

Popular Conservatism and the Culture of National Government in Inter-War Britain

This radical new reading of British Conservatives' fortunes between the wars explores how the party adapted to the challenges of mass democracy after 1918. Geraint Thomas offers a fresh perspective on the relationship between local and national Conservatives' political strategies for electoral survival, which ensured that Conservative activists, despite their suspicion of coalitions, emerged as champions of the cross-party National Government from 1931 to 1940. By analysing the role of local campaigning in the age of mass broadcasting, Thomas recasts inter-war Conservatism. Popular Conservatism thus emerges less as the didactic product of Stanley Baldwin's consensual public image, and more concerned with the everyday material interests of the electorate. Exploring the contributions of key Conservative figures in the National Government, including Neville Chamberlain, Walter Elliot, Oliver Stanley and Kingsley Wood, this study reveals how their pursuit of the 'politics of recovery' enabled the Conservatives to foster a culture of programmatic, activist government that would become prevalent in Britain after the Second World War.

Geraint Thomas is Fellow and Director of Studies in History at Peterhouse, University of Cambridge. He has previously held positions at the Universities of Oxford and York. His research publications have focused on the politics of inter-war Britain and include, as co-editor, *Brave New World: Imperial and Democratic Nation-building in Britain between the Wars* (2012).

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Contents

<i>List of Figures and Table</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	viii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xi
1 The National Government and Interwar Conservatism: The Historical Task	1
Part I Rethinking Interwar Conservatism	
2 Local Politics and the Limits of Baldwinite Conservatism, 1918–1931	25
3 Conservatives and the Politics of National Recovery, 1931–1937	64
Part II Popular Conservatism and the National Government	
4 Anti-Socialism and Working-Class Conservatism in the Industrial North	103
5 The Politics of Anti-Socialism in the Suburbs	134
6 Modernity and Paternalism in Rural Politics	165
7 National Conservatism in Scotland and Wales	197
Part III Reputations of Government	
8 The Unravelling of National Anti-Socialism?	233
Conclusion	258

<i>Appendix Parties' Share of the Vote in the Constituency Case-Study Areas, 1918–1945</i>	269
<i>Bibliography</i>	312
<i>Index</i>	343

Figures and Table

Figures

3.1 ‘The Great Achievements of the National Government’, <i>ILN</i> , 28 April 1934	<i>page 78</i>
3.2 ‘I got the job – help me to keep it’, National government poster, general election 1935	80
5.1 ‘Unity and Security’, National government poster, general election 1931	139
5.2 ‘England Expects’, National government poster, general election 1931	139
6.1 ‘Back to the Plough’, National government poster, general election 1931	177
6.2 ‘Milk at school’, <i>The Times</i> , 27 September 1934	185
6.3 ‘Not worth the picking’, National government poster, general election 1931	192

Table

1.1 Average share of the national vote by party, 1918–1935	13
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Abbreviations

ACC	Association of Conservative Clubs
CA	Conservative Association (or Constitutional Association)
<i>CAJ</i>	<i>Conservative Agents' Journal</i>
CUA	Conservative & Unionist Association
GPO	General Post Office
IDL	India Defence League
<i>ILN</i>	<i>Illustrated London News</i>
LCC	London County Council
LNU	League of Nations Union
MMB	Milk Marketing Board
NCSS	National Council of Social Service
NPB	National Publicity Bureau
PAC	Public Assistance Committee
STCO	Stockton & Thornaby Constitutional Organisation
UAB	Unemployment Assistance Board
UBI	Union of Britain and India

Journal Titles

<i>AHR</i>	<i>Agricultural History Review</i>
<i>CSH</i>	<i>Cultural and Social History</i>
<i>EcHR</i>	<i>Economic History Review</i>
<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
<i>HJ</i>	<i>Historical Journal</i>
<i>HWJ</i>	<i>History Workshop Journal</i>
<i>JBS</i>	<i>Journal of British Studies</i>
<i>JCH</i>	<i>Journal of Contemporary History</i>
<i>JSH</i>	<i>Journal of Social History</i>
<i>LHR</i>	<i>Labour History Review</i>
<i>MH</i>	<i>Midland History</i>
<i>P&P</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
<i>RH</i>	<i>Rural History</i>

xii List of Abbreviations

<i>SHR</i>	<i>Scottish Historical Review</i>
<i>TCBH</i>	<i>Twentieth Century British History</i>
<i>TRHS</i>	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>
<i>UH</i>	<i>Urban History</i>
<i>WHR</i>	<i>Welsh History Review</i>