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Rhetoric and the Liberal Party, 1959-1974

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A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements for award of the degree of History in the Faculty of Arts, School of Humanities, September 2019.

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Abstract

This thesis grounds historical analysis in rhetorical theory to build upon narrative studies of the Liberal Party in the period 1959 to 1974. It uses the particular case study to further our understanding of rhetorical theory as applied to political analysis. Liberal Party oratory in the mid-twentieth century has thus far been neglected, but there is a developing body of rhetorical theory, and especially the concepts conceived of within rhetorical political analysis, which can be used to examine its rhetoric. This thesis will deploy the tools of rhetorical political analysis to build upon the existing literature, taking inspiration from the work on specific speeches, arenas of rhetoric, and techniques of rhetorical expression. It will consider appeals to ethos and the Liberal conception of its implied audience, their potential voter, in order to centre the importance of audience within RPA. It will consider how Liberal rhetoric shifted from a values-frame in the 1960s to one of crisis in the 1970s, to foreground such processes as creative acts of definition and construction. It will then analyse Liberal out-of-election-time campaigns to interrogate differing appeals to internal and external audiences and the debate surrounding the rhetorical situation, arguing that the Liberals used these campaigns to create moments for Liberal progress outside of elections. This thesis will argue that the most productive research comes in combining political history and rhetorical analysis. It will use analysis of rhetoric to learn more about the Liberal Party's activity, and, by grounding rhetorical theory in historical examples, it will in turn require the theory to be refined. To learn more about political parties, we need to continue to develop better analytical tools to understand the role of rhetoric in political activity.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED:A. Beck..... DATE:

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Introduction: A rhetorical approach to understanding politics

The Liberal Party was at a low ebb in 1959. It had just fought its first election under leader Jo Grimond, winning six seats from six percent of the vote. It needed to consolidate its policy, re-establish a party image and build up its membership and financial base. In 1974 the Liberal Party won over eleven million votes across two elections. The creative persuasive opportunities that rhetoric provided were a crucial tool at its disposal in achieving this progress. The rhetorical process must be conceived broadly, from context and strategy to appeal and delivery. It is inseparable from the party political process of persuasion.

In studying the Liberal Party between 1959 and 1974 through the lens of rhetoric, this thesis grounds historical analysis in rhetorical theory. It uses this conceptual approach to build upon narrative studies of the Liberal Party in the period, and the particular case study furthers our understanding of rhetorical theory as should be applied to political analysis. The thesis asks two questions: What does a study of Liberal Party rhetoric tell us about the Liberal Party's aims and activities in this period? And what does a study of Liberal Party rhetoric tell us about rhetoric, and how its study might be developed for the benefit of political histories? Through arguing that the Liberal Party used its rhetoric to respond to challenges specific to them, such as overcoming a vague party image and continually attempting to improve its organisational and financial situations, this thesis shows that the most productive analysis comes from combining rhetorical theory with empirical analysis, as scholars must continue to develop better analytical tools to understand the importance of rhetoric.

This thesis therefore engages with two seams of scholarly literature: studies of the Liberal Party in this period and wider approaches to rhetoric. Liberal Party histories of this period have tended to be narratives situated in a longer-term context of Liberal and national history.¹ David Dutton's work relied on primary and secondary material concentrated on national figures, such as Grimond, to focus on national themes,² and in Vernon Bogdanor's history of the Liberal Party, William Wallace sought to categorise the era neatly, charting "survival and revival" based primarily on election time results.³ Biographies of Grimond and Jeremy Thorpe have been similarly narrative, exploring chronological themes, without scrutinising the rhetoric

¹ V. Bogdanor, *Liberal Party Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984); D. Dutton, *A History of the Liberal Party in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

² Dutton, *Liberal Party*, 315-317.

³ W. Wallace, 'Survival and Revival', in Bogdanor, *Liberal Party Politics*, 43.

used.⁴ A rhetorical approach allows us to develop these narratives by exploring the specifics of what Liberals thought and spoke about. Most notably, this literature obscures the importance of the local to Liberal Party politics in the period. A rhetorical focus encourages a more holistic view of Liberal Party imperatives with both national and local foci because so much crucial Liberal rhetoric was aimed at the local.

An adjoining literature on the local has been written by Liberals, for Liberals, predominantly in the *Journal of Liberal History*.⁵ This work, such as Neil Stockley's narrative work on the February 1974 election, considers national and local Liberal appeals but could be strengthened by a rhetorical approach.⁶ Stockley states that the Liberals 'adroitly exploited the government's acute economic and industrial problems', without examining the language used to achieve this.⁷ Similarly, historians have written on Liberal by-elections in the period, and especially the famous Liberal victory at Orpington in 1962, but more descriptively than rhetorically.⁸ Part of the appeal of rhetorical analysis, therefore, is to study how the Liberals created and expressed both local and national appeals, to better understand those appeals. Richard Toye considered appeals to Liberal voters in 1945, but in Conservative rhetoric.⁹ It is important to consider how the Liberal Party sought to propagate its policy and ideology nationally, and aimed to bring about electoral success in specific constituencies. The range of rhetorical sources deployed in this thesis allows a comprehensive history of the Liberal Party to reflect Liberal-specific themes between 1959 and 1974.

Political historians have long engaged with rhetoric without making it fundamental to their analysis. However, a more systematic quasi-rhetorical political analysis has now existed for nearly thirty years. Amongst the best known is Karen Musolf's work on Nancy Astor which appreciated the agency of rhetoric in shaping events and equated the rhetorical with the political, the economic and social.¹⁰ Philip Williamson's work on Stanley Baldwin is a similar

⁴ M. McManus, *Jo Grimond: Towards the Sound of Gunfire* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2001); S. Freeman and B. Penrose, *Rinkagate: The Rise and Fall of Jeremy Thorpe* (London: Bloomsbury, 1996).

⁵ M. Egan, '1959-74: years of Liberal revolution?', *Newsletter (Liberal Democrat History Group)*, 14 (1997), 2-3.

⁶ N. Stockley, '1974 Remembered', *Journal of Liberal Democrat History*, 26 (2000), 19-21.

⁷ Stockley, '1974 Remembered', 20.

⁸ M. Egan, 'The lessons of Orpington', *Newsletter (Liberal Democrat History Group)*, 14 (1997), 10-11.

⁹ R. Toye, "'I am a Liberal as much as a Tory': Winston Churchill and the memory of 1906", *Journal of Liberal History*, 54 (2007), 38-45; R. Toye, 'Winston Churchill's "Crazy Broadcast": Party, Nation, and the 1945 Gestapo Speech', *Journal of British Studies*, 49 (2010), 655-680.

¹⁰ K. J. Musolf, *From Plymouth to Parliament: A Rhetorical History of Nancy Astor's 1919 Campaign* (London: Macmillan, 1999).

example.¹¹ More directly relevant to this project is Peter Joyce's PhD on 'The electoral strategy and tactics of the British Liberal Party 1945-70' which covers a similar historical period to this project and so is an important base from which this project builds.¹² Despite his extensive study of speeches, Joyce's work is an exploration of themes rather than a rhetorical analysis. He explores the arguments that the Liberals sought to make – such as Grimond calling for political realignment – and is in this sense a forerunner to rhetorical political analysis, explored below. In that sense, whilst Musolf, Williamson and Joyce were thorough in covering and quoting their selected orator's speeches, they did not undertake rhetorical political analysis, as conceived below, which certainly encompasses themes but connects them to the wider rhetorical processes of invention and expression.¹³

The study of rhetoric has developed significantly over the last decade, led by researchers in political theory and social science. Scholars have sought to push beyond approaches such as rational choice theory and behaviouralism, to understand political argumentation and the processes behind its creation and expression in more depth. This has led to a changed understanding of rhetoric and its importance, that is most obviously associated with the work of Alan Finlayson, Judi Atkins and James Martin.¹⁴ Rhetoric, they conclude, is not just the expression of stable themes. It is the contest of ideas and beliefs and how they might be best articulated to a particular audience, in a particular context, within the restrictive framework of particular social norms. So, the audience, context and norms necessarily shape the ideas and beliefs; that is the rhetorical process. Rhetoric is thus an instance of 'creative political action' that needs to be analysed.¹⁵

This insight has led to the development of "rhetorical political analysis" (RPA), a framework of tools and concepts predicated upon the notion that studying argument and its creation and expression can reveal much about politics, motivations and contexts. Finlayson lays out the

¹¹ P. Williamson, *Stanley Baldwin: Conservative Leadership and National Values* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

¹² P. Joyce, 'The electoral strategy and tactics of the British Liberal Party, 1945-70', (London, PhD, 1990).

¹³ Whilst historians have not necessarily focused on rhetorical analysis, they have studied the context of communication in politics: see L. Beers, 'Whose Opinion? Changing Attitudes Towards Opinion Polling in British Politics, 1937-64', *Twentieth Century British History*, 17 (2006), 177-205; J. Lawrence, *Electing our Masters: The Hustings in British politics from Hogarth to Blair* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹⁴ A. Finlayson, 'Political science, political ideas, and rhetoric', *Economy and Society*, 33 (2004), 528-549; A. Finlayson, 'From Beliefs to Arguments: Interpretive Methodology and Rhetorical Political Analysis', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 9 (2007), 545-563; A. Finlayson and J. Martin, "'It Ain't What You Say...': British Political Studies and the Analysis of Speech and Rhetoric", *British Politics*, 3 (2008), 445-464; A. Finlayson, 'Proving, Pleasing and Persuading? Rhetoric in Contemporary British Politics', *The Political Quarterly*, 85 (2014), 428-436.

¹⁵ J. Martin, *Politics and Rhetoric: A critical introduction* (London: Routledge, 2014), 106.

stated aims of RPA as such: ‘RPA foregrounds the inter-subjective, dynamic, formation and reformation of arguments and the elements of which they are composed’.¹⁶ It acknowledges that ideas are not generated in a vacuum, but are strategically deployed in a particular context and for a particular audience. Accordingly, Martin located three aspects surrounding rhetoric to study: the rhetorical context, the rhetorical argument, and rhetorical effects.¹⁷ RPA thus considers contexts, audiences, and the processes of invention and delivery. This new theoretical work awards a lot more agency to rhetoric in the process of argumentation. Rhetoric can give us a much fuller understanding of arguments and the processes behind their creation, and RPA is a helpful set of tools and processes through which this understanding can be gained.

Rhetorical political analysis has generally been undertaken with two differing foci – that on a particular rhetorician or speech, and that on a particular rhetorical technique, theme or context. However, we lack any study of the rhetoric of Liberal Party leaders Grimond or Thorpe beyond biography.¹⁸ Most British work has focused on the Conservative and Labour parties, in the last fifty years. Crines, Heppell and Hill’s work on Enoch Powell’s “Rivers of Blood” speech, for example, followed Martin’s approach to RPA.¹⁹ It considered the long-term context preceding the speech, analysed the speech itself (the appeals it was making and to whom), and ended by discussing its impact. Through combining context, argument and impact, this work demonstrated how the approach of RPA can enable understanding of the entire rhetorical process from idea to expression. Similarly, Crines’ work on Harold Wilson’s “White Heat” speech focused more closely on the appeals being made. In each of these cases, though, there has been the tendency to situate the analysis tightly within the structure of Aristotle’s three appeals – ethos, pathos and logos. For example, Crines wrote in summary that ‘Because of [Wilson’s] ethos, he was able to use sprinklings of pathos to ensure they accepted the logos of his argument’.²⁰ Whilst a valuable application of Aristotle’s theory, it perhaps left the analysis a little too neat as the author sought to demonstrate how the three appeals tidily entwined within the overall argument of the rhetoric. It is important, then, not to let a framework such as ethos-pathos-logos give an undue impression of coherence or of a strict division between the appeals.

¹⁶ Finlayson, ‘From Beliefs to Arguments’, 560.

¹⁷ J. Martin, ‘Situating Speech: A Rhetorical Approach to Political Strategy’, *Political Studies*, 63 (2015), 34-40.

¹⁸ McManus, *Grimond*.

¹⁹ A. S. Crines, T. Heppell and M. Hill, ‘Enoch Powell’s “Rivers of Blood” speech: a rhetorical political analysis’, *British Politics*, 11 (2016), 72-94.

²⁰ A. S. Crines, ‘A Discussion of Rhetoric in Harold Wilson’s White Heat Speech’, *Renewal Journal of Social Democracy*, 22 (2014), unpaginated.

Hayton and Crines have edited important volumes on Conservative and Labour orators of the twentieth-century.²¹ As in any work, these are constrained by their scope – the most high-profile individuals, of the two major parties, stretching across a long time period. Partly as a consequence, however, they emphasise the three arenas of Parliament, conference and public/electorate and the chapters tend to orientate themselves around either themes surrounding each orator or analyse their subject tightly within the framework of the three appeals. This selective approach is natural for a developing type of analysis and enables the authors to cover a lot of ground, but is indicative of the fact that rhetorical political analysis can still be developed as an applied historical approach.

As said, political theorists linked with RPA have also looked at the rhetorical techniques used in argument. Atkins and Finlayson have written on the use of Quotation, and Anecdote, in rhetoric. Quotation and Anecdotes are classes of rhetorical act. Atkins and Finlayson argue that using quotation – prior, known experience – reveals how symbolic and ritualised rhetoric can be.²² Anecdote is used similarly, as it elevates ‘everyday’ experience.²³ The techniques used in rhetorical proof are a vital aspect of rhetorical analysis and demonstrate how RPA encompasses both idea and expression. The authors scrutinised the differing amount of use of quotation and anecdote by political parties in Britain, finding that their use has generally increased. This prompts consideration about (rhetorical and political) culture affecting the expression and reception of rhetoric, affirming the importance of external factors acting upon rhetoric. This is important to reflect upon for this thesis, especially in relation to a ‘minor’ party which pursues specific imperatives pertaining to its political situation.

Another important contribution to this thesis’s conception of rhetoric is Kenneth Burke’s theory of “identification”.²⁴ For Burke, rhetoric entails identifying something in common with your audience, from which basis the speaker can work to persuade the audience in other respects. Once common ground is discovered and a rapport is formed, persuasion is facilitated. Similarly, “identification through antithesis” consists of locating common ground with one’s

²¹ A. S. Crines and R. Hayton, *Labour orators from Bevan to Miliband* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015); R. Hayton and A. S. Crines, *Conservative orators from Baldwin to Cameron* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015).

²² J. Atkins and A. Finlayson, “‘As Shakespeare so memorably said...’: Quotation, Rhetoric and the Performance of Politics”, *Political Studies*, 64 (2016), 164. This builds on earlier work not following RPA, such as J. Charteris-Black, *Politicians and Rhetoric: The Persuasive Power of Metaphor* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

²³ J. Atkins and A. Finlayson, “...A 40-year-old black man made the point to me”: Anecdotes, Everyday Knowledge and the Performance of Leadership in British Politics”, *Political Studies*, 61 (2013), 162.

²⁴ K. Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969).

audience against some negative phenomenon. Judi Atkins explored this theory in her work on the rhetoric of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government of 2010-15, where she argued that identification of the debt crisis – a negative phenomenon, “the problem” – laid the basis for coalition appeals to unity to “solve” the problem.²⁵ This problem-solution narrative of crisis and unity will prove instrumental in the writing of this thesis due to its comparability with Liberal appeals of 1974. “Identification” is a theoretical, audience-focused basis to the creation and expression of rhetoric. It is a theme that this thesis looks to use and develop.

In that work, Atkins considered how the coalition government framed the political situation around a diagnosed problem with a necessary solution. Indeed, rhetoric must have a driving force behind it; a way of viewing the world, or a specific problem, informing upon its expression. There is a thriving scholarship produced on ‘framing’, but none that has interacted with scholarship on the Liberal Party; the closest is coverage of rhetorical themes.²⁶ This thesis considers ‘framing’ rather than ‘invention’ to focus on how ideas appear in the practical expression of rhetoric. It remains in keeping with the rest of the thesis in considering the point at which the Liberals expressed their ideas to their audience.

The concept of the frame is not new. American political scientists have written on framing. Jacoby argued that the frame is important because issues do not truly exist until they are communicated in a certain way to the public. There are different ways to articulate an issue and the rhetor’s task is to ‘maximise support for their own position’.²⁷ Goffman articulated the frame as a creative act, with situations only existing as they are defined.²⁸ Historically this has been studied in the form of agenda-setting.²⁹ Myers’ work on Harold MacMillan and the Winds of Change considered how the problem of majority rule in South Africa was conceived and expressed to different audiences, while Kingdon’s more theoretical work focused on the articulation and emphasis of government policies. “Agenda-setting” has been exclusively studied in terms of major parties with a natural platform and audience, however. A third party is less driven by setting the agenda than by simply impacting upon the political conversation

²⁵ J. Atkins, “‘Together in the National Interest’: The Rhetoric of Unity and the Formation of the Cameron-Clegg Government”, *Political Quarterly*, 86 (2015), 85-92.

²⁶ Joyce, ‘Electoral Strategy’; Dutton, *Liberal Party*.

²⁷ W. Jacoby, ‘Issue Framing and Public Opinion on Government Spending’, *American Journal of Political Science*, 44 (2000), 750-752.

²⁸ E. Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organisation of Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974).

²⁹ F. Myers, ‘Harold Macmillan’s “Winds of Change” Speech: A Case Study in the Rhetoric of Policy Change’, *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 4 (2000), 555-575; J. W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies* (London: Pearson, 2014).

and finding certain niches of appeal. ‘Definition’ and ‘resonance’ were the Liberal rhetorical imperatives rather than driving policy agendas.

There have been more recent, rhetorical approaches to framing, indicating its worth as a focus of analysis. For example, Atkins’ work on the ideology of the Labour Party in the 2010s considered how the party used a coherent ideology as “argumentative contexts” to embody its thinking and produce core concepts as a basis from which to argue.³⁰ Indeed, the purpose of ideology has simply been described as a ‘world view’³¹ or as a body of ‘concepts, values and symbols which incorporate conceptions of human nature’,³² definitions which allow ideologies to be conceptualised as frames. Freedden viewed ideologies as the re-articulations of existing traditions upon encountering new problems.³³ Finlayson thus posited that ideologies must be viewed rhetorically, as a framework supplying commonplaces and a criteria of what is good and bad; they are then adapted to a particular situation.³⁴ This “framework” of invention provides the tools through which the rhetor can then articulate their “frame” in the wild, dependent on context and audience. This was practically applied by Atkins in her study of Ed Miliband and the Labour Party, finding that “One Nation” ideology was the coherent frame used in Labour rhetoric. This literature on ideology proves the existence of rhetoric deploying underpinning frames and shows their importance in rhetorical invention.

Finlayson’s work ‘What’s The Problem’ conceived “problem-setting”, a preferably encompassing term for creative acts of political definition. For Finlayson, problems are rhetorically constructed, and rhetorically solved.³⁵ Indeed, situations do not exist until they are defined and constructed.³⁶ Judi Atkins has written on the framing of a situation by constructing a problem and defining a solution.³⁷ She considered the formation of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government in Britain in 2010. The government located a national debt crisis from 2008, which it defined as caused by Labour fiscal irresponsibility. It could then logically argue of the solution being cuts to public spending – a plan predicated on being

³⁰ J. Atkins, ‘Narrating One Nation: The Ideology and Rhetoric of the Miliband Labour Party’, *Politics*, 33 (2015), 19-31.

³¹ J. Charteris-Black, *Analysing Political Speeches: Rhetoric, Discourse and Metaphor* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

³² A. Vincent, *Modern Political Ideologies* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009).

³³ M. Freedden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998).

³⁴ J. Atkins, “‘Together in the National Interest’: The Rhetoric of Unity and the Formation of the Cameron-Clegg Government”, *Political Quarterly*, 86 (2015), 85-92.

³⁵ A. Finlayson, “‘What’s the Problem?’: Political Theory, Rhetoric and Problem-Setting”, *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 9 (2006), 541-557.

³⁶ Goffman, *Frame Analysis*.

³⁷ J. Atkins, ‘Together in the National Interest’.

responsible. The presentation of irresponsibility against responsibility moulded a coherent narrative in a problem-solution format. The coalition also used identification through antithesis in this negative-positive construction, identifying the previous Labour government as a common enemy causing crisis, to create a justification for the new government as a necessity in the national interest. This work provides a practical example to consider the rhetorical “problem-solution” frame.

There is also scholarship specifically on the construction of “crisis” in the 1970s, the particular manifestation of framing in this period. Colin Hay suggested that the “Winter of Discontent” of 1978-9 was really a constructed ‘fundamental national crisis’ by the New Right.³⁸ It recruited ‘symptoms’ of a crisis to bring a particular narrative into existence, such as a ‘tyranny of the pickets’, enabling it to define striking trade unions as the cause.³⁹ It portrayed a ‘crisis of a monolithic state besieged by the trade unions’.⁴⁰ The New Right thus emphasised particular aspects of the supposed crisis to place the Labour Party at the heart of its cause. For Saunders, this ‘specific interpretation’ by Margaret Thatcher and the Conservatives used crisis as a ‘rhetorical device’ in order to ‘privilege particular responses’ to their benefit.⁴¹ Rhetors craft a particular narrative of a situation to encourage the audience to respond in a desired way. This literature is instructive for thought into how and why rhetorical organising concepts (frames) are created and expressed.

Toye has demonstrated the scope of rhetorical analysis to challenge existing narratives, deploying it to explore the debate surrounding “consensus” in British politics after 1945. He argued that “consensus” was a rhetorical phenomenon only given meaning through its expression.⁴² In his work on Winston Churchill’s wartime oratory, he complicated the existing laudatory narrative by analysing audience and reception.⁴³ Finally, he challenged the existing literature on RPA as being too orator-focused, calling for a greater emphasis on the rhetorical

³⁸ C. Hay, ‘Narrating Crisis: The Discursive Construction of the “Winter of Discontent”’, *Sociology*, 30 (1996), 253.

³⁹ Hay, ‘Narrating Crisis’, 266.

⁴⁰ Hay, ‘Narrating Crisis’, 266.

⁴¹ R. Saunders, ‘“Crisis? What crisis?” Thatcherism and the seventies’, in B. Jackson and R. Saunders, (eds.), *Making Thatcher’s Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 25.

⁴² R. Toye, ‘From “Consensus” to “Common Ground”: The Rhetoric of the Postwar settlement and its Collapse’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 48 (2013), 3-23.

⁴³ R. Toye, *The roar of the lion: the untold story of Churchill’s World War II speeches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

culture surrounding the phenomena of speeches.⁴⁴ This shows the power of rhetorical analysis to provide fresh perspectives on existing literatures.

As seen, Liberal Party rhetoric in the mid-twentieth century has thus far been neglected, but there is a developing body of rhetorical theory, and especially the concepts conceived of within rhetorical political analysis, which can be used to examine it. This thesis intends to deploy the tools of RPA to build upon the existing literature, taking inspiration from the work on specific speeches, arenas of rhetoric, and techniques of rhetorical expression.

As the tool used by political parties to mould their image, appeal to the electorate or respond to particular situations, studying rhetoric provides understanding both of what a party wanted to achieve and how it sought to achieve it. The Liberal Party held great influence in British politics even when its electoral votes did not reflect this. In the period 1959 to 1974 it was still a national party, with membership numbering in the hundreds of thousands, winning byelections, and driving new legislation.⁴⁵ The fact that it has not yet been studied rhetorically provides the opportunity to scrutinise rhetorical theory as it appears in this specific case.

As seen, rhetorical political analysis has often been planted discretely at a moment in time. This thesis contends that rhetoric is a continuous process, central to political activity, from establishing a party image to enlisting members in local activity, rather than simply a speech tool to be deployed when votes are sought. Finlayson's conception of the rhetorical process encourages this longer-term look at rhetoric.⁴⁶ As such this thesis considers the rhetorical activities of the Liberal Party over the fifteen years from 1959 to 1974. This chronological frame, while short enough to analyse specifics, encourages greater appreciation of contexts and imperatives, and rhetorical change over time, allowing the analysis to historicise rhetoric rather than freezing it in time. This particular period is fascinating as the Liberals rose from a party at its electoral nadir in 1959 to a party that considered itself to have a chance of being elected to government in 1974. This progress, and two contrasting party leaders, Jo Grimond and Jeremy Thorpe, allows us to chart rhetorical change.

A broad source base befits this broad conception and as such, this study is based on extensive archival research. The Liberal Party and Election Address collections at the University of Bristol and the Liberal Party archive at the London School of Economics have proven essential.

⁴⁴ R. Toye, 'The Rhetorical Culture of the House of Commons after 1918', *History*, 99 (2014), 270-298.

⁴⁵ R. Douglas, *The History of the Liberal Party, 1895-1970* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1971).

⁴⁶ The full worth of other pieces, such as Burke's theory of identification and Atkins' subsequent work on it, is considered in the relevant chapters.

I have also consulted the Jeremy Thorpe papers at the British Library to supplement some analysis, but a different study might wish to use that and Jo Grimond's personal archive at the National Library of Scotland to focus more on the two leaders. Chapter One uses individual constituency election addresses to explore how the party established an image for the electorate and constructed an audience to whom to appeal. Chapter Two uses a variety of leader and party publications – both policy and non-policy, inside and outside of election-time – to consider how Liberal rhetoric framed visions of British politics. Chapter Three studies out-of-election-time campaigns to learn about Liberal Party imperatives and the role of rhetoric when the agenda is not the winning of votes. Of course, a fully comparative approach of the Conservative, Labour and Liberal parties would be valuable but here the former two are only used as a foil. This base, together with the ascribed fifteen-year time period, allows rhetoric to be considered to its fullest extent.

This thesis therefore uses the case of the Liberal Party between 1959 and 1974 to consider three aspects of the rhetorical process. The first chapter considers appeals to ethos and the Liberal conception of its implied audience, the potential voter, understanding how individual candidates presented themselves and their party. It argues that the audience of the potential voter dictated Liberal rhetoric because its vagueness meant that the party needed to both *construct* it and *appeal to* it. The nature of its target audience was unclear and continuously debated within the party. The Liberals therefore conceived their audience as broadly-based to identify as much common ground for appeal as possible.

The second chapter considers framing and rhetorical acts of definition and construction, exploring the relationship between rhetoric and context. It argues that the Liberal Party constructed a values-based frame in the 1960s predicated on principles of partnership, before re-deploying those values as the solution to a frame based on a depiction of politics-in-crisis in the 1970s. The chapter contends that frames need to be foregrounded in rhetorical analysis for two reasons. Locating the frames deployed by political parties reveals both what the parties consider as the important issues of the time, and how they present their version of those issues to the electorate.

The third chapter analyses Liberal out-of-election-time campaigns to interrogate differing appeals to internal and external audiences and the debate surrounding the rhetorical situation. The chapter argues that these campaigns aimed to create moments for Liberal progress outside of elections, to pursue the organisational and financial imperatives particular to it as a smaller

party. Through attempting to capture particular moods and using the language of action, the party defined situations to convince both Liberals and non-Liberals that it was the opportune time for action for the Liberal cause.

The thesis therefore concludes that using a rhetorical frame of analysis reveals a lot about the aims and activities particular to the Liberal Party as a third and centre party between 1959 and 1974, and that such analysis in turn allows historians to develop their theories of rhetorical analysis.

Chapter One: Appeals to ethos and the potential Liberal voter

Throughout 1959 to 1974, the Liberal Party Organising Committee's strategy discussions were primarily concerned with the party's image as it was received by the electorate.⁴⁷ This was an especially pressing matter for the party because it recognised that the middle ground of British politics was an area perceived to be broad and vague. The personalised, caring image it decided to project was organised around the construction of the potential Liberal voter, an essential rhetorical act for a third party with a limited core support base. This chapter explores the construction of and appeals to Liberal voters by connecting the theories of Aristotle and Kenneth Burke to Liberal Party rhetoric for the first time and showing how this imagined audience was both implicit in, and itself a part of, many of its other appeals.⁴⁸

In particular, this chapter explores how the Liberals used appeals to ethos in order to appeal to the electorate in elections between 1959 and 1974, identifying three distinct aspects. It analyses the Party's presentation of itself "personally", considering its depiction of individual candidates, the Liberal contingent as a whole, senior figures or party leaders as well as its presentation of itself as a party with particular local emphasis. It then looks at the party's political presentation of itself, exploring its desire to assert political credibility. In doing so, it builds on Burke's suggestion that appeals to ethos are a basis from which further arguments can prove persuasive. The final section explores Aristotelian conceptions of ethos to study how Liberals used their rhetoric to construct and appeal to their potential voter.

This chapter argues that ethos appeals were borne from the particular challenge for a minor party to establish credibility with a positive image and full policy programme, and that considerations of the implied audience of the potential Liberal voter fundamentally shaped its rhetoric. The Liberals emphasised the importance of the personal, because most of their votes resulted from individual candidates' local popularity, and constructed a defined party image rooted in a clear political position to build credibility. That image was dictated by Liberal perceptions of its potential voter and so this chapter reaffirms the importance of audience in appeals to ethos. Liberal core support was minimal and so it needed to imagine and construct a broad catchment to appeal to in order to attract votes on a large scale. This construction was

⁴⁷ 'Organising Committee minutes', Liberal Party 5/1 and Liberal Party 5/2, Liberal Party Archive (LPA), LSE Library.

⁴⁸ Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric* (Translated with an introduction and notes by H. C. Lawson-Tancred) (London: Penguin, 1991); K. Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969).

rooted in desirable characteristics such as compassion, and was consistently broad to identify with the attitudes of as many potential voters as possible.

Election Addresses

This chapter studies individual constituency election addresses for both general and by-elections between 1959 and 1974, consulting a comprehensive selection spanning the whole period and country.⁴⁹ These are an invaluable source because they were delivered to every household in a constituency and were considered electorally essential, as a party's easiest way of accessing voters. Gallup polls asserted their widespread reading with fifty three percent of electors claiming to have read an address in the 1970 election.⁵⁰ Around a quarter of the permitted constituency expenditure would be consumed in their production.⁵¹

The limited historiography on election addresses has implied that local and personal foci were more important in Liberal party rhetoric than other parties, but such implications have not been unpacked further.⁵² Addresses typically covered a whole range of national and local issues with a variety of appeals. Advice from the central party organisation was general.⁵³ Candidates could consult specimen segments or entire addresses but individual variation was strongly encouraged. Personal and local focus was demanded, which combined with the call for credible and coherent policy to consolidate appeals to ethos.⁵⁴

The typical format of the addresses reflected the perceived importance of the personal. A personalised message from the candidate beseeched the elector for their vote and usually included a personal introduction, incorporating details of their family, work, political record, and any local ties. Photographs of candidate and family were also typically included, and the spouse might also offer some additional text. There was minimal and vague handbook guidance available on the presentation of the Party politically.⁵⁵ However, the middle pages of the standard four-page election address often took identical forms in detailing policy, reflecting some centralised advice.⁵⁶ In practice, this was often a condensed version of the manifesto. The leeway afforded here reflected both the importance for the Liberals of the personal touch of the

⁴⁹ DM668/2, Election Address Collection (EAC), University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁵⁰ D. Butler and D. Kavanagh, *The British General Election of February 1974* (London: Macmillan, 1974), 229.

⁵¹ D. E. Butler and A. S. King, *The British General Election of 1966* (London: Macmillan, 1966), 198.

⁵² D. Butler and M. Pinto-Duschinsky, *The British General Election of 1970* (London: Macmillan, 1971), 311.

⁵³ *Partners for Progress: Liberal Candidates and Speakers Handbook 1964*, Liberal Party 15/12, LPA, LSE Library.

⁵⁴ The terminology of "ethos" was not used, however.

⁵⁵ *Partners for Progress*.

⁵⁶ *Hendon South February 1974*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

candidate and the independence they were granted by the Party. In these ways, then, election addresses were crucial to party, candidate and elector and their variety of content offers an important opportunity to analyse Liberal appeals to ethos.

Ethos and Audience

The long-debated nature of “ethos” is crucial to this chapter. Often a quite simple definition is adopted, focused on the character of the orator. Crines, for example, has argued that ethos is about establishing ‘credibility’ to create ‘rhetorical integrity’, and that ‘without such credibility an audience cannot be convinced of the argument’.⁵⁷ Crines implies that the specific audience is important, but his work focuses on the orator and their acts alone. This approach stems from a reading of Aristotle, who claimed that speakers need to establish themselves as credible, possessing common sense and goodwill.⁵⁸ In particular, this thesis investigates Burke’s contention that ethos had the purpose of ingratiating the speaker to the audience, from which basis the audience could be persuaded of the overall argument.⁵⁹

Ethos is thus easily considered as the presentation of one’s sound character. However, Aristotle actually put forward a more complex definition than traditionally interpreted. For him, appeals to ethos were about locating characteristics within one’s audience and shaping your appeal accordingly. In his *Art of Rhetoric*, Aristotle explained how a speaker might adapt his appeal based upon the age of the audience he was addressing, for example.⁶⁰ Rhetoric is not an ignorant construction, but one necessarily led by the characteristics of the audience. This encourages a historian undertaking rhetorical analysis to pay closer attention to the relationships between ethos appeals and audiences. Burke also centred the importance of audience in his theory of identification.⁶¹ For him, the task of a rhetor is to identify an element of common ground with your audience. This basis forms a rapport and facilitates further persuasion about the element of the rhetor’s concern. Before that is possible, the specific audience in question must be imagined and constructed. The analysis below builds on these traditional understandings of ethos by considering the connection between implied audiences and ethos appeals. It argues that the fact that rhetoric is (at least) a two-way interaction has not been acknowledged sufficiently in historical application of rhetorical theory.

⁵⁷ A. S. Crines, ‘A Discussion of Rhetoric in Harold Wilson’s White Heat Speech’, *Renewed Journal of Social Democracy*, 22 (2014), 129.

⁵⁸ Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric*, 141.

⁵⁹ Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*, 52.

⁶⁰ Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric*, 172.

⁶¹ Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*, 56.

Frank Myers has considered the place of audience in rhetorical theory. In his piece on Harold Macmillan's "Winds of Change" speech, he combined political science approaches with rhetorical criticism to analyse how Macmillan sought to deal with competing audiences and in doing so explored techniques such as agenda-setting and dissociation to consider how orators dealt with political problems.⁶² The piece is instructive in demonstrating how orators must construct their ideas in such a way that they can be presented satisfactorily to multiple, often hostile audiences. His crucial emphasis on audience encourages further consideration of the Liberal Party's construction of their audience: the potential voter.

The personal presentation of candidates

Appeals to ethos based on the personal presentation of the candidates appeared consistently in election addresses across the period and nation. These took various different forms: the personality of the candidate – and, often, the spouse – was underlined, particularly notable or successful candidates were especially spotlighted, the character and suitability of the Liberal contingent as a whole was stressed, and the importance of the local was constantly referenced. Such themes were demanded by the central party organisation, as seen in the Candidates' and Agents' Handbook of 1963, calling for photographs, biography, and personalisation; the personal was clearly stressed.⁶³ The party's Organising Committee wanted to demonstrate that the party had 'the right type and age of personalities'.⁶⁴ The implication was that some sort of personal emphasis was considered a necessary rhetorical basis for a candidate to establish a positive impression and ingratiate the reader.

This emphasis on the personal was logical. In voting Liberal at this time you were voting for an individual MP rather than for the party of government and the party embraced this fact. Focusing on individual excellence because they were less likely to achieve a solely party vote, candidates therefore tried to demonstrate their own merits as an individual to represent the constituency, wanting to develop a personal connection with voters. Labour and Conservative candidates did also sometimes attempt to connect to their electors on a personal level, but on a smaller scale.⁶⁵ Their rhetoric reflected the fact that their parties were, realistically, competing against each other for majority government. Often their addresses would be made up of positive

⁶² F. Myers, 'Harold Macmillan's "Winds of Change" Speech: A Case Study in the Rhetoric of Policy Change', *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 4 (2000), 555-575.

⁶³ *Election Agents' Handbook 1963*, DM2594/2/10, Liberal Party Organisation papers and political pamphlets collected by Barbara Joyce (LPOJ), University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁶⁴ 'Image: By-Elections', Organising Committee memo 1962, Liberal Party 5/2, LPA, LSE Library.

⁶⁵ DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

discussions of their party's 'policy' and negative discussions of their opposition's 'failure'.⁶⁶ The Liberals, on the other hand, needed the personal to matter above this national debate because it was their best hope of winning a vote.



Figure 1.1 – Sudbury and Woodbridge, 1964 – a typically personal Liberal Party election address.⁶⁷

Liberal addresses accordingly stressed the positive characteristics of candidates, and focused on honesty, integrity, and commitment, imploring electors to consider the virtues of the ideal Member of Parliament. As they sought for votes for an individual, that person was glorified. The candidates of Exeter in 1959 and Cheltenham in February 1974 both spoke of 'devoting' their life's energies towards the Liberal case to improve the fortunes of constituency and country.⁶⁸ The language of 'devotion' implied hard work, care, and passion, the implied argument being that time served represented commitment and thus worthiness of a vote. Other candidates simply listed the characteristics they could bring to Parliament. For example, Bedford's candidate in 1964 promised 'determination, success, sincerity' and viewed himself as 'a dynamo you can have for the price of an X'.⁶⁹ The term 'dynamo' implied the candidate was selling himself as a product and invoked a language of technical scientific development that reflected the status of modernisation as a key issue in the 1964 election. In other cases, the importance of the candidate's underlying character was seen in the address simply asking 'what sort of MP do you want?'.⁷⁰ The assumption underlying this rhetoric was that electors cared about the personal character of the candidate. Liberal rhetoric was creating a virtuous circle,

⁶⁶ '1964', DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁶⁷ *Sudbury and Woodbridge 1964*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁶⁸ *Exeter 1959*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections; *Cheltenham February 1974*, DM668/2, University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁶⁹ *Bedford 1964*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁷⁰ *Hazel Grove February 1974*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

asserting that the personal mattered through repeated appeals to the personal virtues of candidates.

Candidates that were especially notable were awarded even greater personal emphasis within their addresses. These could be national celebrities, famous by-election winners, or simply sitting MPs. For example, the address of Robin Day in Hereford in 1959 began with the statement that Day, a political interviewer and commentator, was ‘known to millions’.⁷¹ Similarly, Ripon by-election winner David Austick was lauded for that success as in October 1974 he now needed ‘no introduction...because you’ve seen him here, there and everywhere’.⁷² The implication was that national or local fame was a sufficient character reference for Parliament. Fame (for positive reasons) brought credibility, as did simply knowledge of a person and association of them with politics. Other addresses provided supplements spotlighting the candidate. In 1964, a sixteen-page booklet to ‘Know Your Man’ (Lord Mayo) accompanied the Dorset South election address.⁷³ The 1966 Bodmin address reproduced near-verbatim a Peter Bessell parliamentary speech on the fortunes of Cornwall.⁷⁴ The implicit logos here was that Bessell was the authority on Cornish affairs, best placed to represent the region. Addresses like these almost acted as independent candidate’s addresses rather than promoting the Liberal Party; they were very clear that an individual was being voted for. Emphasising a well-known candidate’s credentials was therefore one route to closing the credibility gap between minor and major party status.

The Liberals also asserted the positive character of a candidate through the endorsement of their spouse, adding another favourable layer to the candidate’s image. These testimonia had a dual focus. The spouse often simply affirmed the good character of the candidate. In the address for Mid Beds in 1966, a short paragraph from the candidate’s wife asserted that he had ‘very practical’ knowledge, was an ‘ardent campaigner’, and could ‘champion’ local interests.⁷⁵ Often in the case of a female spouse, she would also offer a housewife or mother’s perspective to affirm the broad extent of interests that her husband could defend. The spouse promoting the candidate in Guildford in 1959 asserted that she could impart to her partner ‘the difficulties and problems...of raising a family’, before addressing some policy points on childcare and

⁷¹ *Hereford 1959*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁷² *Ripon October 1974*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁷³ *Dorset South 1964*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁷⁴ *Bodmin 1966*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁷⁵ *Mid Beds 1966*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

schooling.⁷⁶ Such segments portrayed the candidate as more widely knowledgeable, caring, and willing to defend a larger cross-section of their constituents' interests. Importantly, these practicalities of knowledge tied in to Liberal appeals of care for all; the virtues here were those which the implied audience was imagined to value, too. The love of a husband for his wife would appear irrelevant to politics, but it reflected the Liberal focus on the personal and added another thin layer of positive impression of the individual candidate for whom the vote was sought.

As well as individual candidates, though, some addresses also sought to lift up the character and capabilities of the Liberal contingent as a whole, or specifically the Liberal leaders – Jo Grimond and Jeremy Thorpe, for whom praise was often effusive. The importance of the leader as figurehead in a small parliamentary party was evidently appreciated. The candidate for Exeter in 1959 considered Grimond to possess 'one of the outstanding personalities of the generation', being 'vigorous and farseeing'; he went on to underline his credentials as a potential Prime Minister or Leader of the Opposition.⁷⁷ Leadership qualities were boiled down to hard work and logic. Fifteen years on, the candidate for Rugby spoke similarly about then-leader Thorpe, contending that 'only' he 'could harness the energies and skills' necessary to deal with the current political and economic crisis.⁷⁸ The desired and required leadership qualities were being deliberately focused on characteristics rather than experience, as logical for a party with no recent government term. General praise for the wider Liberal Party contingent was used too. A boldened slogan on Cheadle's 1966 address proclaimed 'we have the people and the policies'.⁷⁹ The October 1974 address for Harwich also made reference to the make-up of the party, as it 'consists of free men from the whole spectrum of society'.⁸⁰ This statement held further implications. It referred to the freedom of Liberals in Parliament to vote according to their conscience, as opposed to the masses of whipped Labour and Conservative MPs. This freedom suggested an ability to act honestly and with integrity in politics. The second half of the quote argued that the Liberal contingent could consider a whole range of interests – in contrast to arguments concerning the Conservative and Labour parties who were claimed to be held ransom to the interests of big business or trade unions respectively.⁸¹ Such

⁷⁶ *Guildford 1959*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁷⁷ *Exeter 1959*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁷⁸ *Rugby February 1974*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁷⁹ *Cheadle 1966*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁸⁰ *Harwich October 1974*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁸¹ This Liberal political position will be considered later in the chapter.

appeals sought to establish the wider electoral credibility of the Liberal Party, rather than simply extolling the character of a specific constituency candidate.

A final tactic used was to eulogise the local. This involved emphasising that a candidate was local, acclaiming a constituency, or pledging to prioritise specifically local issues. Any local connections were stressed, nearly without fail. In 1964, Bolton West went slogan-heavy to portray this message regarding candidate Arthur Holt: ‘you know, he’s the man’; ‘one of us for all of us’; and ‘the man you know’.⁸² The assumption was that the audience would or should care about local issues in general elections. Emlyn Hooson for Montgomeryshire in 1966 went a step further, equating localness with local knowledge and passion to demonstrate the expertise and fervour with which he could represent the constituency.⁸³ The importance attributed to a candidate’s own constituency was also portrayed in various ways. For example, the candidate for St Albans in 1959 spoke of his ‘great honour’ to stand in a city boasting visitors from across the globe;⁸⁴ a common trope, as with Oxford in 1966, was to hope for local fame by encouraging a Liberal vote to make an electoral statement and ‘make [your constituency] the headline’;⁸⁵ and the candidates for both Aberdeenshire West and Worcestershire South spoke of ‘neglect’ of their constituencies in Parliament.⁸⁶ It was an obvious ploy for the Liberals to attribute dissatisfaction to the Conservative and Labour parties’ recent terms in government and implied an audience valuing local attention.

Specific local issues were often highlighted by candidates wishing to appeal to electors’ particular grievances. As shown in Figure 1.2 below, Grimond devoted a considerable amount of his 1959 address to ‘A Plan for Orkney’ which incorporated agriculture and transport policy.⁸⁷ In 1964 the candidate for Altrincham and Sale expressed his dissatisfaction at plans for a bypass around the towns being halted⁸⁸ and, as common for this type of appeal, the address for Berwick-upon-Tweed in 1970 sought to make clear that Alan Beith was the man to get Berwick’s problems heard at Westminster.⁸⁹ This call for a ‘voice’ rather than a ‘solution’ was more common in rural constituencies, trying to latch onto dissatisfaction regarding parliamentary neglect of agricultural issues. Attempts to reduce politics from the national to

⁸² *Bolton West 1964*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁸³ *Montgomeryshire 1966*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁸⁴ *St Albans 1959*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁸⁵ *Oxford 1966*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁸⁶ *Aberdeenshire West 1966*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections; *Worcestershire South 1966*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁸⁷ *Orkney & Shetland 1959*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁸⁸ *Altrincham 1964*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁸⁹ *Berwick 1970*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

the local were common. This helped to differentiate the Liberal appeal in teasing out specific dissatisfaction and gave the party credibility for believing in the importance of local grievances. It was easier to display care when discussing something specific and local than something vague and distant and reflected arguments of representing all interests. The candidate for Newcastle-under-Lyme in 1970 linked the language of caring with locality by declaring that the local mine closures ‘stink very strongly’.⁹⁰ Latching on to the desire to fix local issues could help coax a potential vote into an actual vote.

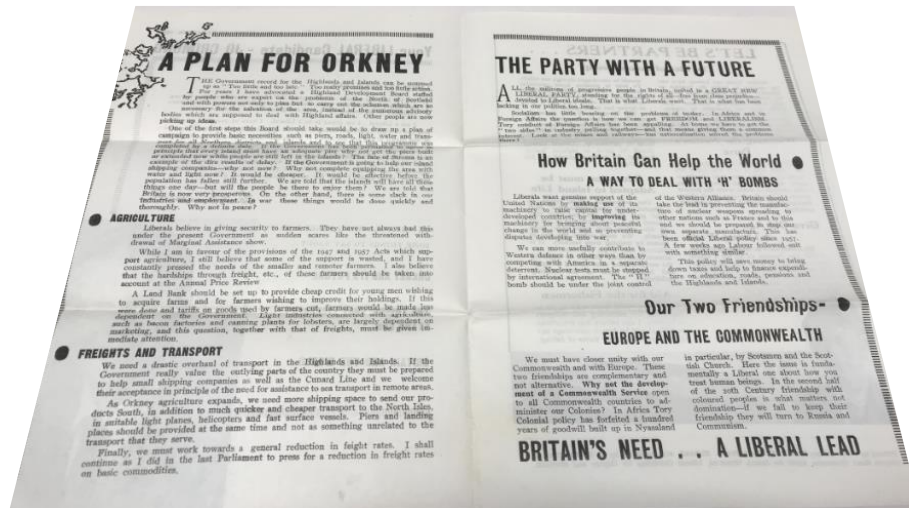


Figure 1.2 – Orkney & Shetland, 1959.⁹¹

Attempts to establish that Liberal candidates and the contingent as a whole were of good character were key to attempts to get individual candidates elected. The Liberals used their rhetoric to set an agenda of personal importance. Candidates writing election addresses used a number of themes to personalise and localise their politics to resonate with the electorate and to underpin a party image of ‘caring’. The Liberals wanted to portray themselves as a personal and friendly party and this naturally began with a very personal presentation of its candidates. Aristotle’s contention that orators needed to establish themselves as possessing common sense and goodwill was clearly visible in this deliberate personalisation of Liberal politics, but it also reflects Burke’s theory of appeals to ethos as a necessary first step for a rhetorician to make a positive impression and have the chance to convince the audience of their further arguments while constructing an implied audience that valued these virtues.

⁹⁰ Newcastle under Lyme 1970, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁹¹ Orkney & Shetland 1959.

Candidates' presentation of the Liberal Party

Candidates also relied upon appeals to ethos in their political presentation of the wider Liberal Party. Again, a number of distinct themes featured, as the party constructed a positive impression, of care, clarity and credibility. The Organising Committee in 1962 discussed party image and recognised that it was the image, more than policies, which would 'win or lose votes'.⁹² They decided that this image must be 'for all the people' and 'young, up-to-date, vigorous and successful'. Candidates sought to present the party as a credible producer of policy, with well thought-out plans arising from genuine principles. This dual notion of credibility and conviction was vital as appeals to logos and appeals to ethos worked as one. The Liberals sought to demonstrate both that they stood for *something*, as well as what that something actually was. This was essential for a minor party seeking to breach a "credibility gap" between it and the major parties in the eyes of the electorate.

Candidates presented the Liberal Party as offering something new, an obvious basis on which to oppose the two established parties of government. They portrayed the necessity of change, both in *policies* and in *politics*, and contended that the Liberals were the party to carry it out. This contention was partly driven by a negative portrayal of "class politics" and partly by an argument about newness. The latter was related to the fact that the Liberals had been out of government for so long; the Liberal Party was not new and elsewhere it appealed to its historical traditions as a party of freedom. Often the party just used slogans to convey what they offered. The candidate for Bradford South in 1959 considered it 'time to let the Liberals have a go!'⁹³ while in East Grinstead in 1970 the appeal was that the Liberals had 'the radical new ideas'.⁹⁴ The two main parties were alternating in government so the Liberals tried to capture a mood of voters wanting something different.

The Liberals' critique of class politics will be assessed in chapter two, but the argument about "newness" developed within two themes. The first was the need for policy change, usually centred on modernisation. Often this was expressed abstractly, such as in Beckenham in 1964 calling for Britain to be 'brought up to date'.⁹⁵ More concretely, the candidate for St Albans in 1959 argued against Tory and Labour 'restrictionism' and for the Liberal Party's ability to

⁹² 'The Liberal Image', Organising Committee memo 1962, Liberal Party 5/2, LPA, LSE Library.

⁹³ *Bradford South 1959*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁹⁴ *East Grinstead 1970*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁹⁵ *Beckenham 1964*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

welcome the ‘fresh wonders’ of science.⁹⁶ Such themes were common in the 1960s.⁹⁷ They tied into the second argument: that there was something intrinsically wrong with how politics was being done, and that fundamental political change was necessary before fundamental policy change could occur. This argument took different forms: MPs were out of date and incapable of looking forward⁹⁸ and their moral standards had deteriorated⁹⁹ to the extent that Parliament needed a ‘blood transfusion’¹⁰⁰ or ‘facelift’.¹⁰¹ The Liberals linked such issues to the two main parties and their creation of class divisions. The candidate for Bridgwater in 1966 called for a ‘fresh approach to politics’ which would ‘treat people as people’ rather than ‘as cogs in a machine to be manipulated’.¹⁰² In the same election the candidate for Huddersfield West pinned blame on the ‘sterile class war’.¹⁰³ The constant trope of the Liberals having ‘no vested interests’ depicted them as inherently the only party who could end the damaging class-driven politics.¹⁰⁴ There was slight variation across the period, but the need for intrinsic political change was constantly portrayed. This was led by political exigency. In the 1960s, Liberal rhetoric of newness tied into appeals for modernisation and education to meet the technological revolution. In the 1970s, the economic crisis led to more direct Liberal pleas for systemic political change to break the two-party system and unite the country. The necessity of the fresh Liberal alternative was presented in terms of policy, but underpinned by the need for actual political change, in breaking the two-party system which was presented as encouraging class division.¹⁰⁵

The Liberals wanted to substantiate such principles with the expression of a defined position on the political spectrum. The idea of establishing yourself as a party within this constructed spectrum was an accepted political practice, satisfying to electors and their understanding of parties. It was also another source of definition for the Liberal Party, one which made sense within their wider view of two-party politics as an unsatisfactory “class war”. Positioning itself as the centre ground between the left and right party poles was considered necessary in order to ‘crystallise the vague imagination of the voter’ of the Liberal Party’s political offering.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁶ *St Albans 1959*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁹⁷ S. Mitchell, *The Brief and Turbulent Life of Modernising Conservatism* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2006), 159.

⁹⁸ *Huntingdonshire 1959*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

⁹⁹ *Mid Beds 1959*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹⁰⁰ *Hereford 1959*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹⁰¹ *Edinburgh North February 1974*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹⁰² *Bridgwater 1966*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹⁰³ *Huddersfield West 1966*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹⁰⁴ *Bodmin October 1974*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹⁰⁵ Liberal rhetoric on class division is discussed further in Chapter Two.

¹⁰⁶ ‘Party Image’, Organising Committee memo 1962, Liberal Party 5/2, LPA, LSE Library.

Richard Toye has assessed such acts of political positioning in the presentation of ‘consensus’ politics after 1945, finding that rhetoricians manipulate the meaning of certain terms to change their perception to their benefit.¹⁰⁷ Liberal election addresses sought to define the political spectrum unequivocally as having a left, centre and right, to present themselves as the only non-extreme electoral option. Again, these were often slogan-heavy, undeveloped claims. ‘Not left, not right, but straight ahead’ was common throughout the period.¹⁰⁸ Sometimes it was slightly metaphorical, as with ‘please look straight ahead’ in Huntingdonshire in 1959¹⁰⁹ or ‘the middle is the citadel of reason’ in Inverness in 1970.¹¹⁰ Occasionally this was linked to the extreme alternatives between which the Liberal Party was sat. The candidate for Wokingham in 1964, for example, called on electors to ‘avoid the dangerous extremes of both Right and Left’,¹¹¹ whilst the candidate for South Bedfordshire in February 1974 spoke of his fear of the forces of extremism,¹¹² and the candidate for Cornwall North in 1966 claimed that the Liberals’ moderating influence in Parliament had actually pulled the Conservative and Labour parties into the centre-ground.¹¹³ Thus the language of the centre was consistent. It was a satisfactory act of political definition to contrast the extremes of left and right. Ethos and logos appeals were therefore interplaying to create political clarity to satisfy an implied audience which valued centrism and non-extreme politics.

This idea of political definition also took a practical form. The Organising Committee agreed that part of the Party Programme in 1962 and 1963 was to promote the Liberals as ‘a Party with a policy’.¹¹⁴ The very possession of defined and widely-known policy and ideology was as important for the Liberals as what that policy and ideology actually was. The language of ‘plan’ and ‘principle’ was prevalent in the addresses, signalling the Liberals as ready to govern, and govern with conviction. They backed this up with policy detail. Almost every address had standardised Liberal policy in the middle pages, and some included extra leaflets, on general policy or in response to specific issues.¹¹⁵ It was a minor party imperative to prove the existence of a full policy plan, as well as persuade electors regarding the actual substance of that plan. This was very matter-of-fact and detailed to reinforce the image of confidence and competence.

¹⁰⁷ R. Toye, ‘From “Consensus” to “Common Ground”: The Rhetoric of the Postwar Settlement and Its Collapse’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 48, 1 (2013), 3-23.

¹⁰⁸ *Derby South 1966*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹⁰⁹ *Huntingdonshire 1959*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹¹⁰ *Inverness 1970*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹¹¹ *Wokingham 1964*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹¹² *South Beds February 1974*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹¹³ *Cornwall North 1966*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹¹⁴ ‘Party Programme’, Organising Committee memo 1962, Liberal Party 5/2, LPA, LSE Library.

¹¹⁵ *Newcastle under Lyme February 1974*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

The candidate for Oswestry in 1964 took it upon himself to justify where the money for Liberal policy would come from – through the formation of a Ministry of Expansion.¹¹⁶ This was apt in the context of 1960s urban planning and the desire for modernisation. A semi-common format for addresses was a mini-newspaper with a big double-page policy spread, with the example of South Bedfordshire in 1966 essentially including a condensed manifesto entitled ‘This is Liberal Policy’ (see Figure 1.3).¹¹⁷ The policy detail was there if any elector wished to see it, and its very existence was as important for the Liberals as what it actually said. One textual alternative to the paper format was listing. It was demonstrated that the Liberals had important things to say about important issues. The address for Anglesey in February 1974 listed ‘what Liberals say about...’ eight policy issues.¹¹⁸ The candidate for Hove offered a sixteen-point policy plan to ‘unite to beat the [economic] crisis’.¹¹⁹ These combined extensive detail with the range of issues covered, helping to evidence claims of representing all the people, and being politically defined – what was being said, and the fact that plenty of things were being said at all. A clear policy programme was therefore proffered to overcome vagueness in image.



Figure 1.3 – South Bedfordshire, 1966.¹²⁰

Candidates presenting the Liberal Party appealed to ethos first in attempting to construct a party image, and second in making this image defined and credible in the eyes of the electorate. The Liberals sought to generate a positive and broad-reaching impression of their party, centred on newness and compassion. As a minor party with an unclear national image, portraying a clear party image and policy, with plentiful policy detail and the overt language of ‘plan’ and

¹¹⁶ *Oswestry 1964*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹¹⁷ *South Bedfordshire 1966*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹¹⁸ *Anglesey February 1974*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹¹⁹ *Hove February 1974*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹²⁰ *South Bedfordshire 1966*.

‘principle’, was designed to prove credibility. An ‘ethos of reason’ was created, blurring the boundary between appeals to ethos and appeals to logos in defining the Liberal Party’s offering.

Constructing and appealing to the potential Liberal voter

This final section builds on the consideration of appeals to ethos by analysing the importance of the audience. For Aristotle, part of the appeal to ethos was to locate particular characteristics within your audience and shape your appeal accordingly.¹²¹ Similarly, for Burke, a crucial basis for rhetorical persuasion was to identify common ground with your audience.¹²² The Liberal Party had to imagine some sort of coherent audience – its potential voter – and decide how to appeal to it. The ‘implied audience’, or perhaps, ‘imagined, or constructed, audience’, shaped Liberal appeals. Locating an audience and assigning at least one characteristic to it is a vital part of political persuasion. Construction and appeal act as part of the same process. All parties need to appeal to their potential voter – it is essential to electoral advance. For the Liberals, however, their potential voter was more of an unknown, with the party’s only consistent belief being that it was large.¹²³ It therefore focused on broad characteristics of the potential voter so as to encompass as large a group as possible. In different addresses this audience was a ‘progressive’ or a ‘moderate’, a caring individual, or simply disillusioned with two-party politics. Ultimately, the Liberals purported to identify characteristics within their audience, associated themselves with such characteristics, and tried to tease them out even further in their appeals. Liberal imagination of the potential voter shows that rhetoric is a two-way process between speaker and audience and makes the party’s rhetorical history a useful window through which to analyse the concept of an implied audience within appeals to ethos.

The Liberal Party considered itself to have huge but fragile untapped support. Geoffrey Sell reflected historiographical consensus in writing that Liberal support consisted of a ‘tiny core’ surrounded by a far broader *potential vote*.¹²⁴ This was an audience not trusted to act. Liberal rhetoric was therefore partly devoted to the practicalities of getting the vote out. The party wanted an early vote, to guarantee it would be cast.¹²⁵ Crucially, and particularly in its lowest ebb of 1959, the party appealed to its potential voter to vote with conviction and follow their Liberal inclinations. It encouraged independence, with the candidate for Banbury in 1959

¹²¹ Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric*.

¹²² Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*.

¹²³ ‘Political Research Unit Survey, September 1960’, DM2594/1/13, LPOJ, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹²⁴ Sell, ‘Liberal Revival’, 134.

¹²⁵ *Arundel & Shoreham 1959*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

simply describing the vote as ‘yours’,¹²⁶ and that of Aylesbury reminding their audience that it was a ‘secret ballot’.¹²⁷ The tacit indication was that a Liberal vote might be socially shameful and needed further encouragement. Other similar appeals were more complex. The 1970 candidate for Bournemouth East & Christchurch implored voters to ‘vote positively instead of traditionally’,¹²⁸ calling for voters to be positive in voting *for* something, rather than simply *against* whichever of the two major parties they disliked more. Using ‘traditionally’ as a negative also tied into Liberal rhetoric of freshness and change. The candidate for Loughborough openly claimed to be of one mind with the potential voter, writing ‘Yes – the Liberals may have the best policy, but will I be wasting my vote? – No!’.¹²⁹ Ascribing opinions to the potential voter, he asserted that the Liberals have the best policy, reducing the point of argument to simply regarding a ‘wasted vote’ – which he could then go on to dispute. He identified Liberal sympathies as the basis for appealing for a vote to frame a positive, conviction vote as logical. Candidates wrote optimistically to make the vote seem worthwhile. Electors in Wells in 1964 were told ‘you can have a Liberal MP if you want one’.¹³⁰ Again, candidates sought to break down the issue by asserting a particular claim (here, that a Liberal could win in Wells), attempting to reduce the doubts in the mind of the potential Liberal voter. Thus, through presenting the simple issue of actually going out and voting Liberal in certain different ways, the Liberals were identifying and seeking to dispel the concerns of their implied audience: the “unsure potential Liberal voter”.

Candidates presented the potential Liberal voter in a positive light, depicting them as thoughtful and intelligent to draw them in to actually voting. On one level, the appeal was just for a vote with conviction; a slogan first seen in 1964 was ‘if you think like a Liberal, vote Liberal’.¹³¹ The appeal for conviction often took a pejorative form, especially in 1970. The Oswestry candidate’s message is worth repeating in full: ‘Are you going to be political sheep and trot into the Tory and Labour folds? Or will you have the courage and independence to register an effective protest by voting for me, your Liberal candidate?’¹³² The implied choice here was between a positive, active Liberal vote and a negative, passive major party vote. Votes were ascribed more significance than simply a vote. The party associated their potential voter with

¹²⁶ *Banbury 1959*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹²⁷ *Aylesbury 1959*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹²⁸ *Bournemouth East & Christchurch 1970*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹²⁹ *Loughborough 1970*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹³⁰ *Wells 1964*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹³¹ *Chertsey 1964*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹³² *Oswestry 1970*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

intelligence. The candidate for Hampstead in 1964 praised the constituency for its ‘forward-looking, thinking people’, before qualifying this by demanding them to ‘think – and vote Liberal’.¹³³ It was a vote for the Liberals that proved your capacity for thought. In 1974, the Liberals were eager to produce convincing appeals based on their recent by-election success, with five victories in the parliament of 1970-1974. The candidate for Kensington ascribed this to voters having ‘the courage to vote for what they believed in’.¹³⁴ A Liberal vote was connected to courage. Liberal candidates simultaneously constructed, and appealed to, their audience by imbuing the potential Liberal voter with favourable characteristics. They presented their audience positively in order to convey that voting Liberal revealed something fundamentally good about your character.

As with the presentation of the party’s political position, Liberals also sought to define their audience on the political spectrum, to capture the individual voter within the broadest possible Liberal arc. The potential Liberal voter was progressive, moderate, a cynic, and crucially there were millions of them across the nation. This further buttressed arguments for optimism and against the wasted vote. The Liberals used polling data as gospel when it was favourable; the candidate for Northwich in 1959 proudly declared that ‘a recent Gallup Poll shows that 47% of the electorate would like to see more Liberals in Parliament’.¹³⁵ The candidate for Battersea South explained that this support was due to electors knowing ‘that the Liberals represent moderate, centre opinion’;¹³⁶ this was a commonly used counterpoint to the left and right of the two major parties. This contrast was key; in Devizes in 1966 the alternative was being a ‘far out left-winger or a far-out Tory’.¹³⁷ This polarisation aimed to scare people away from the major parties and into the non-extreme (and by definition huge) centre-ground where they supposedly naturally belonged. The presentation became broader still. ‘Millions of people from all sorts of places are going Liberal’ was claimed in Colne Valley in 1964;¹³⁸ this entwined with Liberal appeals of being a catch-all party able to represent diverse interests. They capped this appeal with the contention that the British were naturally liberal. The candidate for Basingstoke in 1966 claimed that Britain was ‘liberal by tradition, instinct and behaviour’.¹³⁹

¹³³ *Hampstead 1964*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹³⁴ *Kensington February 1974*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹³⁵ *Northwich 1959*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹³⁶ *Battersea South 1959*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹³⁷ *Devizes 1966*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹³⁸ *Colne Valley 1964*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹³⁹ *Basingstoke 1966*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections. This also reveals the natural incoherence of party rhetoric. Here, tradition is a positive invocation of history; two paragraphs earlier, it represented an unwillingness to change.

This equation of 'Liberal' and 'liberal' expanded the presentation of the Liberal Party into generally positive connotations of freedom and sense. Just as Toye's work on the rhetoric of 'consensus' after 1945 demonstrated that certain terms can be defined and manipulated to the rhetor's need,¹⁴⁰ the Liberals equated 'Liberal' and 'liberal' to in turn equate it with a belief in individual freedom. In this way, Liberal rhetoric sought to widen its appeal to capture a broader section of the electorate. It presented its audience to be sat in a vast political middle-ground, to which the Liberal Party should have inherent appeal.

In 1970 Liberal candidates focused on the theme of 'care'. The Liberals assigned themselves the characteristic of being 'caring' and invited their audience to join them in such a category. This black-or-white invitation implied that you either voted Liberal or lacked basic human compassion. It stood in contrast to Liberal rhetoric deriding the Conservative and Labour parties as bureaucratic and apathetic.¹⁴¹ This was an example of Burke's theory of identification in action.¹⁴² The Liberals sought to identify that they shared the characteristic of being 'caring' with their potential voter, from which basis they could appeal for the vote more empirically. The candidate for Basingstoke sought to reduce the decision to a single frame of reference, asking 'Do you care enough to vote Liberal?'.¹⁴³ The implication of a non-Liberal vote was clear. In Bridgwater the candidate rooted the issue of care in a context of dissatisfaction with the two major parties, writing 'Are you satisfied? Liberals care. Do you care?'.¹⁴⁴ This snappy and aggressive message focused attention on the issue. The Colchester candidate identified dislike of politics with the human quality of caring to argue that the Liberals were the alternative party needed to care about the individual.¹⁴⁵ Liberal rhetoric in 1970 therefore sought to make 'care' the differentiating factor between a Liberal vote or not. Care, occasionally rooted tangibly in 'for the individual', was a basic quality of compassion for Liberals to identify as a broad basis of appeal.

These appeals were underpinned by the notion that the potential Liberal voter was tired and dissatisfied with politics and politicians. The rhetoric presented a trend across the period from a general tiredness with politics in the 1960s towards dissatisfaction caused by the inherent nature of the two-party system dividing the nation in the 1970s. It was necessary for the third

¹⁴⁰ Toye, 'From "Consensus"'.
¹⁴¹ *What A Life! Liberal Party General Election Manifesto 1970*, Liberal Party GE 9/13-F, LPA, LSE Library.

¹⁴² Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*.

¹⁴³ *Basingstoke 1970*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹⁴⁴ *Bridgwater 1970*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹⁴⁵ *Colchester 1970*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

party to encourage discontent, as they were seeking a fundamental political change rather than a mere back and forth of governments. In 1959, voters were professed to be tired with the political situation. The asserted context was eight years of Conservative rule and no positive impact from the Labour opposition. It was confidently asserted that ‘many people are tired, very tired of politics’¹⁴⁶ and that ‘many of you are irritated and bored by politicians’.¹⁴⁷ The candidate for Wokingham in 1959 described Tory and Labour parliamentary behaviour as ‘ceaseless mudslinging’.¹⁴⁸ The implied audience had higher expectations of politics than such petty conflict. The Liberals constructed their audience’s mood and simultaneously appealed to it. By 1974, a more specific trope of dissatisfaction underpinned Liberal appeals. The candidate for Cambridgeshire asserted that the elector should think that ‘class warfare is splitting the nation’.¹⁴⁹ Liberal candidates constructed and asserted dissatisfaction by speaking of political and economic crisis. It was caused by ‘increasing strife and slanging’ between the two major parties in the Commons,¹⁵⁰ and by subsequent ‘political malaise’.¹⁵¹ This left people ‘bewildered, frightened and angry’ according to the candidate for Kensington.¹⁵² James Martin has written on rhetorical appeals to emotion. In asserting how their audience should feel, rhetors are simultaneously creating a mood and capturing that mood.¹⁵³ In the 1970s Liberal Party rhetoric asserted a mood of public disillusion by locating issues with the two major parties, and encouraged this mood to be felt by as broad a group as possible. This was to emotionally stimulate the audience to align with the rhetor’s way of thinking. Being “tired and dissatisfied” with politics changed over the period from an apathy with major party government to a specific discontent at a class warfare-created political and economic crisis.

This study of election addresses has revealed that imagination of their potential voter dictated Liberal rhetoric. This voter was simultaneously constructed and appealed to, based on a number of themes. The inseparability of construction and appeal reflects the importance of audience to rhetoric. The “implied” audience is really “imagined”, “constructed” and “appealed to”. Burke’s theory of identification was visible in practice in how candidates identified with their potential voter by drawing them into a broad house of moderate, progressive politics which

¹⁴⁶ *Honiton 1959*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹⁴⁷ *Salisbury 1959*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹⁴⁸ *Wokingham 1959*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹⁴⁹ *Cambridge February 1974*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹⁵⁰ *Esher February 1974*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹⁵¹ *Honiton October 1974*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹⁵² *Kensington February 1974*, DM668/2, EAC, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹⁵³ J. Martin, ‘Capturing Desire: Rhetorical Strategies and the Affectivity of Discourse’, *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 18 (2016), 143-160.

cared for the individual but was tired of the two major parties. Studying the implied audience has demonstrated that rhetorical invention is a two-way process pinned on creative imagination of your audience. The mystery surrounding the exact make-up of the potential Liberal voter, and how they might be convinced to actually vote Liberal, made this particularly poignant for the Liberals and thus an especially apposite lens through which to study audience.

This chapter has demonstrated the importance of appeals to ethos as a basis for Liberal rhetoric between 1959 and 1974, as the Liberals sought to create a favourable image both of their candidates and the party. In the former, the personal was made crucial, and in the latter, the party recognised the minor party imperative to produce a clear and credible image. This affirms Burke's thought that appeals to ethos were a rhetorical starting point to ingratiate the audience as to your character, from which further appeals could be made. The prioritisation of audience asserted by Aristotle has become clear in analysis of the "implied audience" in the Liberal case. Liberal rhetoric was shaped by constructing a broad political catchment area for its potential voter, to identify common ground for a basis of appeal, as per Burke's theory. The Liberal case is particularly pertinent for studying the rhetoric of the implied audience, because of its unavoidable rhetorical imperatives. In rebuilding the party's electoral position from 1959, its actual target audience was unclear – and repeatedly debated within the party – and its voting audience could not rival the Conservative and Labour parties. It was compelled to partake in a dual act of construction of and appeal to an imagined potential voter. Presentation of party image and imagined audience were inseparable.

Chapter Two: Liberal Party framing of itself and politics

Scholarship on framing has largely focused on a distinct rhetorical moment in time, but this chapter takes the opportunity to study change over time in how Liberal rhetoric framed the world, to explore the two-way relationship between rhetoric and context. It analyses why and how the Liberal Party constructed rhetorical frames in the period between 1959 and 1974 and how this framing changed in that time.

This chapter argues that the Liberal Party adjusted its frame from a values-based politics strongly focused on ideology in the 1960s to a solution-based politics revolving around a rhetorically-defined political and economic crisis in the 1970s. Driven by context, the Liberals reoriented their underpinning values to become part of the solution to the crisis. A nadir in electoral fortunes at the end of the 1950s prompted the Liberals to redefine their image and they began to do this based on values and ideology. When the economic and political situation worsened in the late 1960s, the naturally aggressive leader Jeremy Thorpe was inclined to go on the offensive, eventually defining the status quo as a national crisis. A case study on the rhetorical expression of the theme of industrial relations reinforces these arguments. By locating a consistent industrial policy across the period, the contrast in expression from a focus on the underpinning value of partnership to that value being presented as the only fix to an industrial relations crisis allows us to appreciate the creative agency of the rhetorical frame. This chapter ultimately contends that the frame should be foregrounded in rhetorical analysis for two reasons: frames enable the rhetor to assert a particular way of viewing the world, and allow the rhetor to construct their reality of a situation.

The chapter is separated into three sections. The first section analyses the way Liberal rhetoric framed its politics in the 1960s, finding a values-based approach. It scrutinises this idealistic basis to Liberal rhetoric, and, studying leader Grimond, finds that it viewed politics through the principles underlying policy formation. It looks at the conception and expression of the key theme of the realignment of the left wing of British politics. The second section moves to lay out the changing historical context into the 1970s, to enable analysis of how context drove rhetorical change. It finds that the Liberals created and defined a context of crisis, and analyses the presentation of such a problem to the electorate. It studies how the Liberals looked to respond to the problem and sees a consistently-deployed frame format of a diagnosed problem countered by a proposed solution. Third, that story of change is interrogated using a case study on industrial relations as a rhetorical theme. It first discovers that the policy conception of

industrial relations remained similar throughout the period. It can then analyse contrast in expression to both interrogate the earlier analysis and to consider the creative power of rhetoric.

This chapter uses a variety of sources of Liberal rhetoric, focusing on party publications and manifestos across the period. These are very controlled, planned forms of rhetoric intended to disseminate a thought-out message, ideal in considering the framing of rhetoric. The manifestos also valuably combine the opportunity to proffer a “mission statement” with the imperative context of needing to appeal electorally. Similarly, Jo Grimond’s personal publications will be analysed for their content and tone. Election manifestos aside, party and personal publications are not such ritually produced forms of political propaganda; each very creation is noteworthy.

1960s: values underpin policy

The central act of Liberal framing in the 1960s was to highlight the importance of values-based idealism in politics. Liberals framed issues in relation to a vision of an ideal society oriented around values such as freedom; such principles informed policy-making too. This was driven by context. Grimond was the new Liberal leader in a time of two-party dominance and low Liberal fortunes, so the party needed a new image and chose the idea of ‘progressiveness’ as the focus. The naturally intellectual and ideological Grimond took Liberal values and an ideal Liberal society as his guide, with an ideology of a realignment of the left also a guiding concept.¹⁵⁴ This values-based frame was the rhetorical output the Liberals created to demonstrate what was important to them at this time.

The Liberal and national context of the early 1960s allowed the Liberals to take the opportunity to be inwardly focused and define a new image. Two-party politics was dominant, based around the post-war “consensus” of a mixed economy and welfare state.¹⁵⁵ The Liberals were recovering from their electoral nadir of 1955 and this prompted acts of political redefinition.¹⁵⁶ As discussed by the Organising Committee in 1962, the Liberal Party had the opportunity and need to redefine its political image.¹⁵⁷ William Wallace argued that with Grimond at the helm this new image would inevitably be predicated upon Liberal values and heavily ideological.¹⁵⁸ Liberal historians have also written on that ideology. According to McManus, Grimond was convinced that the Labour Party was in irreversible decline,¹⁵⁹ therefore Grimond wanted to

¹⁵⁴ J. Grimond, *Memoirs* (London: Heinemann, 1979).

¹⁵⁵ In the 1959 election the Conservative and Labour parties won 93% of the vote and 99% of the seats.

¹⁵⁶ Dutton, *Liberal Party*, 188.

¹⁵⁷ ‘Post-Orpington 1962’, Organising Committee minutes, Liberal Party 5/2, LPA, LSE Library.

¹⁵⁸ Wallace, ‘Survival and Revival’, 43.

¹⁵⁹ McManus, *Grimond*, 109.

move his party from the centre of the political spectrum to the left.¹⁶⁰ Grimond perceived the Liberal task as to replace Labour as the progressive wing in Britain.¹⁶¹ This was driven by Grimond's belief that the natural alignment of British politics was to pose a left-leaning progressive party against a right-leaning conservative party. These histories will be newly interrogated through studying how the Liberals framed their politics.

The Liberal frame of idealistic values was omnipresent in party publications. *Liberals Look Ahead* (1968) had a chapter entitled 'Liberal Values', and stated that 'implicit in [the whole] report [was]...a faith in distinctive Liberal values'.¹⁶² It read 'We insist upon the necessity of idealism', and listed values such as 'communal duty' and 'individual independence'.¹⁶³ The titles of publications were principled in nature, such as *Our Aim and Purpose* (1961) and *The New Liberalism* (1963).¹⁶⁴ The first chapter of the former was ideological, discussing Liberalism, as opposed to the Liberal Party or policy. Crucially, such language proliferated more policy-oriented publications too. In *Get Britain Moving With The Liberals* (1963), the party spoke of a 'Liberal vision'. The 'really important thing' was the 'basic attitudes' driving Liberal policy – these centred on an energy and willingness to help people.¹⁶⁵ This document was concerned with detailing practical policy; its concluding remarks were markedly values-based. The language of 'values' and assertions of their importance ran through even policy documents.

The party expressed its values basis to the electorate through defining itself as 'progressive', as decided by the party's Organising Committee in 1962.¹⁶⁶ As Finlayson wrote, ideologies and ideas are received as socially specific, outward-facing expressions.¹⁶⁷ Robinson and Twyman studied the framing of progressive politics in relation to David Cameron and the Conservative Party in 2010.¹⁶⁸ They concluded that the term 'progressive' was difficult for the electorate to understand, just vaguely associated with change. The imperative therefore was to create a 'shared understanding' of what 'progressive' connoted. That same task faced the

¹⁶⁰ Joyce, 'Electoral Strategy', 140.

¹⁶¹ McManus, *Grimond*, 173-174.

¹⁶² *Liberals Look Ahead*, DM2034/1/8, Printed papers relating to the Liberal Party and others (PPL), University of Bristol Special Collections, 78.

¹⁶³ *Liberals Look Ahead*, 79.

¹⁶⁴ *Our Aim and Purpose*, DM2594/2/9, LPOJ, University of Bristol Special Collections; *The New Liberalism*, DM2594/2/9, LPOJ, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹⁶⁵ *Get Britain Moving With The Liberals*, DM2594/2/9, LPOJ, University of Bristol Special Collections, 13.

¹⁶⁶ 'Image By-Elections', Organising Committee minutes, Liberal Party 5/2, LPA, LSE Library.

¹⁶⁷ A. Finlayson, 'Rhetoric and the Political Theory of Ideologies', *Political Studies*, 60 (2012), 751-767.

¹⁶⁸ E. Robinson and J. Twyman, 'Speaking at Cross Purposes? The Rhetorical Problems of "Progressive" Politics', *Political Studies Review*, 12 (2014), 51-67.

Liberals in the 1960s, taking the opportunity to define an electoral image. They made ‘progressive’ tangible on two levels in election-time rhetoric. First, in the 1964 manifesto they tied it to ‘radical’ to demonstrate that the Liberal Party was left-leaning but stood for all groups in society.¹⁶⁹ They established at the beginning of the manifesto that ‘progressive’ and ‘radical’ were one-word descriptors to mean “left-wing-but-not-Socialist”. They deployed the terms for the sake of political definition. Second, they linked it to forward change, as argued by Joyce. The ‘progressive voter’ was young, middle-class and aspiring; the policies to reflect this were rooted in modernisation and scientific progress.¹⁷⁰ The Liberals’ progressive thinking gave them the ability to seize new technological opportunities that were becoming available.¹⁷¹ They defined the period as an ‘age of abundance’ that needed to be exploited. This shows that not only a broad rhetorical approach or specific themes can be framed, but even individual terms.

Studying the Liberal Party leader between 1956 and 1967, Jo Grimond, reinforces the prevalence of the values basis. Grimond believed ‘in the primacy of ideas’ and was driven by the values of ‘political Liberalism’.¹⁷² Indeed, in his own publication *The Liberal Future* Grimond made clear that policy must be dominated by weightier principles and a sketch of an ideal Liberal society.¹⁷³ Policies were justified in principle and in practice. Devolution and regionalism were both underpinned by the need to ‘put power into as many hands as possible’.¹⁷⁴ The stated principle was that individuals deserved to run their own lives rather than have every aspect managed from the centre. This was also justified more practically in terms of the efficiency of local management. Grimond was concerned by ‘ideas and broad policies’; his rhetoric underscored the importance of that point at which ideal values and practical policies could meet.¹⁷⁵ An ideal vision of society and its values underpinned both Grimond and the party’s rhetoric, therefore; policy was always presented alongside its principled justification. This was driven by both Grimond himself and the political situation.

A key thematic organising concept within this frame was Grimond’s theory of a ‘realignment of the Left’ in British politics. This theme relied upon the values underpinning Liberal rhetoric. It allowed the party to associate the desired left wing of British politics with values such as

¹⁶⁹ *The Liberal Manifesto 1964*, Liberal Party GE 9/7 – B, LPA, LSE Library.

¹⁷⁰ Joyce, ‘Electoral Strategy’, 141.

¹⁷¹ *The Liberal Manifesto 1964*.

¹⁷² Sell, ‘Liberal Revival’, 51.

¹⁷³ J. Grimond, *The Liberal Future* (London: Faber & Faber, 1959), 9.

¹⁷⁴ *Get Britain Moving With The Liberals*.

¹⁷⁵ P. Barberis, ‘The 1964 General Election and the Liberals’ false dawn’, *Contemporary British History*, 21 (2007), 373-387.

partnership and care for the individual. Ideological political alignment was the driving tangible theme within Liberal rhetoric. Grimond wrote extensively on this in his publication *The Liberal Challenge*. A rise in affluence and decline in class consciousness left the party system no longer reflecting the make-up of society; there were no longer “haves” and “have-nots”. For Grimond, the real division was between ‘progressives’ and ‘conservatives’.¹⁷⁶ There was political space for a party based on neither capital nor labour.¹⁷⁷ Grimond thus redefined the left as the ‘progressive’ wing; in an election-time speech in 1964, he described Liberal and Communist ideals as the most totally opposed.¹⁷⁸ For Grimond and the Liberals, therefore, political realignment was an electoral theme too; it dominated thinking. He wanted ‘a radical party on the left of the centre of politics but free of socialist dogma’; the distinction between freedom and authoritarianism made the Liberal Party incompatible with the traditional left wing.¹⁷⁹ The party also addressed redefining the political spectrum. In *Liberals Look Ahead*, it wrote ‘the fundamental division today is...between those who are Liberal and those who are authoritarian’.¹⁸⁰ This language reduced the political choice to a positive-negative polarisation. In this case, ideology was a theme, rather than a frame; it interplayed with this frame of a values-based politics, working to define the Liberal Party as a progressive party of freedom.

Liberal Party rhetoric in the 1960s was not entirely positive and inward-facing. The theme of the realignment of the left (and general political positioning) did also produce more critical rhetoric attacking the Conservative and Labour parties. In *Partners at Work* (1968) – an industrial policy report – the party criticised the main parties ideologically, for perpetuating class conflict, because ‘they owe their political position to the very existence of the conflict’. They are ‘paid to defend’ their vested interest rather than attempt ‘to make peace’.¹⁸¹ The contrast was then made with the Liberal Party, supposedly free to search for peace in this supposed class conflict. This was pejorative conflict rhetoric intending to inspire anger against the main parties who were fundamentally depicted as the cause of division in Britain. This is a crucial counterpoint to note against the general trend of self-acclaiming Liberal rhetoric based on its own political position and values. It was the beginning of a more pejorative presentation of the class conflict.

¹⁷⁶ J. Grimond, *The Liberal Challenge* (London: Hollis and Carter, 1963), 295-301.

¹⁷⁷ Sell, ‘Liberal Revival’, 141.

¹⁷⁸ ‘Grimond speech 14.10.64’, Liberal Party GE 9/7 – B, LPA, LSE Library.

¹⁷⁹ Grimond, *Memoirs*, 216.

¹⁸⁰ *Liberals Look Ahead*.

¹⁸¹ *Partners at Work*, DM2034/3/12, PPL, University of Bristol Special Collections.

The Liberal Party took advantage of the opportunity to define a new image for itself by constructing a values-based politics premised on the principles of an ideal society. These values centred on community and care. Liberal party rhetoric focused on the image it was creating for the electorate; Grimond considered the ideological position of the party. This demonstrates that the frame is a creative opportunity to focus on a vision of reality or of what is important that is favourable to a rhetor. Liberal construction of values was simultaneously an underpinning and an appeal.

1970s: crisis

This second section moves the story on to the 1970s to consider what changed in how Liberal Party rhetoric framed reality, and why. It again considers longer-form party publications, particularly the two election manifestos of 1974 and the party handbook of the same year. The values that underpinned Liberal rhetoric in the 1960s now became part of the solution to a defined ‘crisis’ of the early 1970s, caused by the Conservative and Labour parties’ inherent perpetuation of class conflict. National Executive Committee strategy minutes in 1969 reveal that the driving imperative was to lay out reasons for dissatisfaction and to demonstrate that the Liberals were needed to combat it.¹⁸² The party identified a ‘crisis’ and expressed it pejoratively, before proposing a solution of unity in the national interest. The developing context and subsequent electoral opportunities encouraged the problem-solution frame.

Liberal rhetoric in the 1970s was responsive to circumstance. The decade did start in a context of economic downturn and popular disillusion, providing both the basis from which to construct a crisis, and an electoral opportunity for the Liberals to exploit. There is historical consensus on the worsening public mood at the turn of the decade.¹⁸³ Turnout at the 1970 general election was at its lowest since the war.¹⁸⁴ The affluence of the 1960s raised public expectations and led to ‘growth optimism’ by political figures which simply could not be perpetuated.¹⁸⁵ By 1974, there were more tangible symptoms of economic and political slump. The oil price rise by OPEC hit the British economy hard; the miners’ strike reflected growing social divisions; the resulting three-day working week further damaged the economy.¹⁸⁶ This

¹⁸² ‘June 1969’, National Executive Committee minutes, Liberal Party 1/6, LPA, LSE Library.

¹⁸³ D. McKie and C. Cook, (eds.), *The Decade of Disillusion: British Politics in the Sixties* (London: Macmillan, 1972), 1.

¹⁸⁴ D. Butler and D. Kavanagh, *The British General Election of February 1974* (London: Macmillan, 1974), 1.

¹⁸⁵ V. Keegan, ‘Industry and Technology’, in McKie and Cook, *Decade of Disillusion*, 137-148.

¹⁸⁶ L. Black and H. Pemberton, ‘Introduction: The benighted decade? Reassessing the 1970s’, in L. Black, H. Pemberton and P. Thane, (eds.), *Reassessing 1970s Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 1-24.

dissatisfaction created the electoral opportunity for the Liberals to challenge the major parties who could seemingly not reverse the decline. The Party was increasingly the home of the protest voter by 1974.¹⁸⁷ There is also general consensus on ‘partisan dealignment’, a theory of the time as well as subsequent historiography. Voters were simply no longer as strongly attached to the Conservative and Labour parties as in previous decades. For Cyr, this was a growing phenomenon, finally truly signalled by the six million Liberal votes in February 1974.¹⁸⁸ Crewe et al argued contemporaneously for a similar timeline. By 1974, the general rise in affluence, working-class conservatism and the major party dissatisfaction had made partisan dealignment a reality.¹⁸⁹ The Liberals recognised the opportunity to appeal for votes from a larger part of the electorate.

The first step in Liberal framing of its politics in the 1970s was to define a crisis. Atkins argued that the rhetorical imperative in such a situation was to define an issue and select the signs most likely to resonate with the target audience. The Liberals defined it in three parts: a (1) flawed political system dominated by class conflict was (2) suppressing the needs of the individual and (3) causing both economic and political crisis. Alt et al argued that the key Liberal strategy in the 1974 elections was to play upon dissatisfaction.¹⁹⁰ Martin has argued that political speeches are about capturing a mood and emotionally stimulating one’s audience.¹⁹¹ Part of the framing of a problem, there is also the imperative to *create* a mood in the first place. The Liberals sought to capture and create a mood through their rhetoric on class conflict and the individual. The focus on practical grievances was then evidence to justify such a mood.

The Liberals rather abstractly asserted the flawed political system and a public mood of dissatisfaction surrounding it. There was a marked change in the late 1960s in the language used by the party. It was forceful and aggressive. This broadly coincided with both Thorpe becoming leader and the British economy beginning to slump. The Liberal Party asserted a dissatisfaction with politics on account of the Conservative and Labour parties creating a class conflict: defending the interests of capital and labour respectively rather than the individual.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁷ Egan, ‘1959-74’, 2-3.

¹⁸⁸ A. Cyr, *Liberal Party Politics in Britain* (London: John Calder, 1977), 19.

¹⁸⁹ I. Crewe, J. Alt and B. Sarlvik, ‘Partisan Dealignment in Britain 1964-1974’, *British Journal of Political Science*, 7 (1977), 129-190.

¹⁹⁰ J. Alt, I. Crewe and B. Sarlvik, ‘Angels in Plastic: The Liberal Surge in 1974’, *Political Studies*, 25 (1977), 343-368.

¹⁹¹ J. Martin, ‘Capturing Desire: Rhetorical Strategies and the Affectivity of Discourse’, *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 18 (2016), 143-160.

¹⁹² ‘You Can Change The Face Of Britain’, Daily Express 15.2.74, Liberal Party GE 9/14 – C, LPA, LSE Library.

The publication *The Liberal Crusade* in 1967 set the aggressive tone, declaring ‘to hell with politicians’.¹⁹³ They attempted to capture a mood of apathy. An article by Thorpe in the Daily Express in June 1970 summarised the crux of the position. He argued that ‘a radical change [was] needed’ due to the ‘growing cynicism’ with politics.¹⁹⁴ A political broadcast by Lord Byers in 1971 stated that ‘respect for politics and politicians has hit an all-time low’.¹⁹⁵ In light of miners’ strikes, a similar tone persisted into 1974 as the Liberals sought to portray a severe crisis. Indeed, the language of ‘crisis’ was constant both in the February 1974 manifesto and in candidates’ addresses of the same election.¹⁹⁶ They called for a ‘total change’ in the political system and later declared that the October 1974 election would ‘make or break Britain’.¹⁹⁷ On one level therefore Liberal crisis rhetoric aimed to demonstrate that there was something, caused by main party politicians, to be angry with. It was based on assertions that apathy was the correct response to this supposed problem situation in British politics.

The first symptom causing this supposed disillusion was a subjugation of the individual and its interests. The main parties were practising a politics of vested interests, deprioritising the individual. In *Join The Liberal Crusade* (1970), the party contended that the individual felt cut off from decision-making processes in government and industry.¹⁹⁸ The language of ‘Crusade’ connoted a principled and passionate response to the class conflict. The election manifesto in 1970 followed suit. Titled ‘What a Life!’, it was designed to play upon the disillusion created by economic decline and a lack of agency for individuals in their workplace and government.¹⁹⁹ Its main theme was portraying a lack of care for the individual by the Conservative and Labour parties, listing grievances in bullet-point format for eight pages before addressing Liberal policies. It sought to identify with potential voter disillusion. The theme of the individual was selected to exemplify a lack of care for ordinary people by the main parties. The combination of pejorative language and asserted severity intended to dramatize this constructed crisis and both generate and identify popular discontent with the two major parties.

¹⁹³ *The Liberal Crusade: People Count*, DM2594/2/10, LPOJ, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹⁹⁴ ‘A Radical Change Is Needed’, Daily Express 4.6.70, Liberal Party GE 9/12 – A, LPA, LSE Library.

¹⁹⁵ ‘Party Political Broadcast 24.11.71’, MS89073/1/104, Jeremy Thorpe papers (JTP), The British Library.

¹⁹⁶ *Change the Face of Britain: Take Power, Vote Liberal*, DM2034/2/42, PPL, University of Bristol Special Collections; *Aylesbury February 1974, Dorset South February 1974, Harrow West February 1974*, DM668/2, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹⁹⁷ *Pathways to Power: Liberal Candidates and Speakers Handbook 1974*, Liberal Party 15/17, LPA, LSE Library,

¹⁹⁸ *Join The Liberal Crusade*, DM2594/2/20, LPOJ, University of Bristol Special Collections.

¹⁹⁹ *The Liberal Manifesto 1970*, Liberal Party GE 9/13 – F, LPA, LSE Library.

In more practical terms the crisis was presented to the electorate as economic and political in nature. The Liberals connected these aspects by presenting the economic crisis as caused by the asserted class conflict. The Conservatives could not deal with industrial problems because they were driven by the interests of capital. The economy was declining because neither party could place their own vested interests to one side to end industrial conflict and reinvigorate the economy. This argument played on specific grievances. The early 1970s context of oil price rises, miners' strikes and three-day working weeks has already been laid out.²⁰⁰ Inflation was a targeted issue. In February 1974 the Liberal Publication Department published a leaflet entitled 'Stop Britain Going Bust', which called to 'stop the strife'.²⁰¹ Even at the end of the previous decade, unemployment was up and house-building down.²⁰² The Party handbook for 1974 (published between the two elections) is a most revealing source here. Traditionally a matter of fact run-through of party policy, this edition pejoratively attacked the political system and the two major parties.²⁰³ It located 'acute stagflation' as proof of economic crisis and the eroded confidence of the electorate as proof of political crisis. It married the two by attacking the two-party political system of capital versus labour and, in light of the miners' strikes, called for a 'total change' in British politics. The gap between expectation and reality of rhetoric here makes the rhetoric used seem abrupt and vividly demonstrates the pejorative framing of a crisis in Liberal rhetoric in the period.

Liberal rhetoric in the 1970s therefore sought to be aggressive and disruptive and make an impression upon voters. This aligns with Joyce's argument that the party moved from appealing to "progressive" voters to appealing to apathetic voters.²⁰⁴ The supposed 'partisan dealignment' encouraged the Liberals to focus less on the makeup of the political spectrum and more on the mood of the electorate. The change in audience necessitated a change in approach. They sought to create and capture a broader mood of disillusion. Having put their own spin on the contemporary discourse of crisis, the Liberals presented it to the electorate pejoratively.

Having rhetorically constructed and presented the crisis, the Liberals then completed the "problem-solution" frame. Having presented the Conservative and Labour parties as the root cause of the class conflict-created crisis, they presented themselves as the solution. They were the antithesis to the class division, a contention portrayed as inherently logical. The

²⁰⁰ Black and Pemberton, 'The benighted decade', 1-24.

²⁰¹ *Stop Britain Going Bust*, February 1974, MS89073/3/110, JTP, The British Library.

²⁰² McKie and Cook, *Decade of Disillusion*, 4.

²⁰³ *Pathways to Power*.

²⁰⁴ Joyce, 'Electoral strategy', 319.

Conservative and Labour parties defended the vested interests of Big Business and Trade Unions; the Liberals received no such funding from one interest group and could therefore portray themselves as independent.²⁰⁵ This worked on two levels. The very nature of the Liberal Party was suitable to respond to the crisis as it cared for individuals over the interests of capital or labour; in turn it was able to identify a common goal of acting in the national interest and recreating national unity. Both levels functioned as fundamentally logical solutions to the defined crisis and their expression will be explored in turn.

The 1974 handbook logically asserted that the Liberal Party was inherently able to respond to the crisis by prioritising the individual. It asserted certain policies as necessary and used the basis of values to explain why it could champion such policies. Social policies, such as increased housing development grants, were necessary to improve quality of life; the party's concern for the individual allowed them to propose such a policy. The industrial conflict and miner's strikes too required a solution based on the individual rather than political party or trade union. The party could pursue industrial policies of partnership and redistribution and political policies of devolution and regionalism because it was not at the mercy of any vested interest.²⁰⁶ In a press release in February 1974 Thorpe called for policies of moderation; the economic plight was so great that party interests must be placed aside.²⁰⁷ Again, the inherent logic was that only the Liberal Party could place such interests aside because of their underpinning basis of care. As seen in Chapter One, care for the individual was a particular theme for the Liberal Party in the early 1970s. The values that framed Liberal rhetoric in the 1960s explained why it could solve the crisis of the 1970s. The frame was two-part: it laid out the solution and why the Liberals were uniquely placed to provide it. The Liberals defended the interests of the individual whereas the Conservative and Labour parties would always be subject to their vested interests – who stood at the heart of creating the crisis.

To make these respective negatives and positives more tangible, Liberal rhetoric identified a common goal of national unity. Similar to Atkins finding that the coalition government of 2010 preached responsibility in the national interest,²⁰⁸ the Liberals in the 1970s preached care for the individual to create national unity. This was presented as a fundamentally logical response to a crisis whose cause was defined as division (between capital and labour). The February 1974 manifesto was designated as a 'programme for national reconstruction' aimed at a future

²⁰⁵ *Pathways to Power*.

²⁰⁶ *Pathways to Power*.

²⁰⁷ 'Press Release 9.2.74', MS89073/3/110, JTP, The British Library.

²⁰⁸ Atkins, 'Together in the national interest', 90.

without class conflict or partisan bitterness.²⁰⁹ The October 1974 manifesto defined the only possible solution as ‘a new political alignment’ with parties free of vested interests.²¹⁰ Main party interests had to be subordinated to favour those of the nation. Liberals exploited popular disillusion by calling for non-adversarial politics and moderation in the national interest.²¹¹ The language of “national reconstruction” and “national unity” was also a technique for drawing attention and ensuring resonance; the political and economic crisis was so serious that it required drastic systemic change on a nationwide scale. The defined problem and the proposed solution cannot be separated, as the latter was presented very logically to solve the former. Each contrast between present reality and future necessity was solved by something fundamental about the Liberal offering. That was the crux of how the Liberal Party framed its rhetoric in the early 1970s: a constructed problem with a directly logical solution.

Liberal rhetoric moved from a values-based underpinning in the 1960s to a problem-solution frame in the early 1970s. This shows the value of the rhetorical frame as a creative tool to define a situation to one’s benefit. The Liberal Party rhetorically constructed a political and economic crisis predicated upon the major parties’ destructive vested interests of capital and labour which left them fundamentally incapable of solving the economic decline and industrial unrest. It emphasised its inherent care for the individual to demonstrate that it could act in the interests of national unity, which was defined as the only logical solution to problems of division. This logic was key. The values that Liberals used to frame their offering in the 1960s now formed part of the solution to crisis in the early 1970s. The Liberals used a problem-solution narrative in the early 1970s to mould a coherent narrative whereby they had the inherent fix to the constructed crisis.

The case study of industrial relations as a rhetorical theme

The final section of this chapter considers the arguments made above through the case study of industrial relations and explores how its rhetorical presentation changed over the period. The Liberals’ policy idea of co-ownership – giving workers a greater share in their work – changed very little over the 1960s and 1970s. However, the policy’s presentation changed considerably, proving the creative agency of rhetoric to define an issue in ways to suit a wider argument. In the 1960s, the Liberal Party focused on the policy’s underlying principles, talking about a spirit of partnership and common interest and reflected the values-based frame deployed more

²⁰⁹ *The Liberal Manifesto February 1974*, DM2034/2/42, PPL, University of Bristol Special Collections.

²¹⁰ *The Liberal Manifesto October 1974*, DM2034/2/42, PPL, University of Bristol Special Collections.

²¹¹ Stockley, ‘1974 Remembered’, 20.

generally. The perceived consensus of a mixed economy with some planning did not entirely prevent debate on industrial relations (for example, debate regarding pay restraint after the 1961 incomes policy) but the Liberals did not perceive any particular mood of mass disillusion to play on. The situation had reversed by the early 1970s and so the Liberals adapted their rhetoric. An industrial crisis was defined as inherently caused by the vested interests of the Conservative and Labour parties which encouraged partisanship and division. Liberal rhetoric manipulated the underlying values of individual and community to become the logical solution to provide necessary unity in industrial relations.

Liberal policy on industry did not substantially change across the period in question. The consistent policy idea was co-ownership.²¹² Liberals claimed that employees needed a share in both the organisation and profit of their work to incentivise expansion.²¹³ This was seen both in 1959 in Grimond's publication *The Liberal Future* and again in 1974 in the 'You Can Change the Face of Britain' advert. The Liberals wanted to create a community of interests with joint responsibility and a share of the wealth.²¹⁴ The practical output of such ideas would be Works Councils or bodies of worker-shareholders.²¹⁵ This policy did not change from the 1960s to the 1970s. Holding the policy ideas as consistent allows us to consider how contemporary context and rhetorical imperatives affect the ideas' expression.

The language used to portray Liberal policy on industrial relations in the 1960s was values-based, concerned with the principles underlying the policy. Liberals associated their industrial policy with defending the interests of the individual worker and creating a spirit of partnership in industry. In *Partners at Work* (1968), the party lamented the 'alienation of the worker from his work'.²¹⁶ This was a continuation of the theme of 'People Count' which proliferated Liberal rhetoric through the 1960s.²¹⁷ Liberals treated industrial policy as an issue of the individual. A larger say for the worker in his work – through, for example, Works Councils – was predicated upon enhancing personal freedom.²¹⁸ The policy of co-ownership was also designed to promote common interest in industry, which stemmed 'from a belief in the brotherhood of man'.²¹⁹

²¹² D. Butler and M. Pinto-Duschinsky, *The British General Election of 1970* (London: Macmillan, 1971), 117; *Partners at Work*.

²¹³ *Partners at Work*.

²¹⁴ Grimond, *The Liberal Future*, 80.

²¹⁵ 'You Can Change The Face Of Britain'.

²¹⁶ *Partners at Work*.

²¹⁷ *The Liberal Manifesto 1959*, Liberal Party GE 9/5, LPA, LSE Library; *Our Aim and Purpose*.

²¹⁸ *Our Aim and Purpose*.

²¹⁹ *Partners in a New Britain: The Liberal Programme*, DM2594/3/9, LPOJ, University of Bristol Special Collections.

Language such as ‘alienation of the worker from his work’ and ‘brotherhood of man’ implied that the Liberals were thinking very fundamentally about industrial relations and how the individual should be placed within it. There was a recognised need for a spirit of cooperation in industry to enhance production and incentivise expansion.²²⁰ The language used to present industrial policy in the 1960s consistently reflected the dual values of individual reward and community interest. As reflective of wider Liberal rhetoric in the 1960s, the party defined its policies’ underlying principles. In industrial relations too, therefore, Liberal rhetoric saw larger ideals as crucial and related the specific policy to them to make them agreeable.

By the 1970s, the Liberals treated the theme of industrial relations as symbolic of the wider crisis which they sought to construct. The industrial situation in Britain was said to reflect the issues of extremism and partisanship which drove the crisis of economic downturn and social division.²²¹ There was something fundamentally wrong with the Conservative and Labour parties and their vested interests and this was exemplified by the industrial situation in Britain where those duelling interests of capital and labour truly came to tension. There were hints of this more aggressive industrial rhetoric in the 1960s. In Grimond’s personal publication *The Liberal Challenge* (1963), he identified a destructive ‘two-sides’ attitude, indicating a damaging class conflict.²²² In the 1970s, the language of conflict became starker. Thorpe claimed in 1971, ‘we have to stop industry being a battlefield’.²²³ Even by 1968, the strike record of British industry was worsening;²²⁴ in the early 1970s there was increasing public dissatisfaction that Heath could not resolve conflict with the Trade Unions and internal division regarding *In Place of Strife* showed that the Labour Party was also conflicted.²²⁵ Liberal rhetoric reflected the wider problem-solution format of appeal. Industrial conflict was presented as inevitably prolonged by the Conservative and Labour parties; only the Liberal Party of no vested industrial interests could offer the solution. It thus connected the economic and political system by defining this as a wider issue of leadership. The values that underpinned industrial policy in the 1960s became the fundamental reasons why the Liberals could solve industrial crisis in the 1970s.

²²⁰ Joyce, ‘Electoral strategy’, 219.

²²¹ *Pathways to Power*.

²²² Grimond, *The Liberal Challenge*, 144.

²²³ ‘Party Political Broadcast 5.5.71’, MS89073/1/104, JTP, The British Library.

²²⁴ J. Barnes, ‘The record’, in McKie and Cook, *Decade of Disillusion*, 9-68.

²²⁵ Stockley, ‘1974 Remembered’, 19.

The industrial situation was explosively laid out by the Liberals in their Daily Express advert of February 1974, ‘You Can Change The Face Of Britain’.²²⁶ The controversial advert depicted a picture of Jeremy Thorpe, apparently speaking passionately, in front of the faded faces of Conservative and Labour leaders Heath and Wilson. Its very existence was disruptive because it challenged previous electoral etiquette by using newspaper advertising in election-time; its legality was dubious but accepted. At face value it was simply a jarring appeal for drastic political change at the upcoming election. The term ‘Face’ was used both to suggest that it was simply time for a new leader and party in British politics, but also to imply something more fundamental: that Britain needed a transformative systemic change.



Figure 3.1 – You Can Change The Face Of Britain.²²⁷

The content of the text below the picture condemned the Conservative and Labour parties for their handling of the industrial situation. The Conservatives had created an ‘industrial atmosphere’ where cooperation with the Unions was impossible and Labour had ‘stoked the fires of industrial division’ to attack the Conservatives. This vivid language apportioned the blame for the present industrial problems to the two major parties. The problem was fundamental. The Conservatives could only act on the side of Big Business and Labour could

²²⁶ ‘You Can Change The Face Of Britain’.

²²⁷ ‘You Can Change The Face Of Britain’.

only defend the Unions. Portrayal of the solution used very similar language, as the Liberal Party was said to ‘have consistently stood for partnership between Capital and Labour in industry’. The logic of contrast was clear. The values of partnership and community established in 1960s rhetoric on industrial relations now provided the solution to industrial division. The rhetoric of principle was deployed to positive effect. Thorpe claimed in the advert that ‘we do not believe in industrial confrontation’ and ‘we do not believe in perpetuating the class struggle’. A memo to all Liberal candidates and officers by Thorpe in February 1974 showed this to be *the* key focus for appeal. He encouraged candidates to ‘emphasise the appalling climate of confrontation’ in industry and to remember that ‘the government believe unashamedly in class warfare’.²²⁸ By 1974, the Liberals were deliberately weaponising the language of principle.

The rhetorical treatment of industrial relations exemplified the shift in Liberal framing of politics from the 1960s to the 1970s. Industrial policy did not change, remaining focused on co-ownership, the involvement of a worker in both the organisation and profits of his work, but the rhetoric did. The values-based frame of the 1960s which underpinned Liberal industrial policy became part of the solution to the defined industrial crisis in the 1970s. A spirit of community and partnership, the 1960s justification for Liberal industrial policies of co-ownership, became the reason why the Liberals could solve the industrial division inherently created by Conservative and Labour. This was entirely reflective of their wider definition of problems in British politics. This proves the creative agency of framing to manipulate perceptions of a situation to your benefit by presenting similar content in contrasting ways.

This chapter has argued that Liberal values of partnership, set up as the basis for Liberal policy in the 1960s as the party sought to establish a fresh image in the context of low electoral fortunes, were deployed as the solution to a crisis in the 1970s when the economic situation worsened and dissatisfaction with the two major parties increased. This proves the power of rhetoric to interact with context and manipulate ideas in different necessary ways, demonstrating the agency of the rhetorical frame.

This chapter affirms the need for rhetorical analysis to consider frames as part of the rhetorical process for two key reasons. First, they are a crucial tool in underpinning a way of viewing the

²²⁸ ‘Memo by Jeremy Thorpe to all candidates’, undated, MS89073/3/108, JTP, The British Library.

world and asserting what is important. Second, they allow a rhetor to present their reality of a situation and construct a definition to their benefit. They are used to shape rhetoric by grounding a point of view from which rhetorical appeals are made. The contrast in Liberal framing between the 1960s and the 1970s shows how rhetors deploy frames differently to respond to new contexts and perceived exigencies. The Liberal Party shifted from rebuilding its offering by defining its political image to attacking the major parties in pursuit of electoral breakthrough. It thus wanted to present contrasting ways of viewing the state of British politics and its place within it. Its deployment of frames first predicated on values and later predicated on constructing a crisis was the rhetorical tool to achieve this.

Chapter Three: The in-between times tool: the mid-cycle campaign

This final chapter turns its attention to the Liberal Party's "out-of-election-time" or "mid-cycle" campaigns. These campaigns lasted weeks, months or years and were crucial non-election time activity to increase party membership or constituency election readiness. They were prominent in strategy discussions within the party but have received scant scholarly coverage, save the occasional reference in longer party studies of the period.²²⁹ Studying these campaigns offers us an important new perspective on the contexts and imperatives that shaped rhetoric outside the rituals of electioneering. The Liberal Party chose to run particular campaigns at particular times aimed at particular audiences, so we can study the rhetorical tools used for this type of rhetorical activity. Considering campaigns and strategy discussions reminds us that political party rhetoric is a constant process rather than an election-cycle ritual. They are also a window into particular third-party imperatives. For example, the need to retain press coverage outside of election periods was an especially pressing motivation for the Liberals. The imperative was to grab attention and make continuous political progress. This was especially pertinent with the weaker financial and organisational position of the Liberal Party.²³⁰ Outside of elections the party needed memberships and money. It could not afford electorally nor financially to be out of sight and out of mind for four years of every five.

There were four key mid-cycle campaigns in the period 1959 to 1974. They were: the 'Call to Action' campaign of 1961;²³¹ the 'Tell the Nation' campaign of 1963;²³² the 'Autumn Campaign' of 1965;²³³ and 'Join the Liberal Crusade',²³⁴ running over four years from 1967. These predominantly leaflet campaigns were targeted at audiences inside and outside of the Liberal Party. Various executive committees of the Party discussed the intentions and organisation of the campaigns and these strategy minutes are considered alongside the materials produced for the campaigns.

The chapter uses this material to argue three points about Liberal rhetoric between 1959 and 1974. Firstly, it claims that by neglecting mid-cycle campaigns historians have underestimated the extent to which the Liberal Party's rhetorical activity was organised in pursuit of particular organisational, membership and financial imperatives. An important dimension of Liberal

²²⁹ Joyce, 'Electoral strategy', 319, briefly references the Tell the Nation campaign.

²³⁰ *23rd Annual Report and Accounts 1962*, Liberal Party 6/4, LPA, LSE Library.

²³¹ *Call to Action* campaign leaflet, DM2594/2/7, LPOJ, University of Bristol Special Collections.

²³² *Get Britain Moving With The Liberals* campaign leaflet, DM2594/2/9, LPOJ, University of Bristol Special Collections.

²³³ *Autumn Campaign*, DM2594/2/10, LPOJ, University of Bristol Special Collections.

²³⁴ *Join the Liberal Crusade*.

rhetoric was using campaigns to make political progress outside the framework of winning seats at elections. Secondly, the chapter shows that campaigns attempted to achieve this by creating particular moments of opportunity to inspire action in both internal and external audiences. The specialised appeals deployed to create those moments and inspire action were just as important a part of Liberal rhetoric as those associated with election hustings or parliamentary debate. Thirdly, appeals differed to these internal and external audiences but both were part of the same rhetorical situations that the Liberal Party attempted to create. The perceived rhetorical task was to create a moment for Liberal progress, and the contrasting appeals were a means to achieving this in relation to the two specific types of audience.

This chapter uses analysis of mid-cycle campaigns to interrogate two existing literatures. First, it considers the debate on the “rhetorical situation”.²³⁵ This is a welcome opportunity to do this because, even if campaigns are ultimately responses to perceived contexts, they are still a less ritualised form of political activity. The classic debate on the rhetorical situation was constructed between Bitzer and Vatz. The former argued that certain situations demand a certain rhetorical response.²³⁶ Such situations have certain elements which determine the rhetoric that is called for. For Bitzer, these elements are an exigence (at least one organising imperative), an audience to be targeted, and constraints – unavoidable facts that the rhetor must work within. Indeed, ‘a work is rhetorical because it is a response to a situation of a certain kind’. However, Vatz argued that Bitzer was removing agency from the rhetor with this conception. He contended that ‘situations obtain their character from the rhetoric’.²³⁷ It is the rhetor who constructs a situation, in how they define it or respond to certain chosen exigencies.

Bitzer and Vatz were writing in the 1970s and considering American examples, but it nevertheless prompts thought about the extent to which rhetoric is a creative act. We reconsider this debate in the context of the less ritualised out-of-election campaign. James Martin has intervened in the debate by considering rhetorical strategy.²³⁸ As a product of strategising, rhetoric is an active response to a situation. It uses arguments situated at a particular point in time to impact the audience in a desired way. Viewing Liberal Party committee minutes related to the campaigns allows us to consider the place of strategising within the rhetorical process.

²³⁵ L. F. Bitzer, ‘The Rhetorical Situation’, *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, 1 (1968), 1-14; R. E. Vatz, ‘The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation’, *Philosophy & Rhetoric*, 6 (1973), 154-161.

²³⁶ Bitzer, ‘Rhetorical Situation’, 2.

²³⁷ Vatz, ‘Myth’, 159.

²³⁸ J. Martin, ‘Situating Speech: A Rhetorical Approach to Political Strategy’, *Political Studies*, 63 (2015), 25-42.

Centring party strategy in our analysis in this chapter lets us consider the formulation of both the situation and the response. This chapter therefore uses scholarship on the rhetorical situation to reflect on the out-of-election campaign and consider two interlocking themes: rhetoric as a creative act, and the importance of party strategising.

The chapter also considers the work of Katherine Dommett, who located a distinction between public (external) rhetoric and party (internal) rhetoric.²³⁹ The former is aimed at audiences external to the party and might be a manifesto or a leader's speech; the latter is aimed at audiences within the party and might be an internal memo. The campaigns considered here suggest that the format is not so distinct. Dommett arrived at this conception through looking beyond the party leader to study party ideology. She looked for points of ideological conflict or consensus within parties and sought to understand the cause of any difference. This chapter takes inspiration from this more holistic view of political party rhetoric. Dommett did argue that 'rhetorical strategies for persuasion differ depending on context'.²⁴⁰ The campaigns, aimed at various audiences inside and outside the party, are ideal for interrogating this claim in a specific Liberal context as a third party with particular imperatives for these different audiences. In assessing the rhetoric of the mid-cycle campaigns, then, the chapter compares the audiences targeted; the appeals used to these audiences; and the differing imperatives underlying such appeals. In the process, it shows that Dommett's theoretical distinction between public and party rhetoric can usefully be applied to better understand specific episodes of historical rhetoric.

Background to the Campaigns

The Call to Action campaign of autumn 1961 was a ten-week nationwide membership drive.²⁴¹ Announced at the 1961 Liberal Party Assembly, Jo Grimond called for 100,000 new members to lay the foundation for a future push for government.²⁴² The stated context was of Liberal optimism. Liberal support was gradually trending upwards;²⁴³ there were opportunities to exploit dissatisfaction with a decade of Conservative rule and Labour divisions on nuclear disarmament.²⁴⁴ The Liberals aimed to enrol supporters 'as members, workers, and subscribers'

²³⁹ K. Dommett, 'Rhetoric and Party Politics – Looking Beyond the Leader' in J. Atkins, A. Finlayson, J. Martin and N. Turnbull (eds.), *Rhetoric in British Politics and Society* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 73-84.

²⁴⁰ Dommett, 'Rhetoric and Party Politics', 84.

²⁴¹ *Call to Action*.

²⁴² *23rd Annual Report*, 9.

²⁴³ *Political Research Unit Survey, September 1960*.

²⁴⁴ *Take Britain Ahead*, DM2594/2/9, LPOJ, University of Bristol Special Collections.

in order to offer the electorate a credible, nationwide, radical party.²⁴⁵ The Party anticipated an election in the second half of 1963 and targeted the adoption of 450 candidates.²⁴⁶ The key literature attached to the campaign was twofold. A *Call to Action* campaign leaflet was circulated to local constituency associations explaining the appeals underpinning the campaign and how to run it practically.²⁴⁷ These associations were to distribute contact cards to homes and subsequently make return calls. The party also released a booklet for wider public consumption. This was entitled *Take Britain Ahead* and was a repurposed production of Grimond's 1961 assembly speech, with additional comments and explanations included.²⁴⁸

The Tell the Nation campaign ran across 1962 and 1963 in two parts. It began with a campaign targeting Labour voters in which over 600,000 leaflets were distributed.²⁴⁹ The second part was entitled 'Get Britain Moving with the Liberals' and was aimed at local opinion leaders and potential Liberal "influencers",²⁵⁰ it is this part that will be analysed here. The party published a sixteen-page booklet called *Get Britain Moving with the Liberals*.²⁵¹ It incorporated a personal message from Jo Grimond, setting out the Liberal plan for growth and calling these targeted opinion leaders to action. As ever, the Liberal Party context was dominated by a need to continue 'the Liberal advance' with progress electorally and organisationally.²⁵² The asserted national context was twelve 'failed' years of Conservative rule, and the Labour opposition, 'divided and reactionary', deemed unfit to provide a solution.²⁵³ The Liberals' imperatives were driven by a chance to present and exploit a medium-term electoral opportunity. They sought to invigorate action in individual constituencies to build up their election-time front. They had adopted 338 prospective candidates by February 1963 but would only add to the list if a constituency was organisationally ready to fight an election. In this campaign they wanted to reach between 200 and 500 community leaders in each constituency and eventually located around 25,000 nationally.²⁵⁴

²⁴⁵ *Call to Action*.

²⁴⁶ 'National Executive Committee minutes', October 1962, Liberal Party 1/4, LPA, LSE Library.

²⁴⁷ *Call to Action*.

²⁴⁸ *Take Britain Ahead*.

²⁴⁹ 'National Executive Committee minutes', October 1962. Unfortunately literature on this part of the campaign cannot be found.

²⁵⁰ *Get Britain Moving With The Liberals*.

²⁵¹ *Get Britain Moving With The Liberals*.

²⁵² *Get Britain Moving With The Liberals*, 3.

²⁵³ *Get Britain Moving With The Liberals*, 6.

²⁵⁴ *24th and 25th Annual Report and Accounts 1964 and 1965*, Liberal Party 6/6, LPA, LSE Library, 8.

The Autumn Campaign of 1965 was two-pronged in intention. It aimed to turn ‘Liberals into Members’ and ‘Members into Workers’.²⁵⁵ The Liberals subsequently had differing organisational and electoral imperatives, bound together under one stated aim: to ‘stimulate militant Liberalism’ across Britain.²⁵⁶ A leaflet entitled *Autumn Campaign 1965* was sent out to local associations to encourage campaign action.²⁵⁷ The Liberals also published a leaflet for the public, *Liberal for a real change*, to attack the Conservative and Labour parties for failing to bring about change in government.²⁵⁸ The main thrust was in defining a context of the Conservatives providing no change, and Labour providing short change.²⁵⁹ They therefore asserted a Liberal opportunity to offer real change. The campaign was again geared towards a supposedly imminent general election in which the Liberals would continue this appeal for real change.²⁶⁰

The final Liberal campaign of the 1960s was the Liberal Crusade. It began in 1967 and was set to run over four years until the next general election, believed likely to be in 1970 or 1971.²⁶¹ The Liberals pursued every imaginable imperative. They continued their exhortative appeal for votes from the Liberal sympathiser; they pursued the organisational imperatives of increasing local activity and converting “members” into “active members”; and they launched an appeal for one million pounds to fund the party’s push for government. The Liberals began the campaign soon after the start of Jeremy Thorpe’s leadership, in the context of fluctuating fortunes for the party. Two leaflets formed the crux of the campaign. The party published the leaflet *The Liberal Crusade: People Count* to launch the campaign in 1967.²⁶² It was subtitled ‘The Liberal Plan for Power’. The party used it to lay out the purpose of the campaign, targeting each imperative. The second key leaflet, entitled *Join the Liberal Crusade*, ostensibly targeted the potential voting public but appealed within the party too.²⁶³ It reiterated the call for donations, appealing for one million pounds to allow the Liberal to prepare for government and explaining the organisational imperatives that an influx of money would aid.

²⁵⁵ 26th Annual Report and Accounts 1966, Liberal Party 6/7, LPA, LSE Library, 12.

²⁵⁶ ‘Liberal Party Organisation minutes’, July 1965, Liberal Party 2/1, LPA, LSE Library.

²⁵⁷ *Autumn Campaign*.

²⁵⁸ *Liberal for a real change*, DM2594/2/10, LPOJ, University of Bristol Special Collections.

²⁵⁹ *Autumn Campaign*.

²⁶⁰ 24th and 25th Annual Report and Accounts, 8.

²⁶¹ 27th Annual Report and Accounts 1967, Liberal Party 6/8, LPA, LSE Library.

²⁶² *The Liberal Crusade*.

²⁶³ *Join the Liberal Crusade*.

Attracting New Recruits Between Elections

The Liberal Party needed to gain support from external audiences even when it would not be immediately expressed as a vote, to build up a party whose membership numbers could not rival the two major parties between 1959 and 1974. Much of its campaign rhetoric, therefore, was outward-facing, seeking to attract new party members. The Liberals responded to the problem of mobilising a public that was not primed for political engagement by using the language of action and constructing the present as an “opportune moment”. They conveyed optimism and ambition, and deployed a series of metaphors to argue that the main ingredient lacking was the manpower of potential Liberals joining the party. They also used more traditional negative and positive appeals. The former were based on the language of frustration and a need for change. The latter were more issue-based and focused on, for example, education policy, or the role of the individual. The rhetoric produced was attuned to the exigencies of the mid-cycle campaign.

We can see this mid-cycle rhetoric in the Call to Action campaign of 1961, a recruitment drive intended to ‘increase membership substantially’.²⁶⁴ The party produced a booklet entitled *Take Britain Ahead* targeted at non-Liberals, available both for local associations to purchase in bulk and disseminate, or individuals to buy.²⁶⁵ Three key themes were used to capture public interest and support. Firstly, it lay a basis of optimism predicated on the ‘many thousands of new Liberals throughout the country’.²⁶⁶ The optimism Grimond sought to present in the introduction to his speech was signposted by the in-text annotation, ‘Doubt and faintheartedness are out. Brimming confidence has given the party a new dynamic’.²⁶⁷ Repurposing Grimond’s assembly speech allowed the party to add assertions on their view of the party. The mood was being designated as optimistic. It was ambitious too. This campaign was stated to lay the foundations ‘to build a Liberal Government’.²⁶⁸ This fed into the second theme as the Liberals sought to create the “opportune moment”. They repeatedly asserted that the Liberal Party now had everything but the manpower. ‘You have been given a policy’, the pamphlet read, and later, ‘the movement is ready’. A ‘bold, radical programme for Britain’ had been ‘completed’; ‘the new Party image [was] complete’ too; indeed, the eight-point Party

²⁶⁴ 23rd Annual Report, 8.

²⁶⁵ *Take Britain Ahead*.

²⁶⁶ *Call to Action*.

²⁶⁷ *Take Britain Ahead*.

²⁶⁸ *Take Britain Ahead*.

Programme established at the 1961 Assembly was laid out in full on the inside cover.²⁶⁹ This line of argument responded to concerns that the potential voter thought the Liberal Party did not really stand for anything.²⁷⁰ To the contrary, claimed the booklet. The image and the policy were ready, the party was optimistic and primed for progress, and now it needed the third theme: action.

The language of action was everywhere in *Take Britain Ahead*. The Party Programme it detailed was built on a bullet-point list of action verbs, such as ‘Give up the British H-Bomb’, ‘Get employers and unions together’ and ‘Make the Common Market a springboard’.²⁷¹ Indeed, the title of the booklet was itself an imperative: ‘Take Britain Ahead’ played on the upbeat theme of “progress” by associating Liberal fortunes with the nation’s fortunes. They used a tricolon to demonstrate what was missing, writing: ‘You have been given a policy. We have got the machine moving. Now we need muscle-power’.²⁷² This was punchy to convey both optimism and urgency. Action was the only thing missing. This need for action was targeted at the individual: ‘You have got to make [Liberal progress] an absolute avalanche’. The onus was on ‘you’.²⁷³ This was both a call to action and an assertion that the Liberal Party was ready to “make the leap” towards government. The only missing piece was an individual’s support. The themes all aligned. There was optimism that this was the opportune moment for action.

Related metaphors were used in the ‘Tell the Nation’ campaign of 1962-1963 to demonstrate a similar need for action. The earlier ‘Call to Action’ campaign was deemed to have succeeded and, in the light of by-election successes of 1962, the task was seen as needing to continue Liberal recruitment.²⁷⁴ Grimond addressed the hand-picked audience of opinion leaders directly in the *Get Britain Moving* booklet’s introductory message, challenging them to use their local influence to drive the Liberal Party forward. ‘Will you put your weight behind the Liberal advance?’, he asked, making clear their role.²⁷⁵ The Liberal Party had the framework of the party machine but needed local surges to convert that into winning seats, and in his concluding call to action, Grimond used another metaphor to make this need clear. He wanted Liberal supporters who would ‘get off the touchline and into the game’ and, just a few words

²⁶⁹ *Take Britain Ahead*.

²⁷⁰ ‘Party image’, Organising Committee Memo 1962.

²⁷¹ *Take Britain Ahead*.

²⁷² *Take Britain Ahead*.

²⁷³ *Take Britain Ahead*.

²⁷⁴ 23rd *Annual Report*, 8.

²⁷⁵ *Get Britain Moving With The Liberals*, 3.

later, those who would ‘get their shoulder to the wheel’.²⁷⁶ All these were metaphors of action to encourage collective effort. Once again, the party made clear that they had the principles and they had the policies. Now Grimond tried to exhort these selected opinion leaders to mobilise for the Liberal cause.

The campaigns also used negative emotional appeals as an attempt to provoke action. In particular, they tried to instil frustration in the potential Liberal voter, as seen in the *Take Britain Ahead* booklet. As seen in this thesis to be common in Liberal rhetoric, Jo Grimond sought to attack Labour and the Conservatives to provoke an emotional response from the potential Liberal voter. Grimond used anaphora to attack the incumbent Conservative government for its economic record, stating that ‘it not only looks a bad Government and feels a bad Government, it is a very bad Government’.²⁷⁷ With lines like this, Grimond was trying to convert transitory public dissatisfaction with the government into belief that there was a deep-seated problem. He used humour to continue this point. He used a metaphor to ground this contention in the supposed economic issues, contending that the government ‘could not even run a sweetie shop in the Lothian Road’.²⁷⁸ This was aggressive rhetoric designed to trigger a reaction. He went on to criticise particular Conservative figures, prefaced with the joke that his party had ‘certain negative advantages’. Grimond stated that ‘The Liberal Party has not got Sir David Eccles. We have not got Mr Butler to pretend he is a Liberal and yet to stop all sensible Liberal reforms. We have not got Mr Duncan Sandys to ruin our defences. We have not got the Prime Minister, who says Berlin is all the fault of the newspapers.’²⁷⁹ He tried to locate disillusion in specific cases through use of ridicule.

Similar attacks on Labour followed. Grimond urgently asserted that these problems with the Conservative government exacerbated the need for a strong opposition, now. For him, this could not be provided due to a dysfunctional ideology. This was therefore aimed at a particular stated audience: the Labour voter disillusioned with Socialist ideology. Its ‘wasted idealism’ was ‘out-of-date’ and ‘harmful’.²⁸⁰ It left the party too reliant on trade union support and thus too prone to pander to their interests. Grimond attempted to stoke Labour dissatisfaction through his assertion of its ideological problems. He used ridiculing humour here too, saying that Labour ‘kept up appearance of unity only by having no policy on most of the major issues

²⁷⁶ *Get Britain Moving With The Liberals*, 14.

²⁷⁷ *Take Britain Ahead*.

²⁷⁸ *Take Britain Ahead*.

²⁷⁹ *Take Britain Ahead*.

²⁸⁰ *Take Britain Ahead*.

of the day'.²⁸¹ In ideology and in policy the party was not fit for purpose. The negative rhetoric aimed at both parties sought to both create and capture any major party disillusion. Grimond did this through damaging assertions on the state of the two main parties. He assumed this role of political commentator to credibly explain the should-be causes of disillusion.

The Autumn Campaign of 1965 called for real change. The leaflet appealed for change so soon after the 1964 election by portraying that election as one where the public voted for change after thirteen years of Conservative government, and portraying the situation since as one where the elected Labour Party had failed to offer it. The Liberals had doubled their vote, creating an opportunity, the party claimed. The *Liberal for a real change* leaflet, an appeal to the public, was exhortative.²⁸² The introductory theme was change. The Liberals asserted that people voted for change in electing Labour in 1964. They contended that the change had not worked, arguing that 'Mr Wilson's government [had] turned out just as conservative as the Tories'.²⁸³ They thus asserted that the desire for change existed but had not been satisfied. The Liberals were the next alternative to turn to. That was the only way to achieve the 'real change' to 'get Britain moving'. The thematic detail that followed (see next paragraph) reflected this argument more tangibly. The conclusion was a summary plea of past, present and future. 'You'll get no change from the Tories, you're getting short change from Labour, you'll get real change from the Liberals', it read.²⁸⁴ This tricolon was the crux of the leaflet's appeal. The party were trying to latch onto the favourable mood of change whilst ruling the two main parties out of being able to offer it. It re-narrated the last year of British history into a story of unsatiated desire for change.

The party attacked the Conservative and Labour parties as well as more positively encouraging Liberal sympathisers to become Liberal members. Indeed, that was the structure of each themed paragraph in the leaflet. The Liberals first addressed the cost of living. They attacked the main parties for price rises, such as petrol going up by six-pence in Labour's current term.²⁸⁵ This was used as proof of the need for change. The context of a current Labour Government after over a decade of Conservative rule meant that the Liberals did not really distinguish between the parties as government and opposition. They conflated negative appeals against the two. In the classic format, they then provided the Liberal solution to the problem. They would lower

²⁸¹ *Take Britain Ahead.*

²⁸² *Liberal for a real change.*

²⁸³ *Liberal for a real change.*

²⁸⁴ *Liberal for a real change.*

²⁸⁵ *Liberal for a real change.*

the cost of living by ‘outlawing monopolies’ and ‘removing tariffs’.²⁸⁶ The party then explained the fundamentals of why it was the party to carry out such change. The situation needed an independent party that was free to represent the interests of the consumer rather than the vested interests of trade union or big business. This trope of problem-solution-justification was common and used again in the paragraph on house-building, where the Liberals pledged to build 500,000 homes a year through the creation of regional development agencies.²⁸⁷ The Liberals combined negative and positive appeals to prove the continued need for change.

The party also tried to attract the non-Liberal through positive appeals on its offering. The National Executive Committee of the Liberal Party had concluded at the beginning of 1963 that the party’s image was gradually transitioning from moderate and vague to exciting and modern.²⁸⁸ It wanted to continue this transformation in the ‘Tell the Nation’ campaign. The title alone – ‘Get Britain Moving’ – implied a desire for progress.²⁸⁹ The booklet focused on the policy of education as a microcosm of the broader need for forward, technological change. It was both problem and solution. Education standards were said to have ‘lagged disastrously’ in comparison to other European industrialised nations because the Conservative and Labour parties simply did not know how to make positive change. The authors placed education reform on the agenda by asserting it to be their ‘most urgent single job’²⁹⁰ and called for new schools, universities and technical colleges to create a ‘highly trained humane society, ready to meet technological change’.²⁹¹ The use of ‘meet’ showed Liberal desire to remain at the cusp of the technological curve rather than either getting swept up in technological change or slipping behind other countries. As typical with Liberal rhetoric, it was the attitude that was as important as the practical policy. This policy example was aimed to prove themselves as an exciting, forward-looking but responsible party. This shows how Liberal rhetoric was creative in selecting a single issue to respond to an imperative decided upon in strategy discussions.

The ‘Liberal Crusade’ between 1967 and 1970 took the typical Liberal structure of negative and positive appeals. The party themed the campaign around ‘people’ and how the state of Britain and British politics was impacting the individual. As Robinson et al argued, a ‘popular, aspirational form of individualism’ was developing, a trend onto which the Liberals attempted

²⁸⁶ *Liberal for a real change.*

²⁸⁷ *Liberal for a real change.*

²⁸⁸ ‘National Executive Committee minutes’, January 1963.

²⁸⁹ *Get Britain Moving With The Liberals*, 1.

²⁹⁰ *Get Britain Moving With The Liberals*, 7.

²⁹¹ *Get Britain Moving With The Liberals*, 7.

to latch.²⁹² The campaign appealed to pathos by asserting a mood of disillusion. As seen, the first subheading of the 1967 leaflet, *The Liberal Crusade: People Count*, was ‘to hell with politicians’ – a pejorative phrase to capture a mood of anger.²⁹³ In 1970 the electorate were asserted to be ‘fed up’ and in a state of ‘public apathy’.²⁹⁴ This was predicated on the political system’s treatment of the individual. In the 1970 leaflet, *Join the Liberal Crusade*, the Liberals argued that the public were being subjugated as ‘pawns’ rather than people.²⁹⁵ This claim was based on a lack of agency for the individual. Wealth was concentrated into ‘the hands of the minority’; power was concentrated into ‘the few at the centre’. The final passionate cry was ‘We are not pawns. Why should they always decide for us?’. This was complemented by the positive appeal, identical in both leaflets: that ‘before anything else Liberalism is about people’.²⁹⁶ These principles drove policy decisions. It was characterised by the policy of devolution. A share in production needed to trickle down to the individual worker and a share in government needed to trickle down to the locale.²⁹⁷ This is another example of the Liberals demonstrating themselves to be the fundamental solution to a problem. The main parties did not care about the individual and the Liberals had the attitudes and the subsequent policies to remedy this. Studying this content reminds us that though these campaigns were distinct creations, the Liberals naturally made them reflective of their broader rhetoric. These leaflets were aimed at mixed audiences inside and outside the party but the rhetoric was similar across the campaign; this shows that it is still a creative rhetorical choice to appeal differently to internal or external audiences.

When aimed at non-Liberals these campaigns were essentially a series of recruitment drives. The immediate goal was to win an individual as a member rather than as a voter. In some ways this fact did not change the nature of the appeal. Typical Liberal rhetorical structures such as “positive-negative” and “problem-solution-justification” were deployed repeatedly, or often a specific issue was spotlighted. However, the campaigns sought to create feeling within the external audiences that would drive them to the immediate action – subscribing as a member. They sought to inspire frustration based on a need for change, and optimism that the ambitious

²⁹² E. Robinson, C. Schofield, F. Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, and N. Thomlinson, ‘Telling Stories about Post-War Britain: Popular Individualism and the “Crisis” of the 1970s’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 28 (2017), 268.

²⁹³ *The Liberal Crusade*, 1.

²⁹⁴ *Join the Liberal Crusade*.

²⁹⁵ *Join the Liberal Crusade*.

²⁹⁶ *The Liberal Crusade*, 5; *Join the Liberal Crusade*.

²⁹⁷ *The Liberal Crusade*, 7.

Liberal Party could offer that change, in hope that these feelings might lead to the desired action.

Mobilising Members into Workers

At the same time, these campaigns appealed to audiences already within the Liberal Party. The party sought to craft campaigns and mobilise existing members into activity such as leaflet distribution or arranging meetings. The ‘Call to Action’ campaign of 1961 and the ‘Autumn Campaign’ of 1965 were both, indeed, calls to action, with contrasting degrees of emotionality. The section then considers the ‘Liberal Crusade’ of 1967 to 1970, with its longer-term campaign ultimately aimed at election readiness. Here the Liberals served their organisational and financial imperatives through rhetoric that created an appeal of credibility and completeness.

The *Call to Action* leaflet was aimed at constituency associations and intended to support and inspire the actual running of the campaign locally.²⁹⁸ It was practical and organisational to provide instructions to carry out the campaign, and it used a rhetoric of action throughout to mobilise local members. In laying out practical details of the campaign, it provided its value in making it as easy as possible for local associations to understand and enact. The Liberals provided information for all stages of the campaign. Beforehand the associations were told to recruit stewards and speakers; during the campaign they were instructed to distribute contact cards and make return calls; after the campaign they needed to encourage new members to become active in the party.²⁹⁹ The level of detail is revealing about how a campaign actually runs in practice. It was driven by engagement. Anyone could become a ‘Campaign Steward’ to perform simple tasks such as posting leaflets or bringing friends along to meetings.³⁰⁰ The local press were to be sent a bulletin with information such as a programme of meetings. The leaflet set out a weekly timetable for planning the campaign from July to September and running it from September to November. The associations were given everything they needed to carry out the campaign. This form of content might be labelled as “non-rhetorical” but rhetoric can be enabling of action as well as encouraging of it. Guiding the local associations simply and easily through the running of the campaign was a more indirect form of persuading action.

²⁹⁸ *23rd Annual Report*, 9.

²⁹⁹ *Call to Action*.

³⁰⁰ *Call to Action*.

The Liberals' ultimate goal of the *Call to Action* leaflet was just that – to call their members into action.³⁰¹ It was a *kairos* – an opportune time for action – due to progress already made by the party. This was presented with great optimism. The Liberals stated that it was a 'time of great opportunity' because 'there [were] thousands of new Liberals'.³⁰² These people would not need to be converted – simply enrolled. Positive feeling towards the Liberals existed and the party needed to capitalise upon this. Local support needed to be 'wholehearted and enthusiastic' to take this chance for a political breakthrough.³⁰³ This justified the rhetoric of action that followed.

The rhetoric of action proliferated this publication as much as the accompanying booklet for the public. The campaign instructions used action verbs, with local associations told 'Set up an Action Committee', 'Notify the local papers', and 'Arrange a programme of meetings'.³⁰⁴ It was indeed to be a very active campaign, based on delivering reading material and contacting potential members. This idea was bolstered by the party presenting action as a characteristic of theirs. It described itself as the party that 'gets things done for all the people'. The language of action was used to emphasise that this was a moment for action, despite the next election being at least two years away. Grimond appealed to Liberal members in the *Take Britain Ahead* booklet to 'button-hole your neighbours', assigning personal responsibility to local activists to personally ensure enrolments.³⁰⁵ This appeal for membership rather than votes was outside of the rituals of party electioneering. The party therefore had to exhort its existing members to mobilise outside of election time, creating a moment with particular opportunities and imperatives.

The *Autumn Campaign 1965* leaflet also aimed to turn Liberal members into workers.³⁰⁶ It needed to emotionally provoke action as well as practically provide help. It was not dissimilar to the earlier *Call to Action* leaflet in attempting to create a moment, but was occasionally more aggressive in its exhortation of action. This shows that imperatives produce certain exigencies that must be achieved but it is still a creative rhetorical act in how to achieve them. The party presented 'the Liberal opportunity'.³⁰⁷ People were disillusioned with both the Conservatives and Labour parties because of the need for (a usually unspecified) change. Those who voted

³⁰¹ 23rd Annual Report, 8.

³⁰² *Call to Action*.

³⁰³ *Call to Action*.

³⁰⁴ *Call to Action*.

³⁰⁵ *Take Britain Ahead*.

³⁰⁶ *Autumn Campaign*.

³⁰⁷ *Autumn Campaign*.

Labour in 1964 expecting a change were now ‘sadder and wiser’. The Liberals asserted this as the opportune moment, saying ‘this is why we must make our policies known NOW’.³⁰⁸ The necessary alternative was Liberal change and this could only be achieved if Liberal members went out to ‘bang on the knocker’ and stimulate support. There was therefore, again, language of action to mobilise members. They used the imperative verb form to convey urgency and importance, such as ‘hold a special welcoming meeting’.³⁰⁹ This was a set of orders rather than a list of suggestions as the party passionately pleaded for action.

More emotive language was used as the party laid out the practicalities of the campaign too. The campaign was repeatedly described as an ‘attack’.³¹⁰ It discussed getting new members involved in the party, and said that all new members should be encouraged to be involved, even if the local associations were not convinced of an individual’s use. This was because ‘new blood which proves useless [could] easily be shed’.³¹¹ The party was portraying itself as ruthless in the pursuit of progress. These were practicalities of the campaign’s organisation but they were no matter-of-fact list. Language of blood and conflict gave more seriousness to the campaign. The party needed to prove that this campaign mattered, because the last election was only a year ago. The organisational imperatives and internal audience were similar to the Call to Action campaign four years earlier, but the tone of rhetoric was markedly more aggressive to create this moment for action. Such language made the organisational practicalities seem far more than a series of mundane jobs to tick off. This shows the creative agency of the Liberal Party to manipulate its rhetoric in certain ways to satisfy imperatives and appeal to audiences.

For their campaign of 1967 the Liberals chose a long-term ‘crusade’ to transform the party from a third party to a main contender for power.³¹² It differed from previous as it covered the whole parliament until the coming of the next general election in 1970 or 1971. This case study examines the format of the campaign and, particularly, its financial imperatives. It launched a one million pound appeal in 1970 to pursue its electoral ambitions.³¹³

This Liberal ‘crusade’ took a more all-encompassing format than the earlier campaigns. The key introductory and concluding leaflets sought to appeal within and outside the party to satisfy electoral, organisational and financial imperatives. It appealed to internal audiences, that ‘every

³⁰⁸ *Autumn Campaign.*

³⁰⁹ *Autumn Campaign.*

³¹⁰ *Autumn Campaign.*

³¹¹ *Autumn Campaign.*

³¹² *The Liberal Crusade.*

³¹³ *Join the Liberal Crusade.*

Liberal [might] pledge himself to wholehearted achievement’, and external audiences, that ‘every non-Liberal [might] see from this plan that the Liberal Party really means business’.³¹⁴ It focused less on specific details of running the campaign and more on vaster plans for political progress. The 1967 leaflet *The Liberal Crusade* made positive and negative appeals before segueing into an organisational plan for each year from 1967 and 1970.³¹⁵ This was both a call to action for the local associations and a proof for the non-Liberal that this crusade was rooted in thought-out plans. In 1967 the focus was the broad structure of the ‘party machine’. By 1970, 600 constituencies across the country were to be on an election footing. These complete plans were a way of appealing in themselves. They emanated confidence and proved ambition. The organisational imperatives served a dual purpose. They were calls to action for Liberals and non-Liberals, and were deployed as rhetorical tools to prove a full plan for power.

The party used two terms to reflect this full plan to seek power: ‘crusade’ and ‘plan’. The term ‘crusade’ implied a Liberal onslaught for progress. The connotations of ‘crusade’ have been considered elsewhere in this thesis. It implied passion and principle and tied in with the stated importance given to Liberal attitudes. The leaflet in 1967 was subtitled ‘The Liberal Plan for Power’.³¹⁶ This addressed the constant concern that the Liberals were not a credible alternative for government. As seen, the fullness of the plan was an appeal in itself to demonstrate that credibility. The leaflet pledged to address Liberal ambitions – it saw itself as on ‘the road to power’.³¹⁷ This metaphor implied a journey of progress that the Liberals portrayed themselves as taking. It laid out Liberal principles – based on the spread of wealth and power down to the individual – and their ‘Plan for Power’ to provide the electorate with the complete picture.³¹⁸ That introductory leaflet then moved very logically through annual plans. The language was deliberately assured. They introduced each year’s plan with ‘This must be the year in which...’, ‘This will be the first full year of...’, ‘We shall have improved our...’ and ‘This is the year of maximum activity...’ respectively.³¹⁹ It sought to imbue confidence in both Liberal and non-Liberal.

Aligned to the language of ‘plan’ was the rhetoric of target-setting. At a time when the imperative was not directly vote winning, there was importance in knowing exactly what one’s

³¹⁴ *The Liberal Crusade*, 26.

³¹⁵ *The Liberal Crusade*.

³¹⁶ *The Liberal Crusade*, 1.

³¹⁷ *The Liberal Crusade*, 25.

³¹⁸ *The Liberal Crusade*, 25.

³¹⁹ *The Liberal Crusade*, 26-33.

support would provide. The ultimate target was, naturally, election readiness. Achieving this was based on improving organisational strength both locally and nationally. Part of the appeal was simply to have targets to latch onto. In 1967 the party stated ‘Our thinking is clear. Our targets are set’ and ‘If it seems ambitious it is because we are ambitious’.³²⁰ Then the imperative was to enrol Liberals and non-Liberals to help achieve the targets. In 1970 it did this by connecting the us (the Liberal Party) with the you (the potential (active) Liberal member). The leaflet’s peroration read ‘These are our targets. This our crusade. If you want your voice to be heard then you must join our crusade. Without your help we cannot win. And for Britain’s sake we must win’.³²¹ It conveyed urgency through the short sentence structure to call for this extra action outside of election time. It aligned Liberal prospects with national prospects to continue the plea for credibility in showing that the Liberals could influence the national interest. And it related it to wider Liberal arguments about the role of the individual by imploring the reader to ‘want [their] voice to be heard’.³²² In this way the Liberals grounded the appeal in the personal. They set urgent targets that required and benefited the individual.

A key target was financial. They called for £1 million in 1967 at the start of campaign and then again in 1970. To pursue this particular imperative the Liberals deployed an ethos of seriousness in their introduction to the 1970 leaflet *Join the Liberal Crusade*.³²³ They had to justify the financial appeal. They wanted the money ‘because the Liberal Party mean[t] business. [They were] not content to remain a minority pressure group of good intentions’ (implying that they previously were!). They portrayed themselves negatively so as to make their new appeal starker and demonstrate that something had changed for the better in Liberal ambitions. Again they were attempting to assert credibility. They explicitly connected Liberal fortunes to national fortunes as this money would help ‘rid Britain of its disillusionment’.³²⁴ In 1967 they provided pages of detail to justify the appeal, such as to revive derelict constituencies or target particularly winnable constituencies. Action-oriented language was seen again in the call ‘Help us to make it a million’;³²⁵ again the Liberals were placing the onus on the individual to act. They always linked it back to electoral ambitions as that was the avenue to bring about political change. The target had been slightly scaled down by 1970. The ultimate reason for the

³²⁰ *The Liberal Crusade*, 3.

³²¹ *Join the Liberal Crusade*.

³²² *Join the Liberal Crusade*.

³²³ *Join the Liberal Crusade*.

³²⁴ *Join the Liberal Crusade*.

³²⁵ *The Liberal Crusade*, 33.

financial appeal was now to ‘back over 500 Liberal candidates at the next General Election’.³²⁶ The whole campaign was predicated on election readiness. This theme both implied credibility as a genuine electoral option and encouraged involvement behind a weighty goal.

Across the 1960s, then, the Liberal Party faced certain organisational imperatives as its main mid-cycle focus. It needed its existing members to be active in running the campaigns both to attract more members and to improve constituency organisation for election readiness. For this it particularly used the rhetoric of action to encourage its members to mobilise outside of elections. The organisational imperatives also became an appeal in their own right. In the Liberal Crusade at the end of the 1960s the party based its appeal around a complete plan for power with an all-encompassing programme to become ready for government.

This chapter has shown that the ultimate goal of each Liberal Party campaign throughout the period was always some sort of big political surge. This applied both within the party, in increasing organisational readiness for a future election, and outside the party, in enlisting new members. By the end of the decade, financial imperatives drove Liberal rhetoric too. These campaigns have revealed the particular exigencies of the Liberal Party as a minor party in British politics between 1959 and 1974. The Liberals lacked a core support base or a steady income stream and so needed to generate as much local constituency activity as possible. They had to think about membership and money when it was not the time to think about votes. These imperatives were unavoidable and part of what Bitzer considered within the rhetorical situation.³²⁷

The campaigns were therefore intended to create a moment whereby it was possible to work towards these goals. Rhetoric is audience-facing and so the rhetorical situation is also something that needs to be created for your audiences. The Liberals sought to create scenarios where, whether through frustration or through optimism, the audience was inspired to take action in favour of the Liberal cause. The luxury of the campaigns as a rhetorical context was that each leaflet could be targeted to a specific audience of the Liberals’ choosing.

The campaign context allowed different appeals to be targeted towards external and internal audiences and therefore affirms Dommett’s distinction between public and party rhetoric.³²⁸

³²⁶ *Join the Liberal Crusade*.

³²⁷ Bitzer, ‘Rhetorical Situation’.

³²⁸ Dommett, ‘Rhetoric and Party Politics’.

On one level the Liberals simply created contrasting rhetoric to respond to different imperatives and contexts. Predominantly, non-Liberals were appealed to through a rhetoric of frustration and Liberals were appealed to through a rhetoric of urgency. The campaigns do also demonstrate how the distinction can be blurred in practice. The contrasting audiences both formed part of the same rhetorical moment of opportunity. The Liberals were trying to mobilise both towards the same end goal: Liberal Party electoral progress. To both, Liberal ambitions were presented and the language of action was used.

Conclusion: the dual value of inserting rhetorical theory into political analysis

Over the last decade there has been a revival in political historians' appreciation of rhetoric. Its techniques and appeals have been studied both in their own right and as a tool to learn more about political parties or individuals. This work has perhaps understandably focused on the Labour and Conservative parties, but this thesis suggests that paying more attention to minor party rhetoric reveals much about both the party's history and the rhetorical process more broadly. In this conclusion, I consider what this study of Liberal rhetoric tells us about the party itself between 1959 and 1974, before suggesting what it contributes to rhetorical analysis more generally.

A rhetorical perspective on Liberal Party history, 1959-1974

Studying Liberal Party rhetoric emphasises three specific challenges facing the Liberal Party in the period 1959 to 1974. Narrative histories of the Liberal Party have reflected on the problems it faced but the rhetorical approach allows us to move into the detail of how these challenges were conceived in strategy discussions and dealt with in creative expression.³²⁹

Firstly, strategy discussions reveal that the Liberal Party understood its image to be vague, particularly at the beginning of the 1960s. The electorate was deemed not to know what the party stood for. This vagueness was a phenomenon of the centre of politics that might be considered rhetorically for different parties, countries and periods. At best, the party was received as "moderate"; at worst, it conveyed no image of any clarity at all. The party and its candidates met the challenge of clarifying a distinct image through two overarching rhetorical acts. First, candidates predominantly appealed to ethos by centring the importance of their personal characteristics, creating an image of the Liberals as a caring party which had the interests of the individual as its priority. This focus on the personal was an attempt to counteract their third-party status, appreciating that they would win most votes for an individual rather than for the party. Second, the national party established an identity through framing, building an image based on its way of seeing both themselves and British politics generally. In the 1960s this was predicated on the importance of the values underpinning policies and in the 1970s these values became the basis for a distinctive Liberal version of a wider 'politics-in-crisis' frame. This study has used the lens of rhetoric to move beyond historiographical assertions of a vague, centre party image into these specifics of how the party sought to clarify its image.³³⁰

³²⁹ Dutton, *Liberal Party*.

³³⁰ Cyr, *Liberal Party Politics*.

Secondly, the party's target audience was understood to be diffuse. As typical of a smaller party, the Liberals had a small core vote and were unsure who their potential voters actually were.³³¹ In their rhetoric they therefore tried to simultaneously both *construct* the "liberal voter" and *appeal* to what it imagined to be its potential audience. First, claiming to have a potentially large audience generated electoral credibility for the party in enabling appeals of optimism that electoral progress could be possible. This reflected an implicit pressure on minor parties to prove that they did have an eventual chance of electoral success to bridge a credibility gap with the major parties in a time of Conservative and Labour party dominance. Second, the party associated its intended audience with attributes such as care for the individual. It tied this in with its personal image to ascribe characteristics of care and compassion as particularly Liberal attributes. This worked with the desire for a broadly-based appeal. This reflected the minor party problem of not being sure who its potential voter was so it attempted to create a vast catchment area to ensure that any potential voter sharing these "liberal values" was not excluded. Even if in reality the party knew that its vote was regional or stronger amongst certain demographic groups, its rhetoric sought to make its potential reach seem truly national, even if it was simultaneously rooted in individuals and local issues.

Thirdly, a rhetorical perspective has reemphasised the Liberal Party's constant concern with membership and finance. Lacking a support base and any large income streams, the party could not simply arrive at an election with a stable core vote and party machine to be rolled out. For the Liberals, electoral success was as much dictated by the intervening years as by election-time, and the party's rhetoric reflected this. The party's out-of-election-time campaigns really mattered; studying them for the first time has shown these imperatives working in practice, revealing how they were conceived strategically and responded to rhetorically. Such campaigns embodied the rhetorical activity necessary in pursuit of these imperatives. The party used language of optimism and action, seeking to create moments for Liberal support even when the immediate task was not to win votes. It encouraged non-Liberals to become members through the language of frustration and it encouraged members to mobilise in building up local support through Liberal optimism. To both internal and external audiences, it constantly argued that now was the opportune time for action to bring about Liberal political progress. This was a type of rhetoric developed by the Liberals which responded to the centre and third-party problems detailed above.

³³¹ D. Butler and D. Stokes, *Political Change in Britain: Forces Shaping Electoral Choice* (London: Macmillan, 1969).

Implications for the study of rhetoric

Studying a political party's activities in depth has foregrounded the importance of a rhetorical mode of analysis. More than just a speech or election-time device, rhetoric should be studied as a process. Focusing on all areas from strategy minutes to creative expression has shown that the rhetorical process incorporates everything from invention to delivery. Liberal mid-cycle campaigns throughout the 1960s particularly exemplify this. The party located the problem of needing membership and financial boosts to make political progress, with the ultimate goal being to improve election readiness. It decided to tackle this imperative with out-of-election-time campaigns. It selected the contrasting audiences of members and non-members and chose a leaflet format for the crux of the campaign. Finally, it expressed varied rhetoric based on frustration, optimism and action. Each of these acts were rhetorical and ought to be assessed as part of a connected rhetorical process.

Studying political party rhetoric has therefore allowed us to understand a lot more about party politics. It provides insight into the variety of challenges that parties face and every step in dealing with them. Party politics is a lot more than just trying to win votes at election time, so rhetoric was a constant tool for the Liberal Party to pursue its goals, rather than just to be deployed in a parliamentary election campaign. Both party politics and rhetoric are predicated on an end goal of persuasion. The party used different types of rhetoric to persuade different audiences. For example, it used rhetoric based on action to encourage its members to carry out campaigns outside of election time, and it used rhetoric based on party image to define its appeals to the electorate. Studying rhetoric reveals a lot about how contrasting imperatives were pursued. Challenges are met rhetorically and so can only be fully understood when considered as part of the rhetorical process.

Applying rhetorical analysis to the Liberal Party has revealed three areas that need more consideration in rhetorical studies than has traditionally been the case. The first is Kenneth Burke's theory of identification.³³² Central to Liberal Party appeals to ethos, identification was the process used to link their party image to their potential audience. In 1970, for example, the Liberals assigned themselves the quality of being caring and then identified that same quality in the potential Liberal voter. This helps us understand the process of ethos appeals appearing in practice. Identification was the outcome of Liberal rhetoric expressing shared positive characteristics with its audience to create a basis from which to appeal further. Studying

³³² Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*.

identification shows too how appeals to ethos rely on appeals to logos and pathos. To identify with your audience, you need to connect with their emotional state (an appeal to pathos) and convince them that the sharing of some value or opinion is a first step towards voting (an appeal to logos). Building on the work of Judi Atkins, then, this should encourage further thought both about identification specifically and more generally about how appeals to ethos (and logos and pathos) are actually created.

The second concept is the rhetorical frame. Studying this has provided great insight into what the Liberal Party both *considered* and *professed to be* important. Framing has been considered in political science (particularly in America) but has not yet become as central to rhetorical political analysis as it should be.³³³ In 1960s, Liberals used their rhetoric to frame politics around the importance of party values, of partnership and care for the individual – the principles underpinning their policies. Locating this rhetorical frame tells us both that the Liberal Party considered values important as a philosophical guide for its principles and activities, and as a way of presenting its party's offering to the electorate. In the 1970s, the Liberals constructed their version of a crisis in British politics based on major party failure to improve the economic and industrial situations. Identifying this frame reveals that the Liberals both perceived that this crisis was an important issue and appealed to the electorate by presenting it in a certain way. Asking what worldviews underpin the invention of particular rhetoric is a crucial question to understand both what a political party considers to be important and how it subsequently presents that important issue to the electorate.

A third area that has proven revealing for this thesis is the Liberal Party out-of-election-time campaign. As said, these campaigns, as attempts to create opportunities outside of voting, exemplified the fact that rhetoric is a continuous creative process towards achieving chosen imperatives. Studying campaigns reminds us that political rhetoric is not directly centred around election time, or vote winning, but around the pursuit of varied imperatives. The campaigns demonstrated the membership and financial imperatives of the party in ways which election-time rhetoric do not. This thesis has located in the campaigns a broader conception of rhetoric by showing us a different type of rhetoric. Rhetoric is not just forced to work within existing moments of political activity but is a tool to be used creatively in creating a moment for political activity. To achieve this in the campaigns the Liberals both had to assert a particular mood and also persuade that now was the specific, necessary time for action.

³³³ Jacoby, 'Issue Framing'; Goffman, *Frame Analysis*.

This thesis has studied Liberal Party history between 1959 and 1974 by combining an empirical study with rhetorical theory. This conceptual history has revealed much about the Liberal Party that more typical narrative histories pass over, and the in-depth party analysis has contributed to our understanding of longer-term rhetorical acts such as crafting a party image or running a campaign. I have distinguished between the party's political history and rhetorical analysis for this conclusion, but the most productive research comes in combining the two. This thesis has used analysis of rhetoric to learn more about the Liberal Party's activity, but the process of grounding rhetorical theory in historical examples has in turn required us to refine the theory. To learn more about political parties, we need to continue to develop better analytical tools to understand the role of rhetoric in political activity. This reflexive approach has shown the benefit of combining theory and empirical study.

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