Tories and the Language of 'Liberalism' in the 1820s*

In what sense was there a 'liberal awakening' in the 1820s? That phrase – used as the English title of the second volume of Élie Halévy's *History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century* – neatly captures the view that there was a marked change in political sentiment during this decade, and that there was a corresponding shift from 'high' to 'liberal' policies by the Tory government. But to what extent were these Tories actually characterised as 'liberals' and why were their reforms understood as 'liberal'? While scholarship has attended to the complex origins of policies, and the increasingly febrile inter-party politics of the decade, there has been less interest in the broader reasons why some people and some ideas were classified as 'liberal' in the first place. It is not as if historians are unaware of the problem of terminology – nearly a hundred years ago Halévy began his discussion with a helpful survey of how the word 'liberal' was politicised in British parlance from the mid-1810s.[1] Nevertheless, there remains a sense that 'liberalism' was sufficiently understood by the 1820s that it can be used as a lens through which to interpret the politics of the decade. But if, instead, it is better seen as a cluster of loosely-related and poorly-comprehended ideas and associations, perhaps 'liberal Toryism' will look rather different. After all, as the philosopher Raymond Geuss has remarked, liberalism 'seems virtually to have been born looking backward and usurping ... a much older ancestry than a historian of the strictest discipline would perhaps be willing to attest for it'.[2] This may be true not just of the theory but also of the historiography of liberalism.

Given that it is credited with laying the groundwork for mid-Victorian liberalism, the formation and identity of 'liberal Toryism' has always attracted interest.[3] Debate has tended

* I would like to thank Richard Huzzey, the editors, and the anonymous referees for their helpful comments.
[1] E. Halévy, *The Liberal Awakening*, pp. 81-2 n. 3. See more recently J. Coohill, *Ideas of the Liberal Party: Perceptions, Agendas and Liberal Politics in the House of Commons* (Malden, 2011).
[2] R. Geuss, *History and Illusion in Politics* (Cambridge, 2001), p.71.
[3] The classic account is W.R. Brock, *Lord Liverpool and Liberal Toryism, 1820 to 1827* (London, 1941).

turn on two issues. One of these – which might be called the 'continuity' thesis – is now widely accepted. The traditional idea was that Lord Liverpool's reshuffle between 1821 and 1823 marked a dramatic shift towards 'liberal' economic and foreign policy. In the former case, while Robinson was promoted to Chancellor of the Exchequer and Huskisson became President of the Board of Trade, both had been actively involved in policy-making in the preceding decade and moves towards liberalisation were already taking place – retrenchment, reduction of duties, and the return to the gold standard. In the latter instance, Castlereagh had already distanced Britain from the Holy Alliance, and was critical of its commitment to intervene to repress revolutionary movements – policies typically associated with Canning. He was also – again, like Canning – a fervent supporter of Catholic Emancipation.[4] What did change after 1822, however, was the tone of the government. As Jonathan Parry persuasively argues, a key element of Canningite liberalism was its responsiveness to 'public opinion'. Whereas Castlereagh kept his foreign policy under wraps, Canning used his public profile to secure backing for his policies, and to advertise his seeming distance from the Holy Alliance. If, in practice, his policies differed little from his predecessor, his skill was to present them in a positive language which did much to enhance the esteem – not least, among some Whigs – with which he, and the government more generally, were held.[5] The downside, however, was that this increased the suspicion of other Tories – a problem worsened by the abrasive personalities of Canning and Huskisson, which tended to exacerbate disagreements in cabinet which Liverpool had previously managed to smooth over.[6]

[4] See B. Hilton, 'The Political Arts of Lord Liverpool', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., xxxviii (1988), pp. 149-50 for an overview of the 'continuity thesis'. For Castlereagh see J. Bew, *Castlereagh: the Biography of a Statesman* (London, 2011), pp. 450-7, 478-84, 496-509.
[5] J. Parry, *The Rise and Fall of Liberal Government in Victorian Britain* (New Haven, CT, 1993), pp. 39-45; S.M. Lee, *George Canning and Liberal Toryism 1801-1827* (Woodbridge, 2008), chs. 5-7. For Whigs, see also W. Hay, *The Whig Revival, 1808-1830* (Basingstoke, 2004).
[6] Hilton, 'Political Arts'.

But it is the second theme of the historiography which is of more concern here – that is, the 'ideology' of liberal Toryism. Understandably, scholars have concentrated on the impact of economic liberalism on the government.[7] Here, it is important to be cautious: the 'ideologies' of working politicians were always mixed up with much more pragmatic considerations of personal and party interest.[8] Hence, for all the bold talk of some ministers about political economy, the measures implemented were 'calculated and cautious'.[9] Boyd Hilton's early work argued that the government was trying to combat social and economic disorder by engineering a return to the supposedly 'natural' state that had existed before the revolutionary wars with France. As concerns grew in the 1820s about pressure on food supply, moves towards free trade were thought the best way to feed a growing population – this was about the pragmatic need to stabilise society rather than an ideological desire to expand industry.[10] In his later work, Hilton argued that there was in fact an 'ideological' component to liberal Toryism, but that it must be sought in the conjunction between economics and evangelicalism. These Tories were committed to a moderate form of evangelicalism and argued that a divinely created natural order justly meted out rewards and punishments to individuals according to their virtuous or vicious behaviour. Hence, artificial human institutions should take care not to distort the operation of such social and economic justice. By contrast the alternative strand of 'high' Toryism saw no objection to a more managerial and paternalistic approach to governing. In the 1820s these differences between 'liberal' and 'high' Tories became more visible, and were felt not just in economic affairs, but, Hilton argues, also in religious and social policies as well. This remains the most

[7] E.g. B. Gordon, *Political Economy in Parliament, 1819-1823* (London, 1976); id., *Economic Doctrine and Tory Liberalism, 1824-1830* (London, 1979).
[8] See M. Bentley, 'Party, Doctrine and Thought' in M. Bentley and J. Stevenson, eds., *High and Low Politics in Modern Britain: Ten Studies* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 123-53; D. Craig, '"High Politics" and the "New Political History"', *Historical Journal*, liii (2010), pp. 453-76.
[9] Parry, *Rise and Fall*, p. 43.
[10] B. Hilton, *Corn, Cash, Commerce: the Economic Policies of the Tory Governments 1815-1830* (Oxford, 1977).

sophisticated and compelling attempt to define 'liberal Toryism', although there is a danger, as some critics noted, of making it excessively cohesive and unified.[11] Canning's 'liberal' reputation, for instance, was largely built around his foreign policy, and he had relatively little to say about economic matters where he followed the guidance of Huskisson.[12] Peel was also – as Hilton acknowledges – a rather unusual sort of 'liberal'.[13]

This article approaches the issue of 'liberalism' from a different angle. Instead of looking at the policies proposed by ministers and identifying what was 'liberal' about them, it instead reverses the question, and makes the language of 'liberalism' the object of attention. How did the use of this term develop in the 1820s, what did contemporaries mean by it, and why were particular ideas and politicians increasingly defined as 'liberal'? In this sense the aim is not so much a political as a rhetorical history of the decade, with the hope that the latter might throw new light on the former. The analysis of concepts has been a staple of intellectual history for some time, but in recent years political historians have become more attentive to the terms used in political debate. While some have taken advantage of the quantitative method of 'corpus linguistics',[14] the approach here draws more on Quentin Skinner's arguments about the evolution of 'keywords'. In particular, he stressed the need to

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[11] See B. Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: the Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1785-1865* (Oxford, 1988), and pp. 386-93 for a response to various criticisms; id., *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People?: England 1783-1846* (Oxford, 2006), ch. 5.

[12] Lee, *George Canning*, p. 148.

[13] See 'Peel: a Reappraisal', *Historical Journal*, xxii (1979), pp. 585-614; 'The Ripening of Robert Peel' in M. Bentley, ed., *Public and Private Doctrine: Essays in British History Presented to Maurice Cowling* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 63-84; 'The Gallows and Mr Peel' in T.C.W. Blanning and D. Cannadine, eds., *History and Biography: Essays in Honour of Derek Beales* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 88-112.

[14] e.g. L. Blaxill, 'Quantifying the Language of British Politics, 1880-1910', *Historical Research*, lxxxvi (2013), pp. 313-41. There are particular difficulties in searching for variants of the term 'liberal' – partly because as a very widely used adjective, associated phrases did not necessarily have any political significance, and partly because intense interest in French and Spanish politics can distort data on the extent of domestic use in the press. Nevertheless, a search using the British Newspaper Archive – the largest digital repository of newspapers in Britain and Ireland – reveals steady increases of terms such as 'liberal principles' across the decade. In the case of 'liberals' there was a spike between 1822 and 1824 (718 results in 1823 compared to 255 in 1821, dropping back to 294 in 1825) and an acceleration from 1827 to 1830: 985 results rising to 1,877. The same trend is also apparent in targeted searches of the Whig *Morning Chronicle* and the Tory *Morning Post*. Something similar is also apparent in use of the new term 'liberalism' – peaking at 123 results in 1823, dropping to 98 in 1826, but rising to 238, 458, and 511 in 1827, 1828, and 1829 respectively. As discussed below (see esp. nn. 36 and 170), 'liberalism' tended to be used much more extensively by the Tory press.

examine both the sense of a term – what it was typically thought to mean – and also its reference, that is, the range of social situations to which it could be applied. In addition, appraisive force mattered, referring to the attitudes a term was commonly used to express – 'liberal', he notes, was a word which carried positive or negative connotations for different users.[15] What this means in practice is that we can examine the diverse and changing meanings of 'liberal' language in this decade, *and* also seek to understand how those meanings aided the legitimisation and de-legitimation of political positions. Contemporaries found it increasingly useful to describe themselves and others as 'liberal' or 'illiberal', and, as they did so, they invested the term with new meanings. Not only, therefore, did 'liberal' start to acquire associations with particular ideas and policies, but it became part of the arsenal of political rhetoric. A consequence is that we should not expect to find agreement about its meanings across the political spectrum – it could be used in a variety of ways with positive or negative force, meaning that 'liberal Toryism' was at least as much a creature of rhetoric as ideology.

I

By the 1820s the terms 'Toryism' and the 'Tory party' had become established points of reference. Harriet Arbuthnot often used them, and Lord Liverpool commented in 1824 that he wished the 'Tory cause' had as able a defender as Burke.[16] Most striking, perhaps, is that Canning himself spoke in 1820 of 'my public principles – my principles of Toryism, if you

[15] Q. Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, I*: Regarding Method* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 158-74, 175-87. On word history see also S. Collini, *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain* (Oxford, 2006), chs. 1-2 and T. Dixon, *The Invention of Altruism: Making Moral Meanings in Victorian Britain* (Oxford, 2008).

[16] E.g. F. Bamford and the Duke of Wellington, eds., *The Journal of Mrs Arbuthnot, 1820-1832* (2 vols., London, 1950), i. 10, 56, 101, 211, 244, 304, 311, 370, all before 1825; Lord Liverpool to J. W. Croker, 23 Aug. 1824 in L.J. Jennings, ed., *The Croker Papers: the Correspondence and Diaries of the Late Right Honourable John Wilson Croker* (3 vols., London, 1885), i. 270. For broader debate about the re-emergence of 'tory' language see J.C.D. Clark, 'A General Theory of Party, Opposition and Government, 1688-1832', *Historical Journal*, xxiii (1980), pp. 314-15; J.J. Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative: Reaction and Orthodoxy in Britain, c. 1769-1832*, (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 66-74; Lee, *George Canning*, pp. 82-5, 171-3; Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People?*, pp. 195-7.

will'.[17] So, while there was some anxiety about reviving these terms, in general there was broad agreement that they could be used, and about what they meant. But what of 'liberal Toryism'? This phrase was only used rarely in the press before 1827, although terms such as the 'liberal part' or 'liberal portion' of the government were becoming increasingly common from the early years of the decade.[18] In 1823, *The Times* criticised the 'Ultra and more stupid part of the British Ministry' and referred to 'the "liberal" part of the Ministers', the inverted commas indicating that the use of the term was relatively novel.[19] Over the next few years the contrast between 'liberal' and 'illiberal' or 'ultra' members of the government would be frequently stressed, and such commentary helped to formalise the sense of sharp division between them. This quickly became entrenched: by the time Augustus Stapleton published his *Political Life* of Canning in 1831, the belief that the government had been divided into two separate blocs was widely accepted. In 1822, he claimed, most members of the government had been 'Ultra Tories', though some had 'liberal opinions' on the Catholic question. They all, he went on, claimed to be the legatees of Pitt, though the 'Ultra Tories' took the Pitt of the revolutionary period as their role model, while the 'Liberal Tories' cleaved to his earlier incarnation.[20] The accuracy of these claims is not the issue – it is that Stapleton was trying to sort ministers into categories less than a decade old. Indeed, he tacitly admitted that Liverpool and Peel did not readily lend themselves to such sorting, and he might have added that neither Canning nor Huskisson (nor their supporters) generally called themselves 'liberal Tories'. The central question is therefore how and when did they come to be seen as 'liberal' and what did this mean for both their friends and their foes?

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[17] Cited in Lee, *George Canning*, p. 84.

[18] In the case of 'liberal Tory/Tories', the British Newspaper Archive returns only five results before 1826, with nineteen in that election year, rising to sixty-four in the year of Canning's government in 1827, before dropping back to twenty-four and twenty-five in 1829 and 1830 respectively.

[19] *The Times*, 25 Apr. and 5 May 1823. See also *Morning Chronicle*, 19 Jul. and 2 Sept. 1823; 3 Jan., 13 Jan, 30 Jan., and 1 Jul. 1824. On 11 May 1824 it wrote of 'the liberal Mr HUSKISSON … the most liberal of our liberal ministers'.

[20] A. Stapleton, *The Political Life of the Right Honourable George Canning* (3 vols., London, 1831), i. 127, 128.

It should be stressed that 'liberal' language did not emerge simply as a response to the development of continental 'liberalism'. While self-described 'liberals' were becoming a recognised feature of the political landscape of Spain, France, and Italy, that noun was generally distinct from what British parliamentarians meant when they used the word. It had for some time connoted a sort of intellectual openness, and so in recent decades had become closely linked to questions of religious toleration and frequently peppered debates on the Catholic question. In 1821 Mackintosh spoke of the great cause 'of religion, of liberality, of wise policy', and Castlereagh urged that concessions be granted in a 'spirit of liberality'. Wilberforce explained that Catholics had never known the constitution 'in its dignifying, enlarging, and liberalizing influence', but Peel wondered whether 'toleration and liberality' could enable unqualified persons to take office.[21] Charles Wetherell, a bitter opponent of all manner of reforms, noted that opponents of the Disability Removal Bill were taunted as 'narrow-minded and illiberal men', but pointed out that Hobbes, Harrington, Sidney, and Locke – 'all of whom were liberal in their sentiments' – had argued that admittance to national office required conformity to the national church.[22] Whether supporting or opposing the measure, speakers happily used 'liberal' language and tried to resist those who would cast them in the role of 'illiberals'. Hence even a staunch anti-Catholic such as Eldon defended the existing establishment on the very grounds that it provided a 'liberal and enlightened' toleration.[23] As yet, he could see no reason to abandon the word 'liberal' even though he opposed those who thought 'liberality' required an extension of rights to non-Anglicans.

More striking, however, is the way that commercial questions were wrapped up in liberal language. Take the famous petition of the merchants of London which Alexander Baring presented to the Commons in May 1820. It advocated unilateral free trade as

[21] Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (2nd ser.) [hereafter Hansard], 28 Feb. 1821, vol. 4, cc. 994, 1005, 1028 and 16 Mar. 1821, vol. 4, c. 1291.
[22] Hansard, 23 Mar. 1821, vol. 4, c. 1434.
[23] Hansard, 17 Apr. 1821, vol. 5, c. 291.

'enlightened' and 'conciliatory' and argued that 'the most liberal would prove to be the most politic course'. Various commentators – including David Ricardo as well as the Whig Lord Milton – praised its 'liberal principles', while Frederick Robinson, then President of the Board of Trade, claimed that he had always opposed the 'restrictive system of commerce', but that while some 300 duties had been repealed in recent years, opposition from Whigs had prevented further progress.[24] Such 'liberal' language was frequently employed: 'a more liberal system towards foreign powers', 'liberal principle of mutual encouragement', 'liberal to foreign states, more beneficial to England' and so on. The 'liberal system' was contrasted with an 'illiberal, artificial, and restrictive system of regulation'.[25] In 1822, before becoming President of the Board of Trade, Huskisson spoke against the 'mercantile system' which restricted trade and was pleased to see the 'diffusion of more liberal and enlightened views' in these matters. It was, he said, important to set other nations an example and to show 'our fixed determination to pursue that liberal system of commercial intercourse' which had already begun.[26] This language was continued in 1823: in defending his budget Robinson spoke of the need to replace the 'useless lumber of antiquated prejudices' with a 'liberal system of policy' while Huskisson – in proposing his Reciprocity of Duties Bill – explained that a 'perfect equality' of trade with other countries would not only improve Britain's commerce, but would increase feelings of mutual confidence and diminish the 'sources of commercial jealousy' between nations. 'It was high time', he continued, 'in the improved state of the civilization of the world, to establish more liberal principles; and show, that

[24] Hansard, 8 May 1820, vol. 1, cc. 181, 182-3, 187, 191. The petition was encouraged by ministers who wanted 'a declaration of public opinion so that they could pretend to respond to it': Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People?*, p. 298.
[25] Hansard, 5 Jun. 1820, vol. 1, c. 852; 29 Mar. 1821, vol. 4, c. 1503; 25 Jun. 1821, vol. 5, c. 1291; 22 May 1821, vol. 5, c. 885.
[26] Hansard, 15 Feb. 1822, vol. 6, c. 422; 20 Jun. 1822, vol. 7, c. 1215.

commerce was not the end, but the means of diffusing comfort and enjoyment among the nations'.[27]

There was also continuity in the language used about foreign affairs. Canning, for instance, had hoped in a debate on South America in 1820 that 'the march of freedom (to use the cant usually employed)' would be successful if it could be achieved without violence. 'He was as warm a friend for the extension of liberty and of liberal institutions throughout the world … but he never was disposed to prefer new institutions because they were new, and to detest established institutions because they were established'.[28] At his election for Harwich in February 1823 he explained he would pursue the 'most liberal principles' in foreign policy, but would try to maintain 'strict neutrality' towards continental affairs.[29] This was a line he repeated throughout the year – in April, as France invaded Spain, he spoke positively of the diffusion of political liberty, and of his enthusiasm for national independence, but at the same time he could not support revolutions, and in October, he noted that while 'the language of modern philosophy' encouraged cosmopolitan benevolence, what really mattered was the national interest – this did not mean isolation from continental concerns, but nor did it mean ceaseless meddling in its affairs.[30] This basic stance was also explained by Lord Liverpool in debates over France and Spain: when considering 'what were called liberal principles in different states' it was important to avoid extremes, and that true friends of liberty endorsed the compromise between 'the principle of democracy and that of monarchy' which excelled in Britain.[31] There was little here that departed from the practice of Castlereagh, but Canning

[27] Hansard, 21 Feb. 1823, vol. 8, c. 200; 6 Jun. 1823, cc. 796, 797.
[28] Hansard, 11 Jul. 1820, vol. 2, c. 392.
[29] *The Times*, 18 Feb. 1823. See Halévy, *Liberal Awakening*, pp. 168-70.
[30] Hansard, 30 Apr. 1823, vol. 8, c. 1513; R. Therry, ed., *The Speeches of the Right Honourable George Canning* (6 vols., London, 1828), vi. 421.
[31] Hansard, 24 Apr. 1823, vol. 8, c. 1247.

provided enough criticism of continental powers, and enough flirtation with constitutional reformers, to appear progressive.[32]

When the parliamentary session began in 1823, therefore, 'liberal' language was already well established. Canning and Huskisson did not import something new into the Commons, but rather drew on – and drew attention to – an existing and well endorsed set of linguistic resources that signified a degree of openness to the 'spirit of the age'. The language was certainly suggestive to Whigs, who had long been comfortable praising 'liberal opinions'. Lord Hamilton noted that Canning had received 'many high compliments on the ground of the liberality of his sentiments', although he would need more information before crediting the Foreign Secretary with 'liberal principles'.[33] Brougham went further, and was accused of making 'such love' to Canning when he commended his 'liberal sentiments' on Spanish affairs,[34] and he was similarly fulsome in praising the economic arguments of Huskisson and Robinson. 'The former, it was true, had always entertained liberal opinions upon such matters' but the change of heart by the Chancellor was 'marvellous', he said.[35] The fact that members of the government could so freely speak in 'liberal' and 'enlightened' terms was partly because this language was not seen as particularly problematic. Moreover, it was a language that Whigs – and reformers more generally – frequently invoked and commended in their speeches and writings. The *Edinburgh Review* routinely spoke of 'enlarged' or 'enlightened' liberal policy on political, religious and economic questions, but it did not yet refer to 'liberals' either as a noun (except in the context of commentary on Europe) or to 'liberalism' as a philosophy.[36] For these writers 'liberal' remained a loose,

[32] See Parry, *Rise and Fall*, pp. 41-2.
[33] Hansard, 27 Mar. 1823, vol. 8, c. 773.
[34] Copley to Creevey, 6 Mar. 1823 in H. Maxwell, ed., *The Creevey Papers: A Selection from the Correspondence and Diaries of Thomas Creevey, MP* (2 vols., London, 1903), ii. 65; Hansard, 14 Apr. 1823, vol. 8, c. 902.
[35] Hansard, 22 May 1823, vol. 9, c. 439. Robinson's conversion was not recent: W.D. Jones, *'Prosperity' Robinson: the Life of Viscount Goderich* (London, 1967), pp. 65-73.
[36] Aside from a publication notice, the *Edinburgh Review* only mentioned 'liberalism' twice before 1830: 'Irish Novels', xliii (1826), p. 369; 'The Present Administration', xlvi (1827), p. 247. Even the *Westminster Review*

adjectival, and strongly positive term of praise – the mark an open-minded man. It was instead to be Tories – particularly 'high' or 'ultra' Tories – who were to pioneer a negative stereotype of liberalism as a by-product of their ongoing criticisms of 'liberal' ministers.

II

Over the next three years a split within the Tories became starkly apparent. Heated arguments took place in cabinet over foreign policy, economic affairs, and, to a lesser degree, the Catholic question. There were suggestions that the government might collapse in the spring of 1825, and doubts at the start of the following year that it could endure much longer.[37] These divisions were increasingly defined in terms of the 'liberal' and 'illiberal' – or ultra – members of the government, which further contributed to the scrutiny of 'liberal' language. While the various shades of opposition opinion continued to endorse 'liberal opinions', they did not offer sustained discussion of what they believed that phrase meant. Instead it was the 'illiberals' who crafted an account of 'liberalism' as a programme. The increased talk of 'liberality' that suffused the policies of ministers forced critics to articulate more clearly and starkly precisely what they opposed, and in doing so they brought into existence – at least rhetorically – the sense that there was a cohesive 'liberal system'. This section charts how that process occurred between 1823 and 1826, and it focuses largely on the Tory press, because it was there more than anywhere else that 'liberal' language produced the most sustained controversy.

When in the summer of 1823 Canning referred to the 'liberal principles which *all* professed to admire', he was certainly not speaking of the Tory press.[38] Even before he was

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only used the word twice before 1829, and both of those referred to continental liberalism: 'Periodical Literature', i (1824), p. 514; 'Schlegel's Lectures on Religion', iii (1825), p. 321.

[37] Bamford and Wellington, *Journal of Mrs Arbuthnot*, i. 394, 414; ii. 8; J.F. Bagot, *George Canning and his Friends* (2 vols., London, 1909), ii. 279.

[38] Hansard, 18 Jul. 1823, vol. 9, c. 1542 (my emphasis).

appointed Foreign Secretary there had been vocal criticisms of the vogue for 'liberality' in some staunch Tory quarters. The *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine* – and leading high churchmen such as Van Mildert – had frequently pointed out the way 'liberality' was extolled as a justification for Catholic Emancipation.[39] That periodical ceased publication in 1819, but its agenda was continued in *John Bull,* which was launched at the height of the Queen Caroline affair in late 1820 with the slogan 'For God, the King, and the People'.[40] Over the ensuing years this weekly newspaper garnered a reputation for a scurrilous style of loyalism – even Robert Southey refused to endorse it.[41] It insisted that words such as 'liberality' and 'conciliation', along with 'toleration' and 'indulgence' were merely a cover – an 'artificial combination of mock liberality and real hostility to the established order'.[42] 'We are sick of LIBERALITY', it wrote in 1822, 'all the mischief – all the horrors – all the sanguinary excesses which have been displayed on the theatre of Europe over the last 30 years, are the *product* – the SOLE PRODUCT OF LIBERALITY.'[43] The problem that *John Bull* repeatedly articulated was that these sweet phrases were designed to con the defenders of the status quo into conceding seemingly small measures of reform and it hoped that by exposing the language of its enemies it could stiffen the backbone of the government and wider opinion.

Tory newspapers did their best to denounce the Whigs as a dangerous threat. Their role in defending Queen Caroline in 1820 had provided a pretext, but their attitudes to continental politics in the early 1820s added fuel to the fire. The *Morning Post* conceded that Whigs had once held noble principles but they had now lost all sense of 'political propriety' and in their support of the Neapolitan revolution they had thrown in their lot with the

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[39] See D. Craig, 'The Language of Liberality in Britain, *c*.1760-*c*.1815', *Modern Intellectual History,* forthcoming 2019.
[40] R.H. Dalton Barham, *The Life and Remains of Theodore Edward Hook* (2 vols., London, 1849), i. 195-202
[41] Southey to G. Bedford, 31 Aug. 1821 in J.W. Warter, ed., *Selections from the Letters of Robert Southey* (4 vols., London, 1856), iii. 267.
[42] *John Bull*, 8 Oct. and 31 Dec. 1821.
[43] *John Bull*, 23 Dec. 1822.

'Radicals'.[44] This was a common theme. *John Bull* commented that it had often been criticised for 'confounding Whiggery with Radicalism', but it stood by its claims, insisting its job was to expose humbug and the 'mock liberality of the present day'. It made an argument often repeated in the 1820s – that the Tories of the present day were the same as the Whigs of the Glorious Revolution, and that modern Whigs were infected with Jacobinism – they might better be called 'WHIG RADICALS' or 'RADICAL WHIGS'.[45] This conflation – which brought together a diverse collection of politicians, writers, and journalists – was particularly apparent in an article on 'The Opposition' in the *Quarterly Review*. Diagnosing the chief causes of modern sedition, it argued that since the 1790s Whiggism had thrown aside its former moderation in favour of vigorous support for revolutionaries in France, Spain, Portugal, Naples and Piedmont. Because it had once supported a revolution in the 1680s, it now thought it should support them all – indeed, it was only by allying itself with radicals that it had any influence out of doors.[46] Throughout the article, the author used various terms to describe this supposed movement – Whigs, Revolutionists, Radicals, Anarchists, and, increasingly, Liberals. A major boost for this language was the furore surrounding the publication of *The Liberal*, the short-lived journal set up by Byron, Hunt and the recently deceased Shelley. Although it actually used the word very sparingly, its critics argued that the personnel and contents exposed just how immoral and seditious 'liberals' really were, and that they – along with their Whig friends – formed a dangerous cabal.[47]

But how did this evolving stereotype of Whigs come to be applied to 'liberal Tories', and what was the wider significance for the understanding of 'liberalism'? As the government explained its policies – and, as we have seen, used 'liberal' language in the

[44] *Morning Post*, 17 Mar. 1821.
[45] *John Bull*, 6 Jan. and 14 Sept. 1823.
[46] [D. Robinson], 'The Opposition', *Quarterly Review*, xxviii (1822), pp. 209-11, 217.
[47] D. Craig, 'The Origins of "Liberalism" in Britain: the Case of *The Liberal*', *Historical Research*, lv (2013), pp. 469-87.

process – so it became increasingly plausible for some critics to link them to the negative account of that language. In doing so such critics sharpened public awareness of these terms. There were early warning signs of this in 1823 when Canning explained his reasons for opposing French intervention in Spain in terms that were unusually critical of her belligerence. Although the substance of what he said was not new, his tone – and the fact that he published a large set of official papers – was disconcerting to some Tories. Brougham commented on the 'deathlike silence' of members opposite him who, he assumed, were horrified by the 'liberality of principles' that they had just heard, while Creevey reported that Canning had provoked 'undisguised hostility' among 'all the Tories'.[48] Meanwhile, various diplomats of the Concert of Europe – for whom the word 'liberal' connoted something more dangerous than its typical use in Britain suggested – were registering concern. Hobhouse told the Commons what he had heard: '"Oh," said they, "matters will go poorly with us now in England: the patron of legitimacy is no more; and in his place we find a liberal; nay, more, a very radical".' Both he and Peel found such a characterisation rather fanciful, and Canning made a joke of it, referring to himself as 'the liberal – I beg pardon – to be quite accurate I am afraid I must say, the radical – Foreign minister of England'.[49] *John Bull*, although it rejected the argument that the government had borrowed its policies from the opposition, nevertheless warned that 'there has been of late too much coquetting – too much of *liberality* (fatal, fatal word!) and concessions' to the Whigs. It also regretted that the 'conduct and language' of Canning towards France smacked too much of the 'system' of conciliation to 'liberal' ideas.[50] There was also sniping behind the scenes – Wellington frequently complained of Canning's supposed lack of principles, the offence he gave to continental powers, and his avid courting of popularity, while his confidante Harriet Arbuthnot was always ready to accuse the Foreign

[48] Hansard 14 Apr. 1823, vol. 9, c. 899; Creevey to Miss Ord, 14 Feb. and 28 Apr. 1823 in Maxwell, *Creevey Papers*, ii. 63, 69.
[49] Hansard, 28 Apr. 1823, vol. 8, c. 1345; 29 Apr. 1823, vol. 8, c. 1424; 30 Apr. 1823, vol. 8, c. 1483.
[50] *John Bull*, 7 and 21 Apr. 1823.

Secretary of conceding too much to the 'revolutionists'. Although she did not yet call him a 'liberal', his tone seemed to place him close to the views of the opposition.[51]

The crucial years in shaping 'liberal' Toryism were 1824 and 1825. Canning had hoped to co-operate with the United States in recognising the republics of South America, and in one speech had referred to the 'liberal men of both countries' who wanted 'well-regulated liberty'.[52] Even though the declaration of the Monroe Doctrine at the end of 1823 put paid to that, he spent much of the following year laying the ground for a unilateral declaration despite stiff resistance from Wellington and George IV. In addition, the Greek struggle for independence against Turkey rumbled on – here Canning was ambiguous and although he recognised the extent of public feeling on the issue, he also accepted that the Ottoman Empire needed to be preserved against the influence of Russia.[53] During this period, the government was frequently encouraged by opposition speakers to be bolder. Lord Lansdowne was supportive, but wanted 'more liberal, frank, and explicit language' on South America, while Hobhouse hoped the 'tyrants of Europe' would be opposed, and ministers would 'glory in a free, liberal and independent policy'.[54] Francis Blake, meanwhile, complained of a divided ministry, arguing that the 'liberal part of the cabinet' were being held back by intractable ultras who would 'never become liberal'.[55] The opposition press reinforced these messages. The *Morning Chronicle* praised the 'liberal portion' of ministers for helping advance freedom and civilisation against the 'barbarising politics' of the Holy Alliance and stated it would support government measures if they were 'wise and liberal'.[56] Canning and Huskisson continued to use 'liberal' language, and Lord Liverpool hoped Spain

[51] Bamford and Wellington, *Journal of Mrs Arbuthnot*, i. 208, 213, 238, 248-9, 275.
[52] Therry, *Speeches of Canning*, vi. 414.
[53] Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People?*, p. 293.
[54] Hansard, 3 Feb. 1824, vol. 10, c. 22; 23 Mar. 1824, vol. 10, cc. 1353, 1355.
[55] Hansard, 11 May 1824, vol. 11, c. 723.
[56] *Morning Chronicle*, 3 Jan. and 8 Mar. 1824.

would develop a 'more enlarged and liberal' connection with her colonies.[57] Nevertheless it was Canning whose activities were most closely monitored. He did himself no favours when he attended the banquet given by the 'radical' Lord Mayor, Robert Waithman. Harriet Arbuthnot noted Wellington's opposition to this, and she suggested that Canning now thought himself so popular among the Whigs, that it did not matter if he offended the King. By July she had started using 'liberal' as a noun that could be applied to members of the government: Liverpool had become 'quite a liberal', while Wellington was, briefly, inclined to think in the summer that 'the liberals [were] more cautious'.[58] Meanwhile the Grenvillite member of cabinet, Charles Wynn, reported that 'all the old Tories complain vehemently of the new liberal system'.[59] So it seems that by the summer of 1824 there was not only a growing awareness of a divergence among the Tories, but also an emerging terminology by which to explain it.

These fears about the direction of the government now began to percolate into the Tory press. While both the *Morning Post* and even the *Quarterly Review* refrained from using liberal language and avoided attacks on ministers, *John Bull* had fewer qualms – it kept up its steady criticism of the Whig opposition and the 'present rage for liberal opinions', but also worried that 'the system of CONCILIATION, miscalled liberality' was becoming a hallmark of the government.[60] But the most important and sustained criticism of 'liberal opinions' came from *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, which was widely read by politicians and increasingly excerpted in the press. It outsold the *Edinburgh Review*, and although it never quite achieved the sales of the *Quarterly*, it effectively took over the role of main dispenser of political commentary since that periodical now avoided contentious subjects so as not to draw

[57] Hansard, 15 Mar. 1824, vol. 10, c. 994.
[58] Bamford and Wellington, *Journal of Mrs Arbuthnot*, i. 306, 310, 329, 332.
[59] Wynn to Buckingham, 17 Apr. 1824 in R.P.T. Grenville, ed., *Memoirs of the Court of George IV, 1820-1830* (2 vols., London, 1859), ii. 66.
[60] *John Bull*, 7 Jun. & 27 Sept. 1824.

attention to party divisions, and to maintain friendship with Canning.[61] *Blackwood's* had already – in its war against *The Liberal* – helped familiarise readers with the idea that European 'liberalism' was marked by 'licentiousness' and 'infidelity', and it now began applying that critique to British politics in a campaign against what it dubbed 'The Liberal System'. The author of most of these articles was a man about whom little is known: David Robinson. Although now best remembered for his economic essays, he in fact outlined a comprehensive vision of Toryism. Indeed, the politics of *Blackwood's* in the 1820s were in large part those of Robinson. He wrote over ninety articles between 1824 and 1831, typically one a month, and usually the main political article in that issue. Take the election year of 1826, for example: his twelve articles covered not only key economic questions such as agriculture, the shipping interest, and free trade, but also criticised the government, assessed the implications of the election, and offered three separate treatments of Ireland. Although much less well known, then as now, than John Wilson and William Maginn, his role at *Blackwood's* was vital – as one historian argues, 'he more than anyone made its political reputation'.[62] When in 1827 William Blackwood claimed that it was the only journal which espoused the high Tory cause, 'and for years attacked the Liberals and Free Trade Political Economists', this was because of Robinson's contributions.[63]

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[61] S. Smiles, *A Publisher and his Friends: Memoir and Correspondence of the Late John Murray* (2 vols., London, 1891), ii. 160, 168; A. Lang, *The Life and Letters of John Gibson Lockhart* (2 vols., London, 1897), ii. 6-10, 32-6. In the late 1820s, *Blackwood's* sold around 6500 copies each issue, a little above the *Edinburgh's* 6000 and below the 10,500 of the *Quarterly*: D. Finkelstein, 'Selling *Blackwood's Magazine*, 1817-1834' in R. Morrison and D.S. Roberts, *Romanticism and* Blackwood's Magazine: *'An Unprecedented Phenomenon'* (Basingstoke, 2013), p. 81.

[62] J.M. Milne, 'The Politics of *Blackwood's*, 1817-1846: A Study of the Political, Economic and Social Articles in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, and of Selected Contributors' (Newcastle Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1984), p. 75. Other historians who have recognised Robinson's importance include H. Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English Society, 1780-1880* (London, 1969), pp. 244-52; S. Rashid, 'David Robinson and the Tory Macroeconomics of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*', *History of Political Economy*, x (1978), pp. 258-70; A. Gambles, *Protection and Politics: Conservative Economic Discourse, 1815-1852* (Woodbridge, 1999). And yet the most recent study – Morrison and Roberts, *Romanticism and* Blackwood's Magazine – has only four passing references to him.

[63] William Blackwood to his son William Blackwood, 27 Apr. 1827 in M. Oliphant, *Annals of a Publishing House: William Blackwood and his Sons* (3 vols., Edinburgh, 1897-8), ii. 75. In the following year, Robinson was joined by William Johnston, who also wrote political articles attacking 'Liberals': Milne, 'The Politics of *Blackwood's*', pp. 148-72.

Robinson understood continental politics in terms which echoed the polemics of the 1790s. Whether they went by the name of 'Carbonari, Liberals, Revolutionists, Constitutionalists, [or] Anarchists' the enemies of the established powers were simply the heirs of Jacobinism. They may have adopted the new sobriquet 'Liberal', but they merely repeated the dogmas of the French Revolution:[64]

> quenchless animosity against Royalty, Aristocracy, and Christianity, in the abstract … the destruction of all old feelings and institutions, merely because they were old … Everything was to be changed and reversed; not merely forms of government, but forms of society – not merely civil, but ecclesiastical institutions, – religious, as well as political, feelings – and habits and opinions of private, as well as of public, life.[65]

Robinson, accordingly, was sceptical about the demands for liberty coming from 'liberals' and offered a positive assessment of the existing governments of Europe. The Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and Greek peoples were all, he asserted, insufficiently intelligent and moral to be trusted with political power. Yes, Turkey was a despotism, and yes, the Greeks ought to have better government, but they lacked the basic features of organised political life, and the people themselves were criminal and vicious. The best advice was to obey the Turks 'until you become intelligent, virtuous, and reasonably powerful'.[66] So too in South America, where the 'principles of Liberalism' would only establish oligarchy and tyranny.[67] In saying this, Robinson did not want to be identified as a supporter of despotism – he repeatedly stressed he was an earnest advocate of 'real' or 'rational' liberty. And, he claimed, this had also been true of continental sovereigns in the immediate period after 1815. They had been friendly to the gradual extension of liberty, and to preparing their peoples for it, but the

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[64] 'Letter from Sampson Standfast, Esq', *B[lackwood's] E[dimburgh] M[agazine]*, xv (1824), p. 58; 'South America', *BEM*, xv (1824), p. 142. All *BEM* articles by Robinson unless stated otherwise.
[65] '*The Edinburgh Review*, no. LXXVIII', *BEM*, xv (1824), p. 321.
[66] 'The Liberal System', *BEM*, xvi (1824), p. 444, and passim.
[67] 'South America', p. 139.

emergence of liberal revolutionaries – with their slogans about abstract constitutions and royal tyranny – had put them on their guard and prevented moderate reforms.[68] In making these arguments, Robinson explicitly drew upon Burke's thinking about the preconditions of constitutionalism, and about the evolutionary nature of reform.[69] For him the criticisms made of revolutionaries in the 1790s were simply reapplied with minimal adjustment to the new generation of 'liberals'.

This stereotype, as we have seen, was already being applied to the Whigs: since they spouted 'outlandish jargon' about 'light, reason, philosophy' they should stop calling themselves Whigs and embrace the names of 'Liberals, Carbonari or Constitutionalists'.[70] This polemic – which lumped together various individuals including Holland, Mackintosh, Brougham, Burdett, Hume, Byron, and Bentham – was clearly absurd, but the important point is that in 1824 Robinson increasingly began to apply it to Canning. In July, although he explicitly denied that the Foreign Secretary had 'become a Liberal', he nevertheless pointed out that the criticisms of French interventionism and warm words about Spanish revolutionaries merely encouraged opposition liberals to redouble their efforts. Still, the tone of the article prompted John Wilson, one of the editors of *Blackwood's*, to add a footnote stating that the differences among Tories were not as great as suggested.[71] By October, Robinson had become more forthright in attacking critics of the continental sovereigns. 'It is', he wrote, 'mighty liberal in a Tory to go strutting and smirking to the altar of Jacobin licentiousness, to throw upon it the fair fame of a king or an emperor'.[72] There was no mention of Canning, but any discerning Tory reader would know exactly who was meant.

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[68] 'The Liberal System', pp. 453, 446-8; '*The Edinburgh Review*', pp. 324, 333. Interestingly, William Lamb, the future Viscount Melbourne, also argued around the same time that 'the impracticable designs of that very liberal party' were the primary cause of limited civil and religious liberty on the continent: Hansard, 23 March 1824, vol. 10, c. 1366.
[69] See 'Life of Burke', *BEM*, xvii (1825), pp. 1-15.
[70] [Robinson], 'The Opposition', p. 209; 'Letter from Sampson Standfast', p. 62.
[71] 'The Late Session of Parliament', *BEM*, xvi (1824), pp. 81, 76, 77. Wilson's note is on p. 86.
[72] 'The Liberal System', p. 453.

Leading figures made the same points in private: Wellington thought 'all this liberal language about freedom & independence' sounded very fine, but the national interest would better be served by ensuring South America remined under Spanish and Portuguese control.[73] George IV was even more vehement shortly after he reluctantly agreed to recognise the independence of those colonies. In a tirade to the cabinet, he accused them of adopting 'Liberalism', and insisted that 'The Jacobins of the world, now calling themselves Liberals' sought to destroy the Quadruple Alliance and had nothing less than the spread of revolution as their goal.[74] Canning's foreign policy, then, enabled his critics to attach to him the negative connotations of 'liberal' that had been developed as a polemic against the Whigs.

This talk of a 'new liberal system' also gave a fillip to anxieties about Catholicism. Since the turn of the century dedicated opponents of Catholic Emancipation had detested the way 'liberality' was frequently invoked to justify extending religious rights. Given that this was a significant – and longstanding – division within the cabinet, the issue was guaranteed to be controversial, and for that reason Canning tried to steer clear of the question whenever possible. This proved increasingly difficult because of the growing power of the Catholic Association in Ireland from 1823. Even opposition papers thought its diatribes were 'disgusting the friends of liberality' and would do nothing to help 'separate the liberal from the bigoted Protestants'.[75] The pamphlet war thrown up by Southey's *Book of the Church* – a fierce polemic – and Charles Butler's *Book of the Roman Catholic Church* – an urbane riposte – ensured that political, historical and theological debate remained sparky.[76] The

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[73] Bamford and Wellington, *Journal of Mrs Arbuthnot*, ii. 366.
[74] A.G. Stapleton, ed., *George Canning and His Times* (London, 1859), pp. 417, 418. See also Bamford and Wellington, *Journal of Mrs Arbuthnot*, ii. 355 for the report that the King was 'out of sorts' with Canning because of his 'patronage of Jacobins'.
[75] *Morning Chronicle*, 26 Oct. 1824.
[76] See D. Craig, *Robert Southey and Romantic Apostasy: Political Argument in Britain 1780-1840* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 140, 191-6. *John Bull*, 8 Mar. 1824, praising Southey's book, commented: 'let the liberals read, learn, and digest' all that the Catholics had done. See Charles Daubeny, *The Protestant's Companion* (London, 1824), pp. 323, 339, 342-3, 404 for typical examples of High Church animus towards 'spurious liberality' and 'the *liberal spirit* of the times', including criticism of 'our liberal and tolerating government'.

government at the start of 1825 announced its intention to outlaw the Association, while in response Burdett carried the Commons in a motion supporting Emancipation. Some opponents carefully explained that their opposition did not derive from 'any illiberal bigotry', but others now claimed that politicians had been misled by 'theories of modern liberality'.[77] *Blackwood's* was also deeply opposed – its argument, however, offered an ingenious melding of traditional anti-Catholic polemic, which insisted on its bigoted, intolerant and despotic nature, with anti-liberal argument, where the stress was on irreligion and revolution. The 'liberals' might claim they wanted religious equality, but this was not motivated by genuine pluralism, but rather by the desire to erode all faith.[78] Understanding that humans were naturally religious, and that the French Revolution had shown deism and atheism were deeply unpopular, they had now concluded that it was better to encourage a faith – Roman Catholicism – that gave power to the priesthood and corroded the conscience: soon the populace would be morally degraded and easily manipulated by liberals who, it was argued, would then use their power to achieve their real secular goals.[79] To be a liberal was to be entranced by a 'philosophy' – 'reason, truth, and light' – which had no respect for traditional national institutions and sentiments. Everything that was not 'liberal' was presumed to be intolerant, bigoted, and dark – to the point where one contributor could embrace the term 'illiberal' as a badge of honour.[80] By 1825, then, *Blackwood's* was increasingly confident that there was such a thing as a cohesive 'liberal' system. But not everyone was so certain. When, early in the session, the 'liberal policy' of the government was praised, Canning insisted that the cabinet was not 'divided into two parties … liberals and illiberals'. Indeed, he went on, the division was 'by no means a straight but a serpentine line', and that members who opposed him on the Catholic question were not necessarily opposed on the American

[77] Bamford and Wellington, *Journal of Mrs Arbuthnot*, ii. 380; *John Bull*, 4 Jul. 1825.
[78] 'The Roman Catholic Church of Ireland', *BEM*, xvii (1825), pp. 259, 275.
[79] 'State Counsel, by the Statesmen of Cockaigne', *BEM*, xvii (1825), pp. 39-43.
[80] 'New Lights', *BEM*, xvii (1825), pp. 732, 733; [W. Maginn], 'The Illiberal', *BEM*, xvii (1825), pp. 340-4.

republics.[81] What matters here is not the existence of cabinet divisions, but that there were not – at least to Canning – two simple and mutually exclusive blocs that could be defined as 'liberal' and 'illiberal'.

In addition to foreign and religious issues, the final component that critics increasingly identified with this 'liberal system' was economic. Here the story to be told is complex. First, as discussed earlier, there was no sharp break in the government's policy in the early 1820s, but the improving economic situation meant that indirect taxes could be reduced, many export duties and bounties were abolished, and the navigation laws were also loosened. Much of this was more a 'tidying-up operation' than an ideological enterprise, although it was hoped that it would increase the entrepôt trade – that Britain might become the warehouse if not the workshop of the world.[82] The terms in which these policies were commended – by Tories and Whigs – continued to draw heavily on 'liberal' language.[83] Huskisson was cheered when he said that if he was accused of 'possessing over liberal principles with regard to trade', then he pled guilty, because this was the best way to reduce jealousy, extend civilization, and, ultimately, to increase British commerce. 'I would be liberal to other countries', he said, because it was the 'best way to promote my own'. But he also claimed that these principles were not the product of any particular economic theory, but were supported by broad historical experience and a wide range of authorities.[84] Even the Tory press seemed impressed with this sort of rhetoric: the *Morning Post* in 1823 wrote favourably of a new or at least 'a more liberal system of political economy', and as late as 1825 *John Bull* was praising the prosperity generated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer's

[81] Hansard 3 Feb. 1825, vol. 12, cc. 56, 58, 62, 75-6.
[82] Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People?*, p. 296.
[83] Numerous politicians supported the 'liberal system' of trade: Hansard, 29 Mar. 1821, vol. 4, c. 1505;); 20 May 1822, vol. 7, c. 719; 20 June 1822, vol. 7, c. 1215; 23 Feb. 1824, vol. 10, cc. 327, 331; 5 Mar. 1824, vol. 10, cc. 734-5, 737, 739; 22 Mar. 1824, vol. 10, c. 1309.
[84] Hansard, 8 Mar. 1824, vol. 10, c. 814.

'liberal principles' of foreign commerce.[85] It seems that until at least this year there was little Tory opposition to the policies of Huskisson at the Board of Trade or Robinson at the Exchequer: 'they carried all before them'.[86] This was also the period when political economy was in vogue. John McCulloch's lectures in 1825 were attended by the great and the good, and the first Chair in Political Economy was established that year in Oxford, with London following in 1828.[87] The old stereotype of Tories implacably opposed to a supposedly secular, utilitarian economics is no longer viable – on either side of the issue.[88] Even *Blackwood's* could be nuanced, with one writer opposing those who denounced political economy as abstract and irrelevant to real life, lamenting that the clarity and accessibility of Adam Smith had been lost, and concluding that political economy could be reformulated to yield much theoretical *and* practical insight.[89] The significant point is that even into 1825 the 'liberal system' of trade tended to be viewed positively, and so was held distinct from those 'liberal' characteristics of foreign and religious affairs that we have been exploring.

In that year, things started to change. Again, a more critical approach can be seen in David Robinson, who quickly became the leading economic voice in *Blackwood's*. Indeed, he was representative of a wider discourse which claimed that economic questions must be understood in terms of their broader constitutional implications and their effects on the balance of propertied interests.[90] He argued that the prosperity of Britain was the result of the much reviled 'old system' of commercial and agricultural protection and feared that opening

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[85] *Morning Post*, 21 Jul. 1823; *John Bull*, 7 Mar. 1825.
[86] Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People?*, p. 300. One exception was Charles Arbuthnot who told the Duke of Wellington, 25 Apr. 1825, that Huskisson was a dangerous man in cabinet because of his 'innovations in trade' and blamed his 'liberality' and 'liberalism': A. Aspinall, ed., *The Correspondence of Charles Arbuthnot* (London, 1941), p. 74.
[87] Hilton, *Age of Atonement*, pp. 40-2.
[88] Milne, 'Politics of *Blackwood's*', pp. 109-10. For the many shades of political economy see D. Winch, *Riches and Poverty: An Intellectual History of Political Economy in Britain, 1750-1834* (Cambridge, 1996). Even hostile Tories engaged with the subject on its own terms: Gambles, *Protection and Politics*.
[89] [W. Stevenson], 'The Political Economist', *BEM*, xv (1824), pp. 522-31.
[90] Gambles, *Protection and Politics.* See also F.W. Fetter, 'The Economic Articles in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* and their Authors, 1817-53', *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, vii (1960), pp. 85-107, 213-31; Rashid, 'David Robinson'.

domestic markets at a time of overproduction would force down prices *and* incomes, and hence throw capital and labour out of employment. Certainly, he insisted, it would be ruinous for agriculture, and he doubted that the manufacturing sector could pick up the slack or find sufficient demand abroad. Like other critics of 'free trade', he thought that not only was there no guarantee other nations would reciprocate, but that it was political madness to enrich neighbours in times of peace, and thereby store up trouble if war should come.[91] However, the main concern here is to show how Robinson linked his economic analysis to his broader criticisms of the 'liberal system': other Tory writers were to follow in this train, but he was the first to make the association explicit and sustained in 1825. He pressed the criticism that political economy was abstract and disembodied: 'It is first assumed that all men are alike, and that all nations are in similar circumstances, and have similar and common interests; it is then assumed that men are always actuated by interest only, and that if left to themselves they will never take a wrong step in procuring their interests'.[92] Hence, armed with the abstract 'knowledge' that human behaviour could be modelled on self-interest, economists and their political lackeys could introduce measures that spurned traditional statecraft – history, experience, practice – but also ignored the advice of those actually engaged in business. In the past the 'theoretic projector' was laughed at, but in these 'enlightened days' ministers were 'closet visionaries' who revelled in the belief they knew better than the people whose livelihoods were directly affected.[93] This was of course a crude caricature of political economy, but the important point is its *political* ramifications. *Because* political economy had no interest in the cultural complexity of actual human life – dispositions, feelings, habits, prejudices – it was a 'fine science for freezing the blood' and therefore acted as a pioneer for

[91] 'Free Trade', *BEM*, xvii (1825), pp. 553, 557-8, 562, 560. See also 'The Silk Trade', *BEM*, xviii (1825), pp. 739, 743.
[92] 'The Repeal of the Combination Laws', *BEM*, xviii (1825), p. 21; see also 'The Nobility', *BEM*, xviii (1825), p. 336.
[93] 'The Late Session of Parliament', p. 84; 'Agriculture', *BEM*, xix (1826), p. 288. Smith, a man of 'sense, depth, and honesty', was exempted from these criticisms: 'Free Trade', p. 551.

the 'liberal system'.[94] By reducing everything to the rule of profit and loss, Robinson argued, it struck at the sympathy and benevolence rooted in the English 'character', and so eroded what was 'essential for binding man to man, and class to class'.[95] Just as the demand for religious equality had the revolutionary aim of overthrowing established laws and institutions, so too did political economy. It might claim to be about improvement of commerce and manufacture, but its real aim, he claimed, was to entrench the republican agenda of its political wing – all too evident in the assault on the aristocracy disguised as corn law repeal.[96] Given all this, it was hardly surprising the phrase 'liberal system of trade' now took on dangerous associations. In one short passage, Robinson repeated four times that 'we cannot approve of that liberality' which grows the trade of other nations at the cost of our own, which makes us dependent on them for food while our agriculture is ruined, and which increases the wealth of a few traders while causing 'distress and privation' for everyone else.[97] This makes it very clear that for Robinson economic argument was firmly linked to resisting those 'in favour of *liberality* – of a *liberal* system of trade' because they would set interests against each other and worsen the glutted markets which led to 'ruin, pauperism, starvation, and misery'.[98]

By the time he wrote these words, his earlier predictions, it seemed, had come true. The financial crash of December 1825, which brought down a major London bank and numerous country banks in its wake, was swiftly used by Tory critics to denounce the new economic policies.[99] The government endeavoured to defend itself, and opposition MPs such as Brougham denied that 'those sound and wise and liberal principles of commercial policy'

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[94] 'State Counsel', p. 36.
[95] 'Brougham on the Education of the People', *BEM*, xvii (1825), p. 543.
[96] e.g. 'Agriculture', p. 288. See Gambles, *Politics of Protection*, pp. 52-5.
[97] 'Free Trade', pp. 562-3.
[98] 'Agriculture', p. 288, 311.
[99] Halévy, *Liberal Awakening*, pp. 226-38; Brock, *Lord Liverpool*, 203-14; Gordon, *Economic Doctrine*, pp. 96-106; Hilton, *Corn, Cash and Commerce*, ch. 7; idem, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People?*, pp. 300-5.

were the cause of the crash – indeed, if anything, the pace of liberal policy needed to be stepped up.[100] But behind the scenes 'Old Tory Highflyers' were in a rage at the 'liberal jaw' of Canning and Huskisson, while the latter believed that 'the Ultra Party' delighted in the distress because it gave them a chance 'for raising a cry against all improvements'.[101] In the Commons, he was criticised for excessive attachment to abstract ideas and Burke's views about hard-hearted metaphysicians were quoted against him, causing him to reply with some indignation that he was not opposed to humanity or indifferent to feeling. He explained that his policies were not the product of 'visionaries', 'theorists' and 'projectors', but instead had been endorsed by 'practical men of business' as well as parliamentarians.[102] Canning defended his colleague the following day from the abuse his measures and character had suffered, and asked why 'the application of philosophy' to public affairs was presumed to indicate a lack of feeling. 'We must deal with the affairs of men on abstract principles, modified, however, of course, according to times and circumstances.' Echoing Burke, he argued for a middle way, not adopting rash experiments and groundless theories, nor yet rejecting 'sound and wholesome knowledge': it was essential to press forward with 'generous and liberal principles' which were only dangerous when taken to excess. Besides, he went on, freedom of commerce had long been a Tory doctrine – was it not Pitt rather than Fox who had supported the commercial treaty between Britain and France in 1786?[103] There was, then, no reason to assume ministers were embarking on some radical new adventure – if anything, they were continuing traditions laid down by their illustrious forebear some forty years ago.

The arguments made by Canning and Huskisson are indicative of how by 1826 debate about the identity of Toryism had reached fever pitch. These ministers were keen to defend

[100] Hansard, 2 Feb. 1826, vol. 14, cc. 35,
[101] Creevey to Miss Ord, 14 Apr. 1826 in Maxwell, *Creevey Papers*, ii. 99; Huskisson, cited in Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People?*, p. 303.
[102] Hansard, 23 Feb. 1826, vol. 14, cc. 765-6, 767, 771.
[103] Hansard, 24 Feb. 1826, vol. 14, c. 854-6.

their credentials, and to show that Toryism was not inconsistent with sensible progress and could be responsive to 'public opinion'. Canning argued, however, that there was a 'faction' or 'sect' in the country which insisted that all measures of improvement were simply 'retrogradations towards Jacobinism'.[104] This was almost certainly targeted at *Blackwood's*. At the start of the year it produced a manifesto – 'very powerful' noted one Tory paper[105] – outlining its opposition to the government. Ministers were accused of 'wandering far' from the principles of Toryism, and of being much too eager to conciliate Whiggism. While reluctant to oppose public men it had long cherished, it felt that both conscience and duty required it now to speak out openly.[106] Again, it was Robinson who led the way, and during the following months he brought his earlier thoughts together in coruscating attacks on the government. These led J.G. Lockhart, now editor of the *Quarterly Review*, to advise Blackwood that it was not wise 'to go on attacking so savagely the motives of Canning … What I wish to see particularly avoided is any allusion to Canning personally; and I know he feels that personally and avenges it so also.' Robinson was accordingly advised to tone down his articles, but he did not repent, saying that Canning's attack on the 'faction' or 'sect' was 'mean and abominable', and that if allowed to carry on with current policies he and his friends 'will drive us to revolution'.[107]

While he accepted that some reforms had been necessary after the wars with France, Robinson believed that ministers had ditched traditional approaches to 'trade, politics, philosophy, morals and religion' and pronounced that 'everything was to be "liberalized – you were to have practically, if not in form, a general, "new, and liberal system".'[108] It was a bitter irony, he argued, to have fought against infidels and republicans for twenty-five years,

[104] Hansard, 24 Feb. 1826, vol. 14, c. 854.
[105] *Manchester Courier*, 31 Dec. 1825.
[106] [Various], 'Preface', *BEM*, xix (1826), pp. xviii, xxi-xxii.
[107] Milne, 'Politics of *Blackwood's*', pp. 136-7, which notes that Canning cancelled his subscription at this time.
[108] 'Friendly Epistle to John Bull, Esquire, from One of the Old School', *BEM*, xix (1826), p. 633.

only to have their ideas imposed by a supposedly Tory government.[109] Moreover, as the economic situation demonstrated, these ideas did not work, and yet ministers were arrogant enough to press on regardless.[110] Against Canning, he argued that this 'new liberal system' had been pilfered wholesale from Whigs, and denied the claim that, as he put it, 'the Tory party has always been the Liberal, and the Whig the Bigot, on matters of trade'.[111] Instead, ministers tailored their policies to appeal to the opposition while they denounced 'old Tories' as a 'sect' – not content with attacking their ideas, Canning 'must blacken their motives ... [and] blast their character'.[112] The net result, he argued, was that the Tories had become two parties: the 'old' and genuine Tories and the '*new* or *liberal* Tories' who ought not be called Tories at all.[113] Certainly, the vigour of these articles stands out, but what especially matters here is the ubiquity of 'liberal' language – variations were used on virtually every page. Robinson's belief that the 'liberal system' was a revolutionary threat that had infected the government was palpable, and other contributors also took to denouncing the cant of the government's 'new-fledged Liberalism'.[114] There were also signs of wider penetration of these ideas and terms into the Tory press. The *Manchester Courier* praised the high quality of the political articles in *Blackwood's* (which it regularly extracted), arguing they would produce a 'host of friends' from among those not converted to the 'spurious liberality' of what one headline called 'Tory-Liberals'.[115] The *Glasgow Herald*, similarly, praised *Blackwood's* 'manifesto' at the start of the year, and also extracted choice passages from Robinson's essays.[116] The opposition press likewise thought such articles indicative of feeling

[109] Ibid., pp. 635, 642, 643.
[110] Ibid., pp. 641-50.
[111] 'Mr Huskisson's Speech in Defence of Free Trade', *BEM*, xix (1826), p. 488.
[112] Ibid., p. 477.
[113] 'Friendly Epistle', p. 636.
[114] [J. Rivers], 'Free Strictures on the Parliamentary Logic of "Philosophical Statesmen"', *BEM*, xx (1826), p. 223.
[115] *Manchester Courier*, 4 Feb., 7 Jan. and 25 Mar. 1826. For other extracts and endorsements see also 3 Dec. 1825, 1 and 8 Apr. 1826, 7 and 14 Oct. 1826.
[116] *Glasgow Herald*, 6 Jan. 1826, 13 Mar. 1826, 10 Apr. 1826, 28 Jul. 1826, 1 and 4 Sept. 1826, 4 Dec. 1826. See also *Westmorland Gazette* 7 Oct. 1826, 9 Dec. 1826 for extracts and supportive comment.

among Tories and suggested that one anti-government passage by Robinson 'speaks a language which has been very frequently heard of late'.[117] So by the time of the general election in the summer of 1826 it was apparent not only that 'liberal' language was being widely used by Tories, but that for many, at least, it had become an effective shorthand for the deep divisions between them.

III

By this point, 'liberal' language was being increasingly applied by opposition commentators to the government – both politicians and newspapers frequently praised the 'liberal and enlightened' measures of ministers and their pursuit of 'the liberal system'.[118] *The Times* repeated such phrases, and even *The Examiner* thought that Peel, Huskisson, Canning and Robinson were 'men of liberal minds' who were ill-served by the attacks of the 'illiberals'.[119] Similar binary language was evident in the general election in June, where many candidates advertised their support for 'liberal principles' and some endorsed the 'liberal and enlightened' policies of the ministry.[120] Often this rhetoric was couched in terms of a contrast – as Robert Torrens put it in Ipswich – between those who wanted the 'progressive advance of mankind in knowledge, liberty, and happiness' and those who clung to 'long-established usage', the 'wisdom-of-ancestry men'.[121] On the 'no popery' question, some Tories denounced the 'pretended liberalities' of the day,[122] but economic issues also prompted 'liberal' language. The Lowther interest, for example, responded to Brougham's candidacy in

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[117] *Morning Chronicle*, 1 Mar. 1826, referring to 'Agriculture', pp. 312-13 which doubted that 'a "liberal" Tory' ministry could last twelve months. See also *The Examiner*, 10 Sept. 1826, p. 585.
[118] For example, Hansard, 27 Apr. 1826, vol. 15, c. 661; 14 Feb. 1826, vol. 14, c. 392; 13 Apr. 1826, vol. 15, c. 177; 25 Apr. 1826, vol. 15, c. 568.
[119] *The Times*, 27 Jan. 1826; *The Examiner*, 23 Apr. 1826, p. 257.
[120] For examples see election coverage in *Morning Chronicle*, 26 May, 5, 13, 14 Jun. 1826; *The Times*, 10 Jun. 1826. Only 112 of 380 constituencies were contested, and Peel claimed that no election was less characterised by serious political differences: A. Mitchell, *The Whigs in Opposition 1815-1830*, Oxford, 1967, p. 185. See D.R. Fisher, ed., *The House of Commons, 1820-1832* (7 vols., Cambridge, 2009), i. 221-7.
[121] *The Globe*, 20 May 1826.
[122] *The Times*, 15 Jun. 1826, quoting an anti-Catholic meeting in Leicester.

Westmorland by claiming that 'the present system – the liberal system – call it the *starving system* if you will, – is the result of Mr Brougham's advice to Mr Huskisson' – once again adopting the strategy of tarring ministerial Tories with the Whig brush.[123] The coverage of Huskisson's election in Liverpool was no comfort for his Tory critics: he was praised for 'liberalising the commerce of the country', but was urged to encourage the 'liberal' members of the government to extend 'liberality' in trade further.[124] The election, then, showed the increasing use of 'liberal' language to divide the political landscape – although it tended to be employed by its proponents in a loosely adjectival manner, there were signs that it was being used more strongly to indicate specific groups: there were references to 'the liberal candidate', 'the liberal interest', 'the liberal electors', and – at this stage meaning much the same thing – 'the liberal party'.[125] The noun 'liberals' – sometimes capitalised, sometimes not, even appeared from time to time.[126] So, 'liberal' identity was increasingly established and understood, and, moreover, could be applied to leading ministers. Lord Howick explained that the 'liberal Tories' were in most respects little different from Whigs, and the *Morning Chronicle* argued that the old party names were 'quite inapplicable to the existing state of things'.[127]

Unsurprisingly, the election did nothing to heal the sense of division among Tories. Peel hinted that he could not serve under Canning, and Wellington even hoped the

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[123] *Westmorland Gazette* 10 Jun. 1826.
[124] *Liverpool Mercury*, 16 Jun. 1826. Wellington complained to Lord Liverpool about this speech: Bamford and Wellington, *Journal of Mrs Arbuthnot*, ii. 34-5. It was also criticised in 'Jacob's Report on the Trade in Foreign Corn, &c', *BEM*, xx (1826), pp. 368-9, an essay which Huskisson read, and noted to Canning a '*wonderful sympathy*' between its arguments and those of his critics in cabinet (Milne, 'Politics of *Blackwood's*', p. 138), perhaps implying the latter were drawing on the former.
[125] The 'liberal candidates/s' appears no more than a handful of times annually in the British Newspaper Archive, but that rises to seventy-two results in 1826 – this was not an electoral blip, since there are seventy-one results in 1828 and ninety-eight in 1830. For specific examples of 'liberal party' see *Morning Chronicle*, 26 May, 30 Jun., 6 Jul. 1826; *The Times*, 30 May, and for 'liberal candidates', see *Morning Chronicle*, 5 Jun., 14 Jun., 20 Jun., 8 Jul. 1826.
[126] E.g. *Morning Chronicle*, 20 Jun., 26 Jun. 1826; *The Times*, 29 Mar., 6 Jun. 1826; *The Examiner*, 4 Jun. 1826, p. 354; 2 Jul. 1826, p. 423.
[127] *The Times*, 17 Apr. 1826; *Morning Chronicle*, 31 Jul. 1826.

government would break up. Harriet Arbuthnot, like *Blackwood's*, blamed everything on the 'sort of fusion' effected with the Whigs: 'the ill-humour, & almost open hostility, of the old supporters of the Tory Party make the whole concern so very disagreeable that I wd give any thing to be out of it'. By November, the start of the new session, she believed that the government had lost the confidence of the country. 'The liberal party, with Mr Canning at their head' courted the Whigs and sidelined the cabinet to avoid being 'thwarted by their illiberal colleagues'.[128] The corn laws remained deeply divisive and there was controversy over Canning's use of armed force to deter the Spanish from invading Portugal, with Wellington again threatening to resign.[129] The opposition emphasized division and incoherence: the government 'is at the same time both liberal and illiberal', composed of 'a liberal party, and an anti-liberal – in other words, principle and power, were ranged on opposite sides'.[130] Yet many doubted the Tories would fall apart any time soon, and the *Edinburgh Review* counselled Whigs to ensure 'the progress of liberal opinions', even if it meant ministers getting credit for measures long advocated by the opposition – 'not a very brilliant prospect perhaps, not a very enviable lot'.[131]

Lord Liverpool's stroke in February 1827, then, precipitated a striking opportunity for some Whigs, and began a complex period of negotiation which resulted in Canning becoming Prime Minister, but *without* most of his more Tory colleagues, and *with* a small number of Whigs, pre-eminently Lansdowne, but notoriously not Grey. The complexities of the negotiations have been explored in some detail,[132] and need not concern us here – what

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[128] Bamford and Wellington, *Journal of Mrs Arbuthnot*, ii. 29, 44, 45, 60.
[129] Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People?*, pp. 204-5, 305-6.
[130] *Morning Chronicle*, 16 Oct. 1826; *The Times*, 9 Nov. 1826.
[131] [F. Jeffrey], 'Moore's Life of Sheridan', *Edinburgh Review*, xlv (1826), p. 40.
[132] A. Aspinall, 'The Coalition Ministries of 1827, I: Canning's Ministry', *English Historical Review* xlii (1927), pp. 201-26; Mitchell, *Whigs in Opposition*, pp. 194-203; E.A. Wasson, 'The Coalitions of 1827 and the Crisis of Whig Leadership', *Historical Journal*, xx (1977), pp. 587-606; J. Bord, 'Patronage, the Lansdowne Whigs, and the Problem of the Liberal Centre, 1827-8', *English Historical Review*, cxvii (2002), pp. 78-93; R.A. Gaunt, 'The Fourth Duke of Newcastle, the Ultra-Tories, and the Opposition to Canning's Administration', *History* lxxxviii (2003), pp. 568-86.

matters is the way this breakdown and reconstitution was understood using 'liberal' language. The *Morning Chronicle* hoped the 'liberal system' would be retained, and stressed that the measures of the government in recent years were 'equally acceptable to liberal Whigs and liberal Tories'.[133] *The Times* was especially enthusiastic and argued that the coalition was a remedy for the 'unnatural state' of the last few years when political friends were separated across parties, and enemies united within them.[134] Mackintosh quoted Samuel Johnson on how a 'reasonable Whig and a moderate Tory differ only in degree', and argued there was no reason now why the two might not be blended into one system.[135] More extended pieces of commentary by Macaulay, Brougham, and Arthur Wade, fleshed these points out in greater detail. All three endorsed the irresistible growth of 'liberal opinions' in recent years, and looked forward to the inevitable day when 'toryism, bigotry and intolerance' would be supplanted by 'enlightened sentiments' in politics and religion.[136] They underlined a stark polarity: 'all the wisdom, all the liberality, all the public spirit on one side', claimed Macaulay, and all the 'imbecility', 'bigotry', and 'rashness' on the other. It was the coalition – a 'liberal Administration' – which united the former against the latter in pursuing practical measures.[137] Brougham explained that the 'Liberal Parties' on both sides of the Commons had been cooperating since 1823, and what he called 'the two great portions of the Liberal Party' had not formally come together earlier because of divisions within the government. He predicted that the old party names were resolving themselves into two great divisions – 'the *Liberal* and the *Illiberal*' – and hoped in future that 'the Liberal party, of whatever denomination' would ensure that extremism was avoided, that alterations were gradual, and

[133] *Morning Chronicle* 20 Feb., 5 May 1827.
[134] *The Times*, 19 Feb., 17 Mar., 30 Apr., 25 May 1827. Brougham, who was a keen supporter of the new ministry, had close connections to *The Times*: C.W. New, *The Life of Henry Brougham to 1830* (Oxford, 1961), p. 308.
[135] Hansard, 8 Jun. 1827, vol. 17, c. 1189.
[136] [H. Brougham], 'State of Parties', *Edinburgh Review*, xlvi (1827), pp. 415, 416; A.S. Wade, *A Letter Addressed to the Right Hon. George Canning* (London, 1827), p. 5.
[137] [T.B. Macaulay], 'The Present Administration', *Edinburgh Review*, xlvi (1827), pp. 250, 259, 260, 264.

that reaction was halted.[138] The most striking point is the way Brougham adopted 'liberal' terminology as a form of retroactive description and explanation. In claiming that Canning had adopted ideas that had 'so long' been proposed by the 'Liberal Party' he was giving to the latter a more determinate existence than it could have had much before 1825. Indeed, his aim was not so much descriptive as prescriptive – by talking of the existence of a moderate and principled 'liberal' space, and by insisting on the existence of a 'Liberal Party', he was hoping to bring the later into existence, and thereby marginalise dissentients as either reactionaries or revolutionaries.[139]

Tories, similarly, were increasingly confident in interpreting politics through the lens of 'liberalism'. Opponents of Canning continued to vent their spleen against the 'abhorred principles of *liberality*'. *John Bull* insisted that 'we are no bigots' and that it had no objection to 'rational reform' but that liberality was the 'accursed word in our modern slang'.[140] The *Leeds Intelligencer* came out firmly for Peel, suggesting that Canning be moved to the Lords where 'we imagine his "liberality" would be in tolerably safe custody'. When it was announced that Canning would be Prime Minister, it accused him of treason.[141] The *Manchester Courier* had at least hoped that 'the Eldons and the Peels' would counteract the 'baleful influence of a "liberal" minister', and was bitterly disappointed when the full cabinet was revealed – it was hardly a surprise that 'the Whigs and Liberals' were pleased.[142] *John Bull* was similarly horrified and doubted that the king really approved of a government that would become a 'rallying point of Liberalism' abroad. [143] It recommended *Blackwood's* as

[138] [Brougham], 'State of Parties', pp. 417, 421, 431-2.
[139] Arguably, this continued the *Edinburgh Review*'s recent arguments that Whiggism was a 'middle party' – 'that moderate and liberal party' between 'intolerant Tories and fiery reformers', [Jeffrey], 'Moore's Life of Sheridan', pp. 34, 36.
[140] *John Bull*, 26 Feb. and 2 Apr. 1827. For parliamentary criticism of Canning's ministry see W. Hinde, *George Canning* (London, 1973), p. 452; Gaunt, 'The Fourth Duke of Newcastle', pp. 576-8; Lee, *George Canning*, pp. 170-4.
[141] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 15 Mar. and 19 Apr. 1827.
[142] *Manchester Courier*, 7 Apr. and 5 May 1827.
[143] *John Bull*, 7 May 1827. The *Standard* and *Morning Post* made similar criticisms.

the only place which contained a true exposure of what was happening in politics. The *Manchester Courier* also reprinted the bulk of an essay from the periodical, calling it one of the most 'powerful antidotes to the poison of "liberal sentiments" … which we have ever met'.[144] Indeed, in 1827 William Blackwood noted 'Mr Robinson's articles have been most popular' and were, he believed, 'the expression of the feelings and sentiments of all true Tories' and had helped ensure that 'Maga' had considerable influence as 'the organ of the party'.[145]

Throughout this period *Blackwood's* had kept up its criticisms of the 'modern school of Liberalism'. In considering the new ministry, Robinson reminded readers that he had predicted the fusion of parties on various occasions over the preceding two years, and argued that whatever one made of the coalition, the collapse of the old ministry was not to be lamented – it had called itself Tory, but its measures were more Whig and Radical. Like *The Times*, but from the opposing corner, Robinson was pleased that the 'unnatural' union of parties was at an end, but he also accused the coalition of being a self-interested affair in which many Whigs – not, to his credit, Grey – had thrown overboard some of their most sacred commitments.[146] Later in the year, he amplified his arguments in a riposte to Macaulay exposing the supposedly unprincipled nature of 'the faction'. He spent some time criticising the way enthusiasts for the coalition adopted a binary contrast between the 'liberal and enlightened' and the 'bigoted and antiquated' as if that were reason enough to embark on reforms. He derided Macaulay's insistence that the coalition formed a coherent entity by pointing out that its members had very different views on a range of issues, not least parliamentary reform. And he once again drew lines of connection between liberals,

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[144] *Manchester Courier*, 2 Jun. 1827. The essay was [J. Wilson], 'Dr Phillpotts' Letters to Mr Canning', *BEM*, xxi (1827), pp. 858-82.
[145] Blackwood to William Blackwood, 9 Sept. 1827 in Oliphant, *Annals of a Publishing House*, ii. 79.
[146] [J. Ross], 'Steam Navigation', *BEM*, xxi (1827), p. 395; 'The Change of Ministry', *BEM*, xxi (1827), pp. 745, 746-7, 758-60.

republicans, infidels, and democrats – all variants of Jacobinism.[147] This was a rhetorical move against the reasoning of Macaulay and Brougham that liberals were centrists – rather, liberals were *not* cohesive, they were *not* principled, they were *not* pragmatic, and they certainly were *not* moderate.

IV

Canning's death in August was a bitter blow to those hoping for political reconfiguration, and few believed Goderich would last long – Brougham gave him credit for 'devotion to liberal principles' but judged him unqualified to lead a government.[148] So when the appointment of Wellington's government was made public in January 1828, there was understandable concern among 'liberal' commentators. The *Scotsman* thought the Duke a terrible choice: 'bigoted, illiberal, despising the people, and attached to measures of coercion and rigour', the only glimmer of hope was the retention of the core Canningites, Huskisson, Grant, Dudley and Palmerston.[149] While the *Morning Chronicle* hoped they would give the government a 'liberal character', *The Times* suspected that 'imputations of liberalism' would fall short of the mark, and *The Examiner* doubted Huskisson's claim that he had extracted guarantees to preserve Canning's system: since 'Liberality and Bigotry' never went hand in hand, the 'head of the Liberal party' had given in to the 'rump of the old Tory faction'.[150] For precisely these reasons, many Tories were initially pleased with Wellington's new government. *Blackwood's* claimed that the country was sick of the 'unmeaning panegyric' about 'liberal and enlightened' versus 'illiberal and bigoted' ideals, and instead simply wanted practical

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[147] 'The Faction', *BEM*, xxii (1827), pp. 412, 418. This article was reprinted in the *Manchester Courier*, 20 Oct. 1827.
[148] [H. Brougham], 'State of the Parties', *Edinburgh Review*, xlvii (1828), p. 254. For reactions to Canning's death and concerns about the political future, see *Morning Chronicle*, 7, 20, and 30 Aug., 3 and 4 Sept. 1827; *The Times*, 16 and 27 Aug., 24 Sept. 1827; *The Examiner*, 12 Aug. 1827, p. 497.
[149] *The Scotsman*, 16 Jan. 1828.
[150] *Morning Chronicle*, 26 and 28 Jan. 1828; *The Times*, 25 and 28 Jan. 1828; *The Examiner*, 27 Jan. 1828, p. 56.

policies.[151] The *Glasgow Courier* wrote of the 'overbearing arrogance' of the liberals in power, while the *Standard* was happy that the 'nauseating and debilitating' period of conciliation was over.[152] There were soon grumblings: some thought Peel was doing too much to court the liberal side, and the government's acceptance of the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts also provoked some irritation.[153] At least the resignation in May of the Canningites provoked delight, with William Johnston in *Blackwood's* rejoicing that the country now had a 'pure' Tory government freed from the 'taint of Liberalism' that had infected it since 1822.[154] The *Morning Post* – not an Ultra newspaper – was also pleased that the 'whole of the *Liberal* party' was to be dismissed, and endorsed *Blackwood's* essay on the subject, while *The Age* accused them of presuming to 'thrust their Liberalism' in Wellington's face. *John Bull*, also broadly loyal to the government, argued that the Tories should be given a fair trial on their own terms, but 'what we deprecate, are half measures, indecision, conciliation, quackery, and liberalism'.[155] For a brief moment it seemed, at least to some Ultras, that there was a 'good prospect' for the future if the government could finally rid itself of the policies of the 'Liberals'.[156]

The Tory press persisted in calling the Canningites 'liberals',[157] and there is some evidence that the opposition papers did so as well – the *Morning Chronicle*, at least at the time of their resignation, wondered whether it was the cabinet's wish 'that the Liberals should be dismissed?'[158] Palmerston himself headed a list of 'our party' with the title 'Liberals of June, 1828' while his fellow Canningite Edward Littleton exclaimed that 'We

[151] 'Public Men and Parties', *BEM*, xxiii (1828), p. 520.
[152] Cited in *Manchester Courier*, 19 Jan. 1828; *Standard*, 21 Jan. 1828.
[153] For criticisms of Peel see *John Bull*, 31 Mar. 1828; Bamford and Wellington, *Journal of Mrs Arbuthnot*, ii. 158, 166, 171-5, 185; C. Abbot, ed., *The Diary and Correspondence of Charles Abbot, Lord Colchester* (3 vols., London, 1861), iii. 553.
[154] [W. Johnston], 'The Rise and Fall of the Liberals', *BEM*, xxiv (1828), p. 98.
[155] *Morning Post*, 29 May, 11 Jul. 1828; *The Age*, 1 Jun. 1828; *John Bull*, 2 Jun. 1828.
[156] [W. Johnston], 'Close of the London Season', *BEM*, xxiv (1828), p. 326.
[157] E.g. *Leicester Journal*, 26 Jun. 1829, which argued that Napoleon was less of an enemy to England than our 'modern Liberals', and that he had harmed the economy less than Huskisson.
[158] *Morning Chronicle*, 4 Jun. 1828.

Liberals are dying with laugher' when they contemplated Tory incredulity at the prospect of Catholic Emancipation.[159] Hobhouse, having chatted with Palmerston on the steamboat from Calais in early 1829, concluded that 'He "talked" Liberal, just as well and as freely as if he had played the part all his life', though contemporaries who accepted he was 'liberal' on religious and foreign affairs were not yet certain how far he went on economic and parliamentary reform.[160] Later in the year, Lord Minto reported that 'His language to me is that there are in fact but two great parties: those who hold liberal opinions and are friendly to improvement; and those whose prejudices are opposed to all innovation'.[161] But although such talk recurred to the moment of coalition in 1827, it underplayed the political difficulties of creating such a reconfiguration. The Canningites preferred a stance of independence – they did not shift towards the Whigs, who were wrestling with their own divisions, and Grey, at least, could not abide Huskisson, though others thought there might be scope in an alliance with Lansdowne. On the other side, Wellington made periodic feelers towards some of the Canningites, and they in response hinted that if the 'liberal' elements of his government – particularly its foreign policy – could be enhanced, then re-union might not be impossible.[162] As Palmerston had explained in his resignation speech, he wanted the government to ignore supporters of 'arbitrary and intolerant' ideas and instead commit itself to 'the ascendancy of liberal, wise, just and enlightened principles'.[163] But in any case the Canningites did not monopolise the identity of 'liberal' – the word was now being used more widely and generally to describe reform opinion in the country, particularly in relation to the Catholic

[159] H.L. Bulwer, *The Life of Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston* (2 vols., London, 1870), i. 278; A. Aspinall, 'Extracts from Lord Hatherton's Diary', *Parliamentary Affairs*, xvii (1963), p. 22.
[160] J.C. Hobhouse, *Recollections of a Long Life*, ed. Lady Dorchester (4 vols., London, 1909-10), iii. 300; K. Bourne, *Palmerston: the Early Years 1784-1841* (London, 1982), pp. 302, 309; D. Brown, *Palmerston* (New Haven, CT, 2010), pp. 127-32 shows that Palmerston was trying to clarify his political and economic thinking in 1829.
[161] Cited Bourne, *Palmerston*, p. 305.
[162] See Mitchell, *Whigs in Opposition*, pp. 210-22; Bourne, *Palmerston*, pp. 289-92, 300, 303-6.
[163] Hansard, 2 Jun. 1828, vol. 19, c. 969. Palmerston criticised the government for its foreign policy, but Whigs felt that domestic issues would present a more effective rallying cry.

question. *The Times*, for instance, commented of preparations for a county meeting in Exeter in January 1829 that 'the Liberal party seem ... confident that they will be successful' and that the 'hopes of the Liberals are founded upon the exertions of some of the leading men of their party' who are taking more active measures than 'the Liberals of other counties'.[164]

Unfortunately for Ultra Tories, when the issue of Catholic Emancipation finally came to a head, the government felt compelled to act.[165] Over the early months of 1829 it became apparent how extensive Emancipation was to be, and thereafter the Ultras had nothing but bile for Wellington's government.[166] Peel was treated savagely: 'mercenary faithlessness to principles and party … smirking hypocrite … shameless betrayer'.[167] Since so much store had been set in the defeat of 'liberalism', the disillusionment with politicians was severe: Robinson thought virtually all of them – with the notable exception of Michael Thomas Sadler – self-seeking and theory-obsessed 'Liberals' with little concern for the real interests of the nation.[168] Emancipation also made a 'centrist' reconfiguration harder, since Wellington, by demonstrating a measure of 'liberality', was unwilling to play the ultra-reactionary role it required. No wonder Greville lamented that 'At present, there is no party' – government had no organised opponents, nor a dependable body of supporters, 'everything is in confusion – party, politics, and all'.[169]

Tories, then, were deeply concerned about the progress of 'liberalism' and they were now using this term with increased frequency – much more so than opposition papers – to

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[164] *The Times*, 17 Jan. 1829.
[165] G.I.T. Machin, *The Catholic Question in English Politics, 1820 to 1830* (Oxford, 1964), ch. 7; P. Jupp, *British Politics on the Eve of Reform: The Duke of Wellington's Administration 1828-30* (Houndmills, 1998), pp. 369-75.
[166] Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People?*, pp. 384-411; B.T. Bradfield, 'Sir Richard Vyvyan and Tory Politics, with Special Reference to the Period 1825-46' (Univ. of London, Ph.D. thesis, 1965), chs. 1-2.
[167] 'Political Economy No IV', *BEM*, xxvii (1830), p. 41.
[168] 'A Dissolution of Parliament', *BEM*, xxvi (1829), 255-6, 258-9.
[169] H. Reeve, ed., *The Greville Memoirs: A Journal of the Reigns of King George IV and King William IV* (3 vols., London, 1874), i. 211.

denote a doctrine they must oppose.[170] If Palmerston saw being 'liberal' as listening to the voice of public opinion, Johnston – in his essay on 'The Rise and Fall of the Liberals' – argued that this really meant that the 'liberal' lacked any anchoring principles: 'he yields this; he concedes that; he compromises the other thing', always deferring to what he called 'the spirit of the age'. 'He floats about upon the wide sea of the world's opinion, and is blown hither and thither by every gust which may come from various quarters of the globe. He ... sacrifices the most important interests of his own country in a paroxysm of general philanthropy and universal benevolence'. Canning was seduced into this 'mongrel' system by Whigs, and it 'was brought forth under the foreign and affected title of Liberalism'.[171] More specifically, this language was most apparent in the Tory response to religious reforms. In the case of the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, the *Morning Post* conceded the measure did 'savor a little of liberalism', but was prepared to trust the government, but *John Bull* argued that even 'the most liberal of ministers yet heard of', Canning, had refused to countenance the reform.[172] The ecclesiastical biographer, Stephen Cassan, bemoaned the diffusion of 'liberal and levelling' ideas, while Henry Drummond, writing as a 'Tory of the Old School', thought 'Liberalism' was a 'system of dissolution of bonds' and hence was the 'very principle of Satan in action'.[173] In Parliament many defenders of repeal used the language of 'liberality' as justification, leading Eldon to view the measure as 'one of the consequences of that "march of intellect" and that "liberality" of which they had heard so much'.[174] Interestingly, in his speech supporting repeal, Edward Copleston, Bishop of

[170] Between 1828 and 1829, there were twenty-seven uses of the term in the Whig *Morning Chronicle* but sixty-eight in the Tory *Morning Post*. A similar search of rival weeklies shows the *Leeds Mercury* used the term only once, yet the *Leeds Intelligencer* referred to 'liberalism' at least twenty-eight times.
[171] [Johnston], 'Rise and Fall of the Liberals', pp. 96, 97, 98.
[172] *Morning Post*, 6 May 1828; *John Bull*, 5 May 1828. See G.I.T. Machin, 'Resistance to the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, 1828', *Historical Journal*, xx (1979), pp. 115-39; R. A. Gaunt, 'Peel's Other Repeal: the Test and Corporation Acts, 1828', *Parliamentary History*, xxx (2014), pp. 243-62.
[173] S. Cassan, *Considerations Against the Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts* (London, 1828), p. 37; [H. Drummond], *A Letter to the King against the Repeal of the Test Act* (London, 1828), p. 28.
[174] Hansard, 25 Apr. 1828, vol. 19, c. 129. Compare Eldon's earlier use of 'liberal' language above.

Llandaff, criticised those who thought he was sacrificing the Church to a 'false and spurious liberality'. He tried to restore a more traditional meaning to that 'much-abused term': 'it does not consist in being loose, or indifferent, or unsettled, in our opinions, but in being tolerant of others who differ from us' and in not stigmatizing and degrading them.[175] By the late 1820s, however, Ultras were fully acclimatised to the negative characterisation of 'liberality', and its conflation with the insidious doctrine of 'liberalism'.

This was even more apparent in the campaign against Catholic Emancipation from late 1828. The Duke of Newcastle's *Letter to the Right Honourable Lord Kenyon* was a widely reproduced intervention which appealed to the nation to defend Protestantism because the government was infected with 'neutrality, conciliation, and modern liberality'. Since the death of Perceval in 1812, he argued, 'the march of intellect, the spread of knowledge, or philosophy, or liberality, or any of those jargon explicatives' had become increasingly powerful, and now the 'accursed system of liberalism' was so dominant even the new government had been stained by 'liberalizing religion'.[176] The same sentiments can be found in various anti-Catholic meetings that autumn – those taking part in the large meeting at Penenden Heath in Kent were warned by the *Morning Post* to be on their guard against 'liberalism', while *The Courier* noted that for the county's yeomanry the term 'emancipation' was used as a byword for 'the character of a "Liberal", and their disapprobation of it'.[177] In Manchester it was hoped, finally, that 'the spirit of infatuated liberalism is evaporated', while a lengthy pamphlet explained *Liberalism Revolutionary, Emancipation an Apostasy*.[178] It argued that the 'progress of liberalism' was inspired by the beliefs – held equally by Paine and Peel – in the equality of rights, and that it was not bigoted to defend a national church

[175] Hansard, 28 Apr. 1828, vol. 19, c. 183.
[176] *A Letter to the Right Hon. Lord Kenyon, from his grace the Duke of Newcastle*, (London, 1828), pp. 5, 6, 8, 10. For broadly supportive comments see *John Bull*, 29 Sept. 1828; *Leeds Intelligencer*, 2 Oct. 1828.
[177] *Morning Post*, 23 Oct. 1828; *The Courier*, 23 Oct. 1828. See Jupp, *British Politics on the Eve of Reform*, pp. 369-72.
[178] *Manchester Courier*, 22 Nov. 1828.

against atheist liberals.[179] The *Morning Post*, meanwhile, wrote that the 'vaunted *Liberalism* of modern times' was self-serving and that its 'enlightened spirit' was intended to destroy traditional arguments and institutions.[180] This line of thinking was also behind the very first use of the word 'liberalism' in Parliament.[181] Sadler had only been returned for Newark on 6 March through the patronage of the Duke of Newcastle, and yet he was on his feet on 17 March explaining – in one of two speeches which sold half a million copies[182] – that the constitution required not just pecuniary but also moral qualifications from its parliamentary representatives. This, he argued, was wise, 'in spite of the liberalism of the day, which is only another term for that spirit which strikes at the root of Christianity'. The 'liberal school' claimed all such qualifications were a form of slavery, but if they succeeded in this measure, who doubted they would not stop 'till all be liberalized'?[183]

This obsession with 'liberalism' was largely articulated in the context of religious reform, but the onset in late 1829 of a severe depression which affected both the propertied and the poor provided another stick with which to beat Wellington and Peel.[184] Robinson had kept up a steady stream of economic articles over the preceding years which elaborated his earlier criticisms of the 'liberal system' – indeed he even defended what he happily called 'The Illiberals' from the errors of 'The Liberals'.[185] Even before the economic downturn, he was arguing that 'the "New Liberal System" – we speak of it as a whole, and not merely in so

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[179] R. B. Baxter, *Liberalism Revolutionary, Emancipation an Apostasy, leading to Britain's Awful Visitation*, (London 1829), pp. 12, 21.
[180] *Morning Post*, 25 Nov., 22 Dec. 1828.
[181] At least according to Hansard. But see *Morning Post*, 13 Dec. 1826, for an earlier use by Alexander Baring. Moreover, Sadler's text was circulated to the Ultra *Morning Journal* before being delivered, and the spoken version was shorter than the printed version – which was repeated verbatim in Hansard. *The Times* report of the actual delivered speech makes no reference to 'liberalism'. See *The Times* 18 Mar., 24 Mar. 1829; Reeve, *The Greville Memoirs*, i, p. 190.
[182] R.B. Seeley, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Michael Thomas Sadler*, (London, 1842), p. 115.
[183] Hansard, 17 Mar. 1829, vol. 20, cc. 1155, 1157, 1163.
[184] 'A Dissolution of Parliament', pp. 253-4. See Parry, *Rise and Fall*, pp. 58-9; Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People?*, pp. 406-11.
[185] 'Public Men and Parties', pp. 532-3. See 'Milne, 'Politics of *Blackwood's*', pp. 261-7.

far as it concerns trade' was leading to 'ruin and revolution'.[186] As the depression took hold, he insisted that the government needed to abandon the 'exploded dogmas' of the political economists, though he feared that in the new session the usual 'liberal and enlightened' jargon would be repeated with no recognition or remedy for widespread public suffering.[187] Robinson's colleague, Johnston, sounded a populist note when he argued that while politicians spouted the language of 'liberality', in reality they were coldly indifferent to the plight of the poor – the 'science of liberal politicians' rejected paternalism as a levelling doctrine, and ignored the fact that freedom without subsistence was hollow.[188] This appeal to the needs of the lower orders was almost certainly inspired by the belief that Sadler was a new hope for traditional Tories: Robinson claimed to have first spotted him in 1826, and he was sounded out for office if the Ultras formed a government.[189] His speech attacking free trade in Whitby in September attracted extended coverage from the Tory press and was issued as a pamphlet.[190] The *Leeds Intelligencer* echoed his ideas. It laughed at those who claimed that free trade was a friend of the poor and believed that the labouring classes were not deceived by 'vaunted liberalism'. It praised the anti-free trade stance of the *Glasgow Courier*, and lauded *Blackwood's* as one of the few periodicals that both consoled *and* encouraged Tories. It even hoped, for a brief moment, that Wellington had realised the need to abandon 'speculative liberalism' if prosperity were to be restored.[191] The significance of these anecdotes here is not what they tell us about Ultra economic thought, but the way that

[186] 'The Condition of the Empire', p. 97.
[187] 'Political Economy No IV', pp. 40, 45.
[188] [W. Johnston], 'Our Domestic Policy', *BEM*, xxvi (1829), pp. 768-9.
[189] 'A Dissolution of Parliament', p. 255; Bradfield, 'Sir Richard Vyvyan', pp. 69, 73. See also [S. O'Sullivan], 'Review of the Late Session of Parliament', *BEM*, xxvi (1829), pp. 234-6.
[190] *Hull Advertiser*, 18 Sept. 1829; *Standard*, 19 Sept. 1829; *Yorkshire Gazette*, 19 Sept. 1829; *Morning Post*, 21 & 22 Sept. 1829; *Leeds Intelligencer*, 24 Sept. 1829; *Leicester Journal*, 25 Sept. 1829; *John Bull*, 28 Sept. 1829. See also [W. Johnston], 'Mr Sadler and the *Edinburgh Review*', *BEM*, xxvi (1829), pp. 825-8 which attacked the *Edinburgh's* June review of Sadler's *Ireland: Its Evils and their Remedies*.
[191] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 1 Oct., 4 Jun., 6 Aug., 29 Oct. 1829. Sadler was a linen merchant from Leeds and a regular contributor to this paper.

'liberalism' was now clearly identified as a major problem – not just as a religious threat to the constitution, but as an economic disaster for the nation.

At the start of the new decade many Tories, even those who now drifted back to support Wellington, now had a good sense of what they thought 'liberalism' meant. The first point to stress is that some were now able to rehearse an interpretation of the preceding decade which insisted that 1822 marked a radical divergence of policy. *Blackwood's* argued that since that time the 'new liberal system' – an alien imposition – had infected one Tory government after another, effecting serious alterations and 'extending itself with increased boldness'.[192] Interestingly, in defending Wellington's government, the *Quarterly Review* offered an early version of the 'continuity thesis' – it pointed out that many policies were either not partisan in origin, or had been sanctioned by cabinet before 1822 and that therefore caution *and* consistency had marked government policy throughout this time rather than any new ideology.[193] The second point is that in presenting 'liberalism' as a totalising 'spirit of the age' – in its religious, political and economic forms – these Tories could articulate a counter-current – an idealised Toryism of the world before 1822. Robinson, again, made the boldest case: then, he argued, the people were taught to revere the 'wisdom of their ancestors', to see their national and religious institutions as 'objects of chivalrous affection', and to view 'speculative change' with abhorrence. The different interests and classes of the nation saw each other as brethren, and the distress of one was sympathised by all. There was vigilance for the welfare of the people and politicians removed practical abuses while disdaining theoretical experiments: 'The British government was then a paternal one.'[194]

[192] [Unidentified], 'The Court and the Cabinet', *BEM*, xxvi (1829), pp. 706, 696.
[193] [J. Miller], 'Internal Policy', *Quarterly Review*, xlii (1830), pp. 242, 260, 267.
[194] 'Letter to Christopher North on the Spirit of the Age', *BEM*, xxviii (1830), pp. 903, 911-12.

Indeed, it might be suggested that the ideal of 'paternalism' was less a social reality than a romanticised response to a stereotype of an abstract 'liberalism'.[195]

To return to the original question, in what sense was there a liberal awakening? Although there was more consistency in policy before and after 1822, and although there was certainly pragmatism at work in the passing of economic and religious measures, and in the implementation of foreign policy, it would be foolish to deny that something was different about government in the 1820s or to reject the usefulness of the idea of 'liberal' Toryism. What has been argued here, however, is that to understand the ideological turmoil, we must attend to the *language* of liberalism which served increasingly as a lens through which to view the policy and politics of the decade. Before the 1820s, for the most part, appeals to 'liberal and enlightened' opinions had not been controversial, and such language was frequently used across the political spectrum. When ministers spoke in such terms, then, they were not doing anything radically new except to reach out to a 'public opinion' that identified with such sentiments. The rub was that as 'liberal' movements came to prominence on the continent, Tories were able to link ongoing domestic policies to a supposedly subversive, irreligious, and revolutionary doctrine that they traced back to Jacobinism. For some this may have been a cynical ploy to discredit particular ministers, but for others – such as Robinson – it appears to have been a matter of conviction. Either way, the effect was to exacerbate polarisation between personalities and, worse, to create a sense of irreconcilable philosophical differences within Toryism itself – which became especially evident in the late 1820s. What is particularly striking is that Tories gave meaning to 'liberalism' in a way that Whigs did not – the latter, to be sure, extolled 'liberal opinions' and advanced ideas which would later be described an integral to 'liberalism' – but they rarely used that term and nor

[195] See D. Roberts, *Paternalism in Early Victorian England* (London, 1979); K. Lawes, *Paternalism and Politics: the Revival of Paternalism in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Basingstoke, 2000).

did the wider spectrum of reformers. Hence, rather than seeing the ‘liberalism’ of the 1820s – in its conceptual form – as a staging post on the way to ideological maturity, it may be better understood as the consequence of political rhetoric operating in a very specific set of circumstances.

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