The Parliamentary Career of Joseph Cowen

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THE PARLIAMENTARY CAREER OF JOSEPH COWEN

by

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INTRODUCTION .............................. 11

I. COWEN ENTERS PARLIAMENT ...................... 1

II. ACQUIRING A NATIONAL REPUTATION .............. 46

III. "INDEPENDENCE" BRINGS CONFLICT WITH THE CAUCUS .......... 80

IV. IRELAND AND OPPOSITION TO THE GLADSTONIAN GOVERNMENT . 117

V. ASSOCIATION PROBLEMS AND MORLEY'S DEFEAT .......... 144

VI. THE 1885 GENERAL ELECTION: VICTORY OR DEFEAT? .......... 179

CONCLUSION ........................................... 211

BIBLIOGRAPHY .......................................... 213
INTRODUCTION

In the heart of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, a statue of Joseph Cowen, M.P. for Newcastle from 1874 to 1886, stands, but few--very few--of Newcastle's inhabitants have even the faintest notion today of who Cowen was.

Despite this, during the second half of the nineteenth century Cowen was regarded as the best known politician in Northern England, a wealthy capitalist and newspaper owner, and a leading financier of Continental revolutionaries. He first began his political career in the 1840s as a political Radical. Basically, he wanted a drastic change in the map of Europe according to the principle of national self-determination, as it was then understood, and the creation of an English democratic republic. What distinguished Cowen from so many other individuals with the same beliefs was his intense devotion to the implementation of his ideals. It was first during the 1850s and 1860s that he had acquired a reputation as a democratic Republican, a champion of the common man, and a first-rate orator. Among his friends were Mazzini, Orsini, Louis Blanc, Garibaldi, Kossuth, Kropotkin, George Julian Harney, W. J. Linton, George Jacob Holyoake and many others whose names brought fear to the Establishment. On domestic issues, he was one of the leading advocates of Parliamentary reform, cooperation, and various causes which were popular among those
of a Nonconformist background, such as the National Education League, the Emancipation Society, and various temperance groups.

In 1874, he was elected to Parliament as a Radical. Although he never lost a Parliamentary election, he regarded his last contest during the general election of 1885 as a failure. When he first contested for a seat in Parliament, opponents accused him of atheism and communism. When he left Parliament, most Tories viewed him as they did Roebuck at the end of his career: a Tory in all but name.

While in Parliament, Cowen broke with Gladstonian Liberalism on the Eastern Question, and the sharpness of criticism created a rupture between Cowen and the Liberal Party which continued long after the Eastern Question ceased to be of political interest. Furthermore, Cowen was one of the very few English Parliamentarians who championed Ireland during the Liberal ministry of 1880-1885, and, by that time, he had become one of the most persistent and vocal critics of Gladstonian policies.

As Cowen became alienated from Orthodox Liberalism, he also became entangled in a dispute with the Newcastle caucus, which had appeared immediately after the commencement of that northern politician's Parliamentary career. The dispute was largely because of ideology but also because Cowen realized he was unable to control the caucus. Only Cowen's accident shortly before the beginning of his campaign and the hesitancy of the caucus leadership prevented an open rupture during the general election of 1880. In 1883, the caucus won a smashing victory
with John Morley as its candidate in a bye-election in Newcastle. By
the time of the general election of 1885, almost all observers con-
cluded that Cowen had won re-election only because of Tory support and
that only the caucus candidate, John Morley, really represented New-
castle Liberalism.

The victory of the Newcastle caucus was not, however, simply a
local phenomenon. Cowen, through his newspapers and possibly through
his alleged financial support of candidates, was able to dominate
politics in much of Northern England. Furthermore, his reputation as
an orator and political reformer had made him into a figure of national
importance. Thus, when the caucus eliminated all other "independent"
Liberals in Northern England during the general election of 1885 and
humiliated Cowen, it was virtually the end of a political era.

Unfortunately for historians, both nineteenth-century "lives"
of Cowen are closer to hagiography than to history. 1 Although a
biography of Cowen is needed, writing one would necessitate a decade
of research since Cowen was involved in almost every aspect of Radical-
ism. Recently, however, much has been written concerning Cowen's
revolutionary activities during the 1850s and 1860s. 2 Yet, except for

1 William Duncan, The Life of Joseph Cowen (London: Walter Scott
2 Peter Brock, "Joseph Cowen and the Polish Exiles," Slavonic and
East European Review, December, 1953, XXXII, 52-69. D. F. Mackay,
"Joseph Cowen e il Risorgimento," Rassegna Storica del Risorgimento
Ostrogorski's discussion of Cowen as the champion of political freedom against caucus despotism,\textsuperscript{3} Cowen's Parliamentary career has been virtually ignored by historians, including even H.A. Hanham and John Vincent. Therefore, it is the purpose of this work to examine the Parliamentary career of Joseph Cowen, especially his struggle against the caucus.

I. COWEN ENTERS PARLIAMENT

Joseph Cowen was born in 1831 at Blaydon-on-Tyne, a village outside Newcastle; he died in 1900, fourteen years after retiring from Parliament. Cowen was educated at a private school in Byton and later at the University of Edinburgh, where he distinguished himself as a debater and interested himself in Continental revolutionaries. Interestingly, he did not graduate from the University. His wife Jane and his son and daughter are rarely mentioned during his political career, but there is a strong feeling among his descendants today that his family life was unhappy.

As the eldest son of Sir Joseph Cowen, he worked in his father's business, which he later inherited. His father, who represented Newcastle in Parliament from 1865 until he died in 1873, was a wealthy and respected mine-owner and manufacturer of fire-bricks and gas retorts. Sir Joseph was knighted in the 1860s for his activity on the River Tyne Commission. While working for his father, the younger Joseph promoted revolution throughout Europe; one method he used was to smuggle revolutionary documents to the Continent in shipments of bricks.

Eventually he acquired a reputation among Radicals as THE leading financier of Continental revolutionaries and as a campaigner for radical goals. Nearly all the leading revolutionaries of the 1850s and 1860s were in contact with Cowen, and many of them even visited Newcastle to confer with him. Contemporaries of Cowen made various claims
as to his financial involvement: that he financed one-half of the European conspirators, that "for years [he] had spent two-thirds" of his income financing left-wing Polish insurgents, and that Cowen actually provided the funds for Orsini's abortive attempt to assassinate Napoleon III. It is difficult, however, to document much of Cowen's revolutionary support largely because that politician, even as late as 1885, refused to disclose any specific information to his biographer. Furthermore, after Mazzini's attempt to assassinate Napoleon III, Cowen destroyed much of his correspondence with European Radicals.¹

Nevertheless, certain generalizations are possible about Cowen and Continental revolutionaries. Cowen was most moved by the plight of the Poles and Italians, and he regarded Mazzini as the greatest of men and the revolutionary closest to himself. In fact, Cowen was greatly influenced by Mazzini's emphasis on rights and duties and repeated many of that revolutionary's ideas throughout his political career. Mazzini's letters, likewise, reveal a close relationship with Cowen, who, after the Ashurst-Stansfeld clan, was Mazzini's most important English financier and publicist.² Cowen was also one of the


²Cowen, according to Davidson, believed Mazzini was "the greatest man," see Davidson, Eminent English Liberals (Boston: James Osgood and Co., 1880), 52. The Cowen-Mazzini relationship can best be examined in the letters in the Cowen Papers and in Guiseppe Mazzini, Scritti Editti ed Inediti (Imola: Cooperative Typographic Editorice, P. Galeati, 1916-1922).
Englishmen most intimate with Garibaldi and besides giving financial support, Cowen was one of the few Englishmen who both planned Garibaldi's "tour" of England in 1864 and understood the real reason for Garibaldi's sudden departure from England.³

Largely as a result of contact with Continental revolutionaries, Cowen became a convinced Russophobe, and during the 1850s he denounced Russia's evil influence in "our Court and in our Cabinet, as well as the many other countries." "The whole history of Russia," he said, "from Peter's time til the present has been one series of intrigues."⁴ Undoubtedly, Cowen was influenced in his Russophobia partially by the plight of the Poles but also by David Urquhart, who had his greatest influence within England in Newcastle.⁵ Eventually Urquhart's extremism, anti-democratic opinion, and such nonsensical accusations as the charging of Mazzini with being a Russian agent, alienated him from Cowen. Yet throughout his life Cowen remained a Russophobe although for a while he had a fairly high opinion of Czar Alexander II.

Besides supporting foreign revolutionaries, Cowen believed England should change its governing class; and he especially desired the elimination of Palmerston from government. Cowen felt an English democratic republic should replace the entire "rotten" existing system.

³Most of the information in the Cowen Papers, A727-800, pertains to this issue; see also A823-27 and Bee-Hive, May 14, May 21, and May 28, 1864.
⁴Cowen Papers, A180 and A643.
Although he praised Robespierre, his ideal republic was never the same as that of George Julian Harney, since Cowen wanted in the 1850s and 1860s to combine the principles of the United States, which had "good and cheap" government, with those of the Cromwellian Republic, which had religious freedom and what Cowen considered a glorious foreign policy.6

Cowen felt it would be almost impossible to promulgate freedom abroad successfully without first changing the existing English government. This, he felt, could be accomplished best by widening the suffrage, and, therefore, he helped organize reform leagues in the late 1850s and early 1860s—a notable exception to the general political lethargy in England at this time. 

Cowen also felt that the working classes should be helped by educational devices. Therefore, he helped establish the Blaydon and Stella Mechanics Institute, which provided controversial reading material and lecturers for the Tyneside laborers and was prominent in the cooperative movement, which he felt would teach the masses how to help themselves by understanding contemporary business practices and the "state of trade." Cowen also admired the cooperatives' moral influence on the workers in that they prohibited the "baneful" system of credit, which next to alcohol he considered the greatest enemy of

the working class.7

Although Cowen had little use for strikes, by no means was he a defender of the capitalists. He was most vocal in supporting the Plimsoll agitation against the shipowners, whom he considered "the narrowest class of men in the state," and he participated in settling the famous nine-hour strike in Newcastle in 1871 through a compromise which was acceptable to both sides. Cowen, however, always felt these causes should be secondary to his foremost goal: political reform and national self-determination.8

By the end of 1873, Cowen was regarded as one of the leading Radicals in Northern England. His influence was also increased not only by his wealth but also by his development of the Newcastle Daily Chronicle and the Newcastle Weekly Chronicle into two of the leading newspapers in Northeastern England. His success with the Chronicles followed his first experimentation in journalism with the Northern Tribune and Republican Record, both of which were complete failures. When he purchased the Newcastle Chronicles, however, he did not simply emphasize Radical causes as he had done with the Tribune and Record; he obtained the best possible journalists as well as giving news space

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7 The Reasoner, January 27, 1857, February 3, 1857, and especially October 17, 1858. Much of the activity of the Northern Reform League in the late 1860s and early 1870s is reported in various issues of the Bee-Hive. Cowen’s views on cooperation are summarized in his speech of April 16, 1862, before the Northern Cooperative Union, see B41; for the most detailed of Cowen’s speeches on cooperation see the Cooperative News, April 6, 1873 and April 18, 1873.

to events such as sporting matches, which would attract the general public. By controlling these newspapers, Cowen was able to increase his political power significantly since his newspapers could greatly aid or hinder the success of a Northern politician or a particular cause.

By the end of 1873, however, certain important changes had occurred which altered Cowen's political plans. No longer was he a financier of revolutions, since, except for the Poles, most of the causes of European nationalist revolutionaries had succeeded. Mazzini was dead, and Italy was united; Napoleon III had been overthrown, and France was drifting toward a democratic republic. In fact, the only prominent revolutionary on friendly terms with Cowen after 1873 was Prince Kropotkin, who wrote articles on Russia for the Daily Chronicle, but it is most improbable that Cowen ever financed any of his activities.

Cowen had also begun to separate himself from the cooperative movement, which he felt had become too profit-motivated and more concerned with creating producer-cooperatives than consumer-cooperatives. Cowen had also ceased to take an active interest in any Republican movement after 1871 when he chaired a meeting for Sir Charles Dilke, a prominent Republican.

By the end of 1873, many of Cowen's former political allies were no longer closely associated with him. Both Harney and Linton, with

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9 For information on Cowen's newspaper activity, see Aaron Watson, 38-39.
whom Cowen had quarrelled, had emigrated to the United States. Holyoake, who had been persuaded by Cowen not to participate in Cowen's father's Parliamentary election in 1864, gave little help to Cowen, either with the bye-election or the general election of 1874. In fact, during the period from 1874 to 1886, Holyoake's contacts with Cowen were infrequent.

On December 19, 1873, Sir Joseph Cowen died. The Radicals had to act almost immediately in order to ensure the nomination of the younger Cowen to his father's position as M.P. for Newcastle. Always the younger Cowen insisted that he had accepted the nomination of the Radicals, made on December 24—only five days after the death of his father—simply because he would be the least divisive candidate. Many individuals, such as Joseph Chamberlain, were considering the possibility of running. Even John Morley informed Chamberlain: "If young Cowen does not want to go before the General Election, I should not mind trying my chance for the interview." While, undoubtedly, there was talk by the Radicals of nominating Lloyd Jones, a strong cooperative supporter, and by the moderate Liberals of nominating Isaac Bell, a former mayor, Cowen had already had a secret committee

11See Cowen's election speech of December 30, 1873, in Jones, 33.
13Newcastle Daily Journal, January 21, 1874, which claimed that Cowen's entry prevented Lloyd Jones from being elected. This newspaper will hereafter be referred to as the Journal.
14Jones, 32.
working for his nomination at the next general election, which was con-
sidered imminent.

In fact, before Sir Joseph died, the Newcastle Daily Journal, which was considered the more progressive of the city's two Conserva-
tive newspapers, claimed to have received by mistake some envelopes which were to convey circulars announcing Cowen's candidacy. The Journal ridiculed Cowen's insistence upon himself as a reluctant can-
didate by pointing out that "he could hardly have a committee until he had been selected as a candidate" unless he had secretly organized this program. When "A Lover of Fairplay" wrote to insist that the envelopes were for the school board election, the Journal's editor answered that this was a possibility. 15

The suspicions of the Journal, however, were later corroborated by a prominent Northern journalist, Aaron Watson, who was an intimate of Cowen's. While at Cowen's printing office some time before Sir Joseph's death, Watson claimed, he had seen "a small phalanx of girls" who were busily addressing to every Newcastle elector an envelope con-
taining Cowen's election address, his committee, and some miscellaneous campaign literature. The purpose, according to Watson, was to be pre-
pared for the imminent dissolution of Parliament and the expected re-
tirement of Sir Joseph. Although Watson admitted he had no direct proof that Cowen was aware of these developments, he stressed that

15Journal, January 1, and January 2, 1874. The Courant, January 2, 1874.
Cowen desired secrecy and subterfuge:

Mr. Cowen desired the glory of coming forward only in response to public pressure. He said in his first speech as a candidate that it was this public pressure that had drawn him from the quiet conduct of his own affairs.\textsuperscript{16}

This curious quirk of coming forward only in response to public pleas would be used by Cowen again in 1880 when he contested Newcastle after intimating upon numerous occasions that he would retire.

With the nomination of Cowen and his acceptance, the Conservatives realized that they had a chance to regain the Newcastle seat, which they had lost in 1848, largely by harping upon the theme that Cowen was an extremist. His past record was exploited ruthlessly by the Conservative press and politicians. He was accused of almost every crime against political order and religious practice and was charged by the \textit{Journal} with being "anxious to subvert the existing relations of society."\textsuperscript{17} No accusation seemed too ridiculous or frivolous. A "Jewish Elector," in a letter to the \textit{Journal}, claimed that Cowen and his newspapers "have on every occasion villified and scoffed at the Jews as a body . . ."\textsuperscript{18} Catholics were duly warned by the \textit{Journal} that the "Pope never had a greater enemy than Garibaldi, and Mr. Cowen is Garibaldi's close friend."\textsuperscript{19} A fairly typical charge in the \textit{Journal}

\textsuperscript{16}Aaron Watson, \textit{48-49}.
\textsuperscript{17}\textit{Journal}, January 1, 1874.
\textsuperscript{18}\textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{19}\textit{Ibid}., January 12, 1874.
was in an editorial which stated that Cowen had always been associated with "atheists, disloyalists, and regicides." The most absurd accusation against Cowen (among all the preposterous accusations) was made in a letter to the *Journal* by a person who signed himself "A True Liberal." In his letter of January 9, this writer said that twenty years earlier he had been arrested by the Austrian government because he wore a "revolutionary hat—similar in every way to Cowen's." This, he said, must mean something to the "initiated."

From all of Cowen's past extremist activities, Conservatives chose to emphasize primarily his advocacy of a Republic. To back up this charge, Conservatives could point not only to Cowen's activities during the 1850s, but also to his connection with Republicanism during the 1870s. "The Republican candidate," as the *Journal* described him, was criticized during the campaign for his remarks in introducing Sir Charles Dilke's Republican speech at Newcastle in 1871. Conservatives lashed out most of all, however, at the alleged endorsement of Cowen by the local Republican club (of which, supposedly, Cowen was president). According to the *Journal*, the club passed a resolution "a month ago, to the effect that whenever a vacancy should occur in the representation of Newcastle, Mr. Joseph Cowen should be the nominee of that club."

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20Ibid., January 5, 1874.
21Ibid., January 10, 1874.
22He was called this throughout the election by the *Journal*; e.g., see *Journal*, January 14, 1874.
23Ibid., January 1, 1874.
Not only did the Conservatives have the extremist tag to hang on Cowen, they also had the advantage of running the thoroughly moderate and politically experienced Charles Frederick Hamond as their candidate. Even Cowen had to admit that Hamond, a barrister, had been extremely active on the Newcastle Town Council, and he was well known, having also run for Parliament in 1868 as an Independent. When in 1873 Hamond announced his intention of contesting Newcastle in that year's bye-election, the Tories, realizing the danger of splitting the anti-Cowen vote in a bye-election, agreed to withdraw their candidate and eventually supported Hamond on the condition that he would not contest Newcastle at the next general election if he were defeated. Hamond's most important election assets were his pro-Irish convictions, his willingness to devote long periods of time to canvassing voters, and, later, his speechmaking. Hamond was also intelligent enough to try to appeal to moderate Liberals by taking a moderate stand on most issues and by insisting that Cowen's election would be a disaster for Newcastle. He emphasized, for example, that although he admired Cowen personally, he felt Cowen's "principles" as reflected in the Northern Tribune were dangerous. On January 12, he said:

I hold in my hands the Northern Tribune, and I appeal to that as my opponent's claim upon your suffrages. Infidelity, Socialism, and Republicanism abound in it from beginning to end.²⁴

²⁴Ibid., January 13, 1874.
He also stressed his past support of Catholicism and, on January 7, stirred the Catholic fear of non-sectarian education by suggesting, "If they were Republicans, if they were Socialists, if they wished to banish the Bible from their schools," they should vote for Cowen. 25

Within Newcastle, the Catholic vote was essentially an Irish one which numbered between 1,400 and 2,400 voters. 26 Because of Hamond's sympathy with the idea of Home Rule, Cowen's newspaper reported, on January 2, a "rumour" that the Irish vote was to be sold to Hamond. 27 Earlier, Isaac Butt had insisted that the Educational Question and other items must be subservient to Home Rule and that if the Irish "did not support the candidate who went furthest for Home Rule they would bring everlasting disgrace upon themselves ..." 28 The Irish of Newcastle, at a meeting January 2, were dissatisfied with the Home Rule explanations of both Cowen and Hamond. 29 Four days later, however, at a Home Rule meeting in Sheffield, Philip Callen, M.P., said he had received Cowen's pledge to support Home Rule and had just received a telegram from Hamond "declaring himself in favor of it." 30

25 Ibid., January 8, 1874.
26 The Irish boasted of 2,400 votes; see, for example, the estimate of John Mullen, an Irish nationalist, in the Journal, January 3, 1874; John Morley, in a letter to Chamberlain on January 29, 1883, estimated the Irish vote to be 1,400, see Chamberlain Papers, 5/54/486.
27 Newcastle Daily Chronicle, January 2, 1874. This newspaper will hereafter be referred to as the Chronicle.
28 The Times, January 7, 1874.
29 See the Journal, January 3, 1874, and the Chronicle, January 3, 1874.
30 The Times, January 7, 1874.
This meant, in effect, that the Irish could follow Butt's declaration that if both candidates were equal, "every Home Ruler was left to use his own discretion."31 On January 12, a Mr. Curran and Bernard McAnulty, a prosperous merchant, defeated a motion by Cowen supporters at an Irish meeting in Newcastle to endorse Cowen; thus, the Irish remained officially neutral during the campaign.32 Curran had appeared on Hamond's platform on January 8 and later justified this action on the basis of Hamond's friendliness toward Catholicism.33 After the election, Curran, in reply to taunts of "turn-coat," "traitor," and "Hamondite," insisted Cowen would not have allowed him to "entertain his conscientious religious opinions."34

Conservatives also had the support of many moderate Liberals, publicans, and shopkeepers. On December 31, about fifty persons had gathered to discuss the possibility of running a more moderate Liberal, but nothing came of it.35 At the time of Cowen's nomination, the only prominent politician present was Thomas Eustace Smith, M.P. for Tynemouth, who was his campaign chairman. Besides Smith, only Somerset Beaumont, M.P. for South Northumberland, and James Stephenson, M.P. for South Shields, were on Cowen's campaign committee although occasionally J. W. Pease, M.P. for South Durham, would also stress the necessity

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31Ibid.
32Journal, January 13, 1874.
35Courant, January 2, 1874.
of voting for Cowen. The person most conspicuously absent from the list of Cowen supporters was the M. P. for Newcastle, Thomas Emerson Headlam. Cowenites, after the election, were most bitter about the large number of prominent Moderates who were among the chief financial and political backers of Hamond. On at least one occasion there was an accusation, in a letter to the Chronicle, that a Liberal was helping Tory canvassers.37

Cowen also had to face the opposition of various special interest groups. The opposition among shopkeepers was due largely to Cowen's close connections with the cooperative movement. A poll revealed that only three of the market butchers would vote for Cowen; this was unusual since Liberals usually drew more support from this quarter. W. E. Adams, the editor of the Weekly Chronicle, claimed in a letter to The Times, that the "entire class of small shopkeepers" was against Cowen.38 Unlike the opposition of the shopkeepers, however, that of the publicans toward Cowen was well organized. Cowen did not champion the abolition of alcohol; but he stressed that the rate-payers, rather than the appointed magistrates, should "deal with the licensing question." Cowen stressed that one of the major reasons why twenty per-cent of the entire population was relying upon public relief was the evil of intemperance.39

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36See Chronicle, January 14, 1874.
37Ibid.
38The Times, January 15, and January 20, 1874. Journal, January 24, 1874.
Of the approximately 800 licensed victuallers, all but twenty-five or thirty were accused by Cowenites of using their pubs as Tory headquarters. George Jacob Holyoake, in an article entitled "Gambling in Politics," also emphasized that the Newcastle publicans used their barmen as canvassers and their dog-carts as vehicles to bring friendly voters to the polls. More than any other factor, the Cowenites blamed the publicans for the large number of votes against Cowen. Immediately after the election, on January 15, Cowen proposed that in the future the electorate should decide "whether they would allow a mere organized trade to dictate to them on questions affecting the welfare of the country." At an anti-publican meeting eight days later, it was decided that workers should boycott any publican who was active against Cowen. One of the alleged reasons for the founding of a Liberal club in Newcastle was to provide a place where the working class could drink beer and, thus, punish the publicans for past actions.

Besides all the problems peculiar to Newcastle, Cowen had the problem which all Liberals would soon face in the general election: defending the actions of the Gladstone administration, which by 1874 had become rather stale. Concerning the huge increase in Government expenses, Cowen admitted that the spending should have been reduced. In most cases, however, he identified himself closely with Gladstone; and such statements as his defense of the Alabama claims settlement as

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40 Contemporary Review, XXIII (March, 1874), 651.
41 Journal, January 15, 1874.
42 Ibid., January 24, 1874.
"one of the brightest pages in the history of Mr. Gladstone's Government" probably lost votes.⁴³

In spite of all these problems, Cowen was able to achieve victory through hard work and common sense. Most of Cowen's effort was spent in addressing a series of meetings throughout the various wards of Newcastle. His speeches, though unusually long, were interesting; and he would always answer questions from the audience immediately after his speeches.

The major thrust of his speeches was an attempt to minimize his Radicalism by claiming that many of his Radical beliefs pertained to speculative questions rather than to practical questions, explaining: "The former are still subjects for popular education, and, therefore, we don't expect them to be embodied immediately in Acts of Parliament." The moderation Cowen followed in all but one of his speeches was so successful that the Journal charged him with, in one sense, obeying the apostolic injunction since he had become "all things to all men."⁴⁴

As an example of his moderation, Cowen declared that although he was for universal suffrage in theory, he would be willing to accept a "reasonable lodger franchise."⁴⁵ On January 12, in response to a question, he admitted to being a Christian.⁴⁶ Although continuing to support disestablishment of the Church in theory, he denied it was a practical question by claiming that most Liberals were opposed to disestablishment.⁴⁷

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⁴³Chronicle, January 4, 1874.
⁴⁵Newcastle Weekly Chronicle, January 10, 1874. This newspaper will hereafter be referred to as the Weekly Chronicle.
⁴⁶Chronicle, January 13, 1874.
⁴⁷Weekly Chronicle, January 10, 1874.
The issue, however, on which Cowen spent the most time stressing his moderation concerned his Republican sympathies. Cowen, on January 12, denied any connection with the local Republican Club, and said he had merely been informed that he had been elected their president. In fact, Cowen insisted he had no idea as to where the club was located. A steady stream of letters to both the Daily Chronicle and the Weekly Chronicle from members of the Republican Club also stressed that Cowen had nothing to do with the club. Concerning this issue, Cowen admitted in almost every speech to being a Republican in theory. He emphasized, however, that Republicanism would not be a practical question for at least two generations. As long as Victoria, a monarch who "had shown her wide sympathies with the masses of the people," remained queen, Cowen hoped that England would remain a monarchy.

Cowen also denounced class warfare and stressed that he was a large employer of labor and was "instrumental" in bringing several serious trade disputes to a settlement. Moreover, while willing to have government legislation protect women and children, he "had no wish to allow of too much governmental interference." He also denied being a revolutionary or destructionist, asking, "Where have I ever written or spoken one single word to warrant such an accusation?"

48 Ibid.
49 See Weekly Chronicle, January 10, 1874, and Chronicle, January 14, 1874.
50 Chronicle, January 3, 1874.
51 Ibid., January 13, 1874.
52 Ibid., January 3, 1874.
53 Cowen, 21.
In fact, Cowen declared that Tory denunciations of his ideas as dangerous were very similar to earlier Tory denunciations of John Bright's speeches as being too advanced.54

In his speeches, Cowen also denounced the Tories and equated them with the forces of reaction and inaction. "If we scratch a Tory," he said, "we shall find a tyrant."55 If Hamond should be elected, Cowen insisted, he would recognize as his leader Disraeli, "whose chief claim to remembrance in this country is that he was the most relentless and persistent advocate of the tax upon the poor man's bread."56 On one occasion, Cowen devoted an entire speech to describing Tory discrimination against Catholics, Jews, and Nonconformists.57

Cowen, naturally, also stressed that he would help the Liberal Government achieve "practical" reforms which "demand immediate attention." Most important were the extension of the county franchise and the re-apportionment of Parliamentary districts, the reform or total abolition of the game laws, and the abolition of the Criminal Law Amendment Act. Great stress was also placed upon the virtues of Gladstone and the fact that Cowen would give him loyal support.58

Cowen also criticized Hamond, at first for not addressing the voters on the issues, and then for his inexperience in dealing with national issues since "whatever other qualifications Mr. Hamond might
have, he did not possess a large amount of political knowledge." In his orations, Cowen chided Hamond for making mistakes on matters of detail, such as his statement on the Civil List and the history of the Duchy of Cornwall. The Chronicle, with a larger circulation than the Conservative papers, also tore into Hamond. He was charged by the Chronicle with receiving £300 from the Carlton Club, an accusation which Hamond denied in a letter to the Chronicle. He was also identified by the Chronicle with "all the forces which hinder the progress of mankind" and was criticized as being "a man who has proven himself manifestly incompetent" for the position of M. P.

Besides his personal activities in the campaign, Cowen received support from various groups and societies which endorsed him and actively worked for his election. Cowen was also endorsed by the Newcastle Association for the repeal of the Contagious Disease Acts, which claimed that Hamond's election would mean approval of vice and the "further degradation of a poor, friendless, and unfortunate class of your country women." Labor, generally speaking, solidly supported Cowen. On December 31, a meeting of the South Benwell and Elswick Collieries "unanimously" decided to support him. On January 3, the Trades Council for Newcastle and the area endorsed him. Burt, who campaigned actively for Cowen, emphasized on January 6 before the North Yorkshire and Cleveland Miners that Cowen "as effectively represented

59 Ibid., January 13, 1874.
60 Ibid.
61 Chronicle, January 13, and January 14, 1874.
62 Ibid., January 8, 1874.
63 Ibid., January 1, 1874.
64 Weekly Chronicle, January 10, 1874.
Labour . . . as any man with whom he [Burt] was acquainted. At its annual meeting on January 7 the Newcastle branch of the Amalgamated Society of Tailors (more than 500 members) also decided to endorse Cowen.

Cowen received nothing but praise from the various temperance societies. At the annual festival of the Newcastle Temperance Society, on January 1, speakers demanded that Cowen should be elected by thousands of votes and that the Good Templars would disgrace themselves if Cowen were not returned. On January 5, the Good Templars met for the purpose of "adopting the best measures to secure the return of Mr. Joseph Cowen to Parliament" and to best organize the lodges for concerted action to accomplish this goal. On January 10, the United Templars formally endorsed Cowen. Undoubtedly, it was the extremism of the temperance societies, rather than anything Cowen said, which forced the overwhelming majority of the approximately 800 Newcastle publicans to react. Approximately eight publicans, however, publicly supported Cowen; and at least three licensed victuallers were on Cowen's campaign committee.

There was also strong, though not unanimous, Irish support for Cowen. In a letter to the Chronicle, L. A. Atherly Jones, a member of

65 Chronicle, January 7, 1874.
66 Ibid., January 9, 1874.
67 Ibid., January 2, 1874.
68 Ibid., January 6, 1874.
69 Ibid., January 12, 1874.
70 Ibid., January 14, and January 19, 1874.
the Home Rule Association and son of the great Chartist, pointed out that no Parliamentary candidate in England could be as favorable toward Home Rule as if he were before an Irish constituency. Jones did, however, urge Irish electors to vote for Cowen. An anonymous Irish Catholic elector wrote to the *Chronicle* that he would vote for Cowen because he [Cowen] supported a voluntary militia in Ireland. Irish electors, led by a Mr. O'Hanlon and George Hill, also held meetings on January 11 and 12 to pass resolutions supporting Cowen. Also important was the endorsement of Cowen by the *Irishman* on January 10. Nevertheless, there was confusion among the Irish; and after the election, on January 29, the Home Rule Association for the Northern area of England resolved that, in the future, if Liberal and Conservative candidates had identical positions concerning Home Rule, then the Irish were to support the Liberal.

It is difficult to decide whether or not Cowen benefitted from one particular strategy: the sending of a pledge to all the electors to sign and return a stamped, self-addressed circular pledging support to Cowen. The rationale behind this action was twofold. First, since there were 21,407 registered electors, it would have been impossible to canvass them all personally. Second, as explained by T. E. Smith in a post-election speech, "There are a great number of people who have an objection to canvassing." The recipient of a

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71Ibid., January 5, 1874.
72Ibid., January 8, 1874.
73Ibid., January 12, and January 13, 1874.
74Ibid., January 12, 1874.
75Ibid., January 30, 1874.
76For a copy see *Newcastle Daily Leader*, November 7, 1885.
This "card-trick" (as it was called by Cowen's opponents) created a controversy from the start. Somehow, although dated December 26, the letters had been sent before Cowen was nominated by any Liberal meeting. Conservatives also argued that, in effect, it violated the secrecy of the ballot. The Standard, for example, claimed that it exposed "a certain class of electors to something like undue influence" and the Daily Telegraph insisted that a person who feels compelled to sign the Cowen pledge "and who reluctantly keeps his word has thereby been deprived of the protection offered by the ballot." The Tories also argued that a refusal to return the pledge would be viewed by Covenites as a hostile action.

Undoubtedly, this hurt Cowen's prestige throughout England; and such a device was never again attempted by him. Nevertheless, it is possible that many voters who might have been hostile toward Cowen for some reason signed the pledge and, not understanding the secrecy of the ballot, felt that they had committed themselves. Throughout the election, the Conservative papers carried articles and letters to the editor vehemently stating that the pledge was not binding upon voters. After the election, the Journal, in an analysis of the election returns, claimed that although 350 voters broke their pledges to Cowen, many others refrained from doing so only out of fear that their pledges

77 For Smith's speech see Chronicle, January 27, 1874.
78 For these and other excerpts from English newspapers see Courant, January 2, 1874.
might be produced against them. In a letter to the editor of the Journal, an Elswick voter stated that he knew "several people" who would have liked to have voted for Hamond but who felt bound by their previous pledges to Cowen.

The election was held on January 14. Although Cowenites were disturbed that the polling date had been set for a weekday instead of a Saturday, the weather was ideal and, therefore, conducive to a good turnout among the lower classes. Furthermore, many factories closed at noon; and, according to The Times correspondent, "a great mob of working men voters" went to the polls. The correspondent also noted that "very great excitement prevails in the town," that cabs were "used freely on both sides," and that both the publicans and Cowenites were striving to get electors to vote. The correspondent also declared that in his opinion moderate Liberals gave Cowen "heartier assistance than was anticipated."

The final vote showed a Cowen victory of 7,356 votes to 6,353. Since the ballots in the voting boxes were dumped together before being counted, it is impossible to make any definitive generalizations which might prove how the ten wards were influenced by religious, economic, or class factors. Both The Times and the Journal concluded that Cowen won Elswick Ward; The Times felt that Cowen also won All Saints and

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79 See Journal, January 17, 1874.
80 Journal, January 19, 1874.
81 The Times, January 15, and January 12, 1874.
Westgate though the Journal conceded him only Byker in addition to Elswick.\textsuperscript{82} Also noteworthy is the fact that more than one-third of the registered voters, some 7,698 of 21,407, did not bother to vote. But the most surprising thing about the election was the closeness of the result. Certain Liberals viewed the election as a great victory. The Daily News, for example, claimed Newcastle was a "decisive Liberal victory."\textsuperscript{83} Sir Wilfred Lawson, in a speech at Paisley on January 19, insisted that Cowen's election was a sign of an anti-publican reaction.\textsuperscript{84} Views such as these, however, were rare.

Typical was the explanation of the Radical Examiner, which called the election a "remarkable manifestation" of Conservative reaction,\textsuperscript{85} and the statement of Aaron Watson, who claimed the closeness of the election was "the last straw that broke the camel's back."\textsuperscript{86} Perhaps the best example of the reaction of the Government was the comment by W. E. Forster on January 26 at Bradford:

\ldots it was not good news that they had received from Newcastle . . . . Mr. Cowen was returned by a much smaller majority than the Ministry could have liked. That was the whole secret of the dissolution, which had surprised the people of Bradford and most other people so much. The real reason why Mr. Gladstone asked his colleagues whether they would assent to a dissolution, and why the Cabinet did assent to it unanimously, was that they were tired of those single defeats which had taken place.\textsuperscript{87}

\textsuperscript{82}The Times, January 15, 1874. Journal, January 17, 1874.  
\textsuperscript{83}Daily News as quoted by Courant, January 23, 1874.  
\textsuperscript{84}Chronicle, January 20, 1874.  
\textsuperscript{85}Examiner, January 17, 1874.  
\textsuperscript{87}Courant, January 30, 1874; see also Chronicle, January 27, 1874.
Gladstone, in his memoirs, did not mention Newcastle by name, but essentially supported Forster's statement by writing, "The course of the bye-elections had, I believe, sufficiently shown that the course of the Government was declining or lost. But this subject had not been brought prominently into notice."\(^8^8\) Twelve years after the event, Hamond, speaking publicly in June, 1886, said that Gladstone told him the Cowen-Hamond contest in January, 1874, "caused him to dissolve Parliament, as Mr. Cowen had only saved the seat by the skin of his teeth in one of the most Radical boroughs in the kingdom."\(^8^9\)

Cowen, in his victory speech the day after the election, blamed the publicans almost exclusively for the large number of Tory votes.\(^9^0\) The Chronicle, by what one historian calls "a complicated juggling of figures,"\(^9^1\) stressed that only 2,000 of Hamond's votes were really Tory, while the remainder were due to Hamond's personal following and the behavior of the publicans ("one of the darkest spots in the election contest"). The Chronicle also claimed that the choice of a Wednesday for the election effectively "disenfranchised about one-thousand workers"\(^9^2\) who were out of town. Perhaps the best quasi-official Cowenite explanation for the closeness of the election can be found in a January 16 letter of W. E. Adams, the editor of the Weekly Chronicle, to The Times:

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\(^{89}\)Courant, June 18, 1886.  
\(^{90}\)Chronicle, January 16, 1874.  
\(^{92}\)Chronicle, January 15, and January 17, 1874. Since many workers lived around mines outside Newcastle during the week, they probably would not be able to travel to and from Newcastle in time to vote.
It must be remembered, too, that the defeated candidate was favoured with the influence and support of the beer interest. Again, Sir Joseph Cowen, the late member, was a gentleman who enjoyed the support of all classes in the borough. Against his son, the present member, on the other hand, all manner of local and petty prejudices were arousèd. He was denounced as a Republican, a Communist, and an Atheist. The freemen, the Church party, the Catholic party, and the entire class of small shopkeepers... were arrayed against him. Never was the party and personal antagonism more spitefully or vindictively exhibited, than against the Radical candidate.93

The press throughout England viewed the election as at least a moral victory for the Conservatives. Occasionally they made the mistake of The Times, which viewed the closeness of the election as a result of Cowen's being a follower of the Dublin Association, and thus being "cut adrift from the anchorage of common sense."94 To a lesser extent, the Spectator blamed Cowen's views on Home Rule but also added his sympathy with Continental Communists as another reason for the closeness of the election. Most Conservative newspapers, including those of Newcastle, viewed the election as a kind of moral victory although they regretted that the new M. P. might be an agent of English Communists, Republicans or trade unionists.95

Almost immediately after Cowen's victory over Hamond, Gladstone dissolved Parliament; Cowen, after claiming he would not seek re-election,96 was again nominated by the Newcastle Radicals. This time, however, the election was not very strenuous for him. His election address, issued

93 The Times, January 20, 1874.
94 Ibid., January 15, 1874.
95 For a summary of various newspaper articles on the election, see Courant, January 23, 1874.
96 Journal, January 26, 1874.
on January 24, concentrated almost exclusively upon the superiority and virtues of Gladstone and the potential evil of Disraeli. His speeches of January 26 and 30 also generally supported the Gladstone Government, especially concerning Gladstone's promise to abolish the income tax. Cowen's only obvious difference with Gladstone was his claim that Gladstone was "scarcely orthodox" on the religious question. On January 31, Cowen again emphasized that he virtually repudiated any extremist philosophy by promising to be bound by the will of the majority, of whom ninety-nine per-cent "were perfectly contented with the institutions we have." Although T. E. Smith, on January 26, also pleaded with the electors to forget Cowen's extreme views of the 1850s, these views were rarely under serious attack largely because the Tories felt that they had a chance of defeating the senior Liberal M. P., Thomas Headlam, and no chance of defeating Cowen. Consequently, the Tories primarily stressed the need to plump for Hamond, who was again their nominee. The Journal, for example, declared that "the real contest lies less between Mr. Hamond and Mr. Cowen" than between Hamond and Headlam, who "represents nothing."

Thomas Headlam was an Anglican and a landowner who was generally viewed as a Whig. In 1848, he had defeated the Tory M. P. and had since

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97 This was published in an advertisement in every issue of the Chronicle during the election.
98 Chronicle, January 27, and February 2, 1874.
99 Ibid., January 27, 1874.
100 The Tories simply dismissed Cowen as someone who would follow Gladstone blindly, but they realized he was assured of re-election.
101 See Chronicle, January 28, 1874, for Hamond's election address.
102 Journal, February 3, 1874.
sat for Newcastle. His major emphasis was upon his past record of moderation. He had probably assumed that at the next general election he would be able to cooperate with the Radical candidate, despite the fact that he was not on Cowen's election committee, and win easily over the Tory. During the campaign, his speeches generally praised Cowen and urged Liberal unity.103

From the beginning Headlam had a number of strikes against him. First, he had insufficient time to organize a campaign properly, and unlike Hamond and Cowen, did not have a ready organization or a newspaper to represent his cause. Thus, he was unable to canvass the voters and had to rely upon a series of public meetings which would be reported at length only in the Chronicle. Headlam also failed to obtain the endorsement of the Home Rule Association, which on February 1 endorsed both Cowen and Hamond.104 The Good Templars, on February 2, objected to Headlam's views on local option and, after rejecting an offer from Hamond to be absent from Parliament during a temperance vote, decided to plump for Cowen.105 Headlam had met with a deputation of Non-conformists on January 26 and had failed to answer their questions satisfactorily.106 In fact, Headlam was promised support only by the Freemen; he was unofficially endorsed by the licensed victuallers and officially endorsed—along with Cowen—by the Secretaries of the Society

103Chronicle, February 3, 1874.
104Journal, February 2, 1874.
105Chronicle, February 3, 1874.
106Ibid., January 29, 1874.
for the Repeal of the Contagious Disease Acts.107

The Radical attitude toward Headlam was muddled. On January 24, Cowen's former committee met and decided to support Cowen for re-election. According to the Chronicle, the Radicals, although very suspicious of Headlam, decided against reprisals and made overtures to the Moderates which failed to evoke much response since only six or seven attended the Moderate meeting.108 In the Chronicle of January 26, the correspondent writing "Local Gossip" declared that Liberals should accept only those two candidates chosen by the Liberal meeting of that day, and should ignore all others.109 At the meeting, only Cowen and Headlam were nominated—as was expected—with everyone satisfied that one Moderate and one Radical were chosen.110 This, essentially, was the result of an agreement between Cowen and Headlam, as a result of their meeting in London, that the Liberals should nominate both a Moderate and a Radical which would thus help reduce the animosity between Moderates and Radicals in the bye-election.111 On January 27, a number of Radicals met to discuss the possibility of a second Radical candidate, such as (according to Cowen's testimony later) Joseph Chamberlain.112

The only prominent Cowenite who later admitted endorsing such a view

107See Chronicle, January 29, and January 30, 1874.
108Ibid., January 26, 1874.
109Ibid.
110Ibid., January 27, 1874.
111Both Cowen and Headlam admit this; Cowen, in a public letter of February 10, 1874; and Headlam, in a public letter of February 7, and February 12, 1874. These letters can be found in the Chronicle, February 11, and February 8, 1874, and the Courant, February 20, 1874.
was T. E. Smith,\footnote{Smith's letter of February 10, 1874, in the Journal, February 12, 1874.} the idea was abandoned though, according to the Chronicle, because of the lack of sufficient time, the feeling that neither Moderates nor Radicals should monopolize the Liberal party, and the fact that Headlam had promised to support the Gladstonian program.\footnote{Chronicle, January 28, and January 29, 1874.}

After the election, Smith and Cowen both tried to explain what had happened. Smith insisted that he had been unable to attend the meeting but had written strongly to Watson "deprecating any alliance which could not be cordially accepted by the bulk of Mr. Cowen's supporters." Cowen insisted that only the actions of John Cameron Swan, R. S. Watson, and Dr. J. H. Rutherford prevented the making of another choice. Nevertheless, although the Radicals refrained from nominating a second Radical, they were far from happy with Headlam; and Watson later revealed that he tried to convince Headlam to let some other Moderate contest Newcastle.\footnote{Chronicle, February 11, and May 1, 1874; Journal, February 12, 1874.}

The Chronicle's attitude toward Headlam was inconsistent. On January 29, it declared that Cowen was assured of re-election; and, consequently, Liberals should support Headlam since "there is not a single point on which Mr. Hammond can advance a claim to the preference of Liberals."\footnote{Chronicle, January 29, 1874.} On January 31 and February 2, however, the Chronicle placed a huge "X" next to Cowen's name and in regular print merely
announced that those wishing to vote for Headlam could place an "x" next to his name as well. On February 2, the Chronicle devoted two lead articles to the course of action Newcastle Radicals should pursue. It stressed that "it is just possible to be too certain of success" since "many of Mr. Headlam's friends are determined to plump for him, and it is no less a fact that they have begun to boast that he will be at the top of the poll." The Chronicle also declared: first, that if Headlam and Hamond went to Parliament it would be even worse than if Cowen and Hamond were elected; second, that "the Licensed Victuallers and other bodies" had endorsed Headlam and Hamond; and, third, that many of the Moderates were among Cowen's most bitter enemies in the recent election. Consequently, "it is not unreasonable for some at least of Mr. Cowen's friends to give their entire support to him as counterbalance to the coalition of the friends of Messrs. Hamond and Headlam." 117

The same confusion was also evident among Cowen supporters. Throughout the campaign, Cowen rarely noticed Headlam's existence. At the initial Liberal meeting on January 26, R. S. Watson and C. M. Palmer had stressed the need for Liberal unity. 118 In a speech at North Shields, T. E. Smith had predicted "a walkover" for Cowen and Headlam. 119 At a Cowenite meeting January 30, Thomas Gregson had successfully carried a pro-Cowen and -Headlam resolution; 120 at Headlam meetings, the Radical Swan and the Moderate Councillor Dixon, had

117 Ibid., January 31, and February 2, 1874.
118 Ibid., January 27, 1874.
119 Journal, January 27, 1874.
120 Chronicle, January 31, 1874.
resolved to support both Liberals. Nevertheless, there were problems almost from the beginning. On January 27, the day certain Radicals met to discuss the possibility of a second Radical candidate, the Journal claimed, "every street corner and workshop was eloquent with fierce invectives launched against the conduct of the party leaders; and Mr. Cowen himself came in for a full share of the denunciations for wanting to sell his party in order to save his own election expenses." Further, according to the Journal's account, anti-Headlam placards appeared in Cowen's committee rooms, and even Cowen was "no longer able to restrain the zeal and indignation of his party." The Journal of January 30 also charged that Radicals "at one time" are urged to split for Headlam by a placard, "and before the ink is dry out comes another placard from the same shop enjoining the same class of voter to plump for Mr. Cowen, otherwise the Radical cause will be placed in serious danger." 

On January 30, at Cowen's major speech at the Town Hall, various placards, according to the Chronicle and Journal, showed a large "X" next to Cowen's name and only a small "x" next to Headlam's. More significant was the speech of T. E. Smith, which immediately preceded Cowen's. Smith ridiculed the Moderates for their accusations against Cowen in the first election and their later appeals for unity. He claimed that Headlam was "weak-kneed" (politically) and that "they should so endeavor to give their votes that their friend Mr. Cowen

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121 Ibid., January 31, and February 3, 1874.
122 Journal, January 28, 1874.
123 Ibid., January 30, 1874.
124 Chronicle, February 2, 1874.
should be placed in a substantial majority at the top of the poll—
(enthusiastic cheering)—and that Mr. Headlam should beat Mr. Hamond
by as small a majority as they liked." It is true that Smith also at-
tacked Hamond and stressed that Hamond's election would neutralize
Cowen's, but his not-too-subtle request for plumpers certainly had an
effect.\textsuperscript{125}

As the campaign progressed, it became more common for Headlam
supporters to decry any split with Cowen or even to blame the source
of these "rumours" on Hamond canvassers. Headlam, at a February 2
rally, claimed that he had seen placards in some wards advocating a
Cowen plump and in other wards advocating a Liberal split. When he
questioned Cowen about this matter, Cowen disavowed knowledge of the
placards requesting plumps and promised that the \textit{Chronicle} of the fol-
lowing day would endorse a Liberal split.\textsuperscript{126} On election day, the
\textit{Chronicle}'s leading article was entitled "Liberal Union." Advanced
Liberals were urged first to "secure their own candidate and then to
secure the candidate of the Moderate section of the party . . . ."
Emphasis was placed upon forgetting previous Moderate support of
Hamond (although the victuallers' and Freemen's support of Headlam
was again mentioned); and a large "x" was placed next to the name of
both Liberals.\textsuperscript{127}

The final result was 8,464 for Cowen; 6,479 for Hamond; and
5,807 for Headlam. Although there were 5,131 splits between the two.

\textsuperscript{125}Ibid., February 2, 1874; \textit{Journal}, February 2, 1874.
\textsuperscript{126}\textit{Chronicle}, January 31, and February 3, 1874.
\textsuperscript{127}Ibid., February 3, 1874.
Liberals, Cowen received 2,594 plumpers while Headlam received only 333. Thus, if only 673 of Cowen's plumpers had split with Headlam, both Liberals would have been elected. Obviously, the Radical abstention from voting for Headlam was responsible for Hamond's victory and, naturally, this required an explanation from Cowenites.

To Chamberlain, writing in the *Fortnightly Review* of October, 1873, the Radicals of Newcastle preferred "the success of a Tory to the return of a mere Whig."128 Percy Corder, the biographer of R. S. Watson and a prominent person in Newcastle politics during the 1880s, said Headlam's loss was due to his inclination "to take things easy."129 Evan Jones, one of Cowen's biographers, blamed Headlam's "Whig proclivities and over-confidence."130

Other Liberals were shocked that a Conservative had been returned by Newcastle to the House of Commons. The *Pall Mall Gazette*, for example, in an article entitled "Liberal Disunion," commented on Cowen's treatment of Headlam: "Such a combination of dictatorial arrogance and flagrant bad faith gives but a poor promise of that united action by which we are told the lost battle is to be won another day."131 John Bright snubbed Cowen as a result132 and recommended strongly to Watson that the formation of a new Liberal organization in Newcastle was

131*Pall Mall Gazette* as quoted by the *Journal*, February 17, 1874.
necessary to coordinate future strategy.133

Conservatives agreed with the Pall Mall Gazette that Cowen was the primary factor in Headlam's defeat. The Courant of February 6 labeled the Chronicle's inconsistent policy toward Headlam as the primary factor for the Cowenite plumps. The Journal, in a number of issues after the election, also claimed that Cowen could have saved Headlam had he really desired to do so.134

Headlam blamed the loss exclusively upon Cowen and his supporters in two very critical letters which he sent to various newspapers; he even paid the cost of inserting one in The Times as an advertisement.135 Headlam claimed that Cowen had requested a Moderate-Radical alliance shortly after the bye-election while Headlam was in London. Headlam insisted that after the joint meeting of Liberals, "Cowen and his friends" became jealous of Headlam's strength; and the speech of T. E. Smith, on January 30, "treating me with derision and contempt" was the result. Headlam also objected to the Chronicle's leading article and letters to the editor which advocated Cowen plumps. "Strong remonstrances against this line of conduct were made by some of my friends, and some change was in consequence made in the tone of the article on the day of the election," he wrote. "It was, however, too late to produce any practical effect." In concluding, Headlam stressed his conviction that his

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133R. S. Watson, The National Liberal Federation From Its Commencement to the General Election of 1906 (London: T. F. Unwin, 1907), 5. See also Watson's claim that the Newcastle Liberal Association was greatly indebted to Bright for his advice on the necessity of establishing an association; see Chronicle, January 11, 1881.
135See The Times, February 12, 1874.
defeat was "due entirely to the jealousy felt lest I should be at the
head of the poll, and to the advice given and conduct pursued to pre-
vent such a result." When Cowen denied that any instructions had been
issued to carry out Smith's request for plumps, Headlam insisted that the
"natural presumption" would be to implement the suggestion of the chair-
man of Cowen's committee. Furthermore, Headlam said he had "reason
sufficient to convince me that directions to that effect were given"
and that by reading the Chronicle, one would obviously see that Cowen
and Smith had broken their election promises.136

Cowen's public reaction was to claim he was effectively neutral-
ized by Hamond. He also said he regretted that the candidates had not
cooperated more closely and hoped that in the next election, things
would be different. Concerning Headlam's loss, he tried again to use
the publicans as a convenient scapegoat by claiming that Headlam had
mistakenly assumed that the publicans would support both him and
Hamond.137 In his victory speech on February 4, Cowen declared Headlam
had been "absolutely betrayed" by the publicans and said that if the
Radicals had realized this, "then they might have helped more."138
Privately, Cowen was upset both by this simplistic explanation and by the
election result. Even his own newspaper admitted the absence of publican
political activity on election day.139 In a letter to Chamberlain
(who had requested plumpers the evening before his contest in Shef-
field), Cowen complained, "The London papers did not understand the

136 Chronicle, February 8. Courant, February 20, 1874. Headlam's
letters can also be found in the Journal, February 8, 1874.
137 Chronicle, February 5, 1874.
138 Ibid., February 5, 1874.
139 Ibid., February 4, 1874.
merits of our contest."140

After Headlam's first letter, Cowen not only denied the major portion of Headlam's accusations in a public letter of February 10, but he shifted the blame for the loss to Headlam himself. The major factor, according to Cowen, was Headlam's failure to express an opinion on the controversial issues. "He leant first on one side and then on the other," wrote Cowen. "With one hand he sought to secure the support of the publicans and Moderate Conservatives, and with the other he hoped to secure the support of the Radicals. This trimming policy failed." Cowen also charged Headlam with "failing to make sufficient exertion," with being unknown to most electors, and with overconfidence. Cowen also emphasized that his attempts to persuade Headlam to work harder were treated "with indifference" and that another Radical, he believed, would have been victorious. In concluding his letter, Cowen claimed to have been one of Headlam's plumpers.141

On the same day, the Chronicle published a letter from T. E. Smith, who criticized Headlam's "supineness" and "penuriousness" in the contest. At a February 20 meeting for the formation of a Liberal Association, he criticized Moderate conduct in the bye-election and ridiculed the prediction by a Headlam supporter that a future reaction in favor of Headlam would result from his shabby treatment by Cowenites. Smith insisted instead that with Headlam's defeat, they were rid of an "incubus." Smith, like Cowen and Watson, also stressed that Headlam had relied upon splits

140Letter, Cowen to Chamberlain, February, 1874, Chamberlain Papers, 5/1871.
from both sides, the implication being that he was not really a Liberal. Nevertheless, Smith also insisted he had voted for Headlam for the first time in order to help Gladstone; but since one more Liberal M. P. would have made no difference, Smith declared he was indifferent concerning the loss.142

The most interesting and revealing of all the explanations given for Headlam's defeat was that of R. S. Watson. Watson replied to both of Headlam's letters, emphasizing that no promise had been made to Headlam. He alleged that Headlam was both lazy and cheap and had won the last three previous elections only through Radical support. Watson insisted Headlam had become such a stranger to Newcastle that he had imagined that working class constituencies "were like the old middle class constituency to which he had once been acceptable." He also agreed with Cowen that if two Radicals had run, they would have won— even in spite of Headlam's also contesting Newcastle.143

Watson never retracted these allegations, but he did later change his account regarding the instructions given concerning Cowen's plumps. In his first letter to Headlam, Watson denied Headlam's charge that "directions had been given to carry out the advice tendered on Saturday and Monday. That is exactly the reverse of the truth."144 Later, in his Reminiscences, Watson gave an entirely different explanation. On the evening before the poll, Watson claimed he met with Cowen

142Ibid., February 11, and February 21, 1874.
143Ibid., February 11, February 16, and May 1, 1874.
144Ibid., February 11, 1874.
and Rutherford in Cowen's private newspaper office and after a long discussion, "it was ultimately agreed that I should send out instructions to all the captains of wards that they were to insist upon splitting throughout." On election day, Watson received complaints from certain ward captains who insisted that voters refused to split because "they had received instructions not to split." Watson, confused, went to the Elswick Ward polling booth, where pitmen rejected his plea for a split, saying, "Split, hinney, never" since they knew Cowen wanted their plumps. Watson never understood what had really happened until the Master of the Workhouse, about a year later, explained it to him. Watson relates:

[The Master said,] "You have written letters to the papers stating that to your certain knowledge the votes had been honestly and loyally split between Cowen and Headlam. Now this was not the case. The night before the Election, after midnight, I received this 'Private and Confidential letter,' and he gave me a letter. I forget whether it was signed by Cowen or Dr. Rutherford, but it stated that the Captain would have got no doubt from me instructions to split between Cowen and Headlam, but the matter had since then been gone into very carefully by Cowen, and he had decided that there was to be no splitting."

Watson's experiences were essentially confirmed by both the Chronicle and the Journal. The Chronicle of February 4 related that in Elswick and Westgate wards nearly all the Liberal votes were Cowenite plumps until the afternoon when Liberals, at the strong urging of

Cowenite representatives, began to split for both Liberals. The 
Journal of February 4 also claimed that the Cowenite policy was to ask 
for splits only in certain districts; undoubtedly, the others such as 
Elswick received secret instructions which countermanded any public 
order. 146

The obvious question is: why was Cowen so evasive? The answer 
lies partly in the fact that Cowenites at first boasted they would 
obtain 12,000 pledges of support by abandoning canvassing by mail for 
personal canvassing. After the election, "Local Gossip" in the 
Chronicle claimed that the results of a canvass showed the closest 
"agreement between votes and promises" in England. 147 If this is true, 
it is obvious there would have been no hope of 12,000 pledges; and Cowen 
had undoubtedly become worried. In addition, contemporaries of Cowen 
stress his vanity, and it is obvious he hoped to head the poll. There 
is some evidence that Cowenite supporters on January 24 sought a rapport 
with the Moderates, and that they failed for some reason. Nevertheless, 
the attitude of the Chronicle and of T. E. Smith left no doubt that 
Radicals should plump for Cowen.

The election did show the power of Cowen and the Chronicle not 
only in Newcastle, but throughout Durham and Northumberland. In certain 
areas, such as North Shields and Tynemouth, the Liberal nominees were 
unopposed. In Morpeth, Thomas Burt had only token opposition; Cowen

147 Chronicle, February 9, 1874.
not only spoke on his behalf but had the Chronicle raise a good portion of his election expenses. It is also noteworthy that Sir Charles Dilke sent Cowen a financial contribution for Burt (rather than sending it directly to Burt), and Cowen himself contributed £100 toward Burt's expenses. 148

The most important election, besides Newcastle, in which Cowen and his newspaper played a key role was in North Durham. According to the Chronicle, the sitting members, Sir Hedworth Williamson (a Liberal) and Sir John Elliot (a Conservative), had made a secret deal to prevent Charles Mark Palmer, a prominent capitalist and Radical, from entering the race. Williamson, according to Palmer, had threatened to withdraw if Palmer contested the area. Palmer, according to the Chronicle, realized that his running would not increase the total number of Liberal seats and thus decided not to run in the race. 149 On January 26, an anti-Williamson meeting was presided over by Colonel John Cowen, the brother of Joseph. Throughout the meeting, speakers consistently praised Cowen while making derogatory remarks about the "Whig" Williamson. 150 Shortly thereafter, Williamson withdrew from the race, and both the Chronicle and the Journal agreed that it was the result of the Chronicle's attack on him. 151 Almost immediately, Palmer, who had meanwhile entered the race, was joined by Isaac Lowthian Bell, a Moderate; and both Liberals ran a united campaign. Cowen spoke at least four times

149 Chronicle, January 28, 1874.
150 Ibid., January 29, 1874.
151 Ibid., January 30, 1874; Journal, January 30, 1874.
on behalf of Bell and Palmer. The Chronicle also gave full coverage
to their speeches and attacked in every possible manner Elliot, as
well as his new ally, R. L. Pemberton, who had previously decided to
contest the area as an Independent. The Conservative press tried to
emphasize the connection between the North Durham Liberal candidates
and Cowen. There were consistent denunciations of the Chronicle by
both Conservative candidates, and Elliot even went so far as to threaten
a lawsuit. Pemberton, especially, contended that the Liberal candi-
dates were really Cowenites and promised that "Never, as long as he
lived," would he associate himself with Mr. Cowen. 153

As a result of this opposition, however, Cowen and his newspaper
became extremely powerful in Northern England, partly because Bell and
Palmer were victorious. Yet two events prevented Cowen from dominating
the area politically. The first was his breakdown in health, which
lasted until late 1875, and prevented him from doing anything except
giving occasional speeches. The second was the formation of a Liberal
Association in Newcastle which was not under the influence of the ill
Cowen.

The need for a Liberal Association in Newcastle had been stressed
before Headlam's defeat. Immediately after Cowen's victory in the bye-
election, the Chronicle stated that the "one thing" upon which everybody
agreed was the need for a Liberal Club. On February 14, the Chronicle
claimed that the founding of a new Liberal Club should ensure the success

152 Chronicle, January 31, February 6, and February 9, 1874.
153 Journal, February 2, and February 14, 1874.
of anyone. "fighting under Liberal colours."

Watson, who considered himself to be the real founder of the Association, saw a double impetus behind its foundation: first, the desire for such an organization among certain ward captains during the general election of 1874—undoubtedly some of whom were given conflicting instructions concerning plumping; and, second, the concern expressed by John Bright to Watson about the outcome of the Newcastle general election. At the Association's first organizational meeting on February 14, major emphasis was placed upon the need for a club in which the workers could drink beer and thus minimize the political influence of the publicans. Mr. McKindrich was elected temporary secretary and instructed to call a meeting of T. E. Smith, R. S. Watson, and various other Liberals.

On March 20, another meeting was held which was presided over by T. E. Smith. Smith, besides attacking and ridiculing Headlam, emphasized the need for a "permanent and durable" organization. Among those who were appointed to the committee to draw up rules and a constitution for the Association were T. E. Smith, George Luckley, R. S. Watson, J. C. Swan, James Craig (a future M.P.), Dr. Rutherford, T. Y. Strachan (a Headlam supporter), Thomas Gregson, and others. On March 30 a meeting presided over by Councillor Dixon assembled to hear the committee's report on the rules and constitution. In brief, the Association was to be based on the ward. The Executive Committee was

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154 Chronicle, January 26, and February 14, 1874. The Chronicle also contained numerous letters to the editor urging such a course of action.

155 Chronicle, January 13, 1874, and January 11, 1880.
to consist of the officers of the Association and four elected representatives from each ward. The General Committee was to consist of the entire Executive Committee, plus representatives from each ward varying from eight elected by St. Nichols to sixty elected by Elswick.

From April 29 to May 29 meetings were held in all ten wards. At each meeting, members were elected to the Executive and General Committees; and at nine of them R. S. Watson, who later claimed to be the "Father of the Association," was the chief speaker. At these meetings, he explained how the Association was to work, and he often praised Cowen. He also stressed the need for electing a second Liberal M. P. at the next election, raising money, registering voters, and electing Liberals to local offices. 156

Although Cowen and Watson continued to praise each other after the election, a rift soon developed between them over what Cowen considered the high cost of Watson's managing his campaign expenses. Cowen was always extremely frugal and rarely spent any money on his personal needs. According to Aaron Watson, Cowen was shocked when R. S. Watson spent at least £10,000 on the election and "complained that his seat in Parliament doubled his domestic expenditure." Although Aaron Watson exaggerated by saying that after the general election Cowen and Watson were "never friends again," the evidence indicates that Aaron Watson was correct in quoting Cowen's complaint that his seat in Parliament doubled his domestic expenditure and that it was impossible "to pardon this great

156 All the above information was obtained through the Chronicle, February 14, 1874, February 21, 1874, March 21, 1874, April 30, 1874, May 1, 1874, May 14, 1874, May 15, 1874, May 20, 1874, May 22, 1874, and May 30, 1874.
outlay."157 Publicly, R. S. Watson stressed the need for the Liberal Association to raise money to pay the future expenses of a Liberal candidate. He also declared that Cowen had never complained about the election expenses. "Such a question of cost," he said, "was of no consequence to Mr. Cowen—as liberal and generous a man as ever breathed."158

In his Reminiscences, Watson revealed that there were "heavy expenses" during the election but claimed that Cowen's "own cashier attended to the money matters," and that "a great deal" of the expense was due to the publishing and distribution of about twenty-five to thirty thousand copies of his speeches among the public.159 Watson did not openly admit this as a factor in his later break with Cowen, but it was undoubtedly a source of irritation to both men.

Thus, Cowen had won two electoral victories in extremely trying circumstances. In the bye-election Cowen was accused of sympathizing with almost all that was evil, and the closeness of the election results was viewed as a manifestation of a Conservative comeback. In the general election, Cowen did not have to campaign strenuously, but immediately afterwards he was accused of being primarily responsible for the loss of a Liberal seat. As a result of the strain, Cowen suffered a breakdown and attended Parliament only occasionally until the very end of 1875. In the meantime, a Liberal Association independent of his control was formed.

158 Chronicle, April 30, and May 15, 1874.
159 R. S. Watson, Reminiscences, 125.
II. ACQUIRING A NATIONAL REPUTATION

Until the spring of 1876, Cowen had voted with the Liberal Party in House divisions, but because of his illness he had rarely spoken or accomplished anything of importance. During this time, Cowen became disillusioned with the House of Commons as a place to accomplish anything. On June 24, 1876, he wrote to Chamberlain concerning the House:

As a club, it is most enjoyable. As a place for useful public work, it is most disappointing. The time wasted in effectual attempts to accomplish some useful project will surprise you. Some people don't feel it so much but, having been accustomed to see some speedy results from any public efforts I might have engaged in, I get dissatisfied with wasting weary hours and doing nothing. 

Nevertheless, Cowen took his Parliamentary responsibilities most seriously, and between 1875 and 1877 he participated in more divisions than any other M.P. for Northumberland or Durham. In 1878, although he was ill during much of the session, Cowen's attendance at divisions was still third best among the twenty-five M.P.s representing Northumberland and Durham. The correspondent for the Courant, the Newcastle paper most hostile to Cowen at this time, remarking on the seriousness with which Cowen took his work, wrote that Cowen was "always

1Chamberlain Papers, 5/19/2.
2Chronicle, August 16, 1876. See William Duncan, The Life of J. Cowen (London: Walter Scott Publishing Co., 1904), 95. See also Parliamentary Buff Book, as quoted by the Courant, November 22, 1878.
to be found in his place" and was willing to assist anyone, even non-constituents. 3

What made Cowen famous and, according to Justin McCarthy, "at once won him the name of an orator," 4 however, was his speech in Parliament on March 25, 1876, opposing Disraeli's Royal Titles Bill, which would bestow upon Victoria the title of Empress of India. Cowen's speech was especially striking in that it was given after all the Parliamentary leaders had spoken—a violation of tradition in the House of Commons. In brief, Cowen claimed Disraeli could have used better arguments to support the creation of the new title. More important, he predicted that if the traditional title of Queen were replaced by the "tawdry, commonplace, and vulgar designation of Empress," then the Conservatives "would soon find that the superstition of Royalty had no real hold on the people of this land." Cowen also disagreed with the Conservative claim that the title of Empress would not be used in England; he insisted that in time the "inferior" title of Queen would yield to the title of Empress. 5

The effect of this speech was tremendous. Gathorne Hardy, the Secretary of War, said it "electrified" the House. 6 Immediately after Cowen sat down, Monty Corry, Disraeli's chief aide, brought a message from the Prime Minister which said, "Words would fail me to tell you

3Courant, April 13, 1877.  
5Great Britain, 3 Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, CCXXVIII (1876), 501-509; hereafter cited as Hansard.  
6McCarthy, A History, II, 582.
how much I admired your splendid speech." Moreover, Cowen informed Watson the next day that many Tories complimented him on the speech and insisted they supported the Government motion only because of "party discipline."

Although The Times was somewhat moderate in its praise of Cowen's speech, the Manchester Examiner felt the speech was "a thorough, and even a great success." The Daily News claimed the House was filled suddenly with M.P.s "who had been brought in from the lobbies by the rumour that a great speech was being delivered." Cowen's friend Henry Lucy, a journalist and an M.P. at the time, insisted that among M.P.s, "the chief prise of the session belongs to Joseph Cowen, an award made by universal consent." Gladstone; according to William James, M.P. for Gateshead and a Gladstone confidant, also found Cowen's speech "remarkable." Robert Lowe praised the "eloquence and force" of the speech and claimed that when Disraeli's speech was compared to it, "it was like listening to the lispings of the nursery."

Among the newspapers which especially praised the speech was the Radical Examiner. Commenting on the speech, the Examiner concluded, "Mr. Cowen's chances of future success in Parliamentary discussion are all the stronger because, we understand, that the language of his speeches

7R.S. Watson, Reminiscences, 114-15. Watson also claimed Disraeli meant the compliment to be taken tongue in cheek.
8Letter, Cowen to Watson, March 26, 1876, Corder, 215.
9Cowen Papers, B172. For other excerpts from the press concerning Cowen's speech see Chronicle, March 24, and March 25, 1876.
is unprepared."¹³ This belief in the spontaneity of Cowen's speeches, however, was unfounded. Actually, Cowen's speeches were carefully prepared and were submitted to the press even before they were delivered, so as to ensure publication. Tim Healy related that Cowen "used to maintain that preparation was the best compliment a speaker could pay to an audience."¹⁴ Even Cowen commented, in a speech in September, 1882, "There is an absurd belief that oratory is intuitive and that eloquence comes naturally. There never was a greater delusion. These accomplishments have always been the work of prolonged study."¹⁵

The speech seemed even more remarkable because no member of the Government tried to refute it. It must be remembered, however, that the average Englishman found it extremely difficult to understand the Northern dialect, an oratorical device deliberately cultivated by Cowen. Disraeli made several references to this fact. According to T. Wemyss Reid, a prominent journalist, Disraeli replied informally to a question concerning his opinion of Cowen's speech:

"I'm sorry I can't answer your question. It is true that a gentleman whom I had never seen before, got up on the opposite side and made a speech which seemed to excite great enthusiasm in a certain part of the House; but, unfortunately, he spoke in a language I had never heard and I haven't the slightest idea in the world what he said."¹⁶

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¹³Examiner, April 22, 1876.
¹⁵Jones, 439.
Sir Charles Dilke quotes Disraeli as saying:

I am told that we are blamed for not having put up a Minister to answer Cowen. How could we? I came into the House while he was speaking. I saw a little man with one hand in his pocket, and the other arm raising and waving uncouthly a clenched fist, making what appeared to be a most impassioned oration. But I was in this difficulty, I did not understand a word of it. I turned to my colleagues and found that they were in the same position. We could not reply to him; we did not understand the tongue in which the speech was delivered.  

Even Gladstone, according to W. H. James, admitted that for the first part of the speech "he could not tell what language he was speaking and could not make a word out."  

Percy Corder, likewise, related an incident in which one M.P. commented to another M.P., a Northerner, about Cowen's speech, "Here's a barbarian on his feet. Come and interpret for us." Some individuals were even convinced that Cowen was speaking in Latin.  

The most important effect of the speech upon Cowen, himself, was that "it shows my old confidence has nearly returned. I am not now so nervous as I was." From this time, Cowen emerged as a leading Liberal orator; and naturally his views on the Bulgarian agitation, which developed in the summer of 1876, were noticed.

One other important effect of the speech was the national reputation it gave Cowen. There was much talk of Cowen's becoming a leader of the Left. Sir Wilfred Lawson, for example, called Cowen "one of the

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18 R. S. Watson, Reminiscences, 115.  
19 Corder, 214.  
20 Letter, Cowen to J. C. Swan, March 26, 1876, Mary and Emily Swan, John Cameron Swan (Newcastle: Headley Bros., n.d.), 96.
most remarkable men with whom it has been my privilege to be acquainted," "thoroughly well informed," and "original in his ideas." Further, Lawson said he "always had the idea that he [Cowen] was the very man to lead the Radical Party, who I think, have never had a real leader." Referring to Cowen, T. B. Potter, M.P., informed Joseph Chamberlain, "We have no better man in the House of Commons." George Otto Trevelyan wrote that Cowen was "very well thought of in the House of Commons, and is growing quite an authority, and most certainly a favourite." Various newspapers also claimed Cowen would be the head of a new party. The Examiner, for example, on April 22, 1876, said:

Many of the independent members of the House of Commons below the gangway are strongly of the opinion that a distinct radical party—an extreme left—ought to be formed and that Mr. Joseph Cowen ought to take leadership of it.

On March 31, 1877, the Examiner emphasized Cowen's popularity in the House and the strong possibility of his becoming "a kind of power among the independent members."
Four months after the controversy over the Empress of India Bill, the English public became concerned about Turkish atrocities against rebellious Boznians, and, until early 1878, the Eastern Question remained a major political problem. British public opinion at first was overwhelmingly anti-Turkish, but when Russia intervened openly in early 1877, English public opinion became increasingly divided, especially when Turkish resistance had virtually collapsed by the end of 1877. Within the English Parliament, there was much confusion. In general, the Conservatives were more prone to support Turkey and the Liberals more willing to trust Russia. Although the Disraeli Government was Turkophile, Lord Derby, the Foreign Minister, leaned toward complete non-intervention. Disraeli, on the other hand, was largely responsible both for England's rejecting the Berlin Memorandum of the Three Emperors' League and for her sending the fleet to Besika Bay, both of which actions were viewed as English attempts to bolster support of Turkey.

Cowen, long a champion of national self-determination, at first sympathized with the inhabitants of Boznie. Although he had traditionally been a Russophobe because of the Russian crushing of Poland and Hungary, Cowen by May, 1876, declared that Russophobia and the days of men like Lord Dudley Coutts Stuart and David Urquhart had passed. Instead, Cowen was concerned with the possible danger of English intervention to support Turkey through a surprise move by Disraeli.

26 Chronicle, May 6, 1876.
27 Ibid., July 10, 1876.
July 14, Cowen, along with Chamberlain and Bright, took part in a deputation organized by various peace societies to request the Government to refrain from interfering in defense of Turkey. Cowen played no prominent part in the deputation but was satisfied with the pacific assurances of Lord Derby. In fact, in August the "London Letter" even criticized Gladstone for advocating the continued existence of Turkey instead of preferring that she perish, as Cowen would have wished.

As Balkan events became more alarming during the late summer of 1876, Cowen was recalled by his constituents from a holiday in France. On September 30, at an open meeting in Newcastle, Cowen praised the Bulgarian agitation as similar to that of the Poles. In his speech he also praised Gladstone, denied that a changed Russia with its praiseworthy czar still desired Constantinople, advocated a quasi-independent Bosnia-Herzegovina, and insisted that "the continuation of the Turkish Empire in its present form would be a scandal to civilization and an outrage upon humanity." Compared to many other speeches on this topic, Cowen's was quite moderate. Most periodicals and newspapers, including the Courant, had some praise for it, and the Examiner considered it "an exceedingly able review of the Eastern Question as a whole."

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28 Ibid., July 15, 1876. The Times, July 15, 1876.
29 Chronicle, August 2, 1876.
30 Chronicle, October 2, 1876.
31 Courant, February 9, 1877. Examiner, October 7, 1876.
Cowen compared the Bulgarian agitation to that of the Vaudois and emphasized the successfulness of Cromwell's demands and the fact that these demands were "couched in a very different spirit from the half-hearted and hesitating remonstrances" addressed by Lord Derby to the Sultan.32 Even as late as January 27, Cowen was still criticizing Disraeli for sending the fleet to Besika Bay and for refusing to sign the Berlin Memorandum.33

Toward the end of 1876, however, Cowen began to moderate his enthusiasm concerning the agitation. In early December, Cowen refused to attend the pro-Bulgarian conference at St. James Hall because he felt the meeting was "inimical to the national interest" and might "endanger the desirable settlement of affairs on the Continent."34 On January 2, Cowen wrote Dilke, "Since you left England we have talked about nothing but Turkey and Russia, I have not been able to go in for the Muscovites so strongly as some of our friends."35 At the end of January, he spoke to a Newcastle audience and explained his revised viewpoint. The speech summarized all the traditional Russophobic remarks: if Turkey were not maintained, for example, there would be no check upon Russian expansionist schemes, which would eventually include the acquisition of India from England. He also explained that the maintenance of Turkey was essentially the same policy which had cost £70 million and thousands of lives during the Crimean War. Cowen also

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32 *Chronicle*, October 19, 1876.
33 *Chronicle*, January 29, 1877.
35 *Dilke Papers*, ADD MSS 43910, f. 173.
claimed that Russia had no right over Christians in Turkey proper and that Russia should abandon any warlike plans and concentrate upon internal reforms.

Cowen's speech was still rather moderate. He denied that the revolt was the work of outsiders or conspirators, and he labeled the atrocities "one of the blackest crimes of modern times." He criticized the Government for not interfering earlier by pressuring Turkey; and, in a question-and-answer session which was ignored by most newspaper accounts, Cowen criticized Disraeli for his bellicosity on the eve of the Peace Congress and for his ridicule of Gladstone. Although in his speech Cowen urged that the new Turkish constitution be given a trial, in response to a question he reiterated his pessimism concerning reform within Turkey, which he called "to a large extent merely a military camp on the western side of the Bosphorus." 36

During most of 1877, Cowen remained in favor of non-intervention and consistently claimed that he and the "London Letter" were opposed to "coercing either the Turk or the Russian." 37 Nevertheless, Cowen's "London Letter" cited numerous Turkish attributes, such as the relative success of Turkey's Parliament, and many instances of Russian intrigue and atrocities. Cowen also bitterly opposed the gist of the anti-Turkish resolutions which Gladstone had threatened to move in the House of Commons, since Cowen felt it was absurd to demand Turkish reform while its existence was threatened. 38 Cowen also attacked the pro-Russian Liberals for their unpatriotic and unwise criticism of the

36 The Times, January 31, 1877.
37 Letter, Cowen to Watson, May 3, 1877, Corder, 220.
38 Chronicle, April 9, April 17, and May 2, 1877.
Government while delicate diplomatic negotiations were occurring and warned that the "Atrocitarians" could disrupt the entire Liberal Party.39 Cowen summarized the situation in a letter to Watson:

It certainly was the furthest thing from my mind to advocate a war policy. I have always been on exactly the other side. It is because Gladstone has been so bellicose that I have not been able to go with him. I am and always have been for absolute neutrality. Eastern politics are a quicksand. The question at issue is not purely one of nationality, as was the case in Italy or Poland or Hungary. Religion is mixed up in it and has as much to do with the contest as patriotism. I am not afraid of Russia, but I don't want a despotic power like her to extend too far. Perhaps she is better than Turkey, but not much. My idea always has been (I wrote a pamphlet on it in 1853) that the only solution of the difficulty is the creation of three independent States, Latin, Greek and Slav along the Danube and the Balkans. I don't see how helping Russia will help to do this. I am willing to make every concession to Russia and to put the very best interpretation on her course of action. But I cannot shut my eyes to facts. And I believe it is quite true that Russia would have left the Bulgarians to the Turks had the Porte been willing to give up half their fleet.40

By the end of 1877, as Turkey appeared prostrate and Russia threatened to overrun Constantinople, Cowen began to reconsider intervention. According to W.T. Stead, Cowen said on December 22 that in all probability no serious anti-Russian action would take place in Parliament. "He said we could not fight, although he would like to, he hated the Russians so much. But he said the feeling of the country, although not pro-Russian, was against war."41

39Chronicle, March 15, and May 2, 1877.
40Letter, Cowen to Watson, May 22, 1877, Corder, 221.
By January, 1878, Cowen had become a defender of the Government's Eastern policy, which he called generally "fair and temperate," while, he said, the attitude of English Liberal Russophiles who had forgotten Poland, Siberia "and the sorrows that cluster round those names, is more than I can understand." He explained to R.S. Watson at great length his interpretation of the future concerning the Eastern Question. In brief, he believed it "probable . . . the whole business will blow over." He said he had "been assured by the very best authority that the action of the Government has been dictated solely with a desire to bring Russia to terms, to stop the unnecessary slaughter of the Turks, and force her to make conditions before endangering what have been described as British interests." Cowen hedged as to what conduct he would follow concerning the Government's request for additional expenditure. He compared Turkey's position with that of Belgium during the Franco-Prussian War, stressing in his analogy that it was England's duty to protect both countries. In a second letter the same day and especially in a letter on January 30, Cowen stressed the seriousness of the situation but said he still doubted whether England would go to war with Russia.

During the Parliamentary discussion concerning the vote on additional expenditure, W.E. Forster proposed an amendment which would have effectively prevented the Government from obtaining the requested £6 million. Cowen, in opposing the amendment, praised the Government's policy as being generally "prudent and judicious." Furthermore, he

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42 Letter, Cowen to an anonymous correspondent, January 5, 1878, Courant, January 11, 1878.
43 Letter, Cowen to Watson, January 25, 1878, Corder, 223-25.
44 Ibid., 225-27.
insisted that when "national interests" or "national existence" was threatened, patriotism necessitated a show of unity. "We are not here now as Tories, or Liberals, or Radicals. We are here as Englishmen." Cowen also challenged a Russian authority quoted by Forster to support his arguments, which contradicted the information given by the British embassy in Turkey. According to Healy, Cowen emphatically asked, "Mr. Speaker, are we going to believe the Russians or our own countrymen?"

Gladstone, on February 8, declared that Cowen's arguments supporting the Government were based on a proposition "that is most shallow in philosophy and most unwise in policy." Cowen replied in a speech comparing the Government's policy to that of the previous Liberal Ministry. His answer, however, besides simply criticizing Russia, insisted Gladstone had misunderstood him and also praised the Turkish record. Cowen stressed his conviction that the execution of diplomacy, including the details, must be an executive prerogative once a policy had been approved by the people. He reminded Gladstone that he [Gladstone] did not publish all the diplomatic facts concerning English policy during the Franco-Prussian War. He added that the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire was not only a goal during the Crimean War but had been recognized also in 1871 as a cornerstone of British policy and that no government could change this traditional policy without "some formal or informal expression of public opinion."

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45Speech, February 7, 1878, Hansard, CCXXXVII, 1221-222.
46Healy, 35.
47Hansard, CCXXXVII, (1878), 1376-378.
Cowen also claimed that if Turkey collapsed, the Russians and their satellites would move into the area and would "freeze" future constitutional development in the Mediterranean area. Although claiming he was not against the Russian people, he insisted there was "a ring of Christian Pashas at St. Petersburg as corrupt and cruel as the ring of Mohammedan Pashas at Constantinople." These leaders, "the camp followers of civilization," have maintained "the ferocity of barbarism with the duplicity of civilization" through the use of "bribery, bayonets, and banishment," he said.

The one new note in Cowen's attitude was his praise of Moslem peasants and his insistence that the Turkish government's actions were no worse than those of other African or Asian states; he also compared them to British abuses in India and Russian rule in Poland. More important was his claim that Moslem rule, with its "contemptuous toleration" of Christians, would be a lesser evil than the problems resulting from a "national Bulgarian state," since "one village there is Mohammedan, the next Christian, and the third partly Jewish. The people are dotted around in settlements like gypsies." He stressed that a created Christian despotism not only would persecute non-Christians, but other Christian sects as well.48 That same day, Gladstone answered the speech of his "hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle (Mr. J. Cowen)—if I may still call him so." In effect, Gladstone charged that Cowen had accused him of "gross ignorance and religious rancour." While refusing to discuss Turkish affairs, Gladstone

48Speech, February 11, 1878, Hansard, CCXXXVI, 1426-1436.
dismissed Cowen's speech as having probably "been intended for some other occasion; but it is evident that it was thought better to produce it now than that such a valuable composition should blush sight unseen." 49

Throughout 1878, Cowen became even more vehement concerning his support of his Government's foreign policy. In reference to the Treaty of Berlin, Cowen made a number of private notations which indicated approval of Disraeli's conduct. 50 In fact, Lord Barrington stated that Cowen told him on June 24 in the lobby of the House that when Disraeli returned "the nation ought to give him another Blenheim." 51

Thus, by mid-1878, Cowen had almost completely reversed his opinion on the Eastern Question. He then insisted that Russian atrocities were far worse than those of the Turks, warned of the power of the nefarious Pan Slav movement over the vacillating Alexander II, and stressed that the Slavs were merely puppets of Russian expansionists. 52 The reason for this shift in opinion is not easy to pinpoint. Cowen, of course, by early 1877, denied that his views on Russia had changed and declared that "a large number of people had got into their heads that he was what he really was not and now to some extent they were compelled to alter their opinions, then they thought that he had altered his." 53 What Cowen really meant by this statement was that the "old" Democrats and Liberals had traditionally been Russophobes and that the "Atrocitarians" by eulogizing Russia had really broken with

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49 Ibid., 1447-448.
50 Cowen Papers, A950.
52 Chronicle, August 29, 1877, February 8, and May 23, 1878.
53 Ibid., March 1, May 24, July 30, August 20, 1877, February 8, 1878, and May 23, 1878.
Liberal tradition. He also claimed in February, 1877, that the Government was actually carrying out the ideas of the previous autumn's agitation and had adopted the traditional Radical policy of non-intervention.

In changing his opinion, Cowen was influenced by the Continental revolutionaries, especially the Poles. On January 30, for example, Cowen cited "his remembrance of the oppression of the long-suffering Poles" as the reason for his lack of "enthusiasm" for the Russian cause. In fact, Sir Charles Dilke, also a Russophobe at first, explained Cowen's change on the Eastern Question by claiming his views were altered by the arguments of Poles in Newcastle. Throughout 1877 and 1878, Cowen emphasized that Continental Radicals and Democrats such as Karl Blind almost invariably sided with Turkey and insisted that only in England did a sizeable portion of the Left praise Russia. Cowen probably was also influenced by his close friend George Julian Harney, who continued to communicate with Cowen and the Chronicle from the United States. In December, 1876, Harney published a pamphlet entitled The Anti-Turkish Crusade, in which he chided Cowen for his statement on September 30 that the fear of Russian aggression was "an exploded illusion." Throughout 1877, there were numerous letters of his in the Chronicle attacking Russia and the "madness" of Gladstone in supporting Russia.

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54 Ibid., February 14, and April 16, 1877.
55 Ibid., February 13, 1877.
56 The Times, January 31, 1877.
57 Gwyn and Tuckwell, I, 215.
58 Chronicle, March 3, 1877.
59 George Julian Harney, The Anti-Turkish Crusade (Boston, Massachusetts: 1876), 29.
It must be emphasized that in early 1877 Cowen was still a moderate and was lumped by Harcourt with "peace" M.P.s such as Bright and Sir Wilfred Lawson. Nevertheless, the more he was attacked by Russophile Liberals, the more extreme he became in defense of Turkey. The situation is best summarized by Dilke:

Although his anti-Russian views were only the same as my own. Yet he allowed them, as I think, without reason, to drive him into a position of support of the Government which from this time forward separated him from the Liberal party.60

An excellent example of the forces pushing Cowen toward extremism may be seen in the consistent criticism of his beliefs by W.T. Stead. Cowen, to Stead, was a despicable creature even before the agitation, and during 1876 and early 1877 Stead even criticized Cowen for being too pro-Russian. As Cowen moved toward a Russophobic position, Stead condemned him harshly, not only for inconsistency, but also for being pro-Turk.61 This attitude brought Stead interesting rebukes from two of his friends. The first was T. Wemyss Reid, editor of the Leeds Mercury. Around 1879, Reid related, Cowen still called himself a Liberal, and Reid felt he might return to Liberal orthodoxy. When Stead sent Reid a copy of one of his many "vehement and persistent" attacks on Cowen, Reid replied to Stead by warning him that Cowen, a "very sensitive man, was not unlikely to be driven out of the party if these attacks were persisted in, and that his loss would be a serious

61See the Northern Echo, June '14, 1876, and February 1, 1877.
one to the Liberalism of the North of England." 62 Thomas Burt also informed Stead, on September 29, that his articles "would be none the less effective if [he] left off pitching into my friend Cowen so mercilessly." Since Burt admitted he agreed "nearly always" with Stead's writings, he must have meant that if Stead persisted, Cowen would sever all connections with Liberalism. 63

What happened was practically that. When Cowen appeared in Parliament in 1876, he was regarded as a Radical; at the end of the session, he was often accused of being pro-Disraeli and was alienated from both the Gladstonian and the Radical wings of Liberalism. His views did not mean the beginning of a break with Gladstone—that had probably already occurred—but a near severance of relations. In all probability, a coolness between Cowen and Gladstone first developed shortly after Cowen returned to the House after his illness. T.P. O'Connor, M.P. for Liverpool and most friendly toward Cowen, describes the incident as follows: "Something went wrong—I don't know what it was. Some people said a snub—I am sure unintentional—which he imagined he had received from Gladstone." 64 The story is confirmed essentially by Edward Hamilton, Gladstone's secretary, in his diary on November 12, 1882:

62T. Wemyss Reid, 315-16.
63Letter, Burt to Stead, September 29, 1879, Stead Papers, Courtesy of J.O. Baylen, Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia.
Cowen's main idea is hatred of Mr. Gladstone. It is said that this hatred and defection from the Liberal Party are due to an incident in the House of Commons about five years ago. He had been ill and on his return to the House, he was in the lobby being congratulated on his recovery and was passed by Mr. Gladstone unnoticed. Shortly after Dizzy came by and seeing Cowen grasped him by the hand and inquired tenderly after his health. From that moment he transferred his allegiance from Mr. Gladstone to Dizzy.65

Henry Lucy, who was also a close friend and a later newspaper partner of Cowen, wrote that in 1874 Cowen had expected Gladstone to recognize him when he first entered the House:

Gladstone coming upon him in the lobby, passed him without a sign. It was a small event, but recollection of it rankled. Dizzy may or may not have heard of it. He certainly was at pains to make the acquaintance of the member for Newcastle, and succeeded in turning what may have been a faithful follower of the Liberal Leader into an exceedingly embarrassing adversary.66

It must be emphasized, however, that this was not the only explanation for the rift. Sir Wilfred Lawson claimed that "he somehow or other got wrong with the Liberal Party—how or why his most intimate friends were hardly able to explain."67 As early as April 29, 1877, Dilke, in his memoirs, mentioned that Cowen would vote against Gladstone as party leader "although if principle and not persons were in question he must vote the other way."68 Again in May, Dilke insisted Cowen's support of Hartington was "peculiar."69 Jane Cowen, her father's secretary, dated the break as late as February, 1878, when Cowen supported the Government's foreign policy. After Cowen's speech, she wrote, Gladstone

65Gladstone Papers, ADD MSS 48633, ff. 16-17.
68Gwynn and Tuckwell, I, 220.
69Ibid., I, 223.
"practically cut him" and "never forgave him." Sir Alfred E. Pease, a Yorkshire M.P., does not mention anything about Gladstone but relates an incident which reveals Cowen's personality. Pease claimed that after a furious attack by Cowen on Disraeli, Disraeli met Cowen in the lobby and congratulated him for his "splendid speech." Pease added, "From that day, Cowen never said a harsh word about Disraeli; the attitude of the man and the tone of his great newspaper, the Chronicle, were entirely changed." Concerning the relationship between Cowen and other Liberal leaders, Cowen dismissed W.E. Forster as basically clerical and reactionary, and John Bright as having become conservative by 1876. Throughout his Parliamentary career, and especially during the agitation, Cowen maintained a very high opinion of Hartington. Only rarely, however, could the Whig leader and the Newcastle Radical work together. Instead, Cowen, after his recovery, drifted into cooperation with Sir Charles Dilke and later with Joseph Chamberlain. Cowen had chaired one of Dilke's speeches in November, 1871, and had worked with Chamberlain concerning the National Educational League. After the general election, only Cowen's illness prevented him from cooperating politically with Chamberlain to organize for new electoral contests after the latter's defeat in Sheffield in 1874. After Chamberlain was returned unopposed from Birmingham in 1876, Cowen's letters reveal friendliness, warnings

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70 Cowen Papers, A983.
71 Sir Alfred E. Pease, Elections and Recollections (London: John Murray, 1932), 302.
72 Chronicle, February 23, May 1, and June 20, 1876.
73 Letter, Cowen to Chamberlain, February, 1874, Chamberlain Papers 5/19/1. See also letter, Henry J. Wilson to Chamberlain, February 17, 1874 and March 5, 1874, Chamberlain Papers, 6/5/2/61 and 6/5/2/62.
against overwork, regret concerning Chamberlain's gout, and promises to act as a sponsor along with Bright to introduce Chamberlain into the House.74 Chamberlain had apparently been impressed with Cowen and had told Morley that he received "very kind letters" from Cowen and "other members of the left wing."75

Occasionally, Cowen, Chamberlain, Dilke and other Radicals would meet with Hartington to try to persuade him to take a more advanced stand on matters such as education legislation.76 By August, 1876, Cowen's "London Letter" even boasted that about forty M.P.s had formed a Radical clique in order to pursue broad general programs.77 Of all the M.P.s associated with this "New Party," both Chamberlain and Dilke agreed that only Cowen had "force" or was important.78

By December, 1876, Chamberlain had completely recovered from his gout and was able to assume a more active political role. Although Cowen wrote to Chamberlain requesting a meeting at York in January to "discuss our proposed action in the House" and, therefore, further joint action in the future,79 the relationship between Chamberlain and Cowen deteriorated steadily. The major reason for this unhappy situation was that both wanted to lead. Chamberlain, for example, would often refer

74See letters, Cowen to Chamberlain, June 24, June 27, June 29, and July 10, 1876, Chamberlain Papers, 5/19/2-5.
75Letter, Chamberlain to Morley, June 28, 1876, Chamberlain Papers, 5/16/104.
76See, for example, Chronicle, August 3, 1876.
77Ibid., August 17, 1876.
79Letter, Cowen to Chamberlain, December 29, 1876, Chamberlain Papers, 5/16/60.
to the clique as "My Party," whereas Cowen was accustomed to deferential subordination among his followers. There was also a psychological reason: the clash of temperament between the unemotional, meticulous Chamberlain and the emotional, almost Bohemian, Cowen. This split is elaborated upon by Dilke in his reply of February, 1877, to a request to write about the New Party for the Nineteenth Century:

The New Party consisted of Chamberlain and myself and Cowen in the House of Commons and Morley outside of it. . . . As Chamberlain and Cowen failed to agree upon any subject whatever, the House of Commons portion of the party soon dwindled to two leaders, in the persons of Chamberlain and myself. . . .

This observation is supported by Chamberlain's comment to Jesse Collings on February 14, 1877, that he was "perfectly sickened with the observations of some of our so-called Radicals" such as Cowen concerning local government. Concerning the Eastern Question, Chamberlain's views were motivated largely by one idea: whatever was best for Radicalism. Throughout 1877, when Cowen disassociated himself from the agitation, this disassociation was the occasion rather than the cause of the break between Cowen and Chamberlain.

Chamberlain, in a letter to Morley on February 6, stated, "After watching Cowen's speeches during the recess, [I fear] not much will come of our little organization—still it is worth a try." Perhaps the

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80 Letter, Chamberlain to Collings, February 8, 1877, Chamberlain Papers, 5/16/58.
82 Gwynn and Tuckwell, I, 214.
83 Letter, Chamberlain to Collings, February 14, 1877, Chamberlain Papers, 5/16/59.
85 Letter, Chamberlain to Morley, February 6, 1877, Chamberlain Papers, 5/54/158.
last serious attempt to promote unity in the New Party was made on February 7. Dilke informed his brother Ashton that the divisions among Radicals was due to Chamberlain's favoring "concerted intervention to follow up Lord Salisbury's Declaration, Cowen against; the others, muddle-headed." Chamberlain wrote to Collings on February 8 that he had previously persuaded Liberal leaders to compel Turkey "by war if necessary, to grant proper securities to Christian provinces." He continued, "I could not get Cowen to accept this view—he is for absolute non-intervention, but I fancy he must give in,..." On February 16, Chamberlain wrote to Collings that within the New Party, Dilke was the only one "whom I thoroughly trust." Although Chamberlain and Cowen were present at a political reform demonstration on May 16, 1877, all serious cooperation ended.

Cowen agreed that the Eastern Question split the Radicals, but he insisted that the division was between the "Old Radicals," who favored the traditional ideas of peace and non-intervention, and the "bloody" Radicals, who would fight Turkey in order to enforce the decrees of the Constantinople Conference. Instead of making the Eastern Question an issue, Cowen, on February 2 and May 4, 1877, in Newcastle stressed the necessity of Radicals' not only minimizing the differences

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86 Letter, Sir Charles to Ashton Dilke, February 7, 1877, Dilke Papers, ADD MSS 43902, f. 72.
87 Chamberlain Papers, 5/16/58. Salisbury, at the Constantinople Conference, was much more influenced by anti-Turkish sentiment than Disraeli. This conference dissolved on January 28.
88 Ibid., 5/16/60.
89 Chronicle, February 14, 1877.
among themselves but also of uniting behind one "great question," such as the extension of the franchise to the counties, or preferably, disestablishment.90

Despite his demand for radical reforms, Cowen played no part in the formation of the National Liberal Federation at Birmingham in May, 1877. That April, Morley wrote to Chamberlain, "You know best about Cowen. It is indispensable that we should all be heartily together; otherwise nothing but vexation and impotency. Of course, you and Dilke could always outvote him."91 This comment might have had reference to a number of things—cooperation concerning the starting of a weekly Radical paper, the creation of the National Liberal Federation, or simply overall cooperation. Nevertheless, Cowen was not present at the conference in Birmingham which created the National Liberal Federation. Robert Spence Watson, who largely controlled the Liberal Association in Newcastle, decided to affiliate, and this meant Chamberlain might effectively by-pass Cowen since Watson and Cowen were disagreeing increasingly concerning the Eastern Question.92

Although the National Liberal Federation, toward the end of 1877, distributed Cowen's speech on county reform,93 Cowen indirectly attacked the entire purpose of the Federation in a speech December 19 at a meeting of the National Reform Union in Manchester. The speech

90Ibid., February 3, 1877.
91Letter, Morley to Chamberlain, April 14, 1877, Chamberlain Papers, 5/54/166.
93See Annual Report of the National Liberal Federation, 1879.
analyzed the basic reasons for the Tories' victory in 1874 and the lack of any sign of a waning Tory popularity throughout England. Cowen suggested a number of factors ranging from the belief that the previous and present legislatures had accomplished all "desirable or necessary" constitutional change to the fact that the middle class had become wealthy, hence their desire for luxury, which generated "political effeminancy and cowardice." Cowen did not agree with Hartington and Gladstone that "more extended organization" in 1874 would have helped the Liberals. He cited historical examples such as the reaction to the overly organized Tory regime of Dundas, which was largely responsible for the strength of Scottish Liberalism. More important was his ideological criticism of extreme organization. He emphasized that individuality and independence of thought were traditionally Liberal values, while the Tory party had historically used clergymen as electioneering agents and publicans as canvassers. He also predicted that too much organization would become a "means of oppression," and, like the United States, drive some of the best qualified men from public service.94

Thus, by early 1878, Cowen had no connection with the Radical National Liberal Federation. In addition, his support of the Government in early 1878 had isolated him even further from the Liberal Party. The situation was highly unusual in that, as The Times pointed out concerning Cowen's speech in Parliament on February 11, 1878: "So stirring a piece of rhetoric would have been effective even if it had come from the side of the Government, and its force was much increased by the

94Jones, 120-25.
fact that Mr. Cowen is among the most advanced Liberals in the House." The Courant praised his stand while the arch-Conservative Quarterly Review referred to his speech concerning the vote on supply as "words of true wisdom." The chairman of the Durham Constitutional Association also hailed Cowen as "a true patriot and Englishman," and N. G. Clayton, president of the Newcastle Conservative Association on January 29, 1878, praised Cowen for his views on the Eastern Question.

The praise of Cowen by Conservatives naturally prompted a Liberal reaction. On January 12, 1878, Chamberlain at a Birmingham meeting criticized his "good friend Mr. Cowen," whom he described as "a very good Liberal, even a good Radical," for not realizing the changes within Russia during the past twenty years. Chamberlain claimed he agreed with Cowen that Liberals should not forget Poland, but "he could not see how Poland was to be assisted by keeping Bulgaria in servitude." Privately, Chamberlain was more critical. In a letter to Collings on January 25, he declared, "Cowen is actually pro-Turkish now." On February 16, after Cowen's pro-Government utterance in the House, Chamberlain informed Collings:

"Your letter to Cowen was a very good one. He had similar letters, to my knowledge, from other people, including John Morley, and he told me himself on Thursday that what I said to him immediately after his speech affected him so much that he could not sleep. He admitted that when he came to read his speech he found it inferred more than he intended, and in fact

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95 The Times, February 12, 1878. 
96 Courant, February 15, 1878. The Quarterly Review (1878), CXLV, 326. 
97 Courant, February 8, 1878. Chronicle, January 30, 1878. 
98 The Times, January 14, 1878. 
he made a sort of half apology for it. The mischief is done, however, and it is a great pity that a man who might do so much for our party should apparently be gradually leaving us.

Sir Vernon Harcourt, in a letter to The Times, insisted Cowen should have protested Lord Derby's dispatch of May, 1877, which "proclaimed the doom of the Empire." He further warned that "to be silent when the destruction was prepared and to be clamourous when it is accomplished seems to me to be neither dignified nor wise." Goldwin Smith, especially, disagreed with Cowen for two reasons: firstly, Cowen was an obvious exception to his explanation of the Eastern Question as a split between the Turkophile Whigs and the Radicals; secondly, Cowen's views were seen as "so peculiarly bitter to us" since "no man on the Liberal benches more thoroughly fulfills the ideal which we have in mind than Mr. Cowen." In a manner similar to Chamberlain, Smith also felt that Cowen had let Poland so prejudice him against Russia that he was unable to see the justice of the Bulgarian claim. Cowen replied in the "London Letter" by insisting that Smith's insular doctrines were weak, cowardly and opposed to national interests. In time, Smith would become an extremely bitter critic of Cowen and by June, 1880, would be described privately by Cowen as "ill natured," "bitter," and "too much of a partisan."

Within the counties of Northumberland and Durham, Cowen's switch concerning the Eastern Question had a significant effect. As

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100 Letter, Chamberlain to Collings, February 16, 1878, Chamberlain Papers, 5/16/75.
101 Letter, Harcourt to The Times, February 26, 1878. The Times, February 27, 1878.
102 Fortnightly Review, March, 1878, XXIII, 416.
103 Chronicle, May 19, 1879. Letter, Cowen to William Elliot, June, 1880, Cowen Papers, F43.
usual, W.T. Stead ranted both in the *Northern Echo* and in letters to Gladstone as to the manner in which Cowen had doomed himself by his inconsistency.\(^{104}\) A less emotional observer, such as William James, M.P., felt that "Newcastle has been a good deal demoralized on the Eastern Question. Cowen has had something to say to it."\(^{105}\)

Within the two counties, T.E. Smith and Somerset Beaumont had agreed with Cowen. In the spring of 1878, however, a bye-election was held in South Northumberland when the Tory member was elevated to the House of Lords. This contest was most unusual since the Tories had traditionally controlled one of the two seats, and there had been no contest since 1852.\(^{106}\) The Liberals nominated Albert Grey, the nephew and heir apparent of the then Earl Grey, who had just agreed to contest Newcastle as the second Liberal candidate at the next general election. The Tories selected Edward Ridley, who was from one of the most politically famous families in Northumberland. "The result of the election," according to Chamberlain, "is looked upon with great interest. If we win, it will wipe out Worcester; if we lose the weak-kneed will have it their own way up here."\(^{107}\) Undoubtedly, Chamberlain was referring to Cowen as the "weak-kneed," and, naturally enough, one of the chief factors in the campaign was the issue of Cowen and the Eastern Question.

From the beginning, the Conservatives tried to develop the split within the Liberal Party and tried to connect Grey with the

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\(^{104}\)See *Northern Echo*, August 23, November 6, and December 23, 1878; and Gladstone Papers, ADD MSS 44303, f. 291.
\(^{105}\)Letter, James to Gladstone, April 18, 1878, Gladstone Papers, ADD MSS 44265, f. 159.
\(^{106}\)See *The Times*, March 3, 1878.
\(^{107}\)Letter, Chamberlain to Stead, March 30, 1878, Chamberlain Papers, 6/4K/18.
Gladstonian wing. The fact that Cowen and the Chronicle at first seemed to give only lukewarm support to the "Whig" Grey, made their praise of Cowen's foreign policy all the more significant. On March 27, the Journal, for example, criticized Grey's pro-Russian opinions by rhetorically asking Grey whether he would vote with Cowen. "If so, we should have expected him to say something very different about the Eastern Question." On March 28, the Journal again inquired whether Grey would stand with Cowen "ready to mash Mr. Trevelyan's or any other man's hat, rather than knuckle down to Russia."

Praise of Cowen at Conservative rallies was almost inevitable. On March 27, a Mr. Blackwell, a barrister, emphasized that Cowen "was an advocate of the principle upon which the foreign policy of Her Majesty's Government was founded" and that Cowen "was the greatest opponent of Mr. Gladstone." Edward Ridley, on April 5, not only praised Cowen's views on the Eastern Question but insisted that "the only thing he had to quarrel with Mr. Cowen about was that he had gone a little too far on behalf of Turkey." Even after Cowen and the Chronicle had endorsed Grey, Ridley claimed, on April 13, that concerning Grey's cause, it "had still a very uncertain sound about it."

The views of Cowen were most praised by Sir Mathew Ridley, M.P. for North Northumberland and chairman of the Conservative campaign committee. On April 2, he announced that concerning the Eastern Question, "he was

108 Journal, March 27, 1878.
109 Ibid., March 28, 1878. Cowen, apparently very emotional, smashed Trevelyan's hat in the House of Commons.
110 Ibid.
111 Ibid., April 6, 1878.
112 Ibid., April 15, 1878.
perfectly willing to rest his views on that question upon Mr. Cowen's 'London Letter' in the *Newcastle Chronicle.*" On April 15, after Cowen's name was greeted with cheers, Sir Mathew announced that "no man has done more to win us this election than Mr. Cowen. (cheers and laughter)." Sir Mathew admitted that Cowen would vote for Grey and was "perfectly able to explain the reasons which he has for doing so, but for the present moment, I am certainly at a loss to understand what they can be, . . . . "

There is no doubt that Cowen's support of Grey at first was less than enthusiastic. The most important evidence of this is contained in a letter of George Otto Trevelyan:

I am sorry to tell you that some hitch has occurred relating to the election as far as I am concerned. Grey and his friends accepted my offer to come down with very evident pleasure, and a meeting was arranged for Friday in the lecture room at Newcastle, about which I received several letters marked with genuine welcome. Suddenly I have been informed that the meeting has been countermanded owing to Cowen's declining to take the Chair, and that the other meetings are not sufficiently important for me to come to. I suppose that Beaumont and Cowen between them have thrown cold water on the undertaking, for they have certainly done nothing to help poor Grey. Cowen from his strong anti-Russian feelings, and Beaumont ostensibly for Grey's adhesion to the Permissive Bill, but I dare say from mixed motives. There is some foul play somewhere, but it is more dignified not to enquire. I am rather hurt, both on my own account and on yours; but much more sorry to see the election managed in this spirit, and sorry too, to lose the opportunity of doing something for such a good young fellow as Grey. Perhaps you will let Mr. Gov knov that my absence is not due to my own want of good-will. Lawson has been treated in exactly the same manner.

115 Letter, George Otto Trevelyan to Sir Walter Cavalry Trevelyan, April 4, 1878, Trevelyan Papers, Walter Cavalry Trevelyan, 34.
There was also an accusation made by a "leading Northern liberal paper," quoted by the Examiner, that Cowen, through his Chronicle, "did everything in his power—short of publishing articles calling on everybody to vote for Mr. Ridley—to damage the Liberal candidate." The Chronicle was criticized further on the basis that it "comes out one day with exhortations to all and sundry to support the Government and then confines itself to disquisitions concerning the Papal hierarchies in Scotland, and topics of similar interest, . . ." Thus, Grey was like an officer "who is shot from behind by the men who ought to have been straining every nerve to secure him the victory."116

Never during the campaign did Cowen chair or even attend a Grey meeting. At first his support of Grey was confined to a telegram, read at a Grey rally on March 29, stating that "with much pleasure" Cowen would be on Grey's election committee. Cowen also praised Grey's "manifest sincere, intelligent and earnest Liberalism [which] ought to secure him the hearty support of all Liberals. I seldom remember a candidate having aroused among the party here such warm wishes for this success."117 Shortly thereafter, Grey identified his views concerning the Eastern Question with those of Cowen and taunted Conservatives by flaunting Cowen's support of his candidacy.118 At a Grey rally on April 8, a letter from Cowen to Watson was read which not only apologized for Cowen's absence from the rally, but also lauded Grey's virtues. "He possesses

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116 Examiner, April 27, 1878.
117 Journal, March 30, 1878.
118 Ibid., April 4, 1878.
in an eminent degree all the qualifications for ensuring success in the House of Commons," wrote Cowen. "Both personally and politically he is entitled to the confidence and hearty support of all Liberals."\(^{119}\)

Cowen also, according to Burt, had promised to vote for Grey.\(^{120}\)

The Chronicle had also endorsed Grey at the beginning of the contest. During the campaign, thirteen of its editorials praised Grey, especially toward the end of the contest. In the last few days of the campaign, a large "X" was placed next to Grey's name in the Chronicle.\(^{121}\)

The Conservatives, though never attacking Cowen directly, began to allege falsehoods in the Chronicle. For example, the Journal denied Grey's claim that Sir Mathew would, in facing re-election, have to face a "good candidate." Grey, according to the Journal, had "evidently been misled by his mentor, the Newcastle Chronicle, . . ."\(^{122}\)

On April 15, Sir Mathew indignantly denied the Chronicle charge that Conservatives were using paid canvassers during the election and for claiming that a "change of feeling" had occurred among Conservatives during the election.\(^{123}\)

On election day, Grey spoke to his followers at the Chronicle office. After the election results, Cowen wrote to Grey that, concerning the election, "the Liberals may fairly claim it as a victory. The Tories certainly regard it as a defeat." Cowen also insisted that Grey fought "a gallant battle" and that "a less able and attractive candidate would surely have been beaten."\(^{124}\) What made the election so unusual was that

\(^{119}\) Ibid., April 9, 1878.
\(^{120}\) Chronicle, April 16, 1878. Journal, April 9, 1878.
\(^{121}\) See Chronicle, March 26 to April 17, 1878.
\(^{122}\) Journal, April 9, 1878.
\(^{123}\) Journal, April 16, 1878.
\(^{124}\) Letter, Cowen to Grey, April 22, 1878, Grey Papers, University of Durham, Durham, England, 217/7.
Grey had three more votes than Ridley, but two of them were disqualified, and the other ballot had been incorrectly included in Ridley's total. Eventually the contest was decided in Ridley's favor.

During the uncertainty, the Conservatives blamed Cowen almost exclusively for the result. The *Journal* quoted the *Daily News*, which stressed Grey's snubbing of Gladstone "whilst he cherished the testimonial of Mr. Joseph Cowen." The *Journal*, in fact, went so far as to use Cowen and the explanation for the fact that "500 electors who had promised to vote for his opponent voted for the Liberal candidate instead." Sir Mathew Ridley, in an April 20 letter to *The Times*, emphasized that Grey, like the candidate Ridley, essentially supported the Government's Eastern policy, especially in his April 7 speech in which he claimed there was no great separation between himself and his opponent on the Eastern Question. Sir Mathew, in support of the above claim, also quoted Grey's speech on April 8, in which he claimed that concerning Gladstone's views on the Eastern Question, "had he spoken less and written less he would have done himself much more good and the country a far greater benefit." As an example of the dearth of issues between the candidates, Ridley also referred to Grey's speech of April 3, in which Grey cited Cowen's support of his candidacy.

Grey's identification with Cowen—according to Ridley—explained why the Conservative strategy backfired: Grey just would not defend the Gladstonian stand.

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125 See the unpublished *Reminiscences* of Edward Ridley in the Northumberland County Archives.
126 *Journal*, April 24, 1878.
127 *Ibid*.
128 *The Times*, April 2, 1878. Grey, in a letter to *The Times*, stressed the major difference with Ridley was that although both supported the present policy, Grey did not support the past Conservative policy.
The election affected Liberalism in the Newcastle area by revealing the tremendous personal power of Cowen; i.e., the fact that he could stop Trevelyan and Lawson from aiding Grey. R.S. Watson was Grey's campaign manager and almost certainly would have had knowledge of Trevelyan's letter and any other complaints affecting the general election. It also revealed the power of the Chronicle, which as the sole organ of Liberalism in the area, could almost dictate to a candidate. Thus, by the summer of 1878, Watson realized that if the present situation were to continue, Gladstonian Liberalism would remain at the mercy of Cowen, an ideologically unstable politician.

In summary, Cowen became one of the best known Parliamentary orators in England as a result of his speeches on the Empress of India Bill and the Eastern Question. While acquiring a reputation for independence, he became alienated from the Radical clique, the Liberal mainstream, and especially Gladstone. As a result, he became increasingly divorced from the Radical-Liberal caucus in Newcastle, which continued to denounce Turkish wickedness and Disraeli's bellicosity.
III. "INDEPENDENCE" BRINGS CONFLICT WITH THE CAUCUS

If anything can be considered to have been inevitable, it was the clash between Cowen and the caucus. Just as Cowen had broken with Chamberlain over the matter of control, so it was with Cowen and the caucus. Although Cowenites remained in prominent positions, real power from the beginning of the caucus had been in the hands of R.S. Watson and other Liberals who remained loyal to Gladstonian Liberalism.

Cowen never denied the need for a Liberal Association so long as its purpose was primarily to educate the voters and only secondarily to organize them. He even opposed the attempt of what he considered traditionalist Liberals to boycott all caucuses. Cowen did, however, vehemently object to any association's being influenced or pressured by the Birmingham outsiders, and he opposed caucus interference in school board elections and municipal contests. His primary criticism of the caucus, however, was its attempt to pressure M.P.s into supporting Gladstone's foreign policy by threatening not to renominate them on the Liberal ticket unless they acquiesced. These heavy-handed attempts at organization, Cowen predicted, would result in disaster for Liberalism.¹

Cowen always considered his independent action on the Eastern question and his refusal to be a caucus "delegate" as the cause of the split between himself and the caucus; and, undoubtedly, the caucus would,

¹*Chronicle*, May 7, July 22, and August 31, 1878.
through letters, telegrams, and "spontaneous" petitions, have been de-
sirous of controlling the Liberal M. P. from Newcastle. The caucus,
however, realized that on the issue of the Eastern Question Cowen was
merely an annoyance; furthermore, had this actually been a major factor,
Watson would never have later managed the campaign of Albert Grey, who,
essentially, agreed with Cowen on this issue.

The real factor which occasioned the break was Cowen's utiliza-
tion of the Chronicle to support his views and to attack those who dis-
sented from these views. During 1877, Cowen had written pro-Government
and anti-Gladstone articles in the "London Letter," which, in the opin-
ion of Watson, "ultimately occasioned a serious quarrel between the
Liberal Association and their member." Watson's correspondence with
Cowen contains repeated pleas that Cowen change his policy. On April
30, Watson informed Cowen that his "London Letters" were "giving me
great uneasiness." Watson also claimed to have visited Cowen twice in
London to discuss the "Letters."

Cowen's reaction, said Watson, was to claim the "Letter" was a
"mistake" or "against his wish" or that he "would put a stop to it, but
he never did. . . ." Responding to Watson's complaints, Cowen pro-
tested on May 3 that he had been so busy he had "not read our 'London
Letter' once for the last month," that the entire wording of the "Letter"
was not always his, and that the "entire drift" of the controversial
"Letters" was meant to oppose the coercion of either the Russian or
the Turk. Later that month he repeated the major points of his earlier

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2R.S. Watson, Reminiscences, 127.
letter, adding that he "had looked at the matter more carefully," but he indicated no significant editorial policy change. 3

The Chronicle's significance was increased with Cowen's break with James Annand, the Russophile editor of the paper. Annand, who referred to any newspaper he edited as "my paper," had been completely in control of the Chronicle since Cowen's illness in 1874 and had developed views on editorial independence which, in the words of Aaron Watson, a friendly journalist, were "very decided, not to say extreme." 4 As long as both Cowen and Annand supported generally similar goals, occasional disagreements on foreign policy were tolerated, such as an editorial condemning the Government's Suez policy, which the "London Letter" supported. As Cowen shifted toward the Government's Eastern policy in his "London Letter," the effect of the "Letter" was often negated by strong opposing editorials. For example, editorials opposed the £6 million grant, the idea of not criticizing the Government during a time of delicate diplomatic negotiations, and the extent of Russian atrocities, as well as in many other cases often directly contradicting the arguments of the "London Letter." Gladstone's views on the agitation were consistently applauded by editorials throughout 1877, whereas the "London Letter" criticized Gladstone's Four Resolutions as being contradictory and somewhat erratic from his former beliefs. The "London Letter" also insisted that Gladstone, who had not concerned himself with the plight of Turkish Christians for the previous thirty years, had displayed

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4Aaron Watson, A Newspaper Man's Memoirs, 46.
"more of the warmth of a religious zealot than the calmness of a responsible public man." What is most remarkable is that Cowen tolerated Annand's conduct until October, 1877, when Annand became ill; then Cowen suggested that he resign the editorship "on the ground that the strain of the position seems to be too much for him." Thus, by early 1878, when the editorials became Russophobic, the only Liberal daily in the Northumberland-North Durham area was ready to attack Gladstone and Orthodox Liberalism, including those persons who agreed with the Liberal Association.

Cowen foresaw the impending quarrel with the caucus; and, therefore, he concentrated on trying to get somebody to run with him on the Liberal ticket while simultaneously threatening to resign if it could be proved that he did not represent Newcastle Liberalism. The person most sought after by Cowen was John Morley, the Radical editor of the Fortnightly Review, who was extremely anxious to enter Parliament.

Morley, in his correspondence with Chamberlain in early 1877, made few complimentary references concerning Cowen. Yet, these letters seem to suggest that Radicalism needed Cowen. A temporary rift occurred when the "London Letter" that spring accused Morley of "a not very manly mode of procedure" concerning his supposed candidacy for Stoke by "collecting recommendations from second-rate statesmen,"

5Chronicle, February 14, February 15, 1876, March 15, March 24, April 5, April 6, May 4, May 9, July 3, July 18, 1877, and January 26, 1878.
6Aaron Watson, A Newspaper Man's Memoirs, 44-47.
7See, for example, letter, Morley to Chamberlain, April 14, 1877, Chamberlain Papers, 5/54/166.
8Chronicle, April 9, 1877.
Morley wrote a letter to *The Times* which denied seeking the credentials and claimed to have denied previously any candidacy for the borough.⁹ Even before his letter was published, however, Morley revealed to Chamberlain that he wished his letter refuting Cowen's charge had not been sent.¹⁰

Yet, Morley's letter seems to have had no great effect on Cowen, who still insisted he wanted to retire at the end of the session and said John Morley would be "a very good man" to run alongside a local candidate at his next election. Cowen also wrote that Chamberlain had spoken to him "twice or thrice" about Morley's candidacy and that, although Cowen did not know Morley, "everyone that does know [him] speaks of him in warm terms."¹¹

There is no proof, however, that anything further was done concerning this matter until November 28, 1877, when Morley and Cowen had a conversation concerning Morley's candidacy in Newcastle. As a result of the meeting, Morley informed his sister that, although the question of the Newcastle seat was "left open," he had "pretty well decided" not to be a candidate. "I only shrink a little before taking the final plunge OUT of Parliament," he added.¹² Yet, throughout December and January, Morley's letters to Chamberlain were filled with indecision.

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⁹*The Times*, April 11, 1877.  
¹⁰Letter, Morley to Chamberlain, April 10, 1877, Chamberlain Papers, 5/51/162.  
¹¹Letter, Cowen to Watson, May 22, 1877, Corder, 222.  
¹²Letter, Morley to his sister, December 2, 1877, Hirst, II, 55.
concerning his possible candidacy. On December 27, he informed Chamberlain that he was "ashamed to confess an absolute inability to say a plain and firm NO to Cowen." By January 3, Morley admitted to Chamberlain that he had reversed his previous decision:

But finally to shut the door against the only REAL chance I have ever had or probably ever shall have to the House of Commons is more than I can do in my reviving health. So I've written a line to Cowen to say that when the time comes, he can use my name, if it still seems good. Don't think more ill of me than you can help.13

On January 25, Cowen informed Watson of Morley's willingness to become a candidate for Newcastle. Cowen's mention of Morely was in connection with his desire "to say with perfect frankness and in all sincerity, that I should be extremely glad to be relieved of the position I hold as one of the Members for the Borough."14

In his letter to Watson, Cowen emphasized that he was not necessarily recommending Morley. In fact, Cowen had made an arrangement to run together with Watkin Williams, M.P., who was struggling against the caucus in Denbeigh and was opposed to being "a mere delegate."15 Morley was warned of this by Chamberlain, but on February 13, he replied to Chamberlain's accusation by saying that Cowen "could hardly have done as you have been told, in face of his last letter to me some weeks ago. He is a bad politician, but I hope he's an honourable man." By mid-April, however, Morley's letters to Chamberlain reveal a complete

13Chamberlain Papers, 5/54/195 and 5/54/197.
14Corder, 224.
15For information on Williams and Newcastle, see The Times, April 16, 1878, and Courant, April 19, 1878.
disillusionment with Cowen concerning his invitation to Williams. Apparently, Morley had, upon Chamberlain's advice, discreetly inquired about Williams. On April 17, Morley wrote Chamberlain that he had written Cowen about Williams and that Cowen "ought to have a slight touch of the whip for making a fool of his betters." Again, on April 24, Morley wrote that he had received a reply from J. C. "(the bad J. C., not the good J. C.)." Morley enclosed Cowen's reply which he felt was "no answer" to his question. Consequently, Morley declared he would soon write Cowen "that I counted on his special support, that I don't understand his line, and that I will withdraw my name." 16

In early March, while Cowen was involved in political negotiations with Williams and Morley, the Executive Committee of the Liberal Association suddenly recommended that the General Committee select Albert Grey to be Cowen's colleague at the next general election. By selecting Grey, a Whig and an opponent of disestablishing the Church, the Association, in apparent opposition to Cowen, chose a candidate who could not accept the issue which Cowen felt could unite Liberals: separation of church and state. 17 What temporarily upset this arrangement was the decision at the meeting of the General Committee on March 25, that Grey should contest the bye-election in South Northumberland. Grey was subsequently defeated, and the Newcastle General Committee unanimously invited him again to contest Newcastle. At the meeting of the General Committee, J. H. Rutherford, a staunch Cowenite, nominated Grey, and J. W. Pease, a Gladstone supporter, insisted that Cowen "heartily concurred" in the choice of Grey. Almost everyone was optimistic that

16Chamberlain Papers, 5/54/207, 5/54/211-12.
17Chronicle, March 27, 1878.
Grey's identification with Cowen concerning the agitation would now outweigh all differences and the annual report of the Association announced "It is with great pleasure that the Committee are able to say that the two Liberal candidates will work together with one Committee and a mutual desire to aid one another." Nevertheless, throughout the second half of 1878 there were constant rumors that Grey might reconsider being the nominee of the South Northumberland Liberal Association. By the end of 1879, Grey agreed to contest South Northumberland partly because of Cowen's supposed refusal to run jointly with him; thus, there was once more a vacancy on the Liberal ticket for Newcastle.

Shortly after Grey withdrew from the Newcastle contest, the Liberal Association contacted Morley, who explained his decision not to contest Newcastle with contradictory reasons. In a letter to Chamberlain, Morley wrote, "in no case would I like to have anything to do with that slippery fellow J. C., by whom I mean neither Julius Caesar nor the still greater bearer of those initials." In a letter of November 19 to his sister, Morley said it was too late for him to accept the Newcastle offer because he had already agreed to run in Westminster. Morley claimed, however, that he would have preferred Newcastle "because it is more radical and because the recovery of the second seat from Harmond is thought to be certain." 

18Chronicle, March 26, June 27, July 31, 1878. Courant, March 1, 1878. See also the Newcastle Liberal Association's Fifth Annual Report (Newcastle: 1879).
19Chronicle, November 7, November 15, and November 28, 1878.
By his own admission, Morley was only one of many individuals considered by the Association. On November 21, a deputation from the Liberal Association asked J. W. Pease, a prominent Quaker banker and member of the Association, to contest Newcastle, but he declined for reasons of business.\(^{21}\) Until January 10, 1880, there were strong rumors that Isaac Lowthian Bell would contest Newcastle for the Association, but on January 10, he declined Newcastle in order to seek re-election for Hartlepool.\(^{22}\) The candidate eventually selected was Ashton Dilke, a Radical publisher, brother of Sir Charles, and son-in-law of T. E. Smith. The issue had been handled so quietly that Sir Charles was startled when his brother suddenly revealed an interest in Newcastle. Sir Charles' reply after he heard of his brother's interest was, "You can win Newcastle I should think—but? the cost. (Cowen hates your Polish views and would not like you?)" It must be understood that Sir Charles felt Ashton could win even without Cowen's support; such a thing would have been almost impossible two years earlier.\(^{23}\)

It must be emphasized that the Association always claimed it was seeking a candidate to run along with Cowen although Cowen periodically hinted that he would not seek re-election. On May 22, 1877, Cowen informed Watson he was "very desirous not to return to Parliament." On January 25, 1878, Cowen again wrote Watson that he desired not to return to Parliament and that Newcastle Liberals should consider his wishes on the subject. Within five days, however, Cowen received a


\(^{22}\) *Chronicle*, January 12, 1880.

\(^{23}\) Letter, Sir Charles Dilke to Ashton Dilke, 1879, Dilke Papers, ADD MSS 43902, f.113.
vote of confidence from the Liberal Association, which dared not break with so powerful a politician. As a result, Cowen informed Watson on January 30 that, although he was still anxious to be freed from Parliamentary duties, he would "let the matter rest for the present." Throughout the spring of 1878, there were numerous reports of Cowen's decision to retire. The Examiner and the Scotsman, for example, emphasized that Cowen had definitely decided not to seek re-election.

In addition to the struggle over the power to nominate M.P.s on the Liberal ticket, there were other factors which strained relations between Cowen and the Association. Most important was the continued criticism of Liberals in the "London Letter" and in the rest of the Chronicle after the Eastern Question had ceased to be of primary interest. In general, the "Letters" continued to praise the past policy of the Government on the Eastern Question and the present policy concerning Afghanistan. It would be more difficult to generalize about the "Letters'" attitude toward the Zulu Wars except to say that it was indecisive. Hartington was the Liberal leader most praised; Gladstone, rarely; Chamberlain, never. The Conservative leaders Beaconsfield and Northcote were generally only mildly criticized.

The Association, by the spring of 1878, was split into three groups; a majority, which strongly supported Gladstone, an influential pro-Cowen minority, and an extremely small group of fanatical anti-Covenites. The pro-Covenites were led by Rutherford and T.S. Alder, both of the Association's executive board. This group would praise

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24Corder, 222, 224, 226.
25Examiner and The Scotsman as quoted by Courant, March 1, 1878.
Cowen at public meetings of the Association and would stress the danger of Russia. The anti-Cowen band was headed by Henry Whitten, a tea merchant who periodically plastered Newcastle with crude anti-Cowen posters. Whitten and his followers would also propose anti-Cowen resolutions at meetings protesting the possibility of war with Russia, and at various Liberal gatherings. At the annual meeting of the Newcastle Liberal Association on March 21, 1879, Whitten complained about the lack of publicity on the meeting, the Association's endorsement of Cowen, and its re-election of Watson as president of the Association since Watson had been Cowen's election agent in 1874. At an anti-war meeting on May 12, 1879, John Atkinson, after denouncing Cowen, claimed that the Chronicle was a vehicle for concealed Tory ideas and that most of Newcastle opposed Cowen's foreign policy. On November 8, at a speech of Cowen's, Whitten failed in an attempt to pass a no-confidence vote against Cowen.26 The Whitten followers were extremely noisy but numerically insignificant, although the Tories insisted that "these persistent attacks are got up and paid for by the Liberal Association, and that the name at the end [Whitten] is merely a blind."27

Most Association members, who strongly supported Gladstone, expressed great annoyance at Cowen's support of Beaconsfield. Nevertheless, these members always tried to refute the extreme anti-Cowen speeches of the Whitten clique. Watson generally stressed his friendship with Cowen while Swan praised Cowen's past record and his right to some latitude on the Eastern Question. Often, however, they denounced

26Chronicle, March 24, May 13, and November 10, 1879.
27Courant, August 16, 1878.
the Chronicle's attacks on Liberalism, though they occasionally separated Cowen from the reporting of the Chronicle. John Cameron Swan also wrote a number of letters to the Chronicle protesting either the gist of the "London Letter" or some editorial he disliked.28

According to Mayfair, a weekly which Cowen half-owned but which Lucy controlled, Newcastle in 1874 had made a "muddle" by returning a Tory but since the controversy over the Eastern Question "every politician who takes even the slightest interest in Newcastle must have felt somewhat humiliated by the position she has occupied in more than one division, during the last session." It also stressed the necessity for strong organization and denied that Cowen, who probably did not represent Newcastle opinion, had the "right to dictate" to the constituency.29 Exactly the opposite view was taken by the Radical Examiner, which viewed Cowen's actions as "manly" and entitled to the thanks of "all men who have yet a spark of feeling for human rights and political honour." The Examiner also claimed that "Liberals meriting their name will stand by the action of a Member who, whilst placing principle above party, has given ample evidence of his genuine Liberalism."30

By the fall of 1879, variations of the above arguments of Mayfair and the Examiner were used privately both by the adherants of the Association and by Cowenites, so that a break appeared imminent. Consequently, in order to heal the rupture, Lord Hartington arrived in Newcastle on

28Chronicle, March 22, May 13, and April 24, 1879. On November 24, while Gladstone stopped at Carlisle, John Cameron Swan, representing the Newcastle Liberal Association and the Junior Liberal Club, presented Gladstone with an address favoring his views on the Eastern Question. Gladstone indicated he was happy that the address represented the opinion of most Newcastle Liberals; see Chronicle, November 25, 1879.
29Mayfair, February 11, 1879.
30Examiner, July 26, 1879.
September 18. He managed to unite the various groups, and Cowen was present at all functions and made short speeches concerning non-controversial matters.

As to the effect of the visit, Sir William Harcourt, in response to Sir Charles Dilke's request for information, wrote at the end of September, "I hear from all sides that his visit was a great success, Cowen ([Sir Henry] Havelock writes me) had to bow the hull completely."

Leonard Courtney, M. P., also emphasized to Stead that Havelock's letters showed Cowen's diminishing influence and thus proved, according to Courtney, what Stead had written in the Northern Echo about Cowen and the caucus. "I could hope," wrote Courtney, "that Mr. Cowen would be instructed by what he has seen, but I am afraid he has become inaccessible to teaching. We can, however, afford him his perverseness if it is ineffectual to mislead others."

Morley and Chamberlain, however, viewed Hartington's Newcastle visit as anything but a defeat for Cowen. Morley declared he was "disgusted" with Cowen's paper defending the Government policy in Afghanistan, adding, "In spite of all this, what business has such a fellow to take part in liberal receptions." Chamberlain explained his view to Stead of Hartington's visit in greater detail than Morley:

I confess that at first glance I should have read the results differently, and should have supposed that the person who really triumphed throughout the business was Mr. Cowen. For what is the case? Mr. Cowen claims the right to take an independent and antagonistic line to the Liberal party in reference to certain

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31 Letter, Harcourt to Dilke, September, 1879, Dilke Papers, ADD MSS 43890, f.104.
32 Letter, Courtney to Stead, September 25, 1879, Stead Papers.
questions of the greatest importance. I do not blame him for this. I have not the least doubt that he is perfectly honest in his conclusions, but as a matter of fact on most of the important decisions of the last few Sessions Mr. Cowen has either voted with the Gov't or refrained from voting at all, yet he wishes to remain a member of the Liberal Party and to retain the Liberal support by which he has been returned to Parliament. In this wish he is assisted by Lord Hartington who comes to Newcastle at his invitation, who attends dinners and meetings at which he presides or is one of the chief speakers. I can only hope that if ever it should be my fate to differ as widely from the leaders and the bulk of my party as Mr. Cowen has done, that I may be as gently treated by both.33

Stead, in various letters to Gladstone, stressed the fact that the London papers and even "keen observers" such as Chamberlain had misunderstood completely "the political effect of Lord Hartington's visit upon Cowen's apostasy." Stead admitted that Cowen "personally" was "popular enough but politically his influence appeared to be nil." Stead claimed that Newcastle Liberals gave a "vehement and overwhelming repudiation" of Cowen's "political heresies," and that they greeted "every renunciation of jingoism" when Hartington spoke. He also claimed that Newcastle Liberals were delighted to show how they differed from Cowen "without creating a positive split in the party." The real result, according to Stead, was "a gratifying manifestation of the devotion of Tyneside" to Gladstone. Stead also emphasized how much the Newcastle Liberal Association desired that Gladstone stop at Newcastle on his way to Midlothian in order to receive an address from the Association."34

34Letters, Stead to Gladstone, October, 1879, Gladstone Papers, ADD MSS 44303, ff.320-22.
The Liberal hope that Hartington's visit would quiet Cowen was in vain. On November 8, Cowen did praise the Newcastle Liberal Association for its "generous and affectionate treatment of him." Seven days later, however, Cowen opposed those Liberals whose "recent speeches have lost their effect through passing denunciations too far." Cowen also explained "the differences that have recently arisen between myself and an influential section of the constituency." These differences, according to Cowen, were due to the desire of those Liberals to change the "centuries-old" foreign policy of England. "With extreme reluctance, I had to sever myself, on this subject, from men with whom on other questions I cordially agreed." Cowen again insisted that the Newcastle electors had the right to insist that their representatives either support the foreign policy objectives of the Liberal Party or resign. If his policies merited the disapproval of the electors, Cowen promised to return immediately to private life "without any feeling of bitterness or of the slightest sense of disappointment."35 On December 3, at the opening of the North Shields Liberal Association, one theme of Cowen's speech again stressed the exaggeration of "party fervour" which would permit individuals, such as a Lancashire candidate, to declare "I canna speak, I know now't of politics, but I stink o' brass; and if you send me to the Big House I'll vote sti11 for the party." Cowen also declared he was more concerned for Liberal principles than party uniformity and that he was a representative and would never be a delegate for any group.36

36Jones, 174-52.
Members of the Liberal Association hoped, however, that Cowen would modify his views on January 31, 1880, at his annual address to his constituents. Instead, during this speech Cowen reiterated his Russo-phobia, praised the Government and criticized Gladstone:

My contention in a sentence, is that our external empire should be maintained and defended, as much in the interests of freedom and civilization as in the interests of England and its distant dependencies; that we cannot honourably and without danger shrink from the responsibilities that our history and our position as the oldest, and one of the chief of free states in the world, entail upon us; that the security of our dominions in the East and the equilibrium of Europe were threatened by the advance of Russia on Constantinople; that the action this country took, although it was open to objection in its details, was necessary, and in the main judicious; that it largely contributed to thwart the dangerous, the aggressive, designs of Russia; has protected our present, and made provision for our obtaining an improved way to India; may help to secure better government for Turkey; and has strengthened the influence of England in the councils of Europe.

The speech also denounced Russia as "a devouring political mechanism" which annihilated more than fifty nationalities. Its government, which was " Asiatic rule, bastardized by German bureaucracy" has consistently attempted to annex territory in all directions; and, sometimes, such as in the recent plot against Turkey, Russian subterfuge was so cleverly camouflaged that even Cowen admitted he was fooled at first. Cowen praised the Treaty of Berlin for obtaining the best possible settlement, such as the provision which gave Austria control of Boznia and thus made the Russian acquisition of Constantinople " all but impossible." Cowen also stressed that the acquisition of Cyprus would in the future better enable England to resist Russian aggression and that the abrogation of the Treaty of San Stephano prevented a "virtual dictatorship" by Russia over two continents. If the Government's
foreign policy should be criticized, said Cowen, it should be for its occasional "tameness and timidity." Cowen also denounced those Liberals who accused the Government of being "malevolent and malicious," or who were unable to comprehend the serious Turkish attempts to reform abuses, or who censored and ostracized other Liberals for defending the foreign policy of the Government. He criticized Gladstone specifically by quoting the late Earl Russell as to Gladstone's ineptitude in foreign policy and his opposition to a political reform bill of Russell's.

Cowen also alluded to the educational bungling of the last Gladstonian Government as being responsible for the alienation of the Irish and Nonconformists and the consequent Liberal defeat in 1874. Cowen especially emphasized the importance of India and the danger of a Russian takeover which led subsequently to a justification of the Government's policy in Afghanistan.37

The reaction of the press to Cowen's speech was generally favorable. The Telegraph, Standard, Morning Advertiser, Yorkshire Post, Leeds Mercury, Pall Mall Gazette, and the Morning Post, according to the Chronicle's excerpts, praised Cowen's views.38 The Times praised Cowen's speech as "the common ground on which all political parties may meet and join hands."39 The Examiner, in a full-page article entitled "The Real Champion," supported the entire speech, except for Cowen's defense of the Government's Afghanistan policy. The Examiner further declared that the speech revealed the "honest opinion of a true

37Chronicle, February 2, 1880, Jones, 153-76.
38Chronicle, February 4, 1880.
39The Times, February 2, 1880.
Liberal, of one whom the desire for place does not affect and whom the fear of a defeat at the next general election does not sway.\(^{40}\)

The reaction of Conservatives was naturally favorable. A. W. Hall, M. P. for Oxford, speaking at a Conservative rally on February 3, praised Cowen's courage and his support of the Government's foreign policy. It was because of M.P.s such as Cowen, who "more truly represented the Old Whig party . . . that Her Majesty's Government were enabled to pursue with a strong hand, a policy which had averted a European war," said Hall.\(^{41}\) W. H. Smith, speaking at Westminster, also praised Cowen for demonstrating the strength and courage of his convictions.\(^{42}\) On February 4, at a meeting of the Longbenton Conservative Association, Edward Ridley, M.P., also devoted a significant portion of his speech to praising Cowen's January 31 address.\(^{43}\)

More important than mere praise was the action of the National Union of Conservative Associations concerning "this most remarkable speech" which "has had an unprecedented circulation, no less than 178,000 copies having been issued by the National Union alone." A Welsh translation was also extensively circulated.\(^{44}\) Conservatives utilized this speech, according to W.T. Stead's broadside of March 18, by circulating it throughout every constituency.\(^{45}\)

\(^{40}\)Examiner, February 7, 1880.
\(^{41}\)The Times, February 4, 1880.
\(^{43}\)Chronicle, February 5, 1880.
\(^{44}\)Report of the Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the National Union of Conservative Associations, July 23, 1880; an additional 100,000 copies were printed by S. Hayes Co., see The Times, February 19, 1880; Cowen's usual publisher also printed a large number of copies.
\(^{45}\)Gladstone Papers, ADD MSS 44303, f. 332.
A handful of Liberals who, like Cowen, supported the foreign policy of the Government, also praised the speech. One such individual was George Clive, M.P. for Hereford, who on February 27, defended Cowen's speech against the attacks of the local Liberal Association. Cowen's speech, according to Clive, explained why the latter attached "more importance to the security and welfare of our Empire than to a party triumph, and why I refused to join in the attack on the foreign policy of the Government."46 In the Tyneside area, T.E. Smith, in his election address of February 21, also supported the Government on the Eastern Question and viewed much criticism of the Government on this issue as "unjust and unpatriotic." W.B. Beaumont, in a letter to Edward Mather of February 23 also announced his support of the Government on the Eastern Question and his decision to run as an Independent. Neither, however, mentioned Cowen's speech specifically.47

The reaction of the typical Liberal politician was one of disappointment. Arthur Arnold, Liberal M.P. for Salford, on February 25, defended the Manchester School ideology and declared that Cowen merely repeated the Russophobic ideas of Lord Dudley Stuart's speech of forty-four years ago. To Arnold, Cowen was simply unable to moderate "the generous heat of youthful impulse."48 Chamberlain, in a speech at Darlington on February 3 before the National Liberal Federation,

47 Chronicle, February 23, and February 25, 1880.
48 Ibid., February 27, 1880.
criticized Cowen's speech as a mixture of "Quixotic enterprizes." If Cowen's ideas were followed, Chamberlain predicted, England would be forced into war. Harcourt, in a speech before the Liverpool Reform Club on February 5, treated Cowen's speech with derision. Cowen, he claimed, could not be labelled a Conservative, but:

the Conservative Government, the Conservative party and the Conservative papers glorify Mr. Joseph Cowen in every note of the gamut. (Laughter) I see they are demanding that his speech in favour of Her Majesty's Government should be printed in letters of pure gold, and that it is to be disseminated in every part of the country. (Laughter) Now, that is the way in which they are treating the Home Rule member for Newcastle. They are making him a hero, which is a greater thing than making him even a lord, (Loud laughter and "Here, Here"). And I venture to make another prophecy, that when next there is an election at Newcastle, every effort of the Conservative party will be used to return those two Home Rulers to the House of Commons (Hear, Hear). Well, we are very sorry that a man with the ability and eminence of Mr. Cowen differs from us; but it is the fortune of all parties to have among them one who is much wiser, much more virtuous, much more independent, and much more patriotic than the whole of the rest of the party. (Loud cheers).50

John Bright did not comment publicly on the speech but informed Watson that "happily, in this case the Tories have gained nothing by his speech and their wide circulation of it." In Bright's opinion, Cowen's "erratic course" was due primarily to his "vanity."51 Gladstone, of course, was informed by a number of correspondents of the effect of Cowen's speech; but, apparently, he chose not to comment on it directly. He did, however, deny Cowen's allegation that the late Lord Russell had criticized Gladstone.52

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Liberals were quite alarmed at the Tory utilization of Cowen's speech. The monthly Congregationalist announced in March, 1880, that the Tories were distributing 100,000 copies of the speech and stressed that of all the campaign speeches "there has not been one which so seriously damaged the Liberal party as that delivered by Mr. Cowen."53

W. T. Stead, besides attacking Cowen and his speech in the Northern Echo, issued on March 18 "The Electors Guide," which attempted to refute the arguments of Cowen's speech.54 More important, however, was the speech of Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, at Northallerton on February 24, which answered the arguments of Cowen and was later published as a pamphlet by the Liberal Central Association.55

Concerning politics within Newcastle, however, the speech had little effect. John Cameron Swan, who was present on the platform, said, immediately after the speech, that the issue of foreign policy should be a "perfectly open" question among Liberals.56 Watson H. James, who was travelling through Newcastle at this time, informed Gladstone of the effect of Cowen's speech in Newcastle. He claimed that the "proper course" for Newcastle Liberals should be to take Cowen at his word "and make him retire, but this they won't do." James, furthermore, claimed that if Liberals allowed Cowen enough rope, he would "eventually come to quiet."57

53 The Congregationalist, March, 1880, 220.
54 Letter, Stead to Gladstone, March, 1880; see Gladstone Papers, ADD MSS 44303, ff. 328, 332.
55 For a full account of his speech, see Chronicle, February 24, 1880; see also Sir Mountstuart E. Grant Duff, Notes From a Diary, 1873-1881 (London: John Murray, 1898), II, 207.
56 Chronicle, February 2, 1880.
It was never a question of dropping Cowen that concerned the Association but rather an attempt to make him run with Ashton Dilke. Throughout the Newcastle ward meetings in January, which not only elected members to the Executive and General Committees, but also made recommendations concerning Liberal nominees for Parliament, the one basic theme was that foreign policy should be an open question. Not only Cowenites, but even R. S. Watson, before the Elswick Ward Liberal Association on January 14, praised Cowen by declaring that "a more honest man never walked God's earth" and that "if Newcastle ever had a good all-round representative it had that representative in Joseph Cowen."58 In fact, there was absolutely no criticism of Cowen by the Liberal Association throughout the election, and when the followers of Whitten denounced Cowen they were promptly ridiculed by the Association.59

There was also no opposition to Dilke on the part of Cowenites or the Chronicle. Cowen told Dilke that he had given "preemptory instructions that no offensive word shall be published either against you or the Liberal Association."60 Throughout the contest the Chronicle stressed the admirable qualifications of Dilke, praised his campaign stamina, and claimed that the method by which Dilke was interviewed and endorsed by the Liberal Association was satisfactory and straightforward.61

58 *Chronicle*, January 15, 1880.
60 *Letter*, Cowen to A. Dilke, n.d., Cowen Papers, F44.
61 *Chronicle*, January 21, March 10, March 13, and February 9, 1880.
Ashton Dilke first spoke before a Newcastle audience on January 20 at a Liberal meeting of the St. John's and St. Nicholas' wards. In this speech, Dilke praised Cowen extensively (although dissenting from him concerning the Eastern Question), and he indicated his desire to run jointly with Cowen. On February 4, the Liberal Association formally endorsed Cowen and Dilke. The chairman of the meeting, J. W. Pease, admitted it might be illogical for them to support Cowen but "Englishmen are an illogical race." On February 5, at a meeting of Newcastle electors and non-electors, Cowen and Dilke were endorsed, the former over the vehement objection of Whitten, who was joined by a few other supporters in his advocacy of a plump for Dilke.62

Throughout the campaign, Dilke not only praised Cowen on almost everything, but claimed also that Cowen had told him that if Dilke were chosen by the Liberal Association then Cowen would run jointly with him. He also consistently pleaded with Liberals to split their ticket and emphasized that Cowen would head the poll and had so many votes that plumping was unnecessary. As the campaign continued, however, Dilke became defensive concerning his relationship with Cowen. On February 11, he wrote to the Echo denying its charge that Cowen was "furious" at his candidacy. Instead, Dilke claimed his "personal and political relations" with Cowen were "most friendly" and that "I have still every reason to suppose that the divergence in our political opinions will not eventually prove a barrier to our united action."63

62Ibid., January 22, February 5, and February 7, 1880.
63Ibid., February 7, and February 12, 1880.
By March 11, Dilke, responding to a question by admitting the improbability of the existence of a joint committee with Cowen, predicted the formation of two committees with overlapping membership. At a rally the following day he announced the reception of a telegram from Cowen pledging his imminent arrival in Newcastle, and he said Cowen would then squelch all rumours by endorsing Dilke as the second Liberal nominee for Newcastle. This meant, according to Dilke, "that they would fight the battle of Liberalism shoulder to shoulder." On March 13, Dilke urged all Liberals to remember that he and Cowen agreed on ninety-nine per-cent of the domestic questions. He also alluded to conversations and letters between himself and Cowen but refused to reveal them "because if he did they would think he was merely hanging on to Mr. Cowen's coat tails and imploring their votes on that account."64

The reason for the often-confusing remarks by Dilke concerning his relationship with Cowen are due almost exclusively to the uncertainty of Cowen's plans for the campaign. What strained relations between Cowenites and the Liberal Association during the campaign was the action of Edmund Proctor at the annual meeting of the Liberal Association on February 4; Proctor proposed that Cowen be supported as Dilke's colleague and that all Liberals should "fight fairly." The Chronicle, in a February 9 editorial, insisted that wording the resolution so that Cowen should be Dilke's colleague was a veiled insult to Cowen; furthermore, the Chronicle stressed the fact that many members of the Association had been supporters of Headlam; and, therefore, the reference concerning fighting fairly was nothing but an attack on Cowen's

conduct during the last General Election. In a series of letters to the Chronicle, supporters of Cowen agreed with the Chronicle's accusations and often advocated a separate committee for Cowen. Proctor, in a letter to the Chronicle dated February 10, apologized for the poor wording of the resolution, insisted no insult was meant, and claimed to have been exclusively responsible for the resolution's wording. J. I. Nicholson, one of the most ardent Cowenites, in a letter the following day denied Proctor's assertions and declared the resolution was deliberate and premeditated. More than a month later, on March 10, the Executive Committee of the Liberal Association apologized for placing Dilke's name first and for the words "fight fairly" and requested the electors to elect Cowen and Dilke as Newcastle representatives.65

Cowen personally complicated desires for unity by attacking the caucus in a speech in the House of Commons on February 24. The basic theme of the speech was Cowen's advocacy of a new Parliament every five years, and most of the speech simply cited historical precedents supporting more frequent elections. Toward the end of the speech, he warned that the increased suffrage and complex electoral process had so increased the power of party organizations that constituencies would soon be controlled by "cliques and caucuses." Cowen felt that this "excessive combination" by political groups could best be prevented by frequent elections.66 More startling, however, was Cowen's letter to R. K. Creighton, secretary of the Newcastle Liberal Association, in which he resigned his membership in the Association and refused to give further

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65Chronicle, February 5, February 9, February 11, February 12, February 13, and March 11, 1880.
66Hansard, CCL (1880), 1332-333.
financial support.  

The resignation meant, therefore, that Cowen would not work with the Association during the campaign; but Cowen had also hinted that he would not seek re-election largely because of his disagreement with the Association. As early as January 26, Morley asked Chamberlain, "What mean these rumours of Cowen's retirement?" Shortly thereafter, Swan and Dr. Rutherford together tried to persuade Cowen to run for re-election. Cowen, however, informed T. S. Alder on February 6 that he had notified Swan and Rutherford that he would postpone a decision until the Association meeting was over and he had sufficient time to discuss the matter with friends. On March 13, according to the Chronicle, Cowen informed a number of friends he was considering retirement, and the Journal mentioned rumours of Cowen's being replaced by Albert Grey.

The basic reasons for Cowen's considering retirement are found in a letter from Cowen to Watson on March 13. Cowen assured Watson that his candidacy would result in a most awkward situation because any joint committee involving himself and Dilke would end in a "disagreement," and if Dilke ran with his own committee and lost, "the blame of his defeat, however unjustly, will be attributed to me." Cowen also stressed his conviction that there was "a systematic attempt" on the

67Journal, February 26, 1880. This letter was not published in the Chronicle.
68Chamberlain Papers, 5/54/285.
69Chronicle, February 5, 1880.
70Tbid., February 10, 1880.
71Tbid., March 15, 1880.
72Journal, March 15, 1880.
part of certain Northern individuals to villify him "not as a politician, but as a man," through anonymous letters to other M. P.s. Thus, after thinking about the problem "all night," he concluded:

> It is quite clear that my position is just a source of trouble and annoyance to the people of Newcastle, and after deliberately thinking over the whole thing, I can only see one satisfactory solution and that is by me going out altogether. I have been told that Albert Grey is not going to contest the County. His opinions and Mr. Dilke's are in accord. If the Newcastle Liberals can agree upon Mr. Dilke and Mr. Grey, I will give the business up entirely.  

On the same day, Cowen telegraphed T. S. Alder that Liberals should adopt Grey and Dilke as their candidates since his own candidacy was "a source of weakness and trouble to Liberals." In a letter to the *Chronicle*, Alder insisted that Grey had definitely committed himself for South Northumberland; and, consequently, Liberals would have no other satisfactory replacement for Cowen. Alder also claimed, moreover, that if a "powerful and representative requisition" were presented to Cowen, he might reconsider his decision to resign.  

This notion of a separate voluntary committee to request Cowen's candidacy had been advocated frequently in letters to the *Chronicle* after the alleged slight of Cowen by the Liberal Association on February 4. The letters proposing a voluntary committee had defended Cowen in a number of ways: J. Robson had claimed the Liberal Association had opposed Cowen in an "underhand" manner, which was disgraceful since at least one-third of Liberal revenue came from Cowen; some writers had offered to

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73Corder, 233-34.
74*Chronicle*, March 15, 1880; *Journal*, March 15, 1880.
subscribe money or volunteer their labor toward any voluntary committee; one had even suggested Dilke should "place himself under Cowen's wing." On February 13, T. S. Alder wrote the Chronicle that unless many electors formed a requisition to Cowen requesting him to run, Cowen might retire. 75

What changed mere talk of a voluntary committee into action, however, was Cowen's threat not to seek re-election. On March 15, a number of Cowen's friends held a meeting, chaired by J. G. Youll, which resolved to form an independent committee to secure Cowen's re-election. The members of the committee included three aldermen, many councilmen and various Cowenite stalwarts such as Thomas Gregson and Captain Newstead. Almost immediately thereafter, the Chronicle reported that Cowen had written to this impromptu committee that he would place himself at the disposal of the constituency, and on March 17 his formal election address announced his candidacy as a "National Radical." 76 In a letter to Watson on March 16, Cowen denied any knowledge of the committee "til I got a circular yesterday morning and I sent it on to Smith at once." Cowen claimed the support for this committee was a reaction against Whitten or the Association, and was "much stronger than is generally imagined." Cowen also stressed his opinion that the support for his candidacy came not from politicians but from "the steady going old Newcastle people with liberal instincts who have got it into their heads that some injustice has been done." 77

75 Chronicle, February 10, February 11, 1880, February 13, and February 14, 1880.
76 Ibid., March 16, March 17, and March 18, 1880.
77 Corder, 235.
This decision of Cowen's and the previous rumors of his resignation, plus his supposed hostility toward Dilke, naturally were viewed as potential threats to Dilke's candidacy. Although Dilke publicly praised Cowen for almost everything, privately he telegraphed Sir Charles complaining of the *Chronicle's* being "either neutral or indifferent" toward his own candidacy. Learning of this charge, Cowen, in a letter to Ashton Dilke, denied it and claimed he was "not conscious of a single jeer or unpleasant word having been written or said about you" and that "from the very first moment it was known in this office that you were coming to Newcastle, a cordial welcome was given to you," despite the fact that the Liberal Association had not the courtesy to inform Cowen of the visit although they disclosed it to other newspapers. In the same letter Cowen promised to support Dilke but rejected a joint committee because of differences concerning foreign policy as well as from the unpleasant experience from his only previous "coalition." Cowen also warned that any "private bargain" between himself and Dilke which would "ignore" the consultation of the electors would have unfavorable repercussions on all concerned. Cowen also insisted that most Liberals would split for both Liberal candidates as long as they felt certain nothing secretive had been arranged. The essence of these arguments was repeated in a *Chronicle* editorial on March 13 with the additional argument that joint committees were not customary in Newcastle.

During March, the Cowen-Dilke relationship seemed to improve. By March 6, Ashton Dilke, according to Sir Charles, had "patched up" the

78 Cowen Papers, F44.
79 *Chronicle*, March 13, 1880.
fused with T. E. Smith concerning Cowen and Newcastle. Burt, at a Dilke rally on March 13, disclosed that Cowen "on more than one occasion and only a few days ago" had praised Dilke and even declared that "no candidate could possibly have been more acceptable to his feelings."

On March 16, T. E. Smith, presiding at a Liberal meeting, revealed that three days earlier Cowen had agreed to appear at a public meeting with Dilke and had authorized Smith to publicize the joint appearance.

At the rally, which Liberals had counted upon to eliminate dissen­sion within the party, Cowen had an accident which not only prevented him from speaking, but effectively ended his active participation in the campaign for the remainder of the election. Without an active leader, Cowen's committee had no program and drifted eventually into almost a complete merger with the Dilke campaign.

The Chronicle, however, at first did its best to prevent this. On March 22, it printed the substance of the intended speech of Cowen's which stressed the idea that there can be a feeling of friendliness, sympathy and cordiality between the two candidates, but no joint alliance. Cowen's subsequent election addresses (published but undelivered due to his accident) said nothing of Dilke. The Conservative papers in Newcastle also tried to prove that Cowenites had no connection with the Dilke campaign. The Journal, for example, reported that Cowen's committee rejected the attempt by the Association to portray itself as the electoral committee for both Liberals. A. P. Harrison, in a letter to

80 Dilke Papers, ADD MSS 43904, f. 47.
81 Chronicle, March 15, 1880.
82 Ibid., March 17, 1880.
the *Journal* on March 25, insisted that Cowen's brother John had assured him Joseph Cowen "had nothing to do with Mr. Dilke and that he was a perfectly independent candidate." As the campaign progressed, however, the *Chronicle* paid little attention to the activity of Cowenites, and by March 27, even the *Journal* conceded that Cowen's candidacy was "regarded as merged in that of Mr. Dilke."83

The actual effect of Cowen's accident was of great benefit to Dilke because then Liberals could argue about how Cowen would have helped Dilke. At a Dilke meeting on March 19, Burt, James Birkett, Watson and Cowen's son Joseph were on the platform. Burt insisted Cowen would have urged Dilke's election while Dilke added that Cowen personally would have ended all doubts of uncertainty by supporting Dilke. John Birkett, a powerful trade union leader, claimed Cowen had told him personally that he wanted Dilke as his colleague, and Watson claimed Cowen had told him within the past week that he (Cowen) "would do everything in his power to promote the triumphant success of Mr. Dilke." On March 31, Dr. Rutherford declared publicly that he would split for Dilke and Cowen and that he regretted that Cowen personally was unable to endorse Dilke on March 19 and thus eliminate completely "all the rumours which had been spread about by their enemies."84

As a result of the accident, Watson declared on March 22 that the Association would work for Cowen's election, and on March 25 Dilke

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stressed that Cowen's misfortune would only make Liberals work even harder for him. Dilkites also actively distributed cards with an "X" next to the names of Cowen and Dilke and canvassed for both.85 The disappearance of an active Cowenite campaign committee had a disastrous effect upon Conservative chances of maintaining a seat in Newcastle. At the general election of 1874 the Conservative victory had been due primarily to dissension among Liberals. In the general election of 1880, Conservative strength was further reduced when the powerful Irish bloc decided to endorse Dilke along with Cowen.

Part of the strategy of the Conservatives was to exploit any sign of tension between Cowen and Dilke and to try to portray the latter not only as a stooge of the Association— but also as a real foe of Cowen. The Association was criticized by the Journal for attempting to "kow-tow to Mr. Cowen in reply to his kicks." The Journal consistently attacked Dilke as the secret opponent of Cowen who would use his Parliamentary membership to undercut his colleague in the future.86

Throughout the campaign Hamond referred to Cowen in such terms as "my much esteemed and valued friend" and claimed to have a relationship with the Conservative Party similar to that of Cowen and the Liberal Party. Hamond had in December, 1876, praised Cowen for being "noble" and "dignified" and for having an "independent character" in refusing to attend the "Atrocityarian" Westminster Conference. In early 1877 Hamond declared he and Cowen were able to cooperate concerning most legislative matters.87 Hamond ridiculed Dilke, not only as a "secularist

86Journal, March 12, 1880.
87Chronicle, December 8, 1876, January 29, and February 2, 1877.
and socialist," but also for flattering Cowen while really attempting "to try and trip him up." He also criticized Watson for bleeding Cowen of £8,500 in 1874, adding that after he "found he could not bleed his friend, Mr. Cowen, any longer, then he was contemptible enough to start an opposition against him." 88

At first the Conservative papers hinted that many of their party members would vote for Cowen along with Hamond; but, as the Covenite campaign became merged with that of Dilke, both papers eventually endorsed plumping for Hamond. Conservative politicians in Newcastle, although they might praise Cowen for his foreign policy and for opposing the Liberal Association, also advised Conservatives to plump for Hamond. 89

The results of the election were: Cowen, 11,766; Dilke, 10,404; and Hamond, a mere 5,271. The closeness of votes for the Liberal candidates is best explained by the small number of Liberal plumps: Cowen had 382, and Dilke had 199; 10,159 voters split for both Liberals; 1,225 voters split between Hamond and Cowen; and only a negligible number of votes were split between Dilke and Hamond.

The real winner of this election was the Association. It had proven that it could win an election without the assistance of either Cowen or the Chronicle. Furthermore, Cowen never fully recovered from his injury; he was later unable to withstand any prolonged tension, and any weakness on his part was immediately taken advantage of by the Association.

Within the Northumberland-Durham area, Cowen and his beliefs were often an important issue in the general election. At least three

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88 Courant, April 2, 1880; Chronicle, March 20, 1880.
89 Journal, March 15, April 3, 1880; Courant, April 2, 1880.
other Liberals agreed with Cowen: T. W. Smith and W. B. Beaumont, the incumbents, and H. K. Spark, who in 1874 came very close to winning a Parliamentary seat in Darlington. Despite his agreement with Cowen on foreign policy, Smith was endorsed by Tynemouth Liberals. Beaumont consistently refused to have anything to do with Grey or the South Northumberland Liberal Association until March 29, when he finally agreed to merge his campaign with Grey's. Spark, unlike Beaumont and Smith, had no Conservative opponent and contested Darlington again as an Independent Liberal. His chief issue was opposition to the caucus, and for support on this point, as well as for his warning of evil Russian intentions, he quoted Cowen's speeches.90

In general, however, Cowen was praised much more by Conservative candidates in Durham and Northumberland largely because of his opposition to the caucus and his support of the Government's Eastern policy. For example, Cowen was praised by Edward Ridley, seeking re-election as M. P. from South Northumberland, both for his views on foreign policy and for his opposition to the Association. Colonel Sadler, who was contesting Middlesbrough also lavished praise upon Cowen. Henry J. Trotter, who opposed T. E. Smith, naturally ignored Cowen's foreign policy but praised Cowen for breaking with the Liberal Association. John L. Wharton, contesting Durham City, emphasized that Cowen's speech of January 31, had "set forth in the truest colours and the most honest point of view, the

90Chronicle, March 30, and February 21, 1880; The Chronicle also sympathized with Spark against the Darlington caucus; see Chronicle, November 5, November 22, and November 25, 1879.
acts of the Government and the justification of those acts."  
Coven and his views on the Eastern Question were made the basic issue of the contest by Gainsford Bruce and G. B. Hans Hamilton, the Conservative candidates for Gateshead and South Shields respectively. At a rally on March 13, Bruce, after praising Cowen's noble defense of the Government's foreign policy, declared that the real issue of the election was "whether they sympathized with the tyranny of Russia or agreed with the working men of Newcastle." On March 15, a pro-Bruce meeting was chaired by George Crawshay, who in the 1850s was one of the most extreme supporters of Urquhart and had been one of the earliest and most persistent opponents of the Bulgarian agitation. At the meeting, Crawshay denounced James for not following the foreign policy ideas of Cowen and Smith. On March 20, Bruce boasted that Cowen's "great speech had perhaps done more throughout the length and breadth of the country than anything done by any other man to convince the English people that the Government was right."  
Hamilton, like Bruce, praised Cowen extensively; he also predicted that many Conservatives would vote for Cowen, who would thus head the poll. Rhetorically, he asked the population of South Shields, "who are only separated from 'canny Newcastle' by a bit river," whether they were "so different in your political views that you will not vote for a man who agrees with every word Mr. Cowen has said on the Eastern Question."

These statements of Bruce and Hamilton, however, were exceptions and can be explained largely by the fact that these two men were contesting solidly Liberal areas and, therefore, were desperately attempting to attain popular support by identifying their candidacy with the best known and most popular Liberal in the Tyneside area.93

The most complicated and unusual praise of Cowen was made by Digby Seymour, who was challenging Joseph Dodds, M. P. for Stockton. Dodds, on February 2, had repeated a typical accusation of Stead's against Cowen, accusing Cowen of abandoning his conviction held in 1874 (when he was willing to cede Gibraltar to Spain). On March 18, Seymour revealed at a rally that he had received a letter from Cowen dated that day, in which Cowen said it would "delight" him to see Seymour elected to the House of Commons. The following day, Seymour stressed that he shared Cowen's sympathy for the working class and that he was very happy to have Cowen's "good wishes." He also praised Cowen for such qualities as the "unselfishness of his disposition" and the "earnest patriotism of his soul." After hearing of Cowen's accident, Seymour, at a March 20 rally, regretted that it deprived Seymour of "Mr. Cowen's great moral weight" since Cowen's "spirit and his sympathy" were on Seymour's side, and Cowen's intended speech of March 19 would have helped him politically. Seymour also read a telegram from Rutherford describing Cowen's physical condition, and Seymour viewed it as "fortunate that an early death had not deprived England of one of the brightest geniuses and one of the

93*Journal*, March 16, 1880.
most honest hearts" of humanity.94

Seymour's comments on March 18 and 19 concerning Cowen had so frightened Dodds that he personally went to Newcastle to see Cowen on March 19, but Cowen's illness made it impossible for him to see anyone. At a rally later, Dodds emphasized the importance of a particular telegram from Newcastle concerning Cowen's letter to Seymour; this telegram instructed Dodds to "insist on date and context being given." Dodds charged that Seymour should do this as well as reading the entire letter from Cowen. Dodds also stressed his friendship with Cowen over a "great number" of years and the fact that Cowen always viewed Dodds as "one of his pets, except that he was not radical enough for him." Dodds also referred to various excerpts from the "London Letter" in which he found himself praised.95

None of the Conservatives who quoted Cowen was victorious. Instead, the Liberals did even better in Durham and Northumberland than they had in 1874. Nevertheless, no serious attack was made upon Cowen by any responsible Conservative spokesman; this demonstrated an almost complete reversal concerning the Conservative attitude toward an individual viewed as a dangerous revolutionary and Republican six years earlier.

All in all, the caucus had clearly demonstrated its ability to select and elect an M. P. for Newcastle, despite Cowen's lack of support. Cowen, in his speech of January 30, 1880, and in his sudden

94Chronicle, February 3, March 19, March 20, and March 22, 1880. See also Journal, March 20, and March 22, 1880. For Stead's accusation, see Gladstone Papers, ADD MSS 44303, f. 328.
95Chronicle, March 22, 1880. The "London Letter" did say that there was no harder worker in the House of Commons than Dodds; see Chronicle, May 16, 1876, and May 21, 1879.
resignation from the caucus, seemed to be further than ever from most Liberals. Perhaps his accident just before the commencement of the campaign prevented an open break. At any rate, Cowen's illness sidelined him and allowed the caucus to dominate the field and to emerge stronger than ever.
IV. IRELAND AND OPPOSITION TO THE GLADSTONIAN GOVERNMENT

After recovering from the accident he had had during the general election, Cowen between 1880 and early 1883, broke with Gladstonian Liberals over two issues: primarily, the problems of Ireland; secondarily, the foreign and colonial policy of England. As a result of his position on these issues, Cowen was able to obtain widespread support and praise from the extreme left and extreme right in England and, especially, enthusiastic devotion from all shades of Irish nationalists, who regarded him as the foremost Parliamentary champion of Ireland. More than the Eastern Question, Ireland continued steadily to occupy Parliament's attention. Also, Cowen was in conflict with Gladstonian Liberalism over the Eastern Question for only about a year, and his arguments concerning foreign and colonial policy were simply a reiteration of his Russophobia and his claim that he was acting for the national self-interest. The disagreement over Ireland, however, lasted longer, and, on Cowen's side, was even more bitter. As a result, Gladstonians attacked Cowen directly to a much greater extent than they had concerning the Eastern Question.

Cowen's interest in Irish affairs, of course, pre-dated his election to Parliament in 1874. It was certainly true that the Irish were politically powerful in Newcastle; thus, any responsible politicians had to be concerned with Irish problems. Cowen, however, really sympathized with and admired Irish "racial" qualities; and it would be
erroneous to attribute his pro-Irish sentiment to political opportunism. R. Barry O'Brien, a prominent Parnell follower, relates that a member of the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood once told him that Cowen and Lawson were two of the very few English M.P.s who took their Home Rule pledges seriously. Furthermore, he emphasized to O'Brien that although the Irish were strong in Newcastle, unlike in Lawson's Carlisle, Cowen would have voted for Home Rule regardless of Irish strength and that "he was thoroughly Irish in feeling."¹

During the Conservative Ministry from 1874-1880, Cowen was one of the few English M.P.s who consistently supported Home Rule Bills.² He also co-sponsored much Irish legislation with Irish M.P.s. His most important accomplishment during this period was taking a key role in repealing the Convention Act of 1793, which had prohibited delegates at meetings from taking positions on specific issues. In a speech of March 26, 1879, on this subject, Cowen declared that the Act was essentially useless in preserving order while it fostered Irish resentment, and that it was "the last vestige of the penal code that a relentless persecution once fastened upon the followers of the Catholic faith." According to F. H. O'Donnell, it was primarily this speech which persuaded the House to repeal the Act "with hardly a protest."³

Nevertheless, during this time, Cowen spoke seldom about Irish grievances, and this fact cannot simply be brushed off by attributing it to Cowen's illnesses. Cowen's silence can be explained largely by his opinion that the Conservatives believed the Irish "were petted and spoiled by Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues." Therefore, Cowen concluded, "little would be done to help Ireland" in view of the overwhelming Conservative majority in Parliament.\textsuperscript{4} He was also very critical of Irish M.P.s for their failure to push the Irish cause in Parliament. In a speech before the Liberation Society on February 27, 1877, Cowen criticized Irish M.P.s for allying with Conservatives on educational measures and for not allying more with the Liberal Party.\textsuperscript{5} The "London Letter" also was critical of Irish politicians for deserting Gladstone on the University Bill in 1873, for their interest solely in Irish concerns, for their lackadaisical attendance at Parliament, for their "overbearing" and often "insolent" attitude, and especially for their inability to stop internal bickering.\textsuperscript{6} Cowen, for example, in denying the accusation of Richard Pigott that A.M. Sullivan was responsible for anti-Parnell articles in the \textit{Chronicle}, insisted: "It is most unfortunate that Irishmen should be so prone to create differences among themselves. If ever there was a people or a cause that required unity, it is the Irish."\textsuperscript{7}

\textsuperscript{4}Letter, Cowen to the Newcastle Amnesty Committee for Irish Political Prisoners; \textit{Chronicle}, May 27, 1874.
\textsuperscript{5}Ibid., February 28, 1877.
\textsuperscript{6}Ibid., June 30, 1875, March 22, March 28, July 26, 1877, and June 26, 1879.
\textsuperscript{7}Letter, Cowen to Healy, May 8, 1877, Healy, I, 52-53.
Cowen also complained of the obstructionist tactics of the Irish and insisted in the House on July 5, 1879, that "if the rights of the minority were to be continued to be respected, the rights of the majority must receive equal consideration." In November, 1879, Cowen, while introducing A. M. Sullivan to a Newcastle audience, cautioned moderation of those Irish M.P.s "who were in the habit of using language calculated to engender an antagonistic feeling." 8

Cowen's criticism of the faults of Irish politicians apparently did not result in his being criticized by any Irish M.P. Instead, Parnell, at a Home Rule rally in Newcastle on March 19, 1878, praised Cowen's work for the Irish cause and exempted Cowen from any future demand for a Home Rule pledge to which all other English candidates had to agree. 9 John Barry, M.P., at an Irish meeting in Newcastle on September 5, 1877, claimed that if there were twenty English M.P.s like Cowen and twenty newspapers like the Chronicle, then the Anglo-Irish relationship would be amicable and satisfactory. 10

With the formation of the Liberal ministry in 1880, Cowen began to explain his Irish views in greater detail. The important change in his thinking was the lack of any shade of grey in his support of Irish nationalism. His opposition to the Government's policy on Irish questions became so strong that his "London Letter" would occasionally use such subheads as "The Expulsion of the Home Rule Members and the

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9Courant, March 22, 1878.
10Chronicle, September 6, 1879.
Establishment of a Parliamentary Dictatorship. According to Cowen, English rule in Ireland had brought disastrous results ever since the time of Richard Strongbow. Its treatment of the Irish had been one of "repression and violence" whereby the Irish had suffered seven centuries of famine, the destruction of manufacturing, and the creation of a peasantry whose condition in impoverished districts was the most wretched in the world. Instead of rectifying these problems, Cowen said, the English have regarded "Irish politics as a pest, Irish grievances as a nuisance, and Irish history as a myth." Simultaneously, they have traditionally appointed Irish magistrates who, according to Cowen, were descendants of the Conqueror and as alien to the native population as Tory control of Liberal constituencies.

What made the Irish problem especially dangerous, said Cowen, was the change within the Irish peasantry, a class whose members no longer were "deferential" toward the Anglican clergy or the Irish gentry, due to various political changes within Ireland as well as to Irish contact with Irish-Americans. Furthermore, Cowen declared that the Irish were convinced drastic changes could occur only through agitation since, in their opinion, all improvements—such as the Maynooth Grants, the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, and the emancipation of Catholics—were solely the results of agitation.

11Chronicle, February 4, 1881.
13See Cowen's speech of January 3, 1881, in Jones, 177-95, and Cowen's speech of January 8, 1883, in Jones, 220-35.
The basic problem, according to Cowen, was that the Irish had justifiable grievances which the Liberal Government was unable or unwilling to solve. Instead of reforming abuses within Ireland, Liberals had an increasing faith in coercion of Ireland before any real reform could be possible. Cowen bitterly and consistently denounced coercion, partly because it was based on the "conspiracy" explanation instead of the realization that Irish unrest was a national phenomenon based upon justifiable grievances. Cowen also emphasized that the extent of the "outrages" had been exaggerated by the Government. Furthermore, the Irish nationalist politicians were the chief denouncers of whatever "outrages" did exist; and, by arresting the Irish leaders, the Government thereby put out of action the only individuals able to check the extremists since all English authority was despised and disregarded throughout Ireland. In fact, Cowen insisted the best way to attain immediate popularity in Ireland was to be denounced by the English Government in Ireland, which he described as a "feeble and vacillating Executive."

Coercion was also viewed as "hateful and humiliating" to the Irish and, by consistently suspending such rights as habeas corpus, had helped to destroy whatever remaining faith the Irish had in English law. While annoying the Irish, moreover, coercion was a "quack" remedy since it was unable to curb unrest. Cowen, for example, asserted that since

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14See Cowen's speeches of January 3, 1881, in Jones, 177-95; January 28, 1882, Jones, 201-19; January 8, 1883, Jones, 220-35; May 23, 1882, Jones, 362-70; and January 25, 1881, Hansard, CCLVII, 1477.
the Act of Union, fifty-seven acts had limited or annulled "the most precious right of the Constitution: the right of personal freedom," and he cited statistics to prove that outrages actually increased after coercion was implemented.15

Finally, Cowen stressed the disastrous effects that a coercive policy would have upon England. "It is impossible," Cowen insisted, "for a Liberal and constitutional Government to rule another people by despotic means without the said rulers as well as the ruled being injured." In fact, English practices of employing spies throughout Ireland, opening letters, and imprisoning nationalists without just reason had created a reign of terror worse than that of Fouché and the Stuarts.16 In order to assure the success of coercion, the Government had had to resort to such un-English practices as the cloture and an increasing reliance upon the caucus to pressure wavering M.P.s into supporting its Irish policy. Furthermore, Cowen charged, all the time wasted on coercion had resulted in Parliament's becoming the most intolerant since 1832 and one of the most sterile and least successful concerning its legislative program.17

Cowen criticized the Ministers of the Government for what he considered "their passion for coercion." In fact, the Liberal coercive measures were far more objectionable than those of the Tories not only

15See Cowen's speeches of January 3, 1881, in Jones, 177-95; November 10, 1882, Jones, 372-80; May 23, 1882, Jones 362-71; January 28, 1882, Jones, 201-19; August 29, 1881, Jones, 196-200.
17Chronicle, August 11, 1881; May 15, and August 7, 1882.
because they were more severe, but because during the 1880 election "scores" of Liberals had promised Irish voters in England they would discontinue coercion. Instead, W. E. Forster as Irish Secretary had made drastic infringements upon Irish liberty in order to have "implemented the policy of the Liberal Party and the Government." Gladstone, in his desire to force unanimity among Liberals in support of his Irish program, resembled a dictator whose infallibility one questioned at the risk of political suicide. Unlike the opening of Mazzini's letters by Sir James Graham, the opening of Dillon's mail by Gladstone was excused and even resulted in a renewed party confidence in the Prime Minister. 18

Besides criticizing the coercive policy of the Liberals, Coven also denounced utilization of the cloture, which, to Coven, was not only an unsavory foreign import but also an example of the tyranny of the majority since the Irish really were punished for their unpopularity in Parliament rather than their alleged obstruction. Coven repeatedly claimed that depriving the Irish M.P.s of their traditional constitutional right to freedom of speech would be detrimental to the course of English history. Coven was especially critical of the actions of the Cabinet in this matter and implied that most M.P.s only followed the Government on the measure from fear of the caucus and would have rejected the cloture overwhelmingly if they had been able to vote by secret ballot. Coven also accused the Liberals of having consistently obstructed

all measures in the Last Government while the Irish nationalists were responsible only for delaying certain bills.19

On coercion and the cloture, Cowen saw no shades of grey. In analyzing the Land Act of 1881, however, he admitted there were some beneficial features, but these were nullified, he said, by the Irish hatred of coercion. Although Gladstone was praised during the passage of the Bill for exhibiting the "very highest facilities of statesmanship," the real author of the Bill was the agitator Michael Davitt. The basic result of the act was the creation of a peasant holding which was halfway between tenant right and ownership; and, therefore, it was so confusing that it satisfied neither landlord nor tenant. Moreover, the clauses were capable of different interpretations, and the paperwork created "a nation of litigants."20 Furthermore, the act did not prevent the expulsion of more than 12,000 tenants in 1882 in order to keep them from utilizing the beneficial provisions of the act.21 Besides these drawbacks, the cost of reducing rents through this legislation, according to Cowen, was £400,000 by January, 1883, while it reduced rents by only about £70,000.22

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19This issue is discussed most fully in Cowen's speech of November 10, 1882, in Jones, 371-79; see also the "Politics and Parliament" articles in the Chronicle of early 1882, and Cowen's speech of February 2, 1881, Hansard, CCLVIII, 140-41.

20See Cowen's speech of August 29, 1881, in Jones, 196-200; Cowen's speech of June 28, 1882, Jones, 201-19; Chronicle, April 18, 1881; and Cowen's speech of July 28, 1881, Hansard, CCLXIV, 132-33.


22Cowen's speech of January 8, 1883, Jones, 220-35.
In order to solve Ireland's problems, Cowen insisted, the English must cease to regard the Irish as stereotype scoundrels and cowards and begin to understand and accept the admirable qualities of the Irish "race." Furthermore, he said, Irish social problems "will never be settled til the occupiers are made owners; and political difficulty will never be settled til we allow Irishmen to govern themselves."23 This emphasis upon self-government of Ireland was especially important since it would demonstrate English trust in Irish leaders for the first time. "It is commonplace in politics," Cowen argued, "that men will submit to inconvenience inflicted by men of their own race and creed but that they will not tolerate them if forced upon them by strangers." Once Home Rule was conceded, Ireland would be ruled "easily" as "an integral part of the United Kingdom." It must, however, be conceded quickly because otherwise, Cowen warned, Anglo-Irish relations, which were steadily worsening, soon might be beyond repair. In fact, Cowen expressed surprise that the Irish had not yet rebelled since rebellion would have been justified because their basic rights had been taken away.24

Cowen also encouraged the Irish by closely associating with them at a time when most other English politicians shunned their company. Cowen viewed Parnell as a "very decent fellow" who had been falsely

blamed for "a lot of stupid work," and Cowen bitterly condemned the Government for imprisoning Parnell without a trial or even an opportunity for him to explain his actions. Davitt also earned praise from Cowen as a "gallant Irishman," a "peasant Mazzini," and a person of "high Character." His imprisonment was viewed by Cowen as the meanest thing ever done by the English Government.25

Cowen also contributed small sums of money to help individual Irish nationalists. In late 1881, he contributed £10 in a subscription for Dr. Kenny after the latter had been dropped from a Poor Law Board because of his Land League membership. Cowen criticized this "mean and vindictive" government action since through it the Government had tried "not only to punish but to ruin Dr. Kenny."26 In January, 1883, Cowen offered to raise bail for Davitt and Healy, but both nationalists declined the offer.27 Five months later, Cowen contributed ten guineas to the Parnell Testimonial Fund, the purpose of which was to get Parnell out of debt.28

Cowen also managed to help the Irish through various undercover schemes. Throughout the period 1880-1885, Cowen, according to Tim Healy, utilized his friendship with Harcourt to get information about the Government's plans and thus give the Irish "hints of the intentions of the Liberal Cabinet."29 In 1882, when Irish nationalists were fearful

26 The Times, November 3, 1881.
27 Ibid., January 26, and January 27, 1883.
28 Duncan, 184.
29 Healy, I, 35.
of postal "indiscretions" concerning their mail, Cowen received mail for the Irish "under cover to himself" and later distributed it among Irish nationalists.30

Immediately after the Phoenix Park murders in May, 1882, Cowen, according to Davitt, visited the despairing Irish nationalists and advised Parnell to stop considering the possibility of resigning. Instead, Cowen advised him to:

issue a manifesto condemning the crime in strong and honest language. This will appear in tomorrow morning's papers side by side with the details of the murders, and the public will see how this bad deed hits you and your cause more than even your opponents. It appears to me to have been as much the act of league enemies, as that of foes to Dublin Castle.31

Although Parnell acted upon his advice, Cowen apparently did not believe it himself. On May 6, Cowen, according to Dilke, informed Dilke in a manner "rather less wildly and more sensibly than usual" that Dillon and Davitt would unite against Parnell and force his resignation as leader of the Irish nationalists.32

Cowen also aided the Irish by his speeches and by interrogating Cabinet Ministers within the House of Commons, especially concerning the clauses of the Coercion Bills of 1881 and 1882 and the Government's treatment of nationalist M.P.s. It must also be noted that Cowen's support of the Irish was especially significant since there were so few English Liberals who protested coercion and the general Irish policy of the Government. What especially pleased the Irish was Cowen's

30O'Donnell, II, 108.
32Letter, Dilke to Chamberlain, May 6, 1882, Dilke Papers, ADD MSS 43885, f. 233.
continuous harrassment of Forster through questions which attempted to portray the Irish Secretary as a bungling Minister who exaggerated the potential danger of Irish nationalists. On almost every division concerning Ireland, Cowen voted with a handful of other English Liberals who were sympathetic to Ireland.33

The most important thing, however, about Cowen's Irish speeches in Parliament was that they were applauded by both the Irish and the Conservatives and listened to by all those who desired to hear a prominent orator. His speech denouncing the cloture on November 10, 1882, for example, was described by Justin McCarthy as an event which resulted in Commons' "almost immediately" being filled and the ovation after his speech being "worthy of the best days of the House of Commons." Even the hostile Hamilton, Gladstone's secretary, described the evening as being "chiefly remarkable for Cowen's eloquent and virulent attack, which naturally drew down storms of applause from the opposition."34

Cowen's Irish views were anathema to Liberal leaders, but they received nothing but praise from Irish Nationalists and the extreme left

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33Cowen's harrassment of W. E. Forster was continual throughout 1881 and 1882; for example of this harrassment, see especially Cowen's Speech, June 12, 1881, Hansard, CCLXIII, 641, and his speech March 31, 1882, Hansard, CCLXVIII, 1493-94. Cowen always insisted, however, that the Cabinet approved Forster's actions--no matter how despicable--but would sacrifice him as a scapegoat if it were opportune to do so since he merely enforced its Irish policy. See speech, April 20, 1882, Hansard, CCLXVIII, 1024-1026.

within England. A good example of the Irish attitude toward Cowen may be found in a pamphlet summarizing English injustices toward Ireland, written by Thomas Nulty, the pro-nationalist bishop of Meath. In a "letter" to Cowen which preceded the pamphlet, Nulty emphasized:

Of all English statesmen, there is not one in whom my countrymen place the same amount of trust and confidence that they do in you. From your very first appearance in public life, you have invariably displayed a just, a generous, and a kindly sympathy to our race and nation, that was exceptional with English statesmen.

Nulty also praised Cowen for his consistent opposition to coercion:

Throughout the long, weary and trying ordeal on that debate, you never let a single blot in it pass unchallenged; you never lost a single night's sitting; you never missed a division in battling bravely and persistently for the liberties of our country.35

Cowen was also praised publicly by all prominent Irish politicians and the various land league organizations. At a National Land League Conference in Newcastle in August, 1881, Cowen was praised by John Barry, M.P., as having "endeared himself to every Irish heart." At the same meeting Justin McCarthy described Cowen as "the friend of every good and great cause."36 In February, 1881, Davitt moved a resolution

35"Letter of the Most Rev. Dr. Nulty, Bishop of Meath, to Joseph Cowen" (Dublin, 1881). It may be found in the University of Newcastle Library among Cowen's personal pamphlets, Vol. 123, No. 4. See also, Chronicle, December 13, December 14, and December 15, 1881.

36Chronicle, August 30, 1881. The following branches of the Land League thanked or praised Cowen: Blyth, Dublin, Durham, Gateshead, Glasgow, Houghton-le Spring, Jarrow, Murton Colliery, National Land League Convention (Manchester, 1882), Newcastle, Ryhope, Scottswood, Sleatburn, Stockton, Sunderland, Thornley, Tipperary, Ushaw Moor, Walker, and Willington.
whereby the Irish National Land League bestowed its "warmest thanks" upon Cowen, "the sterling friend of Ireland." In March, 1881, B. C. Malloy, M. P., claimed that Cowen could have his choice of representing any of twenty Irish seats. Perhaps the Irish comment which would best represent Irish opinion on Cowen was in the Parliamentary speech of F. H. O'Donnell in March, 1882. In brief, O'Donnell viewed it a misfortune that England should have "so few men of the mental and moral courage of the honorable Member for Newcastle," adding that a speech of Cowen's "did more to keep alive the hope of ultimate reconciliation in the breasts of the more sanguine of the Irish patriots than all the measures of Coercion at the disposal of the United Front Benches." 

Cowen was most disturbed that only a handful of English Liberals consistently opposed coercion. Although Cowen insisted that fifty more English Liberals would have supported his Irish views had they not been fearful of caucus hostility, he realized that hostility toward Irish nationalism was very strong among Liberals. For example, Cowen admitted that Irish differences resulted in his being "entirely out of accord with the Liberal Party and even with our friends Stansfeld and Taylor [who] ... have gone greatly back. I mean they are not as democratic as they formerly were." Likewise, when the Liberal apologist J. Guinness Rogers discussed Liberal dissension in the early

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37 The Times, February 3, 1881.
39 Letter, Cowen to Rutherford, November 14, 1882, Cowen Papers, F51.
40 Letter, Cowen to Jesse White Mario, n.d., Cowen Papers, F45.
'880s, he said, "Never, except in the case of extreme men who regard Mr. Joseph Cowen as the type of true Radicalism, have I found it producing a distrust of the Ministry, still less a desire to substitute Mr. James Lowther for Mr. W. E. Forster." Also typical would be the remarks concerning Cowen made on January 25, 1881, by Osbourne Morgan, M.P., before a rally of East Surrey Liberals. In brief, Morgan insisted that anarchy and terrorism in Ireland were "more odious" than coercion and "not even a 'Joe Cowen' administration (laughter) — could have shrunk from the responsibility of asking Parliament for powers not to coerce, but to protect liberty." The most biting denunciation of Cowen's behavior was made by Lord Rosebery on February 9, 1881, at Greenwich. Rosebery especially attacked Cowen's House of Commons speech of that day, for showing ingratitude for Gladstone's endorsement of Cowen in 1880, and for taking the attitude that it was "his duty to thwart, criticize, and stigmatize the present Government." "When stuff of this sort," said Rosebery, "is coming from a man whose utterances are spoken of as those of a prophet, the sooner we come to an end of such discussion the better."

Within Parliament, Cowen's speeches were frequently interrupted by the jeers of Ministerial supporters. Gladstone's replies to Cowen's suggestions were often sarcastic, and Harcourt, in a speech before Parliament, said:

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42 The Times, January 27, 1881.
43 Ibid., February 10, 1881.
There is no course that Her Majesty's Government could adopt [which would satisfy Cowen]. If we adopt a policy of conciliation, the hon. member for Newcastle is silent; if we feel obliged to adopt measures of coercion we find him against us; and, therefore, we must console ourselves under a disapprobation that must always exist.

In fact, according to the *Echo*, Cowen was so unpopular because of his Irish views and his "independence" that most English M.P.'s would have been happy if Cowen had been somehow arrested. Undoubtedly, most English M.P.'s would also have agreed with Sir Henry James that Cowen had destroyed "such a splendid political reputation" by supporting the Irish and Jingo cause. Cowen's Irish views were also increasingly attacked by such diverse publications as the Radical *Examiner*, the *Labour Standard* (which reflected the views of "respectable" labor), and *The Congregationalist*. All three publications were antagonistic to Cowen; *The Congregationalist* by December, 1882, had even dismissed Cowen as "having played into the hands" of the Tories by his denunciation of the conduct of the Ministry toward Ireland. *The Congregationalist* added that Cowen had become impractical and, therefore, impossible to reason with "since there is no common ground from which to start."

As Cowen was attacked increasingly for his Irish views by the Liberal party and Liberal press, so, increasingly, he became a hero to those of the far left. Although Cowen never abandoned his reliance upon

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46 See, for example, *Examiner*, October 30, 1881, *Labour Standard*, July 9, 1881, and *The Congregationalist*, December, 1882, 1024; March, 1881, 232; and April, 1881, 283.
self-help, he had actually, by the early 1880s, lost faith in the middle class and its typical representative leader Gladstone. \(^47\) He hoped instead to see an alliance between the working class and the Irish Radicals, partly to bring about necessary Irish reforms. He insisted, for example, "I cannot believe that English workmen—even whatever the English middle classes may do—will rest content until this unhappy man [Davitt] is freed from such a cruel lot." \(^48\) Cowen, by February, 1881, was most optimistic concerning the increasing political enthusiasm of the English working class after having watched a working class anti-coercion demonstration in Hyde Park. Cowen, like Hyndman and Marx, also detested the wealthy caucus control of English politics and hoped that a closer connection between English and Irish workingmen would shatter this domination. \(^49\)

In order to reduce caucus power, Cowen also advocated drastic electoral changes, such as a reduction in political campaign costs, compulsory voting to make it more difficult for an organized clique to control an election, and especially the stirring up of issues to attract public attention to politics. \(^50\) It was primarily this idea of arousing popular opinion in political questions which initially attracted Cowen to the Social Democratic Federation.

What made Cowen especially attractive to the working class and to the Federation was his long record of championing political and social

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\(^47\) See, for example, letter from Cowen to James Runciman, May 18, 1882, Cowen Papers, F43.

\(^48\) Letter, Cowen to George Mitchell, February, 1881, Cowen Papers, F43.

\(^49\) Chronicle, February 14, 1881.

\(^50\) Speech, August 28, 1880, Hansard, CCLVI, 598.
reforms and his aversion to high society.\textsuperscript{51} Within the House of Commons from 1874 to 1880, Cowen was very friendly with Burt and with Alexander MacDonald, and he was often regarded as a working class representative, both for his beliefs and his manner of dress, which resembled that of a miner "in his Sunday best." In 1874, an example of Cowen's popularity with the working class was demonstrated before W. E. Adams, Burt, and others who were on a train from Carlisle to Dumfries. While traveling they heard a commotion in which a worker, who had apparently been deprived of his seat, threatened his antagonist by saying, "Joe Cowen shall hear of this." When a stranger inquired who Cowen was, the worker replied, "Wat! Hivvor hard of Joe Cowen? He's wor member and winnot see a warking man wranged." What especially seemed to impress everybody was the fact that the worker was not from Newcastle.\textsuperscript{52}

While Cowen, between 1874 and 1880, spoke a number of times favoring additional political reforms, he endeared himself most to the working class during this period by organizing resistance to flogging in the army. Within Parliament, Cowen pleaded with the Irish not to obstruct the anti-flogging bill and secured the support of Chamberlain for that bill. Outside Parliament, Cowen in July, 1879, warned that the workers "would throw the colonels into the Thame~ if the cats were not thrown there first." He also apparently threatened, according to

\textsuperscript{51}The \textit{International Herald} and the \textit{Bee-Hive}, both defunct before the 1880s, rarely criticized Cowen, but often attacked other middle-class politicians.

\textsuperscript{52}Aaron Watson, \textit{A Great Labour Leader} (London: Brown, Langham and Company, 1908), 167-68.
MacDonald, to placard the constituency of every M.P. opposing the abolition of flogging with a picture of a British soldier being whipped. MacDonald repeated this threat often in the lobby of Commons and "was threatening every general and colonel with extermination in effigy."53

By the early 1880s, Cowen and Burt, who had disagreed on the Eastern Question, drifted almost completely apart concerning Ireland. MacDonald, on January 11, 1881, also supposedly criticized Cowen before the National Conference of Miners.54 Nevertheless, the rift only helped Cowen with the far left, which regarded Burt, MacDonald, and the Labour Standard as having sold out to the bourgeoisie. Furthermore, Cowen was a champion of the rights of the Anarchists Most and Kropotkin, and by publicizing their cause he naturally was applauded by most Radicals.55

The actual alliance between Cowen and the far left was finally made during the spring of 1881 when the Democratic Federation was formed, not as an organization to promote socialism but rather to oppose both the caucuses and coercion.56 For some time, Cowen and Henry Hyndman, who was apparently not yet a convinced socialist, had been friends and correspondents; and, therefore, it was understandable that Hyndman could inform Marx on February 28, 1881, that Cowen would be present.

54Courant, January 14, 1881.
55Kropotkin was permitted to publicize his views through Chronicle articles. Concerning Cowen's relationship with Kropotkin, see the index of the Cowen Collection for Kropotkin. The "London Letter" contained a number of references which were critical of the Government for violating Most's freedom of speech and the press; see Chronicle, March 31, May 5, and May 6, 1881.
at a "little conference between the members who have opposed the Coercion Bill and some representative working men." On March 2, the first organizational meeting was held when various Radicals met in Soho to adopt a program for a future organization. A committee was also appointed to communicate with Cowen, who had already promised "to join and assist any movement having for its object the union of various organizations on a popular basis." On March 5, Cowen presided at a second "formative" meeting of the Democratic Federation, and among those present were representatives from various Radical clubs as well as Hyndman, Lloyd Jones, the anarchist Edwin Dunn, and the positivists E. S. Beesly and Frederick Harrison. Cowen's speech included a declaration that the purpose of the meeting was to consider how to unite the workers' clubs in order to settle "the various pressing social and political questions of the day." He denounced the caucus for making "the present House of Commons the most slavish ever known" since caucus members "all acted in support of the Government no matter what the principle was at stake." Cowen also suggested the formation of a sub-committee to draft "a skeleton program" to be presented at a subsequent meeting; and Cowen, along with Beesly, Hyndman, and others, was appointed to the subcommittee. Nevertheless, Cowen's relationship to the Democratic Federation was most tenuous. Cowen simply dismissed the March 5 meeting, "if it

57 As quoted in Chushichi Tsuzuki, H. M. Hyndman and British Socialism (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 38.
58 Radical, March 5, 1881.
could be called a meeting," as a gathering of six persons. According to Edwin Dunn, the meeting resembled a "conversational gathering" rather than an organized group, primarily because Cowen did not agree as to either "when he would meet us" until late February or where he would meet the group until March 3. Therefore, Dunn insisted it was impossible to inform as many delegates as they would have wished.60 Somewhat later the Daily News announced that the meeting had been called to discuss the Coercion Act and that Cowen would not attend future meetings.61 Although the Radical immediately denied this statement it was announced at the next meeting of the Democratic Federation on March 19 that Cowen would not preside "until the basis of their movement had been established (surprise)."62

In effect, this ended Cowen's active connection with the Democratic Federation, although nobody was really sure why Cowen ceased to cooperate. J. Morrison Davidson, who was present at the early meetings cited "some unexplicable misunderstanding" as the reason why Cowen, "the best informed Democrat in Britain, and since Mazzini's death, perhaps the best in Europe—ceased to take any further active interest in the movement."63 Unlike other breakaways from the Federation, however, Cowen did not split because of Hyndman's overbearing personality. Instead, Cowen's withdrawal was more likely due to his inability to work with anyone except those who would be subordinate

60Chronicle, March 16, 1881. Letter Edwin Dunn to Radical, March 9, 1881; Radical, March 12, 1881.
61Daily News, March 11, 1881, as quoted by Radical, March 12, 1881.
62Courant, March 25, 1881.
to him.

Indirectly, Cowen continued to have contact with Hyndman and the Democratic Federation; and as late as June 8, 1881, at the founding conference of the Federation, Hyndman could still announce that only Cowen's previous commitment to an event in Newcastle had prevented his being present. On October 23, 1881, Hyndman praised him at a Democratic Federation rally held to support the Irish:

Thank God, a noble Englishman, my friend Joseph Cowen, the member for Newcastle, went over to Ireland last night. He is no Brummagen Radical like Joseph Chamberlain, who wirepulls himself into office and then conspires against the cause of the people to serve his own dirty ambition. No; Joseph Cowen has gone to Ireland to show the people of Ireland that there is at least one English Radical member who dares to be true to the faith that is in him, who dares stand shoulder to shoulder with an afflicted people in their distress.

Hyndman, even after he began to push socialist ideas, continued to remain friendly toward Cowen; and Justice, the organ of the Social Democratic Federation as of 1884, never criticized Cowen even after he denounced socialism. Cowen, likewise, continued to correspond with Hyndman, asking, "When are you best seen at Westminster Chambers?" Cowen also agreed to chair a Federation demonstration protesting coercion in 1882, although, as he informed J. Boyd Kinnear, he was

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64Reynold's Newspaper, as quoted by Wilkins, 203.
65Radical, October 29, 1881.
66Letter, Cowen to Hyndman, February, 1882, Cowen Papers F43.
uncertain "whether our friend Hyndman does not greatly over-estimate
the value of the demonstration." 67

On June 11, various representatives of the Federation, the
Radical and the Republican societies, the trade unions, and Irish
nationalists assembled at thirteen centers and marched on Trafalgar
Square. According to The Times, Cowen's platform attracted the largest
crowd. His speech on this occasion consisted of his usual denunciation
of coercion and praise for the demonstrators since they proved that
some Englishmen were favorable toward Ireland. 68

This appearance of Cowen's was typical of the actions for which
the far left admired him. According to the Radical, Cowen was the only
English M.P. present at the demonstration, while the other "so-called
representatives of the people" cancelled out at the last moment.

And where was Burt, where Broadhurst, these men of the people?
Not to be seen. We dare say Mr. Cowen would claim no particular
credit for appearing alone and unbacked by the "respectables."
He occupied at the Hyde Park gathering very much the position he
has occupied all his life, and not-caring much what Society
thinks. 69

It was essentially Cowen's pro-Irish speeches, together with his anti-
caucus stand which encouraged the Radical to claim he "would make a
good leader of a new Radical party—a non-Ministerial Radical party." 70
It also encouraged a member of the Executive of the Radical Magna Charta
Association, in September, 1881, to propose Cowen as the English equiva-
 lent of Parnell and, therefore, the natural "leader of the English

67 Ibid., letter, Cowen to J. Boyd Kinnear, n.d., Cowen Papers, F43.
68 The Times, June 12, 1882.
69 Radical, June 24, 1882.
70 Ibid., January 15, 1881.
people."

What hurt Cowen's prestige among the left, however, was his association with Maltman Barry. Barry, who had been a Tory spy at the Hague Congress of the First International, had also been one of the leading working class champions of Beaconsfield's foreign policy. According to Dilke, Barry, the sub-editor of the Whitehall Review, was not only a police spy in April, 1881, but was also responsible for the "Freeheit lie." In 1880, Barry dedicated a pamphlet, The Catechism of the Eastern Question, by "Special Permission" to Joseph Cowen. In the dedication, Barry praised Cowen for loving "freedom and his country better" than his party and for having remained "loyal to the Principles of Liberty and True Democracy" by defying "the threats of Furious Partisans." By March, 1881, Barry again praised Cowen as the champion of liberty against all caucuses, including that of Hyndman, who had controlled the new working class party. Barry attacked this narrow control by Hyndman as perhaps sufficient "for one of those private caucuses which Mr. Cowen so justly condemns, but it is wholly inadequate as a basis for the building up of a great working class party."

In November, 1882, Barry introduced approximately sixty "Democrats of the Chartist type" to Cowen. The purpose of the deputation was to protest the cloture as a vehicle of bourgeois political infringements upon minority rights and freedom of speech which also resulted in the delaying of full working class enfranchisement. On November 20,

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71Pall Mall Gazette, September 8, 1881, as quoted by Wilkins, 205.
72Dilke Papers, ADD MSS 43924, f201.
74Letter, Barry to Radical, March 9, 1881, Radical, March 12, 1881.
75Labour Standard, November 18, 1882.
Barry read before a rally a letter from Cowen which promised to submit their petition protesting the cloture. "I learn with satisfaction," wrote Cowen, "that the London working men are taking independent action, and that they mean in the future to keep clear of the machine political." The effect of Cowen's association with Barry, however, made Cowen appear ridiculous and provided ample ammunition for Chamberlain to criticize this connection in a speech on December 19 at the annual meeting of the National Liberal Federation. Chamberlain especially criticized the group by insisting that the deputation had been hired at one shilling per head for the meeting.

Besides opposing the Liberals for their Irish policy and their dependence upon the caucus, Cowen also was generally critical of the Government's imperial and foreign policy. Concerning Afghanistan and South Africa, Cowen insisted that the Liberals were merely continuing Conservative policies despite Liberal denunciation of these same policies while out of office.

He also insisted the Liberals were following the Conservative-approved Treaty of Berlin, except where its provisions were favorable toward Turkey. He charged further that the Liberals had shelved their advocacy of national self-determination in the case of the non-Christian Albanians by sending a fleet in September, 1880, to force the inhabitants of Dulcigno to join the "barbarous" Montenegrans, whose

76 Courant, November 24, 1882.
77 Chronicle, December 20, 1882.
78 Ibid., July 21, 1880.
79 Jones, 184.
prince was a mere Russian stipendiary.\textsuperscript{80}

The most important development during this period, after Ireland, was Britain's invasion of Egypt. Toward the end of 1881 a nationalist insurrection was started in Egypt by Colonel Arabi, who was viewed by the Government as a threat to British interests. Cowen not only viewed Arabi as a native nationalist but denied he was even unfriendly toward England. Cowen insisted that intervention was unnecessary (which pleased the anti-imperialists) while eventually concluding that the only future alternative to annexation was anarchy and pillage (which pleased the imperialists). In denouncing the Government's indecision, Cowen again won praise from Conservatives. In brief, he objected to the Government's lack of Parliamentary approval of its course of action, its destruction of a native nationalist movement "by bombs and bayonets," and its hypocrisy in claiming to have opposed "military despotism" after having changed Ireland into "a vast barracks."\textsuperscript{81}

Nationally, Cowen's support of the Irish and his extremely harsh criticism of the Government's Irish and foreign policy had separated him in all but name from the Liberal party. However, the Radicals and the Irish, men such as Hyndman, admired his attack on the Gladstonian government and tried to capitalize upon Cowen's fame and reputation. The Tories, likewise, viewed Cowen as the major enemy of their enemies and thus praised him extensively.

\textsuperscript{81}Jones, 232-35. Letter, Cowen to Mrs. Josephine Butler, August 1, 1882, Cowen Papers, F\textsuperscript{48}. Letter, Cowen to Colonel Cory, June 5, 1882, Cowen Papers, F\textsuperscript{43}. \textit{Chronicle}, July 26, 1882.
The overall result of Cowen's political behavior from 1880 to 1882 was his total alienation from the Liberal Association of Newcastle, which gradually began to regard him as a worse evil than Conservatism. Nevertheless, the more Cowen became alienated from the Newcastle Association, the more he was praised by the Irish, the newly founded Democratic Federation, and various Conservatives.

Within Newcastle, Cowen was able to take advantage of the caucus split on coercion. The Junior Liberal Club, however, resolved on February 7, 1881, by a 23-to-9 vote and after a heated debate, that both Newcastle representatives should support the Government's Irish policy, including coercion.¹ This resolution enabled Cowen in replying to insist he would oppose the Coercion Bill "on every occasion and at every point by all the resources in my power." Cowen also promised in case the bill passed to "delay its operation" and try to minimize "the despotic powers that the Government are seeking to obtain." Cowen also replied to an Association criticism of his failure to support Gladstone concerning Ireland by "regretting" that he had "opposed the suspension of the privileges of the Constitution for the Irish people."² Both these replies of Cowen were read and discussed at numerous Irish

¹Chronicle, February 8, 1881.
meetings in the Newcastle area and subsequently increased the already present suspicion of the Irish toward Orthodox Liberalism in Newcastle.

Cowen also delighted the Newcastle Irish with the pro-Irish editorials of the *Chronicle* and the utilization of Tim Healy, T. P. O'Connor, and Michall Davitt as columnists for the *Chronicle*. Also significant was Cowen's formation of a Newcastle deputation of two miners and an engineer which visited Ireland in June and July of 1881. The deputation was led by John Bryson, who had recently been deposed as head of the Northumberland Miners Association partly because of his pro-Irish views. Bryson, who was a leading proponent of Land League activities, was charged secretly by John Pringle, one of his leading opponents, with having been assisted "by that degenerated organ the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, which from week-end to week-end wallows in the mire of false and anonymous accusations and insulting personalities."3 Cowen had instructed Thomas Sexton, M. P., then the virtual head of the Land League, to provide the names of people to interview and places to visit throughout Ireland.4 Cowen also underwrote the entire cost of the deputation and carefully planned its composition and other details.5 The deputation regularly sent reports which were printed by the *Chronicle* under sub-heads such as "A Village Tyrant" (Clifford Lloyd), "A Sheriff's Sale," "How Landlords Apply the Screw," and "How a Liberal Government helps an insolent agent to extort an

3Letter, Pringle to Grey, May 16, 1881, Grey Papers, 208/11.
5There are many letters in the Cowen Papers from Cowen to the editor of the *Chronicle* pertaining to the deputation.
unjust rent." The conclusion of the deputation, namely, that little concern was shown over the Land Act while coercion was universally detested surprised nobody. Nevertheless, despite their subjectivity, these reports served as excellent propaganda among the Newcastle Irish.

Cowan also spoke at numerous Irish meetings, and when he was unable to attend, Dr. Rutherford would often take the podium to speak in favor of the Irish and in praise of Cowen. Newcastle Irish rallies also attracted almost all prominent Irish Nationalist Parliamentarians, who would invariably praise Cowen before the local audience.

The reaction to Cowen's Irish view and the influence of his Chronicle was a very important factor in influencing public opinion in Northeastern England. The Labour Standard, which by 1881 had become most hostile toward Cowen's Irish views, claimed that Cowen's influence was the major factor behind the unfavorable opinion in the Northeast toward the arrest of Dillon and Parnell. The Congregationalist, which was even more anti-Cowen than the Labour Standard, admitted in March, 1881, that sympathy for "Irish Malcontents" was found only in "the districts where Mr. Cowen is still regarded as a leader." The Congregationalist, in stressing the Chronicle's alleged support of Conservative, emphasized that it "circulates in all the mining villages of Durham, and wherever it goes it is a divisive force in the Liberal party."

Cowen's attacks upon the Government's Irish policy and the

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6Chronicle, June 6, July 7, July 8, July 18, July 21, July 22, 1881.
7Labour Standard, May 7, and October 22, 1881.
8The Congregationalist, March, 1881, 238; October, 1881, 869-70.
subsequent caucus defense of the Government were key factors in turning the Irish against the Liberal Association and against Ashton Dilke, who was regarded as the caucus representative. Dilke in October, 1881, regretted that many caucus supporters took "so strong a line" on Cowen's voting against coercion. Instead, Dilke admitted that he, not Cowen, had deviated from his election pledge opposing Irish coercion, and, therefore, he and not Cowen owed his constituents an explanation. Nevertheless, on November 22, 1881, the Newcastle Land League so disrupted one of his rallies that he was unable to speak. Furthermore, at Newcastle Irish meetings, various speakers promised to turn out Dilke at the next election.9

Besides having Irish support, Cowen received endorsement within Newcastle from various individuals and interests approving of his ideas on foreign policy. Since the time of his opposition to the "Atrocitarians," Cowen was continually being praised by members of the Foreign Affairs Association at meetings and through letters to the editor of the Chronicle. More important were occasional bi-partisan meetings supporting foreign policy notions similar to those of Cowen. On October 12, 1880, for example, a meeting was held to protest Gladstone's bellicosity toward Turkey. Among those participating were George Crawshay, the leading disciple of Urquhart in the Newcastle area, Elijah Copland, a prominent carver and soon-to-become leader of the Newcastle Democratic Federation, Thomas Gregson, a prominent Covenite and one of

9Chronicle, October 15, and November 23, 1881.
the oldest active Liberals in the Tyneside area, and James Hall, a widely respected Conservative shipowner. At the meeting, Hall and others praised Cowen, but when prominent members of the Liberal Association attempted to move an amendment to the resolution, the meeting disbanded in confusion. Both Conservative newspapers also generally praised Cowen, especially concerning his speeches on foreign affairs and attacks on Gladstonian liberalism, and thus almost all of the newspaper-reading voters in Newcastle read articles which praised Cowen against his enemies.

Cowen was also supported by working class groups who felt that the caucus was closed to all but the middle class because of such things as its holding key meetings during weekday hours when the working class could not possibly attend. Furthermore, Cowen had acquired an almost legendary reputation in the Newcastle area as the "Tribune" of the people for his past activities on behalf of the common people. It must also be emphasized that while Cowen always praised self-help and was suspicious of governmental interference, many prominent members of the working class in Newcastle also denounced the excessive centralization tendencies of the time.

On February 3, 1882, a branch of the Democratic Federation in Newcastle held its first public meeting. Since it viewed its main purpose as educational, its activities consisted primarily of lectures by speakers such as Elijah Copland, its President Lloyd Jones, Prince

Kropotkin, and others on topics such as foreign affairs, the caucus, and Ireland. At many of the meetings Cowen was eulogized. Perhaps the best example of this eulogizing was at a February 22 meeting in Newcastle when Hyndman stressed that Cowen represented the working class. Subsequent speakers that evening also identified Cowen's career with democracy and the political education of the working class. 11

Cowen helped the Federation by sending it such things as state papers concerning Central Asia and Egypt to further its discussions. He also sent occasional inspirational letters which were read at meetings. One such letter attacked the Government's legislation "against opinion" and noted the similarity between English and Russian despotism and Cowen's contention that both he and Kropotkin struggled against a common enemy. 12

On November 6, 1882, Cowen even chaired a Democratic Federation meeting for Lloyd Jones. In introducing Jones, Cowen condemned the electoral inequality of the time, urged the imitation of Nihilist zeal in propagating the cause of democracy, and praised the Federation's work for increased political freedom. 13

Undoubtedly the leading members of the Federation had been sympathetic to Cowen even before a Newcastle branch was established, but Cowen now had another important pressure group which could be counted on to support him.

One of the key factors which Cowen repeatedly blamed for the disastrous Irish and foreign policy of the Government was the caucus, which tried to make M.P.s act as delegates whose sole purpose was to

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13Courant, November 10, 1882.
offer blind support to Gladstone. Cowen accused the Newcastle caucus, especially in his annual speeches before his constituents in January, 1881 and 1882, of desiring to act as a funnel between Cowen and the people. He also charged that the Association leaders were a clique who could control the political organization after public opinion waned concerning politics. He accused them of being power hungry in attempting to control the Chronicle and to dominate city and Parliamentary politics while really not representing the ideals of Newcastle Liberalism. Furthermore, he and many sympathizers charged the caucus leaders with having only recently concerned themselves with politics, while he had been active in public life for the previous thirty years. Finally he accused the caucus of attacking him on personal grounds. These attacks, he said, culminated in the sending of uncomplimentary remarks about Cowen to other M. P.'s and the sending of anonymous threats—such as drawings of "gibbets, coffins, and other deadly apparatus"—to Cowen, himself.14

The Liberal Association, however, responded slowly to the Cowenite charges. It was not until September 9, 1880, that its Executive Committee acknowledged Cowen's February letter of resignation from the Association.15 William James, M.P., at the annual meeting of the Gateshead Liberal Association in October, 1880, declared that Liberals "ought to remain satisfied that Mr. Cowen would, in the main, be willing to act

14 See Jones, 177-92, 218-19.
15 Chronicle, September 23, 1880. Some newspapers even understood this to mean that Cowen had resigned in September, 1880; see, for example, The Times, September 23, 1880.
in support of Liberal principles and of the party to which he so long belonged." In reply to a taunt that Cowen was a Tory, James urged patience and tolerance for those whose views differed from those of the Association.\textsuperscript{16} A similar plea for toleration of Cowen was shown at the annual meeting of the South Northumberland Liberal Association on January 29, 1881. At this meeting there was considerable opposition to the re-election of Cowen as one of the vice-presidents of the Association because, as one critic of Cowen declared, "if Cowen had his way there would be no Association." Councillor Dixon denied that criticism of Cowen might alienate Cowen further from Liberalism since, "he can't get much further away." Nevertheless, after considerable discussion, the appeals for unity and toleration were so successful that Cowen was re-elected unanimously.\textsuperscript{17} On March 31, 1881, Cowen was also re-elected as one of the vice-presidents of the Junior Liberal Association, despite an attempt to remove his name from consideration.\textsuperscript{18}

In January, 1881, however, considerable anti-Cowen sentiment had been shown at the various Liberal ward meetings which met to elect representatives to the General and Executive Committees. Various speakers criticized Cowen's speech of January 3, in which he had denounced the caucus; many speakers compared the Association's volunteer canvassers at the last general election with Cowen's paid canvassers. There were also the usual criticisms of the \textit{Chronicle} and the "London Letter," but very few direct attacks on Cowen.\textsuperscript{19}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{16}Courant, October 8, 1880.
\item \textsuperscript{17}Ibid., February 4, 1881.
\item \textsuperscript{18}Chronicle, April 1, 1881.
\item \textsuperscript{19}Ibid., January 11, January 12, January 13, January 14, and January 15, 1881.
\end{itemize}
On March 12, the General Committee, after rejecting both a very harsh resolution against Cowen and a resolution urging conciliation, passed a resolution criticizing Cowen's failure to support the Government and his "attitude of hostility towards it." The committee decided, however, not to discuss "the question of selecting a candidate in place of Mr. Joseph Cowen at the next election, as they already had two members, and it was unnecessary to re-open a question that was settled at the last general election." On June 3, a semi-private Liberal meeting met ostensibly to discuss both the possibility of starting a new morning Liberal newspaper and the representation of Newcastle. Although Swan indicated at the meeting that he hoped to see the representative question discussed, practically the entire meeting was devoted to discussion of the newspaper question. Discussion of representation was brief and may be summarized in Watson's statement that the Association should ascertain whether Cowen was against it and, if so, the members should try to unseat him.

Toward the end of 1881, the caucus had taken a much firmer line against Cowen. In December, 1881, the Alnwick Junior Liberal Club elected James to replace Cowen as a vice-president. In January, 1882, extremely bitter disagreements erupted at the annual meeting of the South Northumberland Liberal Association concerning the re-election of Cowen as a vice-president. One speaker who advocated Cowen's re-election claimed that Cowen had contributed generously to the Association and

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20 Eighth Annual Report of the Newcastle Liberal Association, 1881. These reports are located in the Newcastle Central Library, Newcastle, England.
21 Chronicle, June 4, 1881.
22 Courant, December 31, 1881.
had in 1879, "attended most assiduously to his duties" as a member of the committee to select a Parliamentary candidate for the county seat. Sir Charles Trevelyan, chairman of the meeting, criticized Cowen's "objectionable, destructive opinions," but urged the Association not to sever relations as such a move might prevent the "honest and conscientious" Cowen from rejoining the fold.

Anti-Cowenites at the meeting, however, were much more extreme than they had been the previous year. One member denounced Cowen as unfit to participate in any Liberal Committee which chose candidates for constituencies. Swan also opposed Cowen's re-election since Cowen was "doing far more harm to the Liberal cause than any Conservative that could possibly be named in this county." Nevertheless, Cowen was once again re-elected as a vice-president.23

This harsh anti-Cowen sentiment was also reflected in the various Newcastle ward meetings of 1882. At the first meeting, on January 23, Watson stressed that one of the first duties of the Executive Committee was to settle the question of Newcastle representation. He warned that when an M.P.'s independence resulted in support of the opponents of Liberalism, then the M.P. was wrong. At a different meeting, Henry Clapham charged that Cowen had deserted to the opposition and, therefore, had to be ousted. The finality of the Association's break with Cowen can be demonstrated by the failure of Rutherford to be re-elected to the General Committee and by the passage of a ward resolution requesting that the first meeting of the General Committee be devoted to

23Chronicle, January 30, 1882.
the discussion of the question of finding a candidate to replace Cowen.24

The General Committee, on February 23, 1882, decided overwhelmingly to unseat Cowen at the next general election by running two other Liberal candidates.25

The most important factor in the caucus shift away from Cowen was the increasingly harsh anti-Government tone of the Chronicle and the failure of the Association to establish a rival daily. In early 1881, both the South Northumberland Liberal Association and the Newcastle General Committee emphasized the need for a Liberal daily,26 and on June 3 at a special private meeting of the Association, members discussed the possibility of establishing a morning Liberal paper. Watson, at this meeting, stressed that the Chronicle had attacked the Association in an "unprincipled, unfair, and despicable" manner by suppressing facts and deliberately misinterpreting statements, and by levying false incriminations at true Liberals such as Thomas Burt. Watson also estimated that the cost of establishing a newspaper would be no more than £20,000.

Among the other speakers who promised to collect subscriptions or who denounced the Chronicle, the most important was James Joicey, a wealthy colliery owner. Joicey, after promising to subscribe money for the venture, warned that Cowen was:

... a man of great persistency of purpose and a continual dropping of water would wear away stone. Mr. Cowen had worked hard with his paper to turn the people one way, and now for the past four years he had been turning them another. He was gradually poisoning the minds of the working men of this district, and his influence, and the influence of his paper was most perfidious.

24 Ibid., January 24, January 26, January 27, 1882.
25 Ibid., February 24, 1882.
As a result of the meeting, a six-man committee including Joicey, Swan and Watson, was formed to establish a morning paper.27

By September the project was in serious difficulty, according to Sir Charles Trevelyan. Although still admitting a "kindness" for Cowen, Trevelyan felt Liberalism had been "misrepresented" by the Chronicle in the general election of 1880. Furthermore, he denounced the Chronicle as being "made up of Communism, Jingoism and Low Sport," as being "totally unworthy to be the organ of the Liberal Party in two such counties as Northumberland and Durham," and as being "positively conducive to political and personal demoralization." Therefore, Trevelyan willingly subscribed £50 as a first installment toward the creation of a morning Liberal paper controlled by Watson. Instead of buying a share in a morning daily paper, however, Trevelyan discovered his money financed what he called "a small Evening Paper conducted upon principles which are diametrically opposed to those of our Party." Trevelyan threatened a public lawsuit unless restitution was made.28

In its annual report for 1881, the Association admitted that, just at the point of success, it failed to establish a paper "through circumstances over which we had no control."29

This meant, therefore, that Orthodox Liberalism would continue to be at the mercy of hostile newspapers. Leading Liberals bitterly complained, as did Ashton Dilke on October 14, 1881, that the Chronicle

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27Chronicle, June 4, 1881.
29Eighth Annual Report of the Newcastle Liberal Association, 1881.
falsely reported their speeches. Another Liberal charged that the Chronicle had deliberately shortchanged Gladstone at Leeds by giving his speech only 10 columns of print. A different Association member claimed that the reporting of the speech was good but that the editorial on the speech was subject to criticism.

The most detailed criticism of the Chronicle, however, was James Annand's pamphlet *A Plain Letter to Joseph Cowen, M.P.* Annand, who had been dismissed in 1878 as editor of the Chronicle, had naturally become very critical of Cowen, whom he accused of "Jingoism, of advocating anarchy through his Irish policy, and of a hatred for Gladstone. Nevertheless, Annand insisted it was the conduct of the Chronicle rather than Cowen's votes or speeches which initially alienated Cowen from the Liberal party. Annand also stressed that Cowen's "political opponents in this district can only speak through you [Cowen], and through your newspaper." As a result, Cowen, through his paper, had often made "a successful meeting of [his] opponents" seem to be a failure. Finally, said Annand, Cowen had used his Parliamentary seat for personal gain through his "London Letter" attacks on Liberalism and had even become known as "the Member for the Newcastle Chronicle" in Parliamentary circles.

What really shocked Liberals concerning the Chronicle's power was the result of the bye-election for North Durham in August and September of 1881. In this election, the Conservative Sir George Elliot

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30 *Chronicle*, October 15, 1881.
31 Ibid.
was victorious on September 3 by a margin of 652 votes out of 10,444. Through the entire election the *Chronicle* editorials criticized the Liberal candidate James Laing for being too moderate, especially on Irish affairs, and for being too much of a Ministerialist. The *Chronicle* also claimed that a better candidate should have been selected and blamed the Association "Managers" for having chosen Laing. Editorials also stressed that Elliot, unlike Laing, promised concessions to Ireland, such as the release of Irish prisoners, and predicted that Elliot would lean to the "left" of his party. While it is true that the *Chronicle* did endorse Laing, it was a most half-hearted manner of support.\(^3^3\)

During the campaign, Cowen's name was rarely mentioned by either side. At a Laing rally, one speaker began to criticize the "London Letter" but was interrupted by pro-Cowen cheers. Sir Wilfred Lawson tried to praise Cowen at another Liberal rally, but after several interruptions he announced he would cease discussing the topic of Cowen because it caused "fermentation," and everybody realized how strongly Lawson, the leading temperance advocate, opposed "fermenting."\(^3^4\)

Immediately after the results of the election were known, Orthodox Liberals met at the Sunderland Liberal Club to analyze the causes of defeat. Edward C. Robson, who presided over this meeting, stressed the Liquor and Irish Alliance with Conservatives as factors in the defeat. He also emphasized that Liberalism was hurt by "the half-hearted support of a so-called Radical newspaper on the Tyne" and by the absence

\(^{33}\) *Chronicle*, August 31, September 1, September 2, and September 5, 1881.

\(^{34}\) *Chronicle*, September 1, and September 2, 1881.
of one of their "prominent friends." One outcome of this election, therefore, was undoubtedly the Liberals' realization that something had to be done about Cowen.  

In January, 1882, a ward meeting formally requested that the General Committee at the earliest possible opportunity discuss the question of replacing Cowen. On February 23, before 150 to 300 participants, the General Committee finally settled the official attitude of the Association toward Cowen. At this meeting Cowen was both criticized and defended. Although almost every possible objection to him was mentioned, the primary factor was criticism of his newspaper. A Mr. Thompson, who described himself as pro-Cowen and "an old politician," said, "they were not trying Mr. Cowen upon a fair issue. The speakers seemed to be judging him more from what had followed from his paper than from what he had done himself." This charge was indirectly admitted by the extremely anti-Cowenite sponsor of the resolution. Harry Clapham emphasized that Cowen had immense influence, that his "fervid eloquence is well calculated to bewitch the natives, and that the powerful newspaper he has at his back more than doubles his personal influence. . . ."

The most detailed speech illustrating the anti-Chronicle feeling was made by R. S. Watson, who chaired the meeting. Watson insisted that hope of reconciling the Association and Cowen was destroyed by Cowen's most recent speech, especially his "foolish and sneering statement that we objected to the conduct of the Chronicle because Mr. Cowen did not take the Liberal party into partnership with him." He continued:

35Chronicle, September 5, 1881. The Times, September 5, 1881.  
36Chronicle, January 27, 1882.
When we consider what an immense political engine the Chronicle is; when we remember that from it Mr. Cowen obtains great political power and material wealth; when we reflect that it owes its influence to the fact that Mr. Cowen is its proprietor; it becomes an untenable proposition that he shall refuse to be responsible for the sentiments propounded by it. (Loud cheers.) The conduct of the Chronicle! What is it? Every word that can be said against the actions of the Liberal party, or of the men who were placed at its head by the suffrages of an enormous majority of the English people, is said by the Daily Chronicle. If there has been anything in English history which should have evoked the unwilling admiration even of political foes, it has been the conduct of that grand old man who, at times almost single-handed, has been fighting patiently, faithfully, unweariedly, the battle of Liberty and Progress. (Loud cheers.) He has been pursued with ferocity by his opponents, and with relentless, merciless, pitiless savagery by the Newcastle Daily Chronicle. (Renewed applause.) Gentlemen, this is the danger to which we are exposed. (Hear, hear.) What is the position when it is known that Mr. Cowen is its proprietor? That every blow from the Newcastle Daily Chronicle comes from Mr. Cowen himself; it comes from one who was returned as a Liberal representative; and we had better face an open foe than an apparent friend.

George Luckley claimed Cowen's views on Ireland and the Eastern Question were not the reason for his being challenged. Instead, he said, it was Cowen's desire to overthrow the Government, as shown by the Chronicle, which made the Association oppose him. "I want to know," said Luckley, "how it is that in his 'London Letters' he is incessantly disparaging the PERSONNEL of the present Government, and extenuating, excusing and even eulogising, such men as Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. Ashmead Bartlett." Councillor Thomas Richardson, after summarizing Cowen's faults, claimed, "Nothing has distressed me more than that this able and admirably conducted newspaper should have 'ratted' as it has done, is now doing its best to upset the existing Liberal administration." J. C. Sweeney denounced the Chronicle because "Every Conservative paper was cutting constantly from the London correspondence of the Chronicle" and, therefore, making Newcastle Liberalism appear ridiculous. John
Cameron Swan accused the Chronicle of ruining Gladstone's plans for the formation of a European Concert. "Whatever could be done to prejudice the action of the Government—to make success in that action impossible—was certainly done by the Newcastle Chronicle and by Mr. Cowen in his contributions to that newspaper."

There were, of course, other charges against Cowen, which somewhat overlapped with criticism of Cowen's journalistic endeavors. Speaker after speaker insisted Cowen had become an ally of Conservatives. Sweeney, for example, cited the Journal's praise of Cowen. Clapham insisted Cowen was becoming another John Arthur Roebuck and predicted that unless the Association acted quickly, Newcastle would become as Conservative a town as Sheffield. Luckley admitted that, although Cowen was a good Radical, "for some inescrutable reason he is desirous that the Government should be disparaged, should be lowered, and should come into disrepute, and he would be gratified if it were out of power." Swan insisted that the entire controversy could be reduced to the rhetorical question: "Did Mr. Cowen now, as they believed he did at one time, represent their opinions in the House of Commons?"

Various explanations were offered as to how and why Cowen became alienated from the Gladstonian Government and the Newcastle caucus. As to the cause of the split, several speakers blamed Cowen's dislike of Gladstone; others emphasized differences in foreign policy; and several admitted they had no explanation. Certain speakers emphasized their disapproval of Cowen's ideas on foreign affairs or some aspect of his Irish
policy, but other anti-Covenites dismissed these differences as unimportant as reasons for their rejecting Cowen. Only a Mr. Johnson claimed he did not agree with Cowen on anything. Nobody except Whitten would admit to any personal animosity toward Cowen, and Watson even denounced Whitten's "literary garbage which from time to time has disfigured the walls of Newcastle" and dismissed it "as the outcome of the foolish imaginings of a diseased and somewhat leprous mind. (Loud applause.)" (Mr. Whitten: 'It's true, every word of it'.)

Only thirteen persons objected to the resolution, and the Executive Committee subsequently concurred with the General Committee's desire to replace Cowen. Shortly thereafter, caucus committees began to negotiate with prospective candidates. Except in the case of J. W. Pease, who declined the Parliamentary offer, the negotiations were conducted in such secretive conditions that even members of the Executive Committee were sometimes not kept informed. Eventually, John Morley became the selected nominee.

Morley, after his failure to obtain a seat in 1880, continued to remain interested in a future candidacy. Although Morley had become quite critical of Cowen in the late 1870s, he remained outwardly friendly toward Cowen. In November, 1881, Morley stayed at Cowen's house while participating in a meeting of the Northern Liberal Association, and a Chronicle editorial even praised Morley's long speech before the Association. In fact, Morley's pro-Irish views were so well known that one

37 The most detailed account of the meeting is the report of the Liberal Association in the Newcastle Central Library. See also Chronicle, February 24, 1882.
38 Courant, March 31, 1882.
39 See Chronicle, December 8, 1882, for complaints by Liberal Association members.
participant at the General Committee's meeting of March, 1882, even warned that if the Association rejected Cowen, then Cowen might run with Morley against any Association candidate.40

By no means, however, did Morley change his opinion concerning Cowen.

Cowen [he wrote] is a really extraordinary creature. He was full of hospitality and civility. But he is about as fit for a working member of Parliament as I am fit to be manager of a bank or a cotton factory. He is a conspirator to the end of his fingers: shifty, double, self-deceived: lives in the true delusion of all plotters and exiles, that the world is all on his side; hates all governments as governments, whether Czar's, Gambetta's, or Gladstone's.

Yet, when the Liberal Association contacted Morley in March, 1882, he refused to commit himself immediately, but insisted Newcastle was the area he most wanted to represent.41

The special committee of the Association secretly continued to negotiate with various politicians, but its inability to select a candidate annoyed many of its more extreme anti-Cowenites. At the Association's annual public meeting on December 7, a number of objections were made concerning Watson's failure to discuss the issue of replacing Cowen. George Luckley sharply insisted that the "first aim" of the Association was the elimination of Cowen even if it meant the success of two Tory candidates because "two Tories would do less harm to the

40Chronicle, November 24, 1881, and February 24, 1882.
Government and to the Liberal cause than Mr. Cowen was doing." At an annual ward meeting in January, 1883, Association members such as John Havelock made the denunciation of Cowen their "special topic."42

What most Orthodox Liberals failed to realize, however, was that Ashton Dilke's deteriorating health changed the issue of trying simply to replace Cowen. Instead, with the increasing probability of having to find someone to replace Dilke and then win a bye-election, the Association realized it would be difficult to struggle against the Coven-ites and Tories simultaneously. Therefore, by December, 1882, Watson again communicated with Morley concerning the representation of Newcastle. Morley quickly responded to Watson that he would be willing to run "if events should make it necessary for you to find a candidate suddenly in case of Mr. Dilke's retirement," and if Morley's share of the campaign expenses were not too heavy. Morley insisted that he did not want to run as the opponent of Cowen and, in effect, would seek the Liberal nomination only after Dilke was publicly willing to resign. Morley rejected Watson's request "to come forward at an early date—irrespective of Dilke's retirement." He wrote:

I should be the opposing candidate to Mr. Cowen, and nothing else. Now this would most likely have the effect of provoking him to active hostility, if Dilke's retirement necessitated a bye-election. It might make him bring out (either secretly or openly) some man in such a case, who would carry off Radical voters enough to put me below the Tory. If on the other hand, I did not appear until there was a vacancy. Cowen would have no excuse for opposing me, he might even not be particularly anxious to oppose. Anyhow, it would make things awkward for him.43

42Chronicle, December 8, 1882, and January 24, 1883.
43Letter, Morley to Watson, December 3, 1882, Watson Papers, RSW 3.
Morley readily sympathized with Watson's "difficulty in holding back the more ardent DOGS in your pack," but stressed the certainty of victory by waiting and the fact that he could silence any Chronicle criticism of the caucus' choosing an outsider by showing Cowen's letters "expressly inviting me to offer myself in 1878-9." Finally Morley agreed with Watson about the "ultimate battle," a reference which could only have pertained to a final struggle against Cowen. \(^{44}\)

Throughout January, 1883, there were numerous negotiations and difficulties pertaining to such things as Morley's share of expenses and his determination "not to let the base, bloody and brutal Whigs play any tricks with me." \(^{45}\) The mood of Morley and his supporters, however, was very optimistic. Chamberlain doubted that "Cowen would make any sign," and he felt the Tories would have "no chance at a bye-election." \(^{46}\) Morley also agreed that Cowen and his friends would probably "not be very actively hostile in any way" since the Covenites admitted the Association was entitled to one seat. Morley even believed the Tories would oppose his election only if the Duke of Northumberland "will produce money, which the said Duke is not fond of doing." In fact, Morley was even told by Watson that he should win by two or three thousand votes "unless there is some outsider spring by J. C. or otherwise making a split on our Side." \(^{47}\)

\(^{44}\) Letter, Morley to Watson, December 18, 1882, Watson Papers, RSW4.  
\(^{45}\) Letter, Morley to Watson, January 11, 1883, Watson Papers, RSW5.  
\(^{46}\) Letter, Morley to Watson, January 11, 1883, Watson Papers, RSW5.  
\(^{47}\) Letter, Morley to Chamberlain, January 24, 1883, Chamberlain Papers, 5/54/482.  
\(^{48}\) Letter, Chamberlain to Sir Charles Dilke, January 16, 1883, Dilke Papers, ADD MSS 43886, f.11.  
\(^{49}\) Letter, Morley to Chamberlain, January 26, 1883, Chamberlain Papers, 5/54/484.
Once Morley had decided to run, the only major question was when to announce Dilke's retirement and Morley's candidacy. Morley and Chamberlain supported the caucus' desire to maintain secrecy on this issue, but Morley preferred a two-week period between the announcement of Dilke's retirement and the election writ in order to silence any Tory and Cowenite charges that Liberals had no real opportunity of selecting a candidate. Morley's suggestion was accepted, and on February 8 Dilke's resignation, on the grounds of poor health, was published.\(^{48}\)

The next day, Morley addressed the Liberal 500 and emphasized that he would support the Government 99 percent of the time—the one percent excluded involved coercion. The caucus unanimously approved Morley as the representative of the Association, subject only to a formal appearance before the Newcastle public.\(^{49}\)

Morley's candidacy had fooled all the Newcastle papers and The Times, which had suggested only the names of Sir William Armstrong, a rather conservative Liberal, philanthropist and Newcastle industrialist, and Isaac Lowthian Bell.\(^{50}\) The Journal gleefully reported that the Association had been caught completely by surprise concerning Dilke's resignation and that Watson had telegraphed London for confirmation of this report.\(^{51}\)

Nevertheless, there were problems. For one thing, the Conservative press announced it would not oppose Armstrong and might not oppose

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\(^{49}\)Chronicle, February 10, 1883. Hirst II, 155.

\(^{50}\)The Times, February 9, 1883.

\(^{51}\)Journal, February 10, 1883.
Bell but would strongly oppose Morley. Morley also expressed his fear of Hamond's declaration to contest Newcastle unless Armstrong were selected by Liberals because Hamond would obtain approximately 1,400 Irish votes, which would mean in effect the loss of as many as 2,800 votes. Furthermore, the remainder of Dilke's 5,133-vote majority over Hamond in 1880 "MIGHT disappear with unpleasant rapidity" if "J. C. or his friends played tricks." On February 11, however, Hamond withdrew from the race because of poor health, and the Conservatives "unanimously" selected Gainsford Bruce as their candidate. Both Morley and the Chronicle felt Hamond would have been a stronger candidate than Bruce, since Hamond was pro-Home Rule. Yet Morley was convinced the Tories would be far more enthusiastic over Bruce although they "expect to be well beaten this time, but want to strengthen Bruce's position in view of a General election when they expect Liberal dissensions to come to a climax." Morley also feared other possible Liberal contenders or independent candidates and privately accused Cowen of "trying to get [Isaac] Lowthian Bell to divide the party against us." On February 10, the day after Morley was selected by the Association, Dr. Rutherford headed a deputation consisting of two anti-Association City Councillors and other prominent townsmen which requested Bell to run. Rutherford insisted the deputation would have been larger had there been time to

52The Journal was more emphatic in supporting Armstrong than the Courant; some Conservatives even felt that any contest would be a waste of time; see Chronicle, February 12, 1883.
organize, and he vehemently denounced the selection of Morley by a clique. Although Bell agreed with Rutherford, he requested time to consult with friends in order to reach a decision. Later that day, an Irish delegation met with Bell and promised to endorse him. The Irish deputation also denounced Morley as the agent of that caucus "which of all the Liberal Associations in the country has been the most persistent enemy of the Irish people, and particularly the enemy of the great friend of Ireland, Mr. Joseph Cowen, M.P."57

Bell, however, soon declined Rutherford's offer and left Newcastle. At the same time, Sir William Armstrong announced he would accept the seat only if no contest were required. That meant that the only other alternative to Morley and Bruce was the Social Democratic Federation, which regarded Morley's beliefs as almost identical to a Tory's.

The Chronicle, on February 9, endorsed Armstrong, Bell, and a workingman's candidate, in that order. It stressed that the Liberal Association used guerilla tactics concerning Morley's selection. Although it conceded that Morley's beliefs were satisfactory, it insisted that Morley would subordinate his to those of a clique and, in effect, was the representative of the Anti-Cowen group.59 The Chronicle viewed Bruce as a mild Conservative, but with little chance of winning, and really sided with the Democratic Federation.60

56Chronicle, February 12, 1883.
57Journal, February 12, 1883.
58Chronicle, February 12, 1883.
59Ibid. February 9, 1883, and February 10, 1883.
60Ibid. February 12, 1883.
On February 12, about 50 workers met to discuss the possibility of running a candidate, and on the following day a Labor Representation Committee was organized. The first choice of the Committee, John Burnett of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, declined to run on the grounds that "they could not have a sounder candidate on labour questions than Mr. John Morley." On February 15, Elijah Copland was chosen to run, according to the Chronicle, in the "most free and open" meeting ever in Newcastle. Copland's address favored, among other things, legislative independence for Ireland. On February 17, before a crowd of between 900 and 3,000, he stressed that he would vote for measures and principle rather than men or party. Copland also stressed that the Newcastle Liberal Association abused Cowen. Robert Scott had previously claimed that, although he agreed with Morley's political views, he was "on all fours with Mr. Cowen" who was the opponent of the Association and, therefore, would vote against Morley.

The Chronicle editorially compared Morley's "secret" selection with the admirable method of choosing Copland. It also denounced Watson for claiming Copland was a traitor to his class, gave a full column biography of Copland, and gave space to various Radical supporters of Copland, such as Charles J. Garcia, secretary of the Maritime Central Democratic Association, and F. W. Soutar of the Southwark Radical Club.

The Liberal Association, naturally, attacked the Chronicle's support of Copland. One obscure member insisted that if Copland were

\[61\text{bid., February 13, and February 14, 1883.}\]
\[62\text{The Times, February 15, 1883.}\]
\[63\text{Chronicle, February 16, 1883.}\]
\[64\text{bid., February 19, 1883. Journal, February 15, 1883.}\]
\[65\text{Chronicle, February 19, 1883.}\]
\[66\text{bid.}\]
elected, then he would be controlled by the Chronicle's financing of him.67 R. S. Watson denounced the Chronicle editorial of February 9 and secretly believed Copland was a mere stooge of the Chronicle, whose electoral participation was "very bitter, very nasty, and very disgraceful."68

On February 19, however, Copland suddenly withdrew for numerous reasons. The two most important factors, however, were his failure to receive Irish support, which he claimed resulted in a near cessation of financial contributions, and his inability to raise the necessary election deposit.69 There was hope among Copland supporters of obtaining financial assistance from Cowen, but Cowen refused to become involved personally with Copland.70

Copland's retirement did not, however, significantly aid Morley, except for the fact that the Chronicle editorials became muted. Copland admitted that most of his potential support would have been drawn from Bruce.71 Morley also doubted whether Copland "will get many who would have gone for me" or whether he would have received votes from the Irish and other malcontents who would have voted for the Conservatives.72

Ordinarily in a bye-election in Newcastle, the Conservative had no chance. However, Bruce was able to utilize three factors which ordinarily were unavailable to Conservative candidates. Perhaps most

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67Ibid.
69See Chronicle, February 20, 1883.
71Chronicle, February 20, 1883.
72Letter, Morley to Chamberlain, February 18, 1883, Chamberlain Papers, 5/54/495.
important for Bruce was the January 18 endorsement given him by Newcastle Irish who wanted to show their hostility toward the Government and their anger at the Liberal Association's treatment of Cowen.73

The Irish reluctance to support Morley was so strong that he conceded that 75 percent of the Irish electors would vote for Bruce.74

Another important asset to Bruce was the attitude of the Chronicle. Although its editorials really did not praise Bruce, it tore into the Liberal Association and Morley's opportunism, even suggesting that Morley's literary talents would be better employed outside Parliament.75

There were also numerous letters to the editor from disenchanted Liberals explaining why they would vote for Bruce, a quote from the London Echo criticizing Morley's Egyptian position, and an account of a meeting on February 14 of "Radical" secessionists from the Liberal Association.76

Moderate Liberals such as W. D. Stephens complained of the Chronicle's lack of excerpts from the Irishman or the Freeman praising Morley's Irish views.77 R. S. Watson admitted that the Chronicle had faithfully reported Morley's speeches,78 but he privately denounced the Chronicle's attitude in letters to correspondents. Albert Grey replied to Watson's letter by admitting he was "sadly disappointed in Joe; up to last week

73Chronicle, February 19, 1883.
74Letter, Morley to Chamberlain, February 22, 1883, Chamberlain Papers, 5/54/497. In the same letter Morley said that 90 per-cent of the Catholic vote would go to Bruce.
75Chronicle, February 21, and February 23, 1883.
76Ibid., February 15, February 16, February 22, and February 23, 1883.
77Ibid. February 16, 1883.
78Ibid. February 23, 1883.
[i.e. after February 10] I had cherished the belief that he was, in spite of all his faults, a big man; and he has shown himself so miserably little how he always posed as one who was never touched by petty personal considerations." This remark was not directed to Cowen's absence from Morley's platform, because Grey also declined to assist Morley publicly due to the latter's Irish views, but obviously at the Chronicle's line of conduct. Even Lord Richard Grosvenor, the chief Liberal Whip, emphasized, in response to Watson's letter, that "in spite of what the Chronicle says, I don't believe there is a man in England whom Joe Cowen would not rather see as M. P. for Newcastle than Mr. Morley."80

Finally, Bruce and the Conservatives were able to make a campaign issue out of the idea that they were fighting the battle of Cowen and true Liberalism against the caucus. Bruce consistently charged that Morley was really brought to Newcastle to fight Cowen at the next election and charged the Association was responsible for many evils. Bruce also praised Cowen's struggle against the cloture, his "independence," and his past record of supporting European liberty. He also claimed that Newcastle was proud of Cowen and his paper.81

Other Conservatives praised Cowen for his independent convictions. Perhaps the most interesting eulogy was made by Henry Wallace who claimed that he voted for Cowen in 1880 because of his "straight-forward, and manly bearing" and that it was the first time he had ever voted for a Liberal. Naturally he requested that Liberals now do the same for Bruce. He also repeated the gossip that the Liberal Association had turned to

79 Letter, Grey to Watson, February 17, 1883, Grey Papers, 217/3.  
80 Letter, Lord Richard Grosvenor to Watson, February 14, 1883, Watson Papers, 9D.  
Morley only out of desperation in order to find a candidate. This was only one example of the many and varied pro-Cowen remarks in speeches on Bruce's platforms. 32

Both Conservative newspapers also contained numerous letters from alleged Liberals, Radicals, and workingmen denouncing the Association's attacks on Cowen and urging voters to vote Tory in order to spite the Association. Both papers also stressed that Morley's victory would really be a defeat for Cowen, and the Journal especially reminded its readers of Association attacks on Cowen, such as Quin's alleged denunciation of Cowen as "a traitor, a Jesuit, a libeller of the Grand Old Man, a snake in the grass," etc. 33

Morley tried to counter these Conservative accusations by praising Cowen. Thus, to an outsider the election would have seemed unusually strange. The candidates were completely opposed concerning the role of religious obligations, the caucus, the cause of the Terror in the French Revolution, the character of Gladstone, and almost everything else. Yet both seemed to have nothing but praise for Cowen and both emphasized how ideologically close they were to him.

Throughout the campaign, Morley emphasized his friendship with Cowen, praised Cowen's "wide political knowledge," proclaimed his "genuine admiration for Cowen's brilliant gifts," and added that whatever differences existed between them were "as tossed in the balance compared with the all-important points on which he believed the Radicals of Newcastle were agreed." Morley also promised if elected to fight [citations]

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83Journal, February 15, 1883.
"side by side" with Cowen.84

Morley also believed that he was able to surmount all difficulties concerning coercion and independence. Often during the campaign he was asked whether he was really an anti-Cowen candidate, or whether he would side with the Liberal Association or Cowen at the next general election. Some questions he found difficult to answer. For example: "Your politics creed being identical with that of the senior member, do you justify the action of the Liberal Association in seeking to oust him?" Morley hedged: "I refuse to express, indeed, I am not sure I have an opinion—as to the relations of the senior member with that Association. On my part there is no attack on the seat of Mr. Cowen: I am not here to oust Mr. Cowen."

Morley was equally evasive on questions concerning the Chronicle and future anti-Cowen movements. Morley's identification with Cowen was made easier by the fact that Association attacks on Cowen practically ceased once Morley was chosen by the Association.85

There was no real doubt about the outcome of the election; everybody expected Morley to win. Cowen insisted that Morley was "sure to be elected," and Albert Grey, in reply to a letter from Watson, declared he was "glad to hear that Morley is perfectly safe . . . ."86 The real question was the margin of victory. At first, Morley was told he would win by two or three thousand votes.87 Shortly before the election, however, Watson secretly predicted a victory total of 8,500 votes to

84Ibid. February 10, February 12, and February 13, 1883.
Bruce's 7,500. The change in the predicted vote, according to Morley, was due to the hostility of Irish and Catholics toward his candidacy, and of Cowenites who would vote for Bruce "out of spite" or who would abstain. Even George Meredith, a confidant of Morley, admitted being alarmed by Cowen's attitude and the Irish vote.

The vote was a Morley victory: 9,443 to 7,187. The Courant insisted the Conservative defeat was due primarily to false hopes concerning "Independent Liberals." "No one in the constituency," the paper declared, "believes that any of Mr. Cowen's friends contributed to increase the Conservative vote, as some of the Ministerial newspapers affirm." The Times also agreed essentially with the Courant and claimed the entire Liberal party supported Morley except for a "small section who would have preferred a local man." For Morley and the Association, the result could not have been better. Immediately after the election, the victor said the "Cowenites are much more aghast at our majority than the Tories. It is a smart slap for them. If Watson had stood instead of me, he would have had another 1,000 votes, representing religious abstentions in my case. The Irish are believed not to have gone solid."

The effect of the election upon Cowen was somewhat surprising. Cowen had previously refused to become involved because it was not

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89Letter, George Meredith to Admiral Maxse, March 5, 1883, Letters of George Meredith (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1912), II, 338.
90Courant, March 2, 1883.
91The Times, February 26, 1883.
customary for a sitting Member to help a colleague "especially" when there were "differences of opinion in the party." Cowen also maintained that he saw Morley before he left Newcastle and had been shown a private letter from Watson to Morley. He said he inferred from both "that it would be better for me to take no part whatever." Cowen insisted he had not been asked by Morley's friends, who had violated tradition by nominating a candidate without letting the present M.P. have some say concerning the candidacy. Finally, Cowen insisted Morley was originally a candidate against him and was a stranger to Newcastle.  

Nevertheless, there were predictions made by the *Labour Standard* and occasionally by Morley supporters during the campaign that the Morley victory might result in a reconciliation between Cowen and the Association. Morley, almost immediately after arriving in Parliament, was amazed at Cowen's being "most friendly and obliging." On March 26, Cowen even discussed with Morley the possibility of a reconciliation with the Association. Cowen specifically requested an invitation to attend the annual Association dinner on March 29, at which he would have an opportunity to show his "desire for peace and good will in the party."

Morley replied to Cowen's request for "a little good will on both sides" by declaring that Watson also desired a reconciliation. Morley also said he hoped that both Newcastle M.P.s could work together but that "he was completely in Watson's hands in this matter." Morley felt the dinner invitation would be an ideal opportunity to let bygones be bygones but also warned that Havelock and Quin might view a reconciliation.

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93 *Letter, Cowen to Thomas Hardman, February 23, 1883, Cowen Papers*  
94 The *Judge*, December 12, 1885, Cowen Papers, E9.  
95 *Labour Standard*, February 17, 1883.
as "a selfish private compact" and that others "might think it impudent for him [Cowen] to come and drink the health of a man to whom he had given no help, and to whom his newspapers had been very sultry."

Finally, Morley warned Watson that Cowen might "deny that he ever said a word of all this."95

Morley requested instructions from Watson and agreed to follow Watson's advice to say nothing to Cowen concerning the dinner.96 Additional conversations between Cowen and Morley resulted in Cowen's admitting he had lost his ideals and promising "to write a long and pacific letter, or at least a Full and pacific letter if he is invited. But he now says he has not received an invitation." Morley requested that Cowen receive an invitation in order to "test him."97

Somehow, something happened either on or before March 27 which destroyed all of Morley's optimism. He wrote:

I certainly think that this is one of the basest things ever done by him or his satellites. The policy of it is transparent. It may succeed but it makes him infamous. No reconciliation is possible. I feel even I must at last see that.98

The following day, Cowen wrote expressing his regret at not being able to attend the Association dinner. In his letter, which was read aloud by Quin, Cowen declared he and Morley agreed on the "essential issues" and "personally it would not be easy to find two members between whom

95Letter, Morley to Watson, February 28, 1883, Watson Papers, RSW 1
96Letter, Morley to Watson, March 20, 1883, Watson Papers, RSW 15.
97Letter, Morley to Watson, March 20, 1883, Watson Papers, RSW 16.
98Letter, Morley to Watson, March 27, 1883, Watson Papers, RSW 17.
there exists such a cordial trustfulness and friendship." Watson then commented "how useful it [the letter] would have been seven weeks ago (applause). He could only hope it was a good augury for the future." Watson, in his Reminiscences, also relates a conversation with Morley at the dinner pertaining to the following letter from Cowen.

Dear Morley, I congratulate you on your victory. I did not think that a stranger in Newcastle would ever have been elected in that way. My eyes have been very bad for the last three weeks so that I have no idea whatever of what has been appearing in the papers. I hope they have treated you well.

Watson commented sarcastically to Morley that no man "in his senses would send a note to you like that. It is not as though he were a poor man to whom every penny made a great matter but if the eyes were bad he had at hand 30 or 40 men who would be delighted to read to him what they were saying in the newspaper." Morley, on April 22, told Watson "the line taken at our dinner about his letter [to Quinn] made things worse as in truth I fully expected. I think it a pity at this time, but it is of no use to cry over spilt milk."

As a result of the election, the Association managed to elect a candidate without any help from Cowen. Furthermore, it also had a politician of national recognition. True, the caucus was forced to suspend temporarily its public declaration to unseat Cowen, but its victory in the bye-election only increased its confidence. Even with the opposition of the Irish and the Democratic Federation, the caucus had still won a smashing victory.

100Watson, Reminiscences, 168.
101Letter, Morley to Watson, April 22, 1883, Watson Papers, RSW 18.
VI. THE 1885 GENERAL ELECTION: VICTORY OR DEFEAT?

Between John Morley's election for Newcastle and the General election of 1885, Cowen introduced few new political ideas. He did, however, shift his emphasis significantly from Ireland to Egypt and the Sudan and to domestic political reform. The 1885 election campaign was bitter, and its outcome left the victorious Cowen with a feeling of actual defeat.

In December, 1883, Cowen again condemned the past and present policy of the Government toward Egypt and stressed his conviction that England could profit by expanding markets in an eventual Cape-to-Cairo sphere of influence. Simultaneously, he said, the natives would benefit from English philanthropy and the ending of slavery. In fact, Cowen suggested, the Government should abandon any attempt to impose Western institutions on Egypt with the resultant dual Egyptian control and should simply rule Egypt as a colony.¹

In early 1884, Cowen became extremely interested publicly in the Sudan and claimed he had unsuccessfully tried to warn the Government of the seriousness of the Mahdi's uprising. In brief, Cowen claimed that the Government's Sudan policy vacillated like its Egyptian policy and that, after the massacre of Hicks Pasha, the Government should have either prevented Gordon's expedition "or seen that it was

¹Jones, 240-47.
prosecuted with some prospect of success."²

At first, Cowen was rather critical of Gordon's apparent refusal to withdraw, his approval of the slave trade, his vacillation in general, and everybody's seeming to place the "most charitable interpretation" on his actions.³ In May, 1884, Cowen began to idealize Gordon. In a Parliamentary speech, Cowen declared that the Government was bound to protect kinsmen in the Sudan and that Gordon, whom Cowen praised for not abandoning his garrison, should be sent additional support. More startling was Cowen's insistence that Gordon had been systematically contravened, thwarted, restrained, and trammeled. Not a single request . . . had been complied with, not a solitary proposal had been acted upon; and the cabinet after having committed every error the circumstances allowed, were shabby enough to attribute their own failure to their baulked but sedulous and heroic agent.⁴

In early 1885, Cowen described Gordon as "one of the noblest spirits that have ever shed lustre on our race," and called upon all Englishmen to close ranks to rescue Gordon and make sure that the Sudan should never be in "unfriendly" hands.⁵ After the massacre, Cowen bitterly attacked the Government for the disaster.

Cowen also charged the Government with consistently vacillating on matters of foreign policy. Moreover, he felt its blunders could have

²Letter, Cowen to Frank Carr, February 8, 1884, Cowen Papers, F51.  
³Chronicle, February 21, March 26, and April 22, 1884.  
⁵Jones, 270-71.
been prevented if enough Independent Liberals had conscientiously spoken out instead of succumbing to caucus pressure. It was, said Cowen, this lack of independent criticism—since only a handful of Liberals would vote against the Government—and the "ignorance" of caucus M.P.'s which enabled the drift in foreign policy to develop.⁶

Cowen thrust another small thorn in the side of the Government in his reaction to Chamberlain's Shipping Bill. English shipowners had resented many of Chamberlain's accusations and especially opposed the provisions concerning destroyed cargo. Cowen never denied the need for a shipping bill but insisted that the shipowners, "a respectable body of men," had not been able to present their case and were subject to Chamberlain's threats of caucus reprisals. Consequently, Cowen favored the formation of a select committee to handle the problem.⁷ When the Government agreed to appoint only a Royal Commission, Cowen chaired a shipowners' meeting in which he was authorized to move an amendment to the Queen's speech opposing the Commission unless four shipping representatives were included on it.⁸

After the Government made adequate concessions to the shipping industry, certain individuals demanded the removal of Chamberlain from the Commission. According to the Labour Standard, a paper most unfriendly to Cowen by 1884, Cowen alone opposed the idea of humiliating the Government or Chamberlain and, therefore, was able to prevent any formal request for the removal of Chamberlain.⁹ In general, however, although it would

⁸See The Times, November 4, 1884. See also The Times, November 5 and November 6, 1884.
⁹Labour Standard, November 8, 1884.
be easy to over-estimate Cowen's importance in this matter, the evidence of newspapers and of the Chamberlain and Cowen Papers suggests that Cowen's activity was not of major importance in the shipping controversy.

Cowen was also involved in the Proportional Representation Society, the Reform Bill agitation, and women's suffrage. In none of these activities, however, did he devote a great deal of time or energy. Concerning proportional representation, Cowen was motivated partly by the desire to see "independent" opinions represented; he felt that otherwise Conservatives in the cities and Liberals in the counties would have practically no electoral voice. More important, he feared that the existing political system with its increased electorate would result in caucus "wirepullers" controlling the political machinery and subordinating everything, including the elimination of a candidate's "inconvenient" opinions, to the attainment of victory. 10 Although Cowen was willing to join and to become a vice-president of the society, he refused to support amendments in favor of proportional representation since his doing so would represent a defeat for the Government and would jeopardize the Reform Bill of 1884. 11

One of Cowen's political goals had always been democracy, and his support of the Reform Bill surprised no one, although some Conservatives felt Cowen had damned it with lukewarm praise. 12 Cowen, however, generally refused to participate personally in reform demonstrations, which he felt should reflect working class participants. 13

10 Jones, 251-52. Chronicle, December 3, 1884.
11 Letter, Cowen to Albert Grey, June 17, 1885, Grey Papers, 218/1.
Letter, Cowen to Sir Charles Gaven Duffy, February 29, 1884, Cowen Papers, F50. The Times, December 4, 1884.
12 Courant, September 28, 1883.
13 Chronicle, June 4, 1883.
supporting the bill, Cowen even defended the Government's actions, both in submitting a "practical" bill and in trying to meet the objections of the Lords. In fact, Cowen insisted that the Conservative peers had decided to oppose the Bill even before Gladstone's bellicose speech at the conclusion of the franchise debate and that the "real secret" of the Tories' opposition was their desire to hold an election in Ireland before any reform bill. Cowen also suggested that the Government complete the Reform Bill without letting it be "jostled out of place" by measures such as redistribution or proportional representation.14 The one thing he would allow to come before the bill, however, was women's suffrage, since he dismissed all objections to it as similar to the "stale cliches" previously used against the enfranchisement of non-Anglicans.15

During this period, orthodox Liberals generally dismissed Cowen as an impractical maverick; the Far Left and its periodicals such as Justice and the Republican applauded his actions. Tories usually praised his patriotism and independence from the caucus. There was even speculation that Cowen might adhere to the fourth party or some other new group. The Congregationalist saw him as the potential center for Liberal Adullamites concerning the Egyptian problem.16 The Chelsea and Westminster Radical Association even asked Cowen whether Radicals should conclude from his Parliamentary activity that he had joined the "new

15 For Cowen's views on women's suffrage, see especially his letter to Major Newton in Chronicle, April 30, 1884, and his speech, June 12, 1884, Hansard, CCLXXXIX, 160-66.
16 The Congregationalist, July, 1884, 593.
independent Conservative party."17 Furthermore, Cowen even admitted privately that "there was never more want of a national party" in order to change the present course of foreign policy and the power of the caucuses and that "everything points to a split in the ranks at no very distant date."18

Nevertheless, although he personally admired the members of the fourth party and "malcontents" such as Lord Fitzwilliams, Cowen refused "to have anything to do with any cave business . . . ."19 Nor was Cowen an admirer of the imitation of caucus tactics by Tory Democrats or what he considered their sudden change from Orthodox Conservatism.20 Furthermore, in replying to the Chelsea and Westminster Radical Association, Cowen had always adhered to "democratic political views" and his opinions were those of the "old Liberals."21

During this period, Cowen was still strongly opposed by the Newcastle Liberal Association. Morley bitterly resented the Chronicle's treatment of him: its omission of his speeches in Parliamentary reports and its somehow influencing The Times to utilize material concerning the Liberal Association which "clearly comes from the Chronicle office."22 In May, 1884, Morley replied to a Parliamentary speech by Cowen on Egypt by insisting that Cowen's opinions were unrepresentative of Newcastle and by attempting to refute Cowen's arguments.23 Although Morley later

17 The Times, June 5, 1884.
19 Letter, Cowen to R.B. Reed, n.d., Cowen Papers, B415.
20 Chronicle, May 21, and November 1, 1884.
21 Letter, Cowen to the Chelsea and Westminster Radical Association, June 3, 1884, The Times, June 5, 1884.
22 Letters, Morley to R.S. Watson, May 28, and November 10, 1884; Watson Papers, RSW 38 and 65D.
23 See speech, May 13, 1884, Hansard, CCLXXXVIII, 255-60.
admitted Cowen had remained outwardly friendly, he believed Cowen "will never, never forgive it" and jokingly asserted that he hoped "I shall not be overtaken by him on a dark night, with a Dagger." Although Morley was opposed in principle to the Government's Egyptian policy, he refused Cowen's request to support an amendment opposing this course in foreign affairs.²⁴

Watson steadily criticized the Chronicle in speeches before Liberals, for attacking "everything which they held dear" and for taking unfair advantage of the Gordon misfortune. Watson also claimed that the Liberal Association had really taken politics away from a newspaper clique and that the Tories could not be better represented in Newcastle.²⁵ What is most interesting about these remarks is that they were more moderate than those of extreme anti-Covenites in the Association.

During this period, the Association also gained a number of advantages. First, Chamberlain, after previously rejecting pleas from Morley to visit Newcastle, finally consented to speak there in January, 1884. Morley expressed his gratitude and promised a "first-class turn-out," adding, "It will make my seat safe, will send Cowen into a frenzy, and will fill thousands of honest fellows with an enthusiastic delight."²⁶ In the speech, before a crowd of four thousand, Chamberlain not only criticized Cowen concerning Egypt but also expressed his delight at the large number of Government supporters in the Tyneside area "despite all

²⁵See Courant, June 1, 1883, March 6, and February 20, 1885.
²⁶Letter, Morley to Chamberlain, October 27, 1883, Chamberlain Papers, 5/54/517.
the flood of Tory oratory that has rolled over the country and despite too, what we have heard nearer home from persons we might have hoped would be our friends (cheers) . . . 27 In addition, in the summer of 1885, the Association broke the monopoly of a hostile Newcastle Press. By June, Joicey, then a caucus candidate for Parliament, offered to finance the entire cost of a Liberal paper, and James Annand, the former Chronicle editor, accepted the editorship after being promised absolute power over the paper's "editorial and political direction." 28 The first issue, on September 28, 1885, set the tone for the new Newcastle Daily Leader:

In the great tract of country from York to Edinburgh, from the Tees to the Tyne, and from the blue hills of Cleveland, to beyond the Chevotè, there has been no great morning Liberal Journal since the apostasy of 1878. 29

Thus for the first time, Orthodox Liberals had a most convenient vehicle of propaganda to counter the charges of Tories and Cowenites.

Finally, the Association was able to utilize the Redistribution Bill of 1885, which created single member districts in the counties. In Durham, a "deal" was arranged with the Durham Miners Association in which labor representatives would contest three seats and leave the others to the Association. 30 One major obstacle to this arrangement was the candidacy of Lloyd Jones, a cooperative exponent, for Chester-le Street.

27 The Times, January 16, 1884.
28 George B. Hudson, From Smithy to Senate. (London: Cassell and Co., 1908.), 92.
29 Leader, September 28, 1885.
which conflicted with the candidacy of Joicey. Another obstacle was Samuel Storey, whose attacks on the Government led Morley to ask whether he was in league with Cowen.\textsuperscript{31} Before the election, however, Storey did make his peace with the Sunderland Association. In Northumberland, Beaumont failed to reach an agreement with the Hexham Liberal Association and declined to run; thus, the Association ended temporarily the Parliamentary representation of a very prominent political family. Orthodox Liberals scored a major coup in challenging T. E. Smith for the borough of Tynemouth. When Smith had abstained from voting in 1884 on Northcote's censure of the Government his relationship with the Tynemouth Association had deteriorated. In brief, Smith refused to run unless the Association withdrew its resolution censuring his abstention. Defenders of the Association, such as James Craig, warned that Smith was part of the fifth party (i.e., Cowenites) and urged a new candidate who would defeat Smith if he ran against the Association choice. Shortly after failing to obtain a vote of confidence at a Liberal meeting, Smith retired, leaving Liberals in control of Tynemouth.\textsuperscript{32} The Liberal Association also managed to assert a large degree of control over Albert Grey, who decided to contest the Tyneside division after failing to obtain support in Hexham. At the formal inauguration of the Tyneside

\textsuperscript{31}Letter, Morley to R.S. Watson, March 27, 1885, Watson Papers, RSW 58. Chronicle, March 28, and October 14, 1885.

\textsuperscript{32}Information on the controversy between Smith and the Association may be found in Chronicle, May 29, 1884, September 3, September 8, September 12, September 16, September 19, October 7, and October 14, 1885.
Liberal Association, Grey was nominated as a potential candidate along with James Annand and G. O. Trevelyan. The *Chronicle* almost immediately endorsed Grey, but various branches of the Tyneside Association and working class groups seemed to prefer anyone but Grey.\(^{33}\)

As long as Grey refused to succumb to caucus control, he had some rather unusual support. William Wight, president of the newly formed Northumberland Miners Political Association, informed Grey that he was "through" with caucuses:

> They have done all they could to injure you and Mr. Cowen. I have supported you and Mr. Cowen all through and if I had a hundred votes he would get them all. And whatever division of the county you stand for you may rely to the fullest extent on my support.\(^{34}\)

Thomas Hodgkin, Grey’s campaign manager, disclosed some curious remarks made by a Mr. Brun of the *Weekly Chronicle* who

> has called here to say that he thinks something might be done in the mining districts to put your claims before the voters. He suggests a series of meetings extending over nine days and which might be held by your friends if you do not go yourself. I send the suggestion on, for what it is worth, though hardly seeing myself how it can be acted upon without commencing a critical caucus. He said also that though there were difficulties in the Irish question he believed very strongly that Cowen was intending to support you (this of course in *strict* confidence). I think this hint coming from a man actually in the *Chronicle* office and in frequent communication with J. C. is worth noticing.

Hodgkin stressed how especially attractive the offer would be if the Liberal Association decided to choose another candidate.\(^{35}\) E. Neill, a Cowenite, also informed Grey that it would be possible to obtain the

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\(^{33}\) *Chronicle*, June 1, and June 13, 1885.  
\(^{34}\) Letter, Wright to Grey, May 1, 1885, Grey Papers, 217/5.  
support of Copland and Bryson "on your behalf" and subsequently the votes of the Tyneside Irish.36

Cowen's attitude toward Grey was unclear. He informed Grey that he "watched with both pleasure and admiration your courageous campaign in Northumberland" and that he was "too weak or too stupid to attempt public speaking or I would have attended some of your meetings with pleasure." Yet, on the same day, he insisted to his editor that although "every prominence" should be given to Grey's activity "we will write nothing about him, or, indeed, any of the candidates. They may fight their battles for themselves."37

On June 20, Grey announced that his election address was not menacing to the Liberal Association and that the Association "faithfully and accurately" reflected Liberal party feeling. A week later the Tyneside Liberal Association disclosed letters of non-candidacy from W. S. Robson, then regarded as the major opposition to Grey, and from James Annand.38 While the formal selection of a candidate was delayed for a while, it meant that Grey was virtually unopposed.

Immediately after Grey's speech of June 20, he was endorsed by Councillor Richardson of Newcastle, an Association stalwart. Shortly thereafter, Richardson informed Grey that all other contenders had withdrawn and that "if you will place yourself under the wing of the Liberal Association, the Association will adopt you at once. I have the authority

36Letter, Neal to Grey, June 24, 1885, Grey Papers, 217/9.
37Letter Cowen to Grey, June 17, 1885, Grey Papers, 218/1.
38Letter, Cowen to R. Ruddock, June 17, 1885, Cowen Papers, F51.
39Chronicle, June 22, and June 29, 1885.
of the Vice Chairman [T. Y. Strachan] for saying so." Furthermore, Grey was promised the same advisors that he had had in 1878 and 1880. The most interesting part of the letter, however, was Richardson's blunt admission that the Association "have the dread that you are acting in league with Cowen whose object is to smash the Association." 39 W. S. Robson, then regarded as Grey's most formidable opponent, told Grey, "If you submitted your name to the Association I would not allow mine to be submitted, but if you flaunted and attacked the Tyneside Association as Cowen had done at Newcastle, I would accept the invitation of that Association and fight the seat against all comers." 40

Although the Association unofficially endorsed Grey there remained the danger that somebody might run as a Radical or labor representative against him, so T. Y. Strachan announced his candidacy as a Radical. Rarely, however, was he taken seriously, and Grey disclosed that his own candidacy would continue irrespective of the Association's endorsement—unless a Tory entered the field. On October 3, however, Grey was accepted as the nominee of the Tyneside Liberal Association, and the caucus had triumphed again. 41

Despite these Association victories, Cowen had a number of political advantages. Perhaps most important was his increased popularity in Newcastle following his criticism of the Government's Egyptian and Sudanese policy. This was admitted by the Courant, which doubted whether Cowen's position "was ever stronger in the constituency than it is today."

39 Letter, Richardson to Grey, June 29, 1885, Grey Papers, 217/5.  
40 Letter, Robson to Grey, June 30, 1885, Grey Papers, 217/5.  
41 See Chronicle, August 10, September 18, September 28, and October 5, 1885.
Morley also stressed to Watson that the Government's Egyptian policy had strengthened Cowen's position "while yours and mine proportionally weakened."\(^4^2\)

Cowen also had the complete support of the Irish voter and the typical laborer. Both the Courant and John Morley, whom the Courant dismissed as an agent of the Birmingham Communist, stressed that Cowen's audience represented primarily the bottom layer of society. The Courant claimed that Cowen's speeches were given on Saturday nights because it was the only night on which he could secure a vote of confidence from the audience, since the tradesmen, "who almost to a man in Newcastle, do not believe in him, cannot attend, but their places can be filled by hundreds of pitmen and ironworkers, who have come in from the surrounding villages, but who have no votes, and are not Mr. Cowen's constituents at all." Morley insisted that in one of Cowen's audiences "the Irish were 9 to 1" and "the respectable mechanics were conspicuous by [their] absence."\(^4^3\)

Cowen was also praised consistently by the Newcastle Democratic Club, which was associated with the Democratic Federation. Almost typical was the remark of a Mr. Gibson who insisted at a meeting that Cowen was "as good a working man's representative as could be got." Elijah Copland again announced his candidacy in August, 1885, but fortunately for Cowen he abandoned the contest. The non-candidacy of Copland was beneficial to Cowen, because otherwise certain workers who admired Cowen

\(^4^2\)Courant, February 29, 1884. Letter, Morley to Watson, March 8, 1884, Watson Papers, RSW 32.
\(^4^3\)Courant, December 14, 1883, Letter, Morley to Chamberlain, December 26, 1883, Chamberlain Papers, 5/54/542.
might plump for Copland, and even John Hall, who was one of Cowen's chief admirers, admitted that Cowen might be endangered by Copland's candidacy.44

Besides Irish and working class support, Cowen was praised by all Newcastle newspapers (until the formation of the Daily Leader). The Chronicle continually aroused the wrath of the Association, and by its editorials and columnists it could make caucus advocates appear ridiculous and their opponents seem praiseworthy. More significant was the Chronicle's overlooking many caucus meetings while giving full coverage to Conservative and Democratic club functions. The Conservative papers, as Morley explained, taunted Cowen "with not daring to pitch into the Caucus (after my election) or the Government." A typical example of this would be the Courant's claim that Cowen was alienated from the caucus because as an owner of collieries, brick works, and newspapers he therefore opposed "Chamberlain's programme of plunder."45

By the summer and fall of 1885, Cowen's strength and the Association's unpopularity were worrying Morley. Instead of selecting a second candidate, the Association had simply endorsed Morley without requesting electors to plump for their candidate. Morley had requested G. O. Trevelyan to speak on his behalf at Newcastle but failed to convince Trevelyan that his [Morley's] election was "by no means" a certainty. That November, a confidential Association poll revealed that Cowen would receive 13,500 votes, Morley 10,500, and Hamond 8,000.46 If, therefore,
the Liberals had nominated a second candidate then perhaps either enough Cowenites would plump or split with Hamond that both Liberals would be defeated or Cowen might even be tempted to select the caucus-hating Auberon Herbert as his running-mate.

During the Newcastle campaign in the General Election of 1885, a situation developed which The Times declared had excited more interest than any other recent contest in Northern England. Three candidates, in effect, ran separate campaigns but the critical factor was whether Liberals or Conservatives would split with Cowen.

The Association had apparently believed Cowen might attend its meeting in September or October. Although Morley stated in September that "if Cowen does not like to come, let him go to the D--l," Morley regretted by November that Cowen was not running as a National Radical. The Association's attitude toward Cowen throughout the election was unclear. The Leader consistently emphasized that Conservatives had adopted Cowen as their unattached member. "Saxon," a frequent correspondent, even advocated plumping for Morley on the grounds that there was no difference between Cowen and Hamond, insisted that the Association should have selected two candidates, and charged that Liberals who voted for Cowen aided those "who desired to stab Mr. Morley metaphorically in the back." When it appeared possible that a reconciliation might be attempted at a Cowen meeting, the Leader warned in advance any

47 The Times, December 1, 1885.
reconciliation was impossible. Furthermore, it later charged that Cowen had become "politically mad," that he could never have raised enough volunteer canvassers, and that the Tories had been canvassing for Cowen.49

Watson often denounced Chronicle charges but never requested a Morley plump. Instead, he occasionally claimed that Cowen would be a better choice than Hamond, and once said that if there were anything left of the Cowen of 1874, it would be better than fifty Hamonds. At one meeting, however, Watson declared that if Cowen Jr. had advocated a Cowenite split with Hamond, "then we will take off the gloves."50 William Scott, Morley's campaign agent, also insisted that Association canvassers were ordered not to request plumps and that this order be placed in all committee rooms of the Liberal Association.51

Occasionally, a speaker at a Morley meeting, such as Alderman Barkas, would advocate voting for both Liberals.52 Sometimes Cowen would be praised at a Morley meeting by a speaker such as F. C. Marshall, who declared that "a nobler, more disinterested, and truer man at heart did not breathe." Still, Marshall insisted Liberals should give Morley either all or part of their votes.53

At first Morley tried to ignore Cowen as much as possible. As the campaign progressed, he was forced to deny a Cowenite charge that the Association had sent "young lads" to disrupt Cowen's meeting.54

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49 Leader, November 14, through 30, 1885.
50 Ibid., November 28, 1885.
51 Chronicle, November 19, 1885.
52 Leader, November 20, 1885.
53 Ibid., November 25, 1885.
54 Ibid., November 18, 1885.
November 27, the day before the election, Morley suddenly delivered a bitter tirade against "the cowardly enemy at my back" and the failure of Cowenites to give him "one word of support or appreciation" since he entered Parliament. Apparently Morley became somewhat emotional because his subsequent remarks were inaudible.\(^{55}\)

As the campaign became more bitter, Association champions began to advocate the return of Morley at the head of the poll. Councilor Henzill, on November 25, said he felt Liberals should return Morley at the top of the poll because the *Chronicle* charged Morley with being the major opponent of Cowen.\(^{56}\) On November 27, G. Luckley, who in 1882 said that he preferred two Tories to Cowen, suddenly announced at a Morley meeting that Cowen-Hamond splits had been advocated at a Cowen meeting. Samuel Storey accused Cowen of "political meanness and subterfuge and trickery and treachery to one's own party" and claimed that he was unable to decide whether Hamond was worse than Cowen. Both Luckley and Storey advocated plumps, and Storey also insisted that Cowen's election was assured.\(^{57}\) The *Leader* also assured its readers on election day that Cowen was safe (although it also announced the betting to be 5 to 4 against his being in the poll) and said, therefore, that true Liberals should plump for Morley.\(^{58}\)

The attitude of Newcastle Conservatives toward Cowen was also confusing. Naturally, Conservatives delighted in his attacks upon the caucus and the foreign policy of Gladstone, and regarded him as a lesser

\(^{55}\)Ibid., November 28, 1885.  
\(^{56}\)Ibid., November 26, 1885.  
\(^{57}\)Ibid., November 26, 1885.  
\(^{58}\)Ibid.
Yet, their dilemma was that if they supported Cowen, they might help elect him while jeopardizing their own candidate. Of course, it would be a great victory if Morley were at the bottom of the poll, but it would be a tragedy if Conservative votes enabled Cowen to be in second place, while Hamond was third.

Nationally, Lord Randolph Churchill and the *Globe* endorsed Cowen. On November 20, Lord Randolph rather suddenly emphasized that Cowen and Bright, rather than the Tories, were the major opponents of Chamberlain Radicals. Churchill stated, concerning Cowen:

With many of his tenets I do not agree, but I do believe that for honesty, for political independence and for a love of political truth there is nobody in England who can come near Mr. J. Cowen. Mr. Cowen made a speech at Newcastle the other day, which, so far as I can profess to be any judge, was the most interesting and the most impressive speech which has been made in this election contest. I think he made it on Saturday last, and I am very sorry that the English Press had not the discrimination to repeat that speech verbatim from end to end. It was a masterly effort of rhetoric; it was a consummate literary composition; it was a wonderful effort to place before the people what I might call the philosophy of politics. But the chief feature of this speech was that from end to end it was directed to exposing the utter fallacy and uselessness of the policy which Mr. Chamberlain has put before the country. It was one long argument, one long appeal, almost a cry for liberty, for political freedom, for independence of thought and action. Imagine how odious these sentiments must be to the Birmingham caucus. Mr. Cowen not only showed with great force the fallacy of schemes of graduated taxation; he showed also the utter impossibility of carrying into effect all schemes for the immediate or rapid establishment of any system of peasant proprietary. More than that, while avowing himself in favor of the disestablishment of the Church of England in theory, he protested with all his strength and with all his force against the disendowment of the Church, which he said would be nothing but robbery pure and simple (cheers)—as flagrant a piece of robbery as to take the endowments of the Nonconformist communities or to confiscate their chapels for secular uses. Mind, it is to the property of the Church of England that Mr. Chamberlain looks to find him the funds for various secular uses which he considers would be advantageous to the public.
(Hear, hear,) Mr. Cowen denounced that policy amid the enthusiastic applause of thousands of Newcastle Artisans. (Cheers) Is not there a good deal of matter for serious reflection in these facts. (hear, hear)—a good deal which would lead one to distrust the policy of which Mr. Chamberlain comes forward. 59

This speech was especially significant because it appeared in many papers under a caption such as "Mr. Cowen and Lord Randolph Churchill," which undoubtedly influenced some Conservatives to split for Cowen. The Globe expressed surprise that Cowen, who held opinions "absolutely identical" with the Conservative Government, still described himself as a Radical. "If, however," the article continued, "he will but continue to enforce them as he has done, it is probable that the supporters of Lord Salisbury will hardly be disposed to quarrel with the colour of the flag under which he fights." 60

Within Newcastle, Hamond and other Conservatives often praised Cowen and emphasized the similarities between Cowen and Hamond. This naturally meant there would be some confusion as to what official Conservative organs would advocate. The Courant from the beginning of the campaign warned Conservatives against splitting with Cowen. The paper attacked certain of Cowen's views, such as his belief that local areas should pay the salaries of M.P.s and insisted Cowen had his own newspaper to canvass for him. 61

The Journal, on the other hand, began its campaign coverage by "deliberately" advising Newcastle electors to vote for Cowen and place him at the head of the poll. The Journal also insisted that the "patriotic" Cowen had, in effect, become a Tory Democrat, that his "individualism" was close to that of modern Conservatism, and that he and

59 The Times, November 21, 1885.
60 Globe, as quoted by Leader, November 17, 1885.
Hamond were really fighting "the party of the caucus."\textsuperscript{62}

Suddenly the \textit{Journal}, between November 19 and 26, reversed itself and requested Hamond plumpers unless an "honorable understanding" could be reached with Cowenites and reported that the bitterness between Cowen and the caucus had been exaggerated.\textsuperscript{63} On November 27, the \textit{Journal} again endorsed Cowen's return partly because of his usefulness in Parliament and partly because the caucus was seeking plumpers. The \textit{Journal} also requested that Cowen personally ask his followers to seek revenge by helping to elect Hamond. On election day, the \textit{Journal} simply declared that the first duty of Conservatives was to elect Hamond, which left it up to the elector whether to cast his other vote for Cowen.\textsuperscript{64}

In contrast to both Liberal and Conservative campaigns, Cowen decided to dispense entirely with the usual electioneering methods. As early as July, he had decided it would be impossible for volunteers to canvas the approximately 27,000 voters; he, therefore, decided to restrict his campaign to a series of public meetings.\textsuperscript{65} In making a virtue of necessity, Cowen publicly declared that although the Corrupt Practices Act of 1883 had prohibited only paid canvassing, "in spirit" the Act had really opposed all interference between candidate and elector.\textsuperscript{66} Cowen also decided against any election day organization to encourage electors to vote, a move which Dr. Rutherford estimated would cost him 2,000 votes.\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{62}\textit{Journal}, November 10 and November 16, 1885.
\textsuperscript{63}See especially, \textit{Ibid.}, November 19 and November 23, 1885.
\textsuperscript{64}\textit{Ibid.}, November 27 and November 28, 1885.
\textsuperscript{65}Letter, Cowen to William Sutherland, July, 1885; Cowen Papers, F54.
\textsuperscript{66}See his election address in \textit{The Times}, November 12, 1885.
\textsuperscript{67}\textit{Chronicle}, November 28, 1885.
Between November 14 and 27, there were seven major speeches and two "heckling" or question-and-answer sessions. In the speeches, Cowen reiterated his views on Ireland, foreign policy, the caucus, and the "personal" opposition to him. He also attacked the "excessive" government of England and warned of the danger of becoming "a nation of legislative cripples, who can only walk by the aid of state crutches." He insisted, furthermore, that the state's function was to promote equal opportunity and that any interference with the "sacredness of private property" would result in "inextricable confusion." 

The Chronicle also assisted Cowen. Shortly before the election, its pages doubled, and, therefore, it could provide more electoral coverage. Obviously it could report Cowen's speeches in depth while directing its editorials against the caucus. For example, it insisted that the predominate inclination among the caucus representatives was to request plumps, that Morley was Cowen's opponent, and that the Association preferred a Tory over Cowen. Finally, on election day, the Chronicle denied that Cowenites on November 27 requested splits with Hamond and urged its readers not to vote for Morley.

As in past elections, Cowen could count on the support of various special interest groups. Both he and Morley were endorsed by the Temperance advocates. The North of England shipowners, after a series of meetings, endorsed Cowen and Hamond. The Democratic Federation and

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68 Cowen's speeches may be found in the Chronicle, November 15 through 28; see especially The Times, November 17, 1885.
69 Chronicle, November 11, November 19, November 26, November 27, and November 28, 1885.
70 Leader, November 27, 1885.
71 The Times, November 28, 1885.
Justice, the organ of the Social Democratic Federation, also had kind words for Cowen. Although Cowen had denounced socialism and collectivism, Justice insisted he had done more for the English working class than any of his opponents who were denouncing him as a Reactionary.72

The most important special interest group was the Newcastle Irish, especially since Parnell had hinted that there might not be any exception to his order to vote Tory. Nevertheless, on November 19, Newcastle Irish made no secret of their admiration for Cowen, and Charles Diamond warned that they would never join in the caucus plot to replace Cowen with Hamond.73 On November 23, Parnell announced that Cowen would be one of the very few exceptions to the Irish endorsement of Tories. That evening a telegram from Parnell ordered the Newcastle Irish to plump for Cowen.74

On November 25, Bernard McAnulty, the generally recognized leader of the Newcastle Irish, declared that Hamond had befriended Irish Catholics for the past forty-seven years, and thus: "To Cowen, if I had a hundred votes, I would give them, but well knowing that by voting for Hamond I would not injure Cowen, I intend to vote for Cowen and Hamond."75 On the following day, however, McAnulty, after "deep" consultation with Parnell, reversed himself and advocated plumping for Cowen.76

When the votes were counted, Cowen had received 10,489; Morley, 10,129; and Hamond 9,500. When compared to the secret Liberal poll before the campaign, the results showed that Cowen had lost almost 3,000 votes,

72Justice, November 21, and December 5, 1885.
73Chronicle, November 20, 1885.
74The Times, November 24, 1885. Chronicle, November 25, 1885.
75Journal, November 27, 1885.
76Chronicle, November 27, 1885.
Morley had gained more than 300, and Hamond had gained 1,500. Morley received 7,105 plumpers; Hamond, 4,237; and Cowen, 2,814; there were 306 splits between Hamond and Morley, 4,957 splits for Hamond and Cowen, and only 2,718 splits between Morley and Cowen.

The caucus viewed the results as a great victory. The Leader insisted the election proved the weakness of Cowenites since the Irish could account for two thousand of Cowen's plumpers. Furthermore, said the Leader, Cowen had been returned primarily by Tory splits and, consequently, could no longer speak for Liberalism. Morley, likewise, insisted that the large number of his plumpers proved Liberals had rejected Cowenite independence. Like the Leader, Morley also believed that Cowen, "that singular genius, though he had fought for good causes in his day, was now constrained to hold one of the two seats by Tory aid, and was finally dislodged from his claim to represent the Liberals of his own city." Publicly, Morley insisted the results proved a "conspiracy" between Cowen and the Tories. Privately, Morley rejoiced at his "splendid" 7,000 plumpers and insisted, "Cowen is done. But it has needed careful steering, and so will the future need it."

Conservatives generally agreed with the caucus that Cowen had been re-elected by Tories. Hamond even denounced those Tories who voted for the "Democratic Socialist party." The Courant claimed Cowen would have lost without Tory splits, but the Journal emphasized that in Newcastle there was "no proper dividing line" between Cowenites and

77Leader, December 1, 1885.
78Ibid. Morley, Recollections, I, 200.
79Letter, Morley to Chamberlain, December 2, 1885, Chamberlain Papers, 5/54/661.
80Courant, December 4, 1885.
81Ibid.
Conservatives.  

To Cowen, the results were most discouraging. Almost immediately after his victory speech, he declared that he would not seek re-election. Cowen's subsequent letters reflected pessimism concerning the results of manhood suffrage and the ballot and insisted that canvassing was necessary for victory. Concerning his public speeches Cowen felt they were as useless as if he had addressed "the rocks at Tynemouth." He insisted, furthermore, that he had entered Parliament as a "public duty," and it had been apparent that his continued representation would result in "nothing but wrangling and quarreling" since "more than seven thousand of the Liberals voted against me after all the meetings, and they would just do the same next time."  

The election had also been a defeat in one other respect. All the successful candidates were either Tories or supporters of the caucus. In response to numerous requests, Cowen refused to participate personally to help anti-caucus candidates but did offer advice. Spark, who had again contested Darlington, insisted he would have voted in Parliament as Cowen did, but he retired before the poll. More important, however, was the decision of Lloyd Jones to contest Chester-le-Street against both caucus and Tory opponents.  

Lloyd Jones had long been popular among the miners of Northumberland and especially Durham, where Chester-le Street was located. Between

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82 *Journal*, December 1, 1885.  
83 *The Times*, December 2, 1885.  
84 See, for example, letter, Cowen to the Wingate Debating Society, December 24, 1885, Cowen Papers, B347.  
85 Letter, Cowen to R. O. Lamb, June 1, 1886, Cowen Papers, F93.  
86 *Chronicle*, November 2, 1885.
1874 and 1885 he had been selected as a speaker at the annual gala in all but two years. The president of the Durham Miners' Association frequently praised him, and one of its reports stated, "Perhaps no other living man has such a comprehensive grasp of labour questions, as is possessed by Mr. Jones."88

In the spring of 1885, an agreement was arranged between the North and South Durham Registration Association (the caucus), and miners' political groups whereby three seats in Durham would be left to labor. The Chronicle, however, insisted that when Jones entered the race, he had foiled "a veritable plot" between the caucus and the Durham Miners' Federation Board.89

Jones was nominated by the Blaydon cooperative society on January 31, 1885, and announced his candidacy on February 9. Almost from the beginning, Jones emphasized he would not submit to the choice of any association and would fight to the finish. On October 24, Jones again arrived in Chester-le-Street and the campaign began in earnest.90 His followers generally emphasized his connections with labor and Cowen, with but one exception. At many of his meetings Cowen was praised, and frequently Cowen's son would speak in Jones' behalf. The Chronicle also not only endorsed Jones and gave favorable publicity to his meetings, but also insisted that Joicey was violating the spirit of the secret ballot by sending pledge cards to electors and by having his canvassers hint that the ballot was not secret. Finally, Jones had the advantage of being the

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87 Durham Miners' Association, Annual Gala, 1865.
89 Chronicle, April 8, 1885.
90 Ibid., February 2, February 12, March 3, March 13, March 26, March 30, April 8, and October 26, 1885.
only non-incumbent and non-Tory candidate who was endorsed by Parnell.  

Jones' Liberal opponents naturally rejected his claim to independence. John Wilson, one of the three labor candidates and a power within the Federation Board, insisted that the Board offer Jones a safe seat in Durham. When Jones declined the offer, Wilson concluded that he had already pledged himself to contest Chester-le Street as Cowen's nominee. W. H. Pattison, also of the Durham Miners' Association, insisted that when the deputation visited Cowen to obtain his support for Joicey, Cowen replied by suggesting Jones. Pattison claimed, "It was then and not until then, that personally, directly or indirectly, I heard Mr. Jones' name mentioned in connection with the Chester-le Street division."  

The Leader, and its correspondents, also replied to Jonesite and Cowenite charges. Both editorialists and correspondents accused Jones of being chosen by a few Cowenites. The Leader also tried to refute the Chronicle's criticism of Joicey's "pledge" card by denying that it was sent to anyone residing in the Chester-le Street area and by claiming that it was only what Cowen had done when he first contested Newcastle in 1873.  

On election day, Chester-le Street electors chose Joicey by 803 votes over Jones and 2,391 over the Tory candidate out of 10,033 valid ballots. Thus, the victorious Joicey did not have a majority and was extremely bitter. Even before the votes were counted, however, Joicey had accused Cowen of spending an entire day telegraphing Parnell in behalf of Jones and of doing more harm in Northern England than any ten Conservative:

91Ibid., October 26, November 6, and November 25, 1885.  
92Wilson, 196. Leader, November 7, 1885.  
93Leader, November 7, November 25, and November 26, 1885.
combined.94

Yet, after the bitter Newcastle battle, the sudden announcement by Gladstone concerning his conversion to Home Rule seemed to bring hope of cooperation between Cowen and the Newcastle caucus. Cowen, who had consistently supported Home Rule, announced his support of the Gladstonian Bill, although he disliked many of its provisions. In all probability, Cowen felt, Gladstone would fail to "accomplish much" on the matter because "the opposition is too powerful." Nevertheless, it meant that for the first time since 1877, Cowen was part of the Liberal mainstream. While rumors that Cowen would accept a position in the Gladstonian Government came to nothing, apparently Cowen and Gladstone did meet concerning Home Rule, and, according to the London correspondent of Freeman's Journal, "a complete rapprochement has taken place between them."95

During the Home Rule controversy, Cowen also participated in the British Home Rule Association as a sponsor and vice-chairman. Although the Association did publish two of Cowen's speeches on Home Rule, he insisted from the beginning that he would give only "the most casual aid" and would take "no prominent part in it."96 In fact, the only major speech Cowen made outside Newcastle was at Birmingham on June 17, and it was anything but a fiery oration.97

94 Ibid., November 30, 1885.
96 Leader, February 24, 1886. The Times, February 4, February 11, and April 28, 1886. Letter, Cowen to T. C. Thompson, April 15, 1886, Cowen Papers, F57.
97 The speech was reported in The Times, June 18, 1886.
Nevertheless, the fact that Cowen favored Home Rule was even more significant when Gladstone suddenly appointed Morley as Irish Secretary, an appointment which necessitated a bye-election for Morley. Before the campaign, Morley met with Cowen and "took Cowen by the throat [figuratively]." He said, "Here we are—going to do something like what you want. If I am beaten at Newcastle, it will not only be a nuisance to me . . . but a heavy blow to the policy and objectives which you prefer."98

When Cowen asked how he could help, Morley requested cooperation from the Chronicle, which subsequently praised Morley both in its editorials and even in the "London Letter." Furthermore, prominent Cowenites such as Rutherford and Youll spoke in Morley's behalf at Association meetings. The significance of the extent of Cowenite support may be seen especially in the bitter comments by Hamond, again the unsuccessful Conservative candidate, concerning the ingratitude of Cowen's followers after Conservatives had really elected Cowen in 1885.99

Throughout the contest, Morley not only praised Cowen, but even admitted that Cowen would have been a better choice for Irish Secretary. Even Watson complimented the Chronicle for its "generous and manly" article concerning Morley.100 After the easy Morley victory, prominent Association members, such as Swan, continued to praise Cowen's Irish views, and Cowen was often sent resolutions approving his Irish policy from various Association groups in the Northumberland-Durham area.101

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99 Ibid. See also Chronicle, February 4 and February 8, 1886. Leader, February 11, 1886. Courant, February 12, 1886. For Hamond's accusation, see Chronicle, February 13, 1886. Leader, February 9, 1886. The Times, February 9 and February 12, 1886.
100 Leader, March 13, 1886. For some of the resolutions of various associations, see Chronicle, May 15 and May 28, 1886.
There was even an attempt to have Cowen appear at an April 21 Association meeting advocating Home Rule. Cowen did speak to Morley about the possibility on April 15, and on April 17 a formal invitation promised him a reserved seat on the platform, stressing that "it is particularly desired that the gathering should be as representative as possible." Although it was publicly announced by a wire service that Cowen had accepted the invitation, for some reason he decided against it.102

There was, naturally, serious talk within the Association of endorsing Cowen if there were another general election in the near future. Morley, for example, asked Cowen to reconsider his decision to retire because, as he told Watson, "We are very short of Gladstonian candidates and if he will save one seat, that is much to the good." Morley also told Watson he had informed Cowen that he "felt sure the caucus [sic] would as a whole not be sorry to see him stand. Should we not run together."103 Furthermore, T. Y. Strachan and Watson made "indirect overtures" to Cowen through Dr. Rutherford asking that he reconsider his retirement.104 There were numerous correspondents in the Leader who also emphasized the necessity of union between Cowen and the Association.105

There were, however, serious problems concerning any attempt to patch up differences between Cowen and the caucus. The most bitter critic of such a reconciliation was the Leader. During Morley's bye-election, it

103Letter, Morley to R. E. Watson, June 1, 1886, Watson Papers, RSW 32.
105See, for example, Leader, April 16, and June 10, 1886.
insisted that Cowenites were plotting with Hamond and that Rutherford and Youll should be re-admitted to Orthodox Liberalism only as "prodigals, but not while they swagger as if they had never been among the husks and swine." The paper ridiculed Cowen by referring to him as the "Junior" member for Newcastle and by continually criticizing him. The Leader also demanded that the Association choose a second candidate and rejected any possibility of a rapprochement with Cowen. "How can a Liberal Association," it asked, "fight for a candidate who flouts its good offices, who ridicules its power, and who had given the best of his later political life to denouncing its methods?"106

The Chronicle continued to attack the Newcastle caucus, and the "London Letter" derided caucus charges that Unionists were "turncoats."107 Cowen, also, in letters to correspondents continued to emphasize the caucus hostility toward him, but he did not definitely re-affirm his non-candidacy until early June.

The Association, of course, was in the dilemma of not really being able to decide definitely on a candidate until Cowen made his final withdrawal. The worst thing they could have done would have been to follow the Leader's advice to name a second candidate and, therefore, to add fuel to the frequent charges of ruthlessness laid against them. Morley, for example, in the spring of 1886, said, "I did not think very well of the article in the Leader the other day about a second candidate. We ought to be ready, but we shall do well not to seem in a hurry to push

106Leader, February 13, March 8, June 9, and June 10, 1886.
107Chronicle, April 5, May 14, and May 21, 1886.
JOE out." By June, Morley again emphasized, "It is clear that we can take no active steps until Cowen has made up his mind." Prominent Liberals, such as Strachan and Watson, discussed the need for a second candidate, but until mid-June nothing had been decided. 

There was still strong sentiment for Cowen within the Association, and at an Executive Committee meeting on June 10, there was talk of re-opening negotiations with Cowen; that attempt failed, reportedly by one vote, due to the feeling that Cowen's real "objective was to humiliate the caucus by forcing them to make advances to him."

Shortly thereafter, the Association nominated James Craig, a prominent shipowner, to be Morley's running mate. According to Watson, this was the result of the Chronicle's startling endorsement of Sir William Armstrong, the Unionist candidate. This was especially significant since the Chronicle had previously urged voters to support Gladstonian candidates, but now urged voters to make Armstrong an exception because of his public service to Newcastle. Furthermore, the Chronicle in two editorials ridiculed Craig as a nonentity and predicted his defeat.

108 Letter, Morley to R. S. Watson, March 10, 1886, Watson Papers, RSW 76. Letter, Morley to R. S. Watson, June 1, 1886, Watson Papers, RSW 82.
109 See Leader, March 20, 1886; Chronicle, March 23, 1886.
110 See Chronicle, June 11, 1886. Concerning Cowen's "objective," see letter, Alexander Stephenson to James Cochran Stephenson, June 13, 1886, Stephenson Papers. Captain Newstead, a Cowenite, stated that Cowen was not nominated by the Association because of Luckley's tie-breaking vote. See Chronicle, July 5, 1886.
111 Chronicle, June 12, June 15, June 17, June 21, June 22, and June 23, 1886.
In this election, the Unionists allied with the Tories, who dumped Hamond (a Home RULER) for Sir Matthew White Ridley, an experienced campaigner and Parliamentarian. Throughout the campaign, the Unionists and Tories outdid the Liberals in praise of Cowen, who, they claimed, was consistent in championing Home Rule. Armstrong also claimed that Cowen was Newcastle's best representative, and Ridley was "astonished" that the Association did not express regret at Cowen's retirement.112

Shortly after the Liberal victory, Cowen praised Ridley for his electoral struggle:

not for Home Rule it is true, but for what is equally important, English liberty. I want Ireland to have a Parliament but I don't want Englishmen to surrender the constituencies to the control of the caucus or the House of Commons to the domination of Mr. Gladstone. You and Sir William Armstrong were really fighting the Liberal cause and I sincerely wish you had been successful.113

Thus, the champion of Ireland felt that caucus victory would rank among the greatest of evils.

CONCLUSION

In his retirement, Cowen rejected Parliamentary offers from Conservatives, Labourites, and Unionists. His refusals were based largely on his feeling that party life was "slavery" and that his time at Westminster was wasted. Before he died in 1900, he became an avid Jingoist, and—although he was still friendly to Irish nationalists—he was a leading opponent of Gladstone; he had, however, accomplished nothing of great importance in his retirement.

In assessing Cowen's significance, one must discount his self-evaluation of failure. Most Irish nationalists felt he was one of their most valuable allies in Parliament and in the English press; thus, Cowen might have acted as a safety valve against extremist nationalist charges that all Englishmen were scoundrels. It must also be remembered that while there is no major piece of legislation named after Cowen, this is understandable since Cowen was almost always in opposition to the Government. Yet, not even Cowen's most bitter enemies ever charged him with any indifference toward his Parliamentary duties. In fact, it was Cowen's steady attendance, his willingness to ask embarrassing questions of Cabinet officials, and his oratorical talent that made him so dangerous to his rivals.

Cowen's caucus opponents were correct in criticizing his devious methods in politics, but they were certainly no more pure. The Association
advocates were also correct in their insistence that Cowen had become conservative. Yet, although Cowen did modify his beliefs somewhat, English public opinion had moved so far left that by the mid-1880s Cowen was left standing in the light of conservatism.

What is most important about Cowen's Parliamentary career was his last stand against the caucus power structure. While he regarded the outcome of this struggle as a defeat, much of what he warned against did happen. In 1892, Hamond, the perennial candidate, topped the polls, forcing Craig out. In 1895, when the Tories ran two candidates, John Morley lost his seat, and the Newcastle Liberals never again completely regained their lost power.

The caucus, furthermore, though well organized, had no widespread support among the masses, who eventually became most receptive to working class candidates and willing to abandon the Liberal party. Finally, Parliament eventually degenerated into what Cowen feared most: a delegation in which an M.P. who dared to resist the Party whip on an "important" issue was committing political suicide. In fact, Cowen was the last prominent "independent" Liberal M.P. who resisted the efforts of the party organization to dominate him politically.
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The dissertation submitted by Joseph Michael Kelly has been read and approved by members of the Department of History.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

June 2, 1976
Date

[Signature]
Signature of advisor