

Edmund Harvey

Mark Frankel tells the story of the Quaker who was one of only sixteen MPs to have sat in Parliament during both world wars.

T. Edmund Harvey, Libera

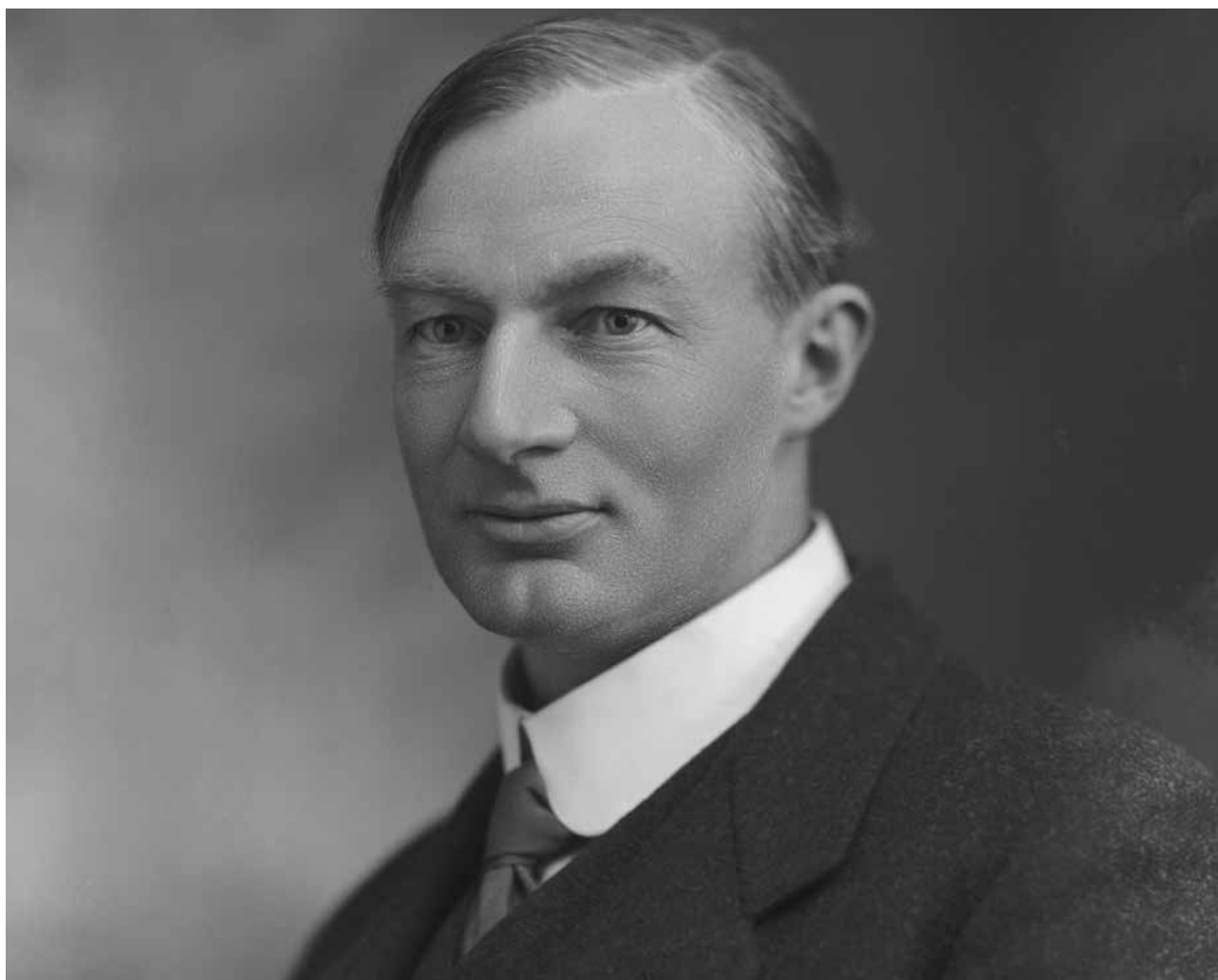
T. EDMUND HARVEY (1875–1955) was the Liberal MP for West Leeds 1910–18, for Dewsbury 1923–24 and an independent MP 1937–45. He was one of only sixteen MPs to have sat in parliament in both world wars, putting him among such greats as Lloyd George and Winston Churchill. He was a Quaker who notably expressed his religious values by his work for conscientious objection to military conscription, although he did much more. He went from the days of Edwardian liberalism through to the age of the atomic bomb, and was involved in the great and humble issues of the day as they played out in parliament, in the wider public domain, and in his own life of faith and practice. Yet he is a neglected figure. A biography by the Quaker historian, Edward Milligan, remains uncompleted. Harvey has a vivid few pages in parliament's illustrated publication, *Duty and Democracy* in the First World War, but mention of him elsewhere in the secondary literature is confined to a few lines on his connection with conscientious objection in the First World War. Aside from the secondary literature, there is *We Were Seven*, a childhood memoir by his brother, William Fryer Harvey. With the personal and place names altered, it is an account of an upbringing in a wealthy Quaker family in the north of England in which Harvey features as 'Tom, the kindest and most good natured of elder brothers'.¹ This article is in seven sections. The first section gives a brief account of Harvey's early years and outlines the six further sections which make up the remainder of the paper. These further sections are in chronological order, from Harvey's time as warden of Toynbee Hall through to his final years.

1. Harvey was born into a prosperous Quaker family in Leeds in 1875. His given name was Thomas Edmund but he preferred to be known as Edmund and his nickname was Ted in a play on his initials. His father, William Harvey, was

a businessman, philanthropist and active Liberal. The family had close ties to the Rowntrees; Arnold Stephenson Rowntree, who was Liberal MP for York 1910–18, became his brother-in-law in 1906. Harvey went to Bootham, the Quaker school in York, then to Oxford, where he got a first-class degree in *Litterae Humaniores*. After a study tour of Berlin and Paris, in 1900 Harvey went to London to be an assistant in the British Museum but intent on a career in social reform and politics. Mentored by Joseph Allen Baker, a Quaker and one of the Progressive group on the London County Council, Harvey became an LCC councillor and in 1906 succeeded Rev. Samuel Barnett as warden of Toynbee Hall, the university settlement in London's East End. His time at Toynbee Hall, dealt with in section two, begins the thematic episodes which make up the remainder of this paper. Section two explains how Harvey, while at Toynbee Hall, took on work to reform the Balfour Act and published articles on the liberal approach to social reform. The paper then moves on to section three about Harvey's election to parliament in 1910 and his interest in imperial affairs. In the years before war in 1914 he campaigned for the indigenous population of British East Africa. Subsequently, when he was back in parliament from 1937, he spoke on Indian independence. The fourth section of the paper deals with the high point of his career, which came in 1916, when he won the right of conscientious objection to military conscription and went on to help set up and administer a system for alternative national service. In addition, during the First World War he sacrificed his career to his conscience not once but twice, and stood down from his parliamentary seat in December 1918. The paper then moves to the fifth episode which is about how, when he was back in parliament for the short duration of the Labour minority government of 1924, he opposed naval rearmament, acting both as a Quaker pacifist and a loyal party man. After October 1924 Harvey was out of parliament until March 1937, when

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al politician of conscience



he was elected as an independent for the Combined English Universities, a seat he held until the general election of July 1945. His years as an independent MP are covered in the sixth section of the paper, which has two sub-themes. The first is his support for the abortive Criminal Justice Bill of 1938–39 out of a lifelong commitment to prison reform. The second is the reintroduction of conscription when war came again in 1939 and Harvey reprised his role as protector of the rights of conscientious objection. The seventh and final section of the paper deals with the years between his retirement

from parliament in July 1945 and his death in May 1955, during which he was one of the first to speak against the atomic bomb.

2.

The first episode of Harvey's career begins with his time at Toynbee Hall, where he was appointed deputy warden in late 1904 and warden proper in May 1906, leaving the post in July 1911 on his marriage to Alice Irene, daughter of Professor Silvanus P. Thompson FRS. In 1908–10, he was involved in trying to settle

Thomas Edmund Harvey, 17 November 1918 (Bassano Ltd, whole-plate glass negative; © National Portrait Gallery, London)

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the controversy over Balfour's Education Act of 1902, which had continued after its enactment. He worked with a cousin, the educationist Michael E. Sadler, as joint secretaries to the Education Settlement Committee, an independent body set up to deal with Nonconformists' objections to the provision in the Balfour Act empowering local education authorities to support Church schools. Completing its deliberations in 1910, the committee published a sizable booklet, *Towards Educational Peace*, co-authored by Harvey and Sadler. What was effectively a privately produced Green Paper made ingenious proposals which would meet the Nonconformists' concerns while being administratively feasible and consistent with the strategic aim of the Balfour Act, which was an efficient national education system. The Liberals' attempts to reform the Balfour Act were thwarted by the House of Lords. This meant that nothing came of *Towards Educational Peace* in the short term, but it had a long-term effect in two ways. Firstly, it looked forward to the Butler Education Act of 1944, when coincidentally Harvey was back in parliament, which finally implemented the recommendation to formalise the place of religious education in schools. Secondly, Harvey's work boosted ecumenism, bringing the warring Christian denominations together in the face of growing secularisation.

Harvey's work for the Education Settlement Committee was an instance of an activism which reflected his secular credentials as a political progressive and his religious commitment to interdenominational goodwill. This would not have been of interest to Clement Attlee, an unobtrusive atheist, who was briefly secretary to Toynbee Hall during Harvey's time and found him 'a vague and amiable Liberal'.² Unlike Attlee, Harvey believed the solution to socio-economic deprivation lay other than in socialist structural changes. As he wrote, 'The answers to the problems of the age must be worked out in the lives of men'.³ This meant, for example, middle-class families settling in working-class areas, to counter what Harvey called suburbanism, the geographical separation of the well-to-do from the poor. 'If we are to make Christ's teaching of human brotherhood a reality, we must share our neighbour's burden and not be content with protesting against its weight.'⁴ Harvey lived this example himself at Toynbee Hall. Of his activities there, the most colourful was his chairing of the Thursday evening Smoking Debates, which were an opportunity for lively exchanges between

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the local proletarians and the Oxbridge residents of Toynbee Hall. Harvey's one vice was smoking tobacco, which he justified because it helped him fraternise with working-class men. He would call the Smoking Debates to order by knocking out his pipe with the emollient words 'There is much to be said on both sides.'⁵

3.

January 1910 marks a turning point in Harvey's career when he was elected as the Liberal MP for West Leeds. He had secured the nomination because of his status as warden of Toynbee Hall and his family's good name. During the election campaign, he handled raucous public meetings with skills acquired from the Smoking Debates. In parliament he associated with the Liberal Radicals, a group of backbenchers, journalists and intellectuals interested in foreign and colonial policy who clustered around the editorial board of the periodical *The Nation*, which was owned by the Rowntrees. In line with this, Harvey took up the case of the Masai, the independently minded nomadic people in British East Africa whose traditional grazing lands were coveted by white settlers. In 1911 Harvey was asking parliamentary questions about the tribespeople being transferred from good northern lands to less desirable territory to the south. The government replied that the change had the full approval of the chief of the Masai, his regents and tribal representatives. Harvey took the matter to *The Nation* with an anonymous piece, 'Naboth's Vineyard'. The article drew its title from the story in 1 Kings 21 about the coveting of land by a neighbour. Harvey showed that the colonialists were taking the best land from the Masai who, wrote Harvey ironically, had the misfortune to be rich. In another ironic thrust, Harvey explained how the *East African Standard* of 10 June 1911 had 'ingenuously expressed the settlers' gratitude to His Excellency the Governor, who placed their cause so clearly before the Masai tribe as to cause them to realize the advantages to them of settlement in one reserve.'⁶ Harvey returned to the matter two years later, in June 1913, with a question in the House of Commons which was met by the government's stock reference to the consent of the tribal hierarchy.⁷ This prompted another article in *The Nation*, 'Naboth's Vineyard – the sequel'. It began '... beneath the shelter of a British Protectorate, the hand of Sir Having Greedy has been stretched out to seize the possessions of a savage tribe, unhappy in their too great wealth'. The article

went on to say how in the face of court action by tribesmen, the Colonial Office had been trying to delay the governor's expropriations, but the last legal obstacles having been removed the governor had prevailed. In the course of transfers from one reservation to another, the article continued, the Masai had suffered the immense economic loss of hundreds of thousands of livestock. Prolonged legal action by the Masai had eventually failed. Harvey concluded, 'The imperfect story of our dealings with this people is not pleasant reading but at least we can be glad that under British rule it should be possible for a subject tribe to impugn the justice of the action even of the highest of the King's officials.'⁸

Harvey was a progressive imperialist in that he favoured the constitutional approach of Whitehall against the local colonial administration's unscrupulous support for 'Sir Having Greedy'. He was able to re-assert his preferred form of imperialism when he was back in parliament 1937–45 during the agitation for Indian independence. He regularly spoke in the Commons about India, urging the protection of minorities, including Muslims and the primitive tribes, and gradual moves towards eventual Dominion status. This put him at one with the wartime secretary of state for India, Leo Amery, who was in turn at odds with Prime Minister Churchill's expansive vision of global empire. Harvey condemned the campaign of civil disobedience renewed by Gandhi and the Congress Party in August 1942 under the slogan of 'Quit India'. Harvey said the campaign of non-violence misled the ignorant into acts of violence and crime. The following March, Harvey called on Gandhi to have the 'magnanimity to admit that he had made a Himalayan blunder in believing that the Indian people would act non-violently'.⁹ Three years later in 1945, the last words that Harvey was to utter in parliament were on India. He spoke figuratively of how the lamp of parliamentary democracy should be shared with India and the wider human family. He had urged peace and reconciliation on the terms as he understood them, which was as a progressive imperialist who offered to India the model of the British system of government as a means for the protection of human rights and the gradual transfer to self-rule of a united country. As history knows, he was to be disappointed.

4.

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War. Britain's declaration of war in August 1914 was the occasion for him to commit an act of conscience himself, because the Quaker testimony to peace compelled him to resign his post as PPS to Charles Masterman. He had been appointed the previous year but refused to be a part, however so junior, of the governmental war machine. Responding to other moral imperatives of war, he threw himself into relief work on the continent organised by the Friends War Victims Relief Committee, of which he was one of the honorary secretaries. His focus shifted in December 1915, when, as a prelude to the introduction of conscription, Asquith appealed in parliament for unmarried men to enlist and Harvey responded by calling for an exception for religious conviction. The following month, the government accepted an amendment that Harvey moved to the Military Service Bill which meant that conscientious objectors could be absolutely exempted, or directed either to civilian work of national importance or to the non-combatant corps. This was a novel measure in unprecedented times, so it is not surprising that problems immediately arose, one of which was the lack of advice to tribunals as to what constituted work of national importance. To meet this challenge, the government set up a committee which became known by the surname of its first chairman, Thomas Pelham, and to which Harvey was appointed along with two other Christian pacifists, Charles Fenwick and Graham Spicer. On 14 April 1916 the Pelham Committee issued a circular with a list of occupations recommended to tribunals as being of national importance. The circular reflected Harvey's influence in two ways. Firstly, there was the prominence given to welfare work. The Friends' Ambulance Unit, which had been operating since the start of the war, had already been recognised as an option for alternative service, but work in asylums might not have found its way onto the circular but for Harvey's intervention at a crucial stage in the committee's deliberations. Secondly, and less to be expected in wartime, was the emphasis that the circular placed on flexibility and freedom of choice. During a session of the Pelham Committee on 30 March 1916, Harvey had suggested vacancies could be offered to conscientious objectors conditionally, because the precise connection of a trade or occupation with the war effort was a matter of judgement. For example, the apparently innocuous timber trade was producing props for trenches. Conversely, the committee recognised that there could be ostensibly war work such as welfare

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services in a munitions factory which a conscientious objector might be willing to undertake. As Harvey was to point out, the strength of the British legislation was that, unlike comparable legislation in the US, it did not depend on membership of a stipulated denomination but allowed for a range of reasons, secular or religious, for the objection.

The Pelham Committee's flexible policy facilitated a matching flexibility on the part of exempted men and made for a successful scheme, some 4,000 men being placed in suitable civilian posts in the course of the war. In his work for conscientious objection, Harvey had a conception of the Christian's duty to God and the state which showed the influence of the liberal philosopher T. H. Green. Harvey believed that the Christian citizen ought to pay for the privilege of conscientious objection by an enhanced duty of service to the state and that a civilised state had an obligation to facilitate the giving of that enhanced service. Harvey's intellectual coherence and his personal integrity made him the leader of those moderate Christian pacifists who sought to reconcile their duty to God and to the state through non-military service. It was Harvey's skill and good standing which led to the first ever system of alternative national service for conscientious objectors, in spite of the fact that few MPs, let alone members of the government and the wider public, shared his anti-war principles. As Harvey was later to say, although modestly without mentioning his own crucial contribution, it was remarkable that 'a state in the midst of a great war recognised the right of conscience, at any rate in principle, for its individual citizens'.¹⁰

Harvey's pacifist stand was all the more remarkable in that it cost him his political career. Having resigned as a PPS in 1914, he sacrificed himself a second time, in 1917. When war started, West Leeds Liberal Association realised that Harvey, as a Quaker, could not take part but they appreciated the relief work which he carried out in France. With the introduction of conscription, however, the Association feared that Harvey's work for conscientious objection would damage their reputation. Matters became worse in March 1917 when Harvey appeared on a platform at the Stockton by-election with Edward Backhouse, a family friend and Quaker standing for peace by negotiation. Backhouse was the one candidate to stand against the Liberal bidding to succeed the previous Liberal MP, who had died in post. Harvey's supporting the rival candidate prompted an interview with his constituency

association, after which Harvey wrote to its president, Alderman George Ratcliffe:

The time has come when I ought to take steps to leave the Association entirely free to choose as their future candidate one who can command their individual support. ...

I value more than I can say the trust that you have placed in me and I am reluctant to say farewell to friends who have been so true, but I think it best now to inform the Executive that I do not wish in these circumstances to offer myself as a Parliamentary candidate for West Leeds at the next General Election. After careful thought, I consider that it would probably also be in the best interests of the constituency that I should make way in the near future for the candidate of your choice, and I am prepared to take the steps to carry this out at an early date to meet the convenience of the Executive.

Following this gracious letter, the local Liberals asked Harvey to retain his seat for the remaining life of the parliament and expressed 'their high appreciation of all the services he has rendered in the great cause of social reform during the period he was their member prior to the war.' The resolution recognised that, in taking the course of action leading up to the severance, Harvey 'had always been guided by what he believed right, and in the best interest of the country.'¹¹ At the general election of December 1918, Harvey's successor as MP for West Leeds was the Coalition Liberal candidate, John Murray.

5.

The next episode in Harvey's career was when he was back in parliament for the ten months of Ramsay MacDonald's minority Labour government, during which there was a controversy over naval disarmament. Having in effect been deselected from West Leeds in 1918, Harvey sought another candidature and was adopted by the Liberals of Dewsbury. He failed to win at the general election of November 1922 but at the one of December 1923 was victorious in a straight fight with Labour. He succeeded because the Conservative candidate left the field for personal reasons too late for a replacement to be found, although at the next election, in October 1924, the Conservatives claimed they had intentionally stood aside for Harvey to spare Dewsbury the fate of a socialist MP. Back in the Commons, he became engaged in

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an issue which played to both his Liberal Party affiliation and his Quaker pacifism. In April 1924 he was one of the signatories to an open letter on the subject of a planned expansion of the Royal Navy which was against the spirit if not the letter of reductions agreed at Washington Naval Conference of 1921–22. The letter opposed Labour's decision to carry on with the preceding Conservative administration's decision to construct five cruisers. The Liberals held more warships to be unnecessary from the standpoint of defence, economically disastrous, and morally wrong. The letter alleged the new vessels were being built to provide not security for the nation but profitable work for shipbuilding constituencies. Harvey spoke to the Dewsbury Liberals of his disappointment in the Labour government under Ramsay MacDonald. 'What a contrast we've had already between Labour platform promises at the election and the Labour Government. What a contrast we have seen between the speeches and votes of the present Labour Ministers and those they gave when in Opposition, a year ago.' To build five cruisers would 'begin again the wretched, mad race in armaments.'¹² The Quakers corporately lent support. In an open letter to MacDonald, the Clerk of Meeting for Sufferings (the Quakers' executive body) reiterated Harvey's points about renewed rivalry in armaments, loss of good will amongst nations, and keeping men in work by building ships whose purpose was purely destructive and would be paid for by excessive taxation involving the unemployment of other men. MacDonald ignored the various representations and continued with the naval building programme because it was an inherited responsibility in regard to national defence. The episode of the five cruisers, when a left-leaning British government rejected the spirit if not the letter of multilateral naval disarmament, was an opportunity for Harvey to act on a happy coincidence of Quaker pacifism and party-political considerations. Harvey's time back in parliament was brief and part of the Liberals' Indian summer. He lost the seat of Dewsbury at the election of October 1924 and was not back in parliament until March 1937, when he was successful at a by-election for the constituency of the Combined English Universities.

6.

His return to parliament in March 1937 marks the start of Harvey's final period there, during which he was concerned with prison reform, appeasement and war. The by-election was

occasioned by the death of Sir Reginald Craddock, one of the two members for the double-member constituency of the Combined English Universities. The other incumbent was the social reformer Eleanor Rathbone, who was one of those who nominated Harvey for the vacancy. He also benefited from being on the council of Leeds University, which put him in good standing with the constituency's electorate, who were the graduates of the redbrick universities. Harvey stood as an Independent Progressive aligned with the cross-party Next Five Years Group. His election address dealt with the necessity of maintaining academic freedom, extending the education system and 'pursuing a foreign policy aimed at removing the causes of international grievances which lead to war'.¹³ The Liberal Party did not field a candidate though there was an Independent Liberal contender, Henry Britten Brackenbury, an erstwhile president of the British Medical Association. Ramsay Muir, vice-president of the Liberal Party and the party's leading intellectual, had been invited to stand but in the event refused to do so. In his reply to the invitation, Muir said,

I had the idea when your invitation came that elaborate preparations had already been made to put forward my old friend, Mr. T. E. Harvey, as Independent Progressive. Mr Harvey, whom I have known for many years is as convinced a Liberal as I am, and the phrase 'Independent Progressive', which he has adopted seems to be a good definition of the word Liberal as I understand It. Obviously one of us ought to be sufficiently magnanimous to retire in the favour of the other. Mr. Harvey does not see his way to withdraw. The unpleasant duty, therefore, falls to me, and I have decided with great regret not to accept the invitation you have addressed to me.¹⁴

Harvey's refusal to give way to Muir shows a certain ruthlessness. In after years, the Quaker educationalist Harold Loukes recalled asking Harvey if it were possible to be a Christian in the House of Commons. Harvey replied, 'Yes, I think it is, but it is terribly hard to be one while you are getting there'.¹⁵

Until the approach of war became all-consuming, Harvey used his position in parliament to pursue his interest in prison reform, drawing on his experience as a prison visitor which had started in 1921 and went on for the next thirty years. The Criminal Justice Bill, which was in gestation in 1938–39, was intended to put into

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law reforms which had been introduced piecemeal in the previous twenty years, particularly for the young offender. Unfortunately for the supporters of the Criminal Justice Bill, difficulties in deciding on provisions such as those to abolish corporal punishment delayed the passage through parliament. By March 1939 the likelihood of war overtook the legislative timetable, so that it was not until 1948, after Harvey had left parliament, that a major measure of criminal justice was enacted. At the time, however, Harvey strongly supported the bill, on one occasion saying movingly:

I am not speaking only from a study of books. For some 16 years I have been into prisons as a visitor. I had a weekly class in the prison at Armley in the days of the old silence system. I saw the change of atmosphere when the silence system was abolished. Only 18 years ago if a prison officer found a young lad in prison for the first time, weeping, broken down, as I have seen them again and again, if he laid his hand on his shoulder and said, "Cheer up my lad, this need never happen again. Make the best of it, and with God's help it will be a turning point in your life", if he were overheard by another officer, it would have been the duty of that officer to report him to the governor, and it would have been the duty of the governor to reprimand him for undue familiarity to a prisoner. The whole of that has been swept away.¹⁶

In articles in the press Harvey wrote proudly of improvements in his locality which pointed the way to further reforms. Armley prison in Leeds had pioneered changes to the old regime of imposed silence by creating teams for 'associated labour'. He singled out for special praise the farm colony at Wakefield. He wrote that hard work in the open air was the healthiest and best occupation for most prisoners whose physique permitted it. He went on that they might go out fitter in body and mind to take up life afresh when their prison sentence was over, not embittered against the world and with hope in their hearts. In the press Harvey praised the success of reformers inside and outside government and called for further progress. For example, he showed how reforms had kept out of prison thousands who previously would have been incarcerated for such minor reasons as failure to pay court fines. Despite the loss of the Bill, Harvey continued to promote the cause of prison reform and the practice of prison visiting. His wartime book, *The Christian Church*

and the Prisoner in English Experience (1941), was a manual about how the Christian could best contribute to the betterment of society through service to the prisoner.

Harvey's strongest personal commitment was to the cause of prison reform but his time as a MP for the Combined English Universities was dominated by appeasement and war, issues on which he disagreed with the other member for his constituency. Although Eleanor Rathbone had supported Harvey's nomination, the two were different personalities with only limited shared interests. One of these interests was refugees – from the Spanish Civil War, the Sudetenland and Nazi Germany – but the two differed on rearmament and appeasement, Rathbone being an outspoken supporter of Churchill. Harvey, by contrast, was among the many MPs who welcomed Chamberlain back to parliament after the Munich Agreement, writing to his wife how the prime minister 'carried the House away – many congratulated him, me included.'¹⁷ He worked with other Quakers following the Agreement on proposals to preserve the peace, some of which looked forward to later European integration, but the failure of these efforts and the coming of war in September 1939 was a bitter blow. In a circular to the graduate electors of his constituency in November 1939 he intoned that 'the war lies like a heavy curtain between our lives today and that far-off world in which we were living only a few months ago'.¹⁸ Harvey continued to hope for a negotiated peace. In August 1940 he signed a letter to the press, along with other notables including Sybil Thorndike, James Joyce and John Middleton Murry, urging the British government to state its terms for peace. It was only with the German invasion of Russia in June 1941 that he gave up all hope of a peaceful settlement. Of the invasion, Harvey reported to the Guild of St George – a charity founded by John Ruskin, of which he was Master 1934–51 – that 'millions more of the peoples of Europe have come beneath the power of a ruthless invader with whom they thought they had no quarrel; and now the great plains of Russia are being made desolate and her peasant homes destroyed.'¹⁹

In the Second World War, Harvey reprised his role as the protector of the conscientious objector. The arrangements which Harvey more than anyone else had helped to establish in the First World War meant that when another war loomed, opinion was already attuned to an exemption from conscription for conscientious objectors. The reintroduction of conscription began in May 1939 with the preliminary

Military Training Bill. Harvey criticised the principle of the bill at its second reading, saying that the totalitarian preparation for war was a notion foreign to the British tradition of individual freedom. At the same time, he paid tribute to the government for their efforts to ensure justice for conscientious objectors and he contrasted the bill favourably in that respect with the Military Service Act of 1916. The passage of the bill was characterised by an absence of the acrimony which had marked the controversy during the First World War. Well might Harvey comment, 'Hardly a touch of bitterness in the Debate – a striking contrast from 1916.'²⁰ Four months later war broke out and an emergency National Service Bill was rushed through parliament, opposed in the Commons only by Harvey and six others. The next move, which was in response to the German bombing campaign which started in September 1940, came in January 1941 with the introduction of compulsory fire-watching. Crucially, there was no exemption for conscience, only for hardship. Harvey foresaw that some pacifists would consider civil defence so closely associated with military service as to entail a conscientious objection. The minister of labour, Ernest Bevin, refused a right of conscientious objection despite an enabling amendment from Harvey. However, Bevin said he was willing to effect administratively that which he was not prepared to make law, meaning that the government would be generous in allowing exemption on grounds of personal hardship. The next legislative step came in December 1941 with the call-up of women for military service together with other measures representing further encroachments on the already diminished liberties of the individual. Harvey again spoke of these measures as a 'great step forward to the totalitarian State' and was successful in getting a small concession to conscience in the form of an amendment which freed female conscripts from an obligation to bear arms unless they had signified in writing their willingness to do so.²¹ Eleven months later, in November 1942, the government introduced a bill to facilitate the calling up of youths as soon as they became 18. By the summer of 1943, the nation's entire human resources, civil and military, had been mobilised for war.

When measures for conscription came before parliament, Harvey's practice was to vote against the principle of compulsion but to welcome concessions to conscience. The paradoxical effect of this was that, while his fellow parliamentarians saw Harvey as a man of principle, his own faith community saw him as a

compromiser. When conscription was extended to civil defence, Harvey was aware that many Quakers saw this in the same light as compulsory military service. He reminded them that conscription was regarded by the government, rightly or wrongly, as essential to the survival of the country, and he cautioned against too much stress being laid on conscientious objection as opposed to conscientious obligation. This neat expression summarised Harvey's ethic of the Christian pacifist citizen. He argued for the need to balance the privilege of permissible conscientious objection with a matching obligation to serve the state by alternative means. For Harvey this was not just an abstract proposition applicable to others but summarised his own politics of conscience. He would speak of how he sought to put himself under the guidance of Christ the Master, but he used such language not as evangelist or prophet but as a Christian citizen. He exemplified in his own life and work the belief that privilege and power brought with them an enhanced duty to serve.

7.

Harvey retired from parliament aged 70 at the general election of July 1945. Next month came the atomic bombing of Japan, against which he was one of the first to speak out. In the annual report of the Guild of St George, he published his feelings:

I had all but completed the writing of this report when the solemn news arrived of the invention and first use of the Atomic Bomb, followed so swiftly by that of the surrender of Japan. Thankfulness for the end of this vast and awful conflict is mingled with sorrow and shame for the use to which civilization has turned the gift of knowledge and the power of the forces of nature with which we have been entrusted.²²

In powerful words Harvey went on to express horror, penitence, a sense that science had been abused, a call for spiritual transformation and the tentative hope that international control and cooperation could be the means to avoid further horror and destruction. He again pronounced against the Bomb in a 'Peace Symposium' published in the communist newspaper, the *Daily Worker*, in June 1950. Under the headline 'Don't Wait for Others to Ban the A-Bomb' he argued that the existence of the nuclear weapon increased fear and insecurity.

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19. Ivor Crewe and Anthony King, *SDP: The Birth, Life and Death of the Social Democratic Party* (OUP, 1995). See also, Michael Meadowcroft, *Social Democracy: Barrier or Bridge?* (Liberator Publications, 1981).
20. Tony Greaves, 'A Lifetime in Liberalism: Where do we go now?', 4th Viv Bingham Lecture, *Journal of Liberal History* 103, Summer 2019.
21. Ibid.
22. Tony Greaves and Gordon Lishman, *Democrats or Drones? A party which belongs to its members*, Hebden Royd Paper 5 (Hebden Royd Publications, Sep. 1987); see also Michael Meadowcroft, 'Merger or Renewal? A Report to the Joint Liberal Assembly', 23/24 Jan. 1988, Leeds.
23. Rachael Pitchford and Tony Greaves, *Merger: The inside story* (Liberal Renewal, 1989).
24. Michael Meadowcroft, 'Tony and the Merger', *Liberator* 406, April 2021.
25. The others were Peter Knowlson, former head of policy for the Liberal Party, Michael Meadowcroft, former Liberal MP, Leeds West, and Rachael Pitchford, chair of National League of Young Liberals. All four were directly elected members.
26. Adrian Slade interview, Mark Pack blog.
27. Pitchford and Greaves, *Merger*, appendices 1–4; at a meeting in Leeds on 28 Nov. 2016 Tony Greaves revealed that Shirley Williams had said to him a few days earlier that it had 'taken her forty years to realise that she was a Liberal'.
28. Duncan Brack (ed.), *Why I am a Liberal Democrat* (Liberal Democrat Publications, 1996).
29. Tony Greaves, 'Audacious – but fundamentally flawed', *Journal of Liberal History* 30, Spring 2001.
30. Paddy Ashdown, *The Ashdown Diaries: Volume 1, 1988–1997* (Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 2000).
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T. Edmund Harvey, Liberal politician of conscience

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By the time of this article, Harvey was 75 years old. He had suffered a heart attack the previous year and by September 1954 was an invalid. His death on 3 May 1955 brought forth appreciations of his character and commitment to social betterment at the grassroots. A fellow Quaker and Leeds townsman, Wilfrid Allott, wrote the following encomium:

As chance would have it whenever I saw Mr. T. E. Harvey it was over some question of helping an orphanage, helping people in trouble or helping to get citizens informed about some wrong that ought to be put right. I feel sure there was no day of his life on which he did not try to think of some good that he could do. So I am wrong to say 'as chance would have it'. What I saw of the man was typical of his interests. He was one of the products of the best education in England, France and Germany. I was often impressed by the wealth of his knowledge of social problems in various countries. He

served in many capacities [...] He was not a demagogue who could inflame a public meeting; he never wanted to be. A member of the Society of Friends, he was content to do his good work quietly and with no desire for acclamation. Few of our reformers have such a record of continuous, solid work.²³

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