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Three Parties Finally Declare Against Pacts

Why Conservative, Liberal Labor Supporters Cannot and Will Not Come to Any Arrangement with Each Other Before the Election

"During the week there has been a good deal of talk about a Conservative pre-election pact with the Liberals. We deplore this talk for the simple reason that the thing is outside the bounds of possibility. Let us consider the facts. Mr. Baldwin is the man who took the initiative in breaking his party away from the Coalition under Mr. Lloyd George; he holds his position as Prime Minister and head of his party in virtue of that action. It is proposed that this man shall now go cap in hand to the ex-Coalition Premier and ask him for quarter? Plainly the thing is impossible on this ground alone.

"Even were he willing, Mr. Lloyd George would not be. Add to this that the camps are already pitched, most of the candidates chosen, and the battle virtually joined, and the impossibility of the idea is finally demonstrated. This being so, the less said about it the better, for it is likely to have a bad effect on the moral and prospects of Conservatives by creating the impression that they cannot, and that they themselves think they cannot, win the election on their own merits."—*Saturday Review* (London).

"The political strategists are busy in giving lavish and contradictory advice to the party at present in power," says the *Times* (London). "One school of thought urges them to be uncompromisingly truculent; the other beseeches them to seek allies almost at any cost.

"Yet both these extreme counsels seem to be based on very questionable assumptions. It is really not necessary for them to accept as inevitable either complete victory or utter defeat; nor, to ask the Liberal Party, because it has upset the traditional two-party system, to come to dictate.

"Bravado and despair that, although the Liberal Party may, with some difficulty, a distinct Liberal policy, means certain defeat if it attempts to induce the mass of Liberal voters to support him in putting into operation ideas which I am convinced are utterly incompatible and, if embarked upon, will involve the country in inevitable disaster."

"The instinctive assumption of the Liberal vote is that the Liberal Party is very sharply divided between Right and Left wings, and that, though the former is likely to swoop towards Conservatism, the latter, which is probably also the stronger, is not averse to a flight towards Socialism."

A Liberal Report

"Your correspondents," writes Professor Ramsay Muir in a letter to the *Times*, "waste their time and your space in discussing the possibility of an arrangement between the Conservatives and the Liberals for the next election. The Liberal Party would commit suicide if it contemplated any such arrangement, as certain, if it were to make a similar arrangement with the Labor Party. Even if the party leaders were to agree (and there is no suggestion that any of them would do so), the rank and file would not follow them."

"Some Conservatives seem to fear that the electoral gamble may give a Parliamentary majority to the Socialists, who are certainly in minority in the country. They could have made this impossible by a reasonable measure of electoral reform, while they had the power. They threw away this opportunity. Perhaps they will be wiser next time. But they need not fear."

"The revived strength of the Liberal Party ensures the country against a Socialist majority in Parliament based upon a minority in the country; just as it ensures the country against a contingency of minority government by the Conservatives, who were in a minority of votes even in 1924. In short, the Liberal Party is the main safeguard against minority government."

"No one in his senses imagines the Conservative Party could or should make any advances," says the *Sunday Times*. "The majority of the candidates on both sides are already chosen; few of them would be willing to retire. They are already busy fulfilling one another's policies in the constituencies, and they are at a given signal to desist, withdraw their accusations, and shake hands as though they had always been in agreement." The electors would be very quick, we may be sure, to see through so palpable a fraud."

"What possible political morality could attach to a Conservative-Liberal coalition?" asks the *Yorksire Post*. "What answer could be made to the instant claim of the Socialists that they represent the only united, consistent, and politically honest force in the field?"

"What temptation could there be?" is the point made by the *Daily Chronicle*. "For Liberals to mislead the country and misrepresent themselves by joining hands with either of their rivals in the fight that is almost on. Who that commands a hearing in their ranks would yield to such an unbelievable folly?"

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such an opinion, the wind that blows through the party would simply blow

it away. Shakespeare's old adage in *Hamlet*: 'To thine own self be true' is no bad slogan for a party which knows its own mind; and upon the most vital issues of to-day—not least, upon that of unemployment—the Liberal party, thanks to years of unspun work, has won more of that precious knowledge than any other."

Finally, the Labor Party will have nothing to do with pacts, for the *Daily Herald* says:

"If the Labor Party enters the coming fight with the belief that it is not going to win, it will indubitably lose. And one of the best ways of ensuring partial, instead of a complete victory, is to bicker about pacts with the Liberals or with any other opposing party. The right way to go to work is to stand four-square without fear or doubt, against all comers, and to go it out for a major victory over all."

"Hanging on hypothetical contingencies, which may not, and, given the right, will not, arise, is ill-preparation for the greatest political struggle in this country's history."

"Suggestions are made," says Sir Herbert Samuel, "in the press from time to time that we should arrive at some accommodation with one or other of the opposing parties, and that some mutual arrangement should be made to withdraw candidates sometimes. The suggestion is made for an arrangement with Labor and sometimes with Conservatives." The Liberal party has not for a moment contemplated any such understanding. As chairman of the Liberal party organization I say categorically that the party has not made and will not make any such compact with either of its opponents."

A Conservative Rejoinder

Mr. Neville Chamberlain, on the same day, was equally emphatic. He stated:

"There are some who suggest that the Conservative party would do well to enter one of these new combinations. To my mind that would be a policy of cowards and futilists."

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