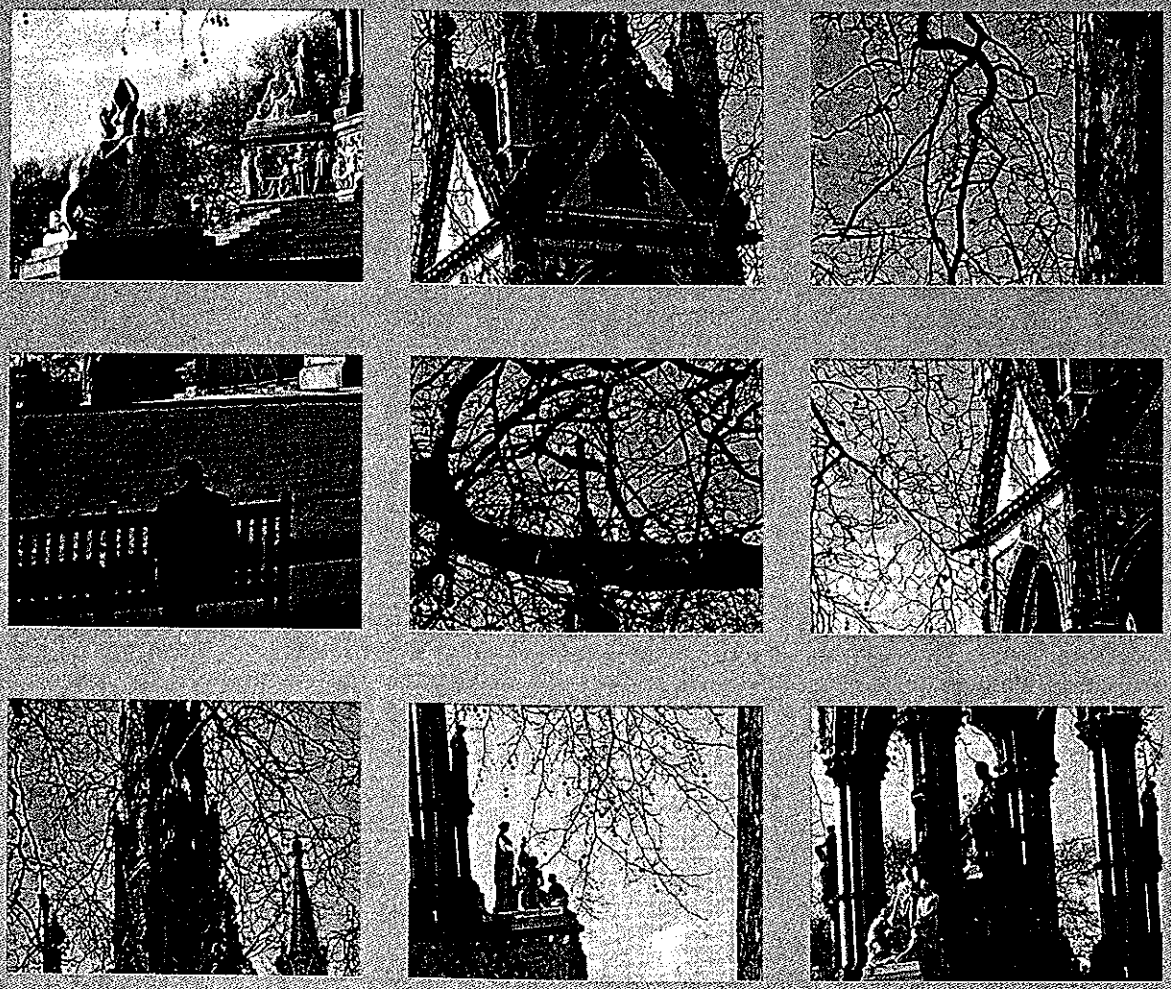
Chapter 5

Britain: Patterns of Interaction



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What is party image? Party identification?
2. What is a *safe seat* and how do you get one?
3. Who picks British candidates?
4. What did "New Labour" mean as a political party?
5. Why do the Liberal Democrats have such an uphill struggle?
6. How did Thatcher differ from a traditional Tory?
7. What is the big British labor confederation? How big?
8. Where and what is the Question Hour?
9. How democratic is Britain? As much as the United States?

In Britain, as in most democratic countries, the relationship between people and political parties is complex, a two-way street in which each influences the other. The parties project something called **party image**, what people think of the party's policies, leaders, and ideology. Most voters, on the other hand, carry in their heads a **party identification**, a long-term tendency to think of themselves as "Tory" or "Democrat" or whatever. The strategy of intelligent party leadership is to project a party image that wins the loyalty of large numbers of voters and gets them to identify permanently with that party. If they can do this, the party prospers and wins many elections.

Both party image and party identification are reasonably clear in Britain: Most Britons recognize what the main parties stand for, and most identify with a party. The situation is never static, however, for the parties constantly change the images they project, and some voters lose their party identification and shift their votes.

In every country, parents contribute heavily to their children's party identification. In Britain (and the United States), if both parents are of the same party, most of their children first identify with that party, although this may later erode as young people develop their own perspectives. By the same token, party images are rather clear, and most Britons are able to see differences between their two largest parties: Labour aiming at helping people through social and educational reforms, and Conservatives aiming at economic growth through hard work with little state intervention.

For confirmed Labour or Conservative voters there is little doubt about whom to vote for. Until recently, most British voters were reliably Labour or Conservative. The **swing** vote is those who move their votes among parties, either because their party identification is not strong, or their perceptions of the parties' images shift, or both. A swing of a few percentage points can determine who will form the next government, for if each constituency shifts a little one way, say, toward Labour, the Labour candidate will win in many constituencies. Single-member districts often exaggerate percentage trends and turn them into large majorities of **seats**.

The game of British electoral politics consists of the parties trying to mobilize all of their party identifiers—that is, making sure their people bother to vote—plus winning over the uncommitted swing vote. In 1970 the Labour government of Harold Wilson suffered a surprise defeat by the Conservatives under Edward Heath. Labour identifiers had not suddenly switched parties; rather, some were unhappy with Wilson's policies and did not vote.

NATIONAL AND LOCAL PARTY

Political scientists used to describe the British national party—Conservative or Labour—as nearly all-powerful, able to dictate to local party organizations whom to nominate for Parliament. Actually, there is a bargaining relationship between the parties' London headquarters and the local **constituency** party. The local party might have a bright local person they want to run and ask the Labour or Tory **central office** in London for approval. More often, however, the central office suggests bright comers from elsewhere to the local party, who may or may not accept them. Britain has both national and local input into British candidate selection with a veto on both sides. The U.S. system is purely local; essentially candidates for Congress nominate themselves.

party image Electorate's perception of a given party. (See page 61.)

party identification Psychological attachment of voter to political party. (See page 61.)

swing Voters who change party from one election to the next. (See page 61.)

seat Membership in a legislature. (See page 61.)

constituency The district or population that elects a legislator.

central office London headquarters of British political party.

carpetbagger In U.S. usage, candidate from outside the *constituency*.

safe seat *Constituency* where voting has long favored a given party.

Some constituency organizations insist that a candidate actually live in the district. Americans expect all candidates to be from the district they represent; those who are not are called **carpetbaggers** and have an uphill battle. Most countries, however, including Britain, impose no such requirements, although being a local person can help. Some British constituencies like their people to establish a residence there once they have won, but many do not insist that their MP actually live there; after all, the MP's job is mainly in London, and periodic visits are sufficient for him or her to hear complaints and maintain ties with electors. In Britain, party is more important than personality. Probably a minority of MPs are natives of the constituency they represent.

The name of the game for parliamentary candidates is the **safe seat** and getting adopted by the local constituency organization to run for it. Party leaders are normally assigned very safe seats, for it is highly embarrassing if one of them loses his or her seat in the Commons. Prime Minister Brown, for example, represents Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath, a solid Labour constituency north of Edinburgh, Scotland. About 450 (of 646) seats are usually considered safe.

What about the unsafe seats, those where the other party usually wins? These are the testing grounds for energetic newcomers to politics. The Conservative or Labour central offices in London may send a promising beginner to a constituency organization that knows it cannot win. Again, the local unit must approve the candidate. Even if the candidate loses, his or her energy and ability are carefully watched—by measuring how much better the candidate did than the previous one—and promising comers are marked. For the next election, the London headquarters may offer the candidate a safer constituency, one where he or she stands a better chance. Finally, the candidate either wins an election in a contested constituency, is adopted by a safe constituency, or bows out of politics. Most of Britain's top politicians, including prime ministers (Blair and Brown among them), lost their first races and were transferred to other constituencies. There is no stigma attached; it is normal, part of the training and testing of a British politician.

POLITICS WITHIN THE PARTIES

British political parties, like British cabinets, are balancing acts. A party leader must neither pay too much attention to his or her party's factions nor totally ignore them. In constructing their policies, leaders usually try to give various factions a say but keep the whole thing under moderate control

with an eye to winning the next election. The Labour party, portraying itself as more democratic, elects its leader at an annual party conference. Tories tried that for a time but in 2005 reverted to their old elite tradition of having only Conservative MPs elect their chief, not a party conference.

general election Nationwide vote for all MPs.

Party leaders must balance between sometimes extremist party militants and a generally moderate voting public. If a party takes too firm an ideological stand—too left in the case of Labour or too right in the Conservative case—it costs the party votes. Thus party leaders tend to hedge and moderate their positions, trying to please both the true believers within their party and the general electorate. If they slip in this balancing act, they can lose either party members or voters or both. When Labour veered left in the 1980s and the Conservatives followed their hard-right Thatcher course, the centrist Liberal Democratic Alliance (later turned into a party) won a quarter of the 1983 vote, a warning to both major parties.

Although long described as ideologically moderate, both the British Labour and Conservative parties have important ideological viewpoints within their ranks. The Labour party is divided into "left" and "right" wings. The Labour left, springing from a tradition of militant trade unionism and intellectual radicalism, wants nationalization of industry, the dismantling of "public" schools, higher taxes on the rich, leaving the European Union, and no nuclear weapons—British or U.S. Some

Democracy

2005: Labour Squeaks Through

In the May 2005 **general election**, after eight years in office, Britain's Labour party won a third term, the first time Labour had done that. Its vote dropped from 41 percent in 2001 to 35 percent, but it still won a majority of Commons' 646 seats. Remember, Britain's electoral system overrepresents the winning party, just as in the United States. As usual for Britain, 2005 gave Labour only a plurality of the votes cast; since 1935 no British party has scored an actual majority. Turnout was a weak 61.3 percent (but higher than 59.4 percent in 2001).

The Conservatives gained a little in the popular vote and moved up from 25 percent of the seats to 30 percent. The Liberal Democrats gained, too, but were still underrepresented because their voters are territorially dispersed. The rest of the vote, 10.5 percent, was scattered among small, mostly regional parties. Scottish, Welsh, and Northern Irish parties won a few seats each.

Labour won again because the British economy was excellent; its unemployment rate was the lowest in thirty years. Many Labour supporters, however, detested Blair for following President Bush into the Iraq War and voted Lib Dem. The Tories could not use this issue because they also supported U.S. policy on Iraq. The third Tory chief in four years, Michael Howard, made anti-immigration the Conservatives' big issue, but it never caught fire. The Tories became known as the "nasty party" with little positive to offer. Howard resigned after the 2005 elections, leaving the Conservatives divided and unfocused.

	% Votes		Seats	
	2005	*2001*	*2005*	*2001*
Labour	35.2	40.7	356 (55%)	413 (63%)
Conservative	32.3	31.7	197 (30%)	166 (25%)
Liberal Democrat	22.0	18.3	62 (10%)	52 (8%)

Marxist Follower of socialist theories of Karl Marx.

Trotskyist Follower of Marxist but anti-Stalin theories of Leon Trotsky.

New Labour Tony Blair's name for his very moderate Labour party.

traditional Tory Moderate or centrist Conservative, not *Thatcherite*.

Thatcherite Free-market, anti-welfarist ideology of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

neoliberalism Revival of free-market economics, exemplified by *Thatcherites*.

Marxists and **Trotskyists** have won Labour offices. The Labour right, on the other hand, is moderate and centrist. It favors some of the welfarist approach of Continental social-democratic parties, such as the German SPD, but now wants little government-owned industry or higher taxes. It is pro-NATO, pro-Europe, and pro-American in foreign policy. The rightists in Labour argue that the left wing's ideas are extremist and cost the party votes. With Tony Blair, the Labour right won and told the left to shut up. For the 1997 election, Blair called his party **New Labour**, friendly to business, growth, and political reform.

As an amorphous party proud of its pragmatism, Conservatives were long thought immune to ideological controversy or factional viewpoints. This is not completely true, for the Tories comprise two broad streams of thought, which we might label as traditional and Thatcherite tendencies. The former is not a U.S.-style conservative, advocating a totally free economy with no government intervention. Instead, the **traditional Tory** wants a party that takes everybody's interests into account, plus traditional ways of doing things, and under the guidance of people born and bred to lead. This has been called a "one-nation" Tory view because it rejects notions of class divisions.

The **Thatcherite** wing (which traces back to nineteenth-century *liberalism* and is called **neoliberalism** in Europe and Latin America) is like American conservativism: They want to roll back government and free the economy. After World War II this view crept into Conservative ranks and,

DEMOCRACY

THE STRUGGLE OF THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

Public-opinion polls at times suggest that the Liberal Democratic party could become Britain's second-largest party. In a few constituencies they already are. Widespread disillusionment with the two large parties gave the Liberal Democrats a boost in the 2005 elections, because they were the only ones opposed to the Iraq War. The Lib Dems, like the Liberals before them, used to be a center party between Labour and Tories, but now that Labour has taken over the center, the Lib Dems have taken up positions often to the left of the Labour party.

The Liberal Democrats were born of the 1988 merger of the old Liberal party and the small, new Social Democratic party that in 1981 had broken away from Labour. The two strands did not see eye-to-eye. On many questions—especially on the economy and defense matters—the Social Democrats were more conservative than the Liberals. The Liberals tended to be ultra-liberal on questions of gay rights and open immigration. They wanted Britain out of NATO and free of nuclear weapons. True to their origins in the right wing of the Labour party, the Social Democrats were not unilateral disarmers and felt that lifestyle questions cost the party votes. The new party is a parallel to the many and incoherent viewpoints of the U.S. Democratic party.

The British electoral system—single-member districts with plurality win—is brutal on third parties (just as it is in the United States), especially those like the Liberal Democrats that are territorially dispersed. This discourages potential voters, who do not want to waste their votes on a party they fear will never be in power. The Liberal Democrats' great hope is to bring to Britain some elements of a proportional-representation electoral system.

with the 1975 elevation of Margaret Thatcher to party chief, moved to the forefront. Thatcher dubbed the traditional Tories **wets**, the militant Thatcherites **dries**. (The terms were taken from boarding-school slang in which "wets" are frightened little boys who wet their pants, and "dries" are strong and brave lads who do not.)

The trouble here is that some old-style British Conservatives find total capitalism almost as threatening as socialism. As industries went bankrupt in record number, Thatcher faced a revolt of Tory "wets" against her "dry" policies. After John Major took over, Thatcherite MPs sought to dump him. Attitudes toward European unity still split the Tories. Thatcher favored the Common Market but opposed turning it into a European Union that infringed on British sovereignty. She and her followers were dubbed **Euroskeptics**. Major and his followers were enthusiastically pro-Europe—**Euroenthusiasts**—and were for the 1993 Maastricht Treaty, which took European unity a big step forward. Tory chief Michael Howard, a Euroskeptic, had trouble leading a party split between forward-looking "modernizers"

wets In Thatcher's usage, Tories too timid to apply her militant *neoliberalism*.

dries In Thatcher's usage, Tories who shared her *neoliberal* vision.

Euroskeptic Does not wish to strengthen the EU at the expense of national sovereignty.

Euroenthusiast Likes the EU and wishes to strengthen it.

charisma Pronounced "kar-isma"; Greek for gift; political drawing power.

Democracy

Saving Labour from the Unions

From its 1983 electoral disaster, the Labour party struggled to recover. Part of its problem was a too-left party image. Another part was its doddering and ineffective leader, Michael Foot. At its annual conference that fall, the Labour party tried to repair both areas by overwhelmingly choosing as its new leader Neil Kinnock, a silver-tongued Welshman as charming as Margaret Thatcher was aloof. At forty-one, Kinnock, son of a coal miner, was the youngest Labour leader ever. Kinnock first had to curb Labour extremists; he got the Trotskyist Militant Tendency faction expelled (it formed a mini-party). Kinnock did well, lifting Labour from 27.6 percent of the popular vote in 1983 to 35.2 percent in 1992. But he came across as too slick and was still hurt by the Tory charge that the unions dominated Labour. Labour indeed was founded by and heavily based on trade unions, some led by militant socialists who would rather lose elections than lose their principles.

Following Labour's fourth defeat in a row in 1992, Kinnock resigned, making way for John Smith, a fifty-three-year-old Scottish lawyer who was even more pragmatic than Kinnock. Smith, a wooden speaker with little **charisma**, set out to reorient Labour more to the middle than the working class. Higher taxes and public ownership were out; discipline in education was in. But Smith had to break the union hold on the Labour party. Many union leaders resisted; they liked controlling—through the proxy votes of millions of union members—90 percent of the vote at Labour's annual conferences. This union domination, often strongly leftist, rendered Labour unacceptable to most British voters. In 1993, Smith got a change in Labour's rules to return the candidate selection process back to local party organizations; unions now control less than half the conference votes. In 1994 Smith died of a heart attack.

Tony Blair then took on the unions and got the party to drop its Clause Four, part of its constitution since 1918, that called for the "common ownership of the means of production," in other words, socialism. With Blair's very moderate 1996 manifesto, Labour—now called "New Labour"—started looking a lot like the U.S. Democrats. Although union and leftist militants disliked Blair, Labour's membership and electoral support climbed until it won three elections in a row, 1997, 2001, and 2005. It was not just Blair's doing, though; the process of pushing Labour back to the center had been underway since Kinnock began it in 1983.

and backward-looking "traditionalists" and resigned after losing the 2005 elections. As Labour had done earlier, the Tories tried to rebrand themselves as a centrist party by naming a fresh, young person as their leader in 2005: David Cameron (then thirty-nine). Cameron—a product of Eton and Oxford—is an attractive modernizer and moderate who boosted Tory electoral fortunes.

PARTIES AND INTEREST GROUPS

What politicians say and what they deliver are two different things. Politicians speak to different audiences. To party rank and file they affirm party gospel, championing either the welfare state or free enterprise, as the case may be. To the electorate as a whole they usually tone down their ideological statements and offer vague slogans, such as "Stability and prosperity," or "Time for a change." But quietly, usually behind the scenes, politicians are also striking important deals with influential interest groups representing industry, commerce, professions, and labor. A large fraction of the British electorate belong to at least one interest group.

Trades Union Congress (TUC), British labor federation, equivalent to the U.S. AFL-CIO.

interested member MP known to represent an interest group.

sleaze factor Public perception of politicians on the take.

Confederation of British Industry (CBI), leading British business association, equivalent to U.S. National Association of Manufacturers.

Some 25 percent of the British work force is unionized, down from 55 percent when Thatcher took office but still twice the level in the United States or France (but only half that of Sweden). Labor unions are constituent members of the Labour party and, until 1993, controlled a majority of votes at Labour's annual conference. Unions still contribute most of the party's budgets and campaign funds and provide grass-roots manpower and organization. Especially important are the views of the head of the **Trades Union Congress** (TUC). No Labour party leader can totally ignore the wishes of Britain's union leaders.

This opened up Labour to charges that it is run by and for the unions, which earned a reputation as too far left, too powerful, and too ready to strike. To counteract this, both Labour party and union leaders deny union dominance. Indeed, one Labour party campaign tactic is to claim that only the Labour party can control the unions, rather than the other way around. Tony Blair pointed out to union chiefs the folly of losing one election after another. Ironically, Blair's and Brown's Thatcherite economic policies pushed some British unions back into militancy. Blair partially broke the close association of labor federation to social-democratic party that had been the norm for the industrialized countries of Northern Europe, as we shall see when we study Germany.

Dozens of union members sit as Labour MPs in Parliament; dozens more MPs are beholden to local unions for their election. This union bloc inside the Labour party can force a Labour government to moderate measures that might harm unions. At times, however, Labour party chiefs have made union leaders back down, explaining to them that if the unions get too much, the Labour party will lose elections. To reiterate, to be a party leader means performing a balancing act among several forces.

MPs known to directly represent special interests—an **interested member**—are not limited to the Labour side. Numerous Tory MPs are interested members for various industries and do not hide it. When the connection is concealed or when money changes hands, an MP pushing for favors to a group becomes known as sleazy. The **sleaze factor** hurt the Tories under Major and Labour under Blair, some of whose aides sold peerages for cash. Politicians taking money on the side are found everywhere, in all parties and in relatively clean countries.

The Conservative counterpart of the TUC is the influential **Confederation of British Industry** (CBI), formed by an amalgamation of three smaller groups in 1965. The CBI speaks for most British

employers but has no formal links to the Conservative party, even though their views are often parallel. The CBI was delighted at Thatcher's antinationalization policies, although British industrialists gulped when they found this meant withdrawal of **subsidies** to their own industries. Thatcher could not totally ignore them, for CBI members and money support the Tories, and dozens of CBI-affiliated company directors occupy Conservative seats in Commons.

subsidy Government economic aid to individual or business.

Question Hour Time reserved in Commons for MPs to query ministers.

permanent secretary Highest civil servant who runs a ministry, nominally under a minister.

knighthood Lowest rank of nobility, carries title "Sir."

The Parties Face Each Other

There are two ways of looking at British elections. The first is to see them as one-month campaigns coming once every few years, each a model of brevity and efficiency, especially compared to the long, expensive U.S. campaigns. Another way, however, is to see them as nearly permanent campaigns that begin the day a new Parliament reconvenes after the latest balloting. The formal campaign may be only a few weeks, but long in advance the opposition party is planning how to oust the current government.

The chief arena for this is the House of Commons. British parliamentarians are seldom animated by a spirit of bipartisanship. The duty of the opposition is to oppose, and this they do by accusing the government of everything from incompetence and corruption to sexual scandal. The great weapon here is embarrassment, making a cabinet minister look like a fool. The time for this is the **Question Hour**, held Monday through Thursday when Commons opens. By tradition, this hour is reserved for MPs to aim written questions at cabinet ministers, who are on the front bench on a rotating basis. Most Wednesdays at noon, for example, Prime Minister Brown personally countered Tory criticism in Commons. Other cabinet ministers face questions on other days of the week. Each written question can be followed up by supplementary oral questions. The opposition tries to push a minister into an awkward position where he or she has to tell a lie, fluff an answer, or break into anger. Then the opposition, in effect, smirks, "You see, they are not fit to govern."

The Cabinet and the Civil Servants

As we discussed earlier, British cabinet ministers are generalists, not specialists, and are chosen more for political reasons than for any special ability to run their departments. Who then does run them? The nominal head of each British department is the minister; he or she represents that ministry in cabinet discussions and defends it in Commons. But the minister does not run the department; civil servants do.

Ministers come and go every few years; the highest civil servants, known as **permanent secretaries** are there much longer. Permanent secretaries often have an edge on their ministers in social and economic terms as well. Most permanent secretaries are knighted later in life while few ministers are. Although **knighthood** is now purely honorific in Britain, it still conveys social superiority. Permanent secretaries earn more than ministers, in some cases nearly twice as much. Ministers find it nearly impossible to fire or transfer permanent secretaries, who have a say in determining who will replace them when they retire or leave for well-paid positions in private industry; they tend to be a self-selecting elite. Permanent secretaries always play the role of humble, obedient servants, but some ministers come to wonder just who the boss really is.

Treasury British ministry that supervises economic policies and budgets of other ministries.

rule of anticipated reactions Friedrich's theory that politicians plan their moves so as not to anger the public.

The permanent secretary is assisted by several deputy secretaries who in turn are supported by undersecretaries and assistant secretaries. These names look like those of an American department, but in America all or most of these people are political appointees, serving at the pleasure of the president and resigning when a new president takes office. In Britain, only the ministers assisted by some junior ministers—about a hundred persons in all—change with a new government. What in America are temporary political appointees are permanent officials in Britain.

This gives them power. They are not amateurs but know their ministry—its personnel, problems, interests, and budget. Knowledge is power, and over time top civil servants come to quietly exercise a lot of it. While permanent secretaries or their assistants never—well, hardly ever—go public with their viewpoints, they reveal them through the kinds of ideas, programs, bills, and budgets they submit to the minister, their nominal boss. The minister theoretically commands them, but in practice he or she simply does not know enough about the workings of the ministry. Instead, the minister relies on them. Accordingly, while most bills and budget proposals pass through the cabinet, they do not originate there. The permanent civil servants do the jobs that are the stuff of governance.

The real power among the several British ministries is the **Treasury**. Sometimes called the "department of departments," Treasury not only supervises the main lines of economic policy but has the last word on who gets what among the ministries. Anyone with a bright idea in British government—a new minister or an innovative civil servant—soon comes up against the stone wall of Treasury, "the ministry that says no."

DEMOCRACY

HOW DEMOCRATIC IS BRITAIN?

The power of bureaucrats brings us to a fine irony. We have seen how Britons marched toward democracy by first limiting the power of the monarch and then expanding participation. If we look closely, though, we notice that many important decisions are only partly democratically controlled. Civil servants make much policy with no democratic input. Does this mean there is no real democracy in Britain? No, it means we must understand that no country exercises perfect control over its bureaucracy and that parties and elections are only attempts to do so.

Indeed, most of the interactions we have talked about are not under any form of popular control. Ideological infighting, the influence of interest groups on parties and the bureaucracy, the relationship of top civil servants with ministers, the granting of titles—these and other interactions are removed from democratic control. The people do not even choose whom they get to vote for; that is a matter for party influentials. All the people get to do is vote every few years, and the choice is limited.

Again, does this mean there is no democracy in Britain? No, not at all. Some people have an exaggerated vision of democracy as a system in which everyone gets to decide on everything. Such a system never existed at the national level, nor could it. The most we can ask of a democracy is that the leading team—in Britain, the prime minister and cabinet—are held accountable periodically in elections. This keeps them on their toes and anxious to pay attention to the public good, holds down special favors and corruption, and makes sure the bureaucracy functions. It is in the fear of electoral punishment that Britain, or any other country, qualifies as a democracy. What the great Carl J. Friedrich called the **rule of anticipated reactions** keeps the governors attentive. We will learn not to expect much more of political systems.

peerage A Lord or Lady, higher than knighthood.

Britain's treasury minister goes by the old name of Chancellor of the Exchequer—originally the king's checker of taxes—and is now the second most powerful figure in the cabinet, the first being the prime minister. Some Chancellors of the Exchequer later become prime ministers—as did Gordon Brown in 2007—so the person in that office is watched closely.

Under the Chancellor are the usual secretaries and civil servants, but they are a breed unto themselves, smarter and more powerful than other bureaucrats. Operating on a team-spirit basis, Treasury chaps trust only other Treasury chaps, for only Treasury can see the whole picture of the British government and economy and how the many parts interrelate. The other departments see only their corner, hence they should not be heeded. This attitude gives Treasury and its people an image of cold, callous remoteness, "government by mandarins"—but no one has tried to replace them.

The Civil Service and Interest Groups

We mentioned earlier the relationship between interest groups and political parties. But this is only one way for interest groups to make their voices heard and is often not the most important way. Much interest-group impact is in their quiet, behind-the-scenes contact with the bureaucracy. Indeed, with Parliament's role curtailed as a result of powerful prime ministers and party discipline, and cabinet ministers themselves dependent on permanent civil servants, many interest groups ask themselves, "Why bother with Parliament? Why not go straight to where the action is, the bureaucracy?"

This approach is especially true of business and industry; the major effort of the unions is still focused on the Labour party. The reason for this is partly in the nature of what trade unions want as opposed to what business groups want. Unions want general policies on employment, wages, welfare, and so on, that apply to tens of millions of people. Industry usually wants specific, narrow

Political Culture

The Utility of Dignity

Another British holdover from the past is the monarch's bestowal of an honor such as knighthood. More than quaint, it is a payoff system that serves a number of purposes. The granting of titles is a reward and an encouragement to retire, opening positions to fresh, energetic younger people. A person looking forward to a knighthood (Sir) or a **peerage** (Lord) is more likely to go quietly. These honors also civilize recipients; even militant union leaders and rapacious businessmen start talking philosophically about the common good once they have titles in front of their names.

The queen awards these and other distinctions only on the advice of the prime minister, who has a small staff that watches for meritorious civil servants, business people, unionists, soldiers, politicians, scholars, artists, and writers, and recommends who should get what. In addition to becoming knights and peers, distinguished Britons may be named to the Order of the British Empire, Order of the Garter, Order of Merit, Order of the Bath, the Royal Victorian Order, and many others. The granting of honors is a part of British political culture, a way of bolstering loyalty to and cooperation with the system.

rulings on taxes, subsidies, regulations, and the like that apply to a few firms. Thus unions tend to battle in the more open environment of party policy while business groups may prefer to quietly take a government official to lunch.

In working closely with a branch of Britain's economic life, a given ministry comes to see itself not as an impartial administrator but as a concerned and attentive helper. After all, if that industry falters, it reflects on the government agency assigned to monitor it. In this manner civil servants come to see leaders of economic interest groups as their "clients" and to reflect their clients' views. When this happens—and it happens in every country—the industry is said to have "captured" or "colonized" the executive department.

Reinforcing this pattern is the interchange between civil service and private industry. A permanent secretary can make much more money in business than in Whitehall; every now and then one of them leaves government service for greener pastures. (We will also see this pattern in France and Japan.) By the same token, business executives are sometimes brought into high administrative positions on the dubious theory that if they can run a company well, they can run government. The point is that cozy relationships develop between civil servants and private business.

KEY TERMS

carpetbagger (p. 62)
central office (p. 62)
charisma (p. 65)
Confederation of British Industry (p. 66)
constituency (p. 62)
dries (p. 65)
Euroenthusiast (p. 65)
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