howell's description of Wilson's political style is apposite.

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[60] For Wilson's denunciations of the City of London and the Stock Exchange see Pimlott, *Harold Wilson*, 217, 222.
[61] Quoted in Whiting, 'The City and democratic capitalism 1950-70', 109. For these emphases more generally in Wilson's politics, see H. Wilson, *Post-war Economic Policies in Britain* (London, 1957); *Remedies for Inflation: a series of 'Manchester Guardian' articles* (London, 1957).
[62] *TUCACR* (1966), 197. The proposals to which Wilson referred involved the revision of the gaming laws following evidence of organized crime's penetration of London's casinos. The 1968 Gaming Act was the result. See above, pp.199-200, 210.
[63] As Howell has noted, a significant aspect of Wilson's political identity was his ignorance of trade union politics and priorities: "Wilson and History. '1966 and All That' ", 183-5.
[64] *Crossman Diaries*, vol.iii, 417.

> One strand that remained throughout his leadership period had its roots in Liberal Nonconformity – the zeal for self-improvement, the pursuit of social mobility and security, the insistence on the central place of morality in politics, the participation in a variety of high-minded cultural activities. The rhetoric and sentiments associated with this outlook had a ready resonance with the Labour Party. They linked easily with an ethical socialism of the type articulated by Philip Snowden, Wilson's MP in the 1920s.[65]

Central to this ethical socialism, of course, was an emphasis on the reform of personal behaviour instead of, or hopefully alongside, structural political and economic change.[66] More specifically, popular gambling, with its promotion of chance and fortune, could appear at odds with Wilson's ambition 'to construct a stable, knowable, self-respecting community'.[67]

Fundamentalist allies like Aneurin Bevan and Michael Foot[68] shared Wilson's antipathy to the anarchy of the free market and to parasitical capitalism: they were as likely as him to attack stock exchange speculation for promoting disproportionate reward and acquisitive individualism. *In Place of Fear* often illustrated the flaws of the capitalist system via gambling metaphors.[69] Foot, discussing the Conservative Government's proposed premium bonds scheme, summed up the Bevanites' perception of the free market: 'capitalism is a gamble...Something for nothing has always been the oil which helps make the wheels go round'.[70] Furthermore, both possessed, like Wilson, a background in provincial

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[65] Howell, "Wilson and History. '1966 and All That' ", 180.
[66] The origins of this emphasis on individual change lay, of course, in what Hobsbawn described as 'the British labour sects' of the nineteenth century, 'so remarkable [because] the sect normally dealt with the problems of the proletarian by evading them, or rather by solving them not for the class, but for the individual or a chosen group of the elect...What counted was individual salvation'. E. Hobsbawm, *Primitive rebels: studies in archaic forms of social movement in the 19th and 20th centuries* (Manchester, 1959), 132.
[67] Howell, "Wilson and History. '1966 and All That' ", 180.
[68] Although for a view which emphasizes the differences between Wilson's politics and (among others) those of the fundamentalists see I. Favretto, 'Wilsonism reconsidered: Labour Party revisionism, 1952-64', *Contemporary British History*, 14 (2000), 54-80.
[69] *In Place of Fear*, (London, 1952, 1996) , 69, 70, 83, 89, 122, 182-3.
[70] *Daily Herald*, 27 April 1956. See also Foot's subsequent column in which he described Macmillan's scheme as the 'Chancellor's silly stunt'. *Daily Herald*, 18 May 1956.

Nonconformity: Bevan in South Wales, Foot (whose father, the Liberal MP Isaac, was perhaps the leading parliamentary anti-gambler of the 1920s)[71] in South West England. And, again, like Wilson, both were somewhat distanced from the working classes in culture and aspiration. Foot was an impeccably middle-class man of letters as much as he was a socialist politician. Bevan - his reputation as a hedonist notwithstanding - felt alienated, as Hayhurst has illustrated, from many of the recreational aspects of 'traditional' working-class culture.[72]

But neither Bevan nor Foot, having travelled much further from Nonconformity than Wilson, were disposed to attacking the cultural preferences of the working classes. This aspect of Bevan's political style had been evident during the interwar period. In the early 1930s, as a new member of Parliament, he had conspicuously failed to join the majority of the PLP in supporting greater control of dog racing. Indeed, he actually attended the AGM of the National Greyhound Racing Society in 1933 – an action which many in the Labour Party viewed as conferring legitimacy on a dubious capitalist enterprise. The company he kept in this respect was indicative: the only other Labour MPs to attend were significant defenders of dog racing - Neil Maclean, a libertarian socialist of the interwar ILP type, Thomas Groves, who represented the interests of the provincial dog tracks in the House of Commons, and the ILP MP John McGovern, scornful of attempts to impose an 'official' culture on the working classes.[73]

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[71] Isaac Foot was also a strong opponent of drink, and in 1937 founded the Cromwell Association, dedicated to the memory of the Lord Protector, whom he described, memorably, as 'the dictator with a difference'. S. Koss, *Nonconformity in modern British politics* (London, 1975), 169. For a sympathetic and enlightening treatment of his father's Puritanism see Michael's biographical sketch, 'A Rupert for the Roundheads', in M. Foot, *Debts of Honour* (London, 1980, 1981), 11-21.

[72] Mark Hayhurst, 'Duty Bound', *Guardian*, 28 May 2005, accessed at http://books.guardian.co.uk/departments/politicsphilosophyandsociety/story/0,6000,1493978,00.html. For the more traditional interpretation of Bevan as a wholehearted anti-puritan see the recent essay by Gareth Stedman Jones, 'New Labour's History', *Guardian*, 19 March 2005, accessed at http://books.guardian.co.uk/departments/politicsphilosophyandsociety/story/0,,1440931,00.html.

[73] *The Times*, 14 Feb 1933. See also above, pp.103-4, 1115.

Campbell has argued that Bevan 'was never able to acknowledge...the sort of human weakness' that 'thrives on the dream of unmerited inequality held out by the football pools...Most people in all classes, however irrationally, prefer to trust their fate to chance and fortune'. But Smith has pointed out that Bevan's objection to 'chance and fortune' was aimed squarely at capitalism. "He did not then go on to inveigh against the kind of working-class 'gambling' which, however zanily interpreted, cannot be seen as a significant factor in the unmerited division of property and capital".[74] A distinction between working-class betting and stock exchange gambling illuminates Bevan's seemingly obtuse approach to the premium bonds issue:

> I do not mind people having a flutter. I do not mind an individual who sits down and has a bob on a horse, so long as he does not put his children's shoes on the horse. I do not even mind a man putting his shirt on a horse so long as he does not put someone else's on...I am not a puritan and I like people to have a good time. But I do not like gambling.[75]

'So subtle was the arguing' suggested the Conservative minister Edward Boyle that he felt Bevan was 'setting himself up as the poor man's Thomas Aquinas'.[76] But Bevan's analysis was representative of a Labour Party, which, while retaining a socialist critique of gambling, was increasingly compelled to accommodate itself to the forms of wagering on luck practiced by the working classes.

In such circumstances, inconsistency was inevitable. As long as the Labour Party maintained some kind of critique of capitalism its attitude to gambling would remain unresolved intellectually. Only with the advent of New Labour, and the consequent subordination of

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[74] J. Campbell, *Nye Bevan and the mirage of British socialism* (London, 1987) quoted in D. Smith, *Aneurin Bevan and the world of South Wales* (Cardiff, 1993), 186-7.
[75] Speech at Dewsbury, 22 April 1956. Quoted verbatim by Edward Boyle MP, April 23 1956, HCD, vol.551, cols.1474.
[76] Ibid.

egalitarianism and social solidarity, would the Party's objections of principle to gambling begin to dissolve.

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