

The Politician's Child: Growing up in the Public Eye of Modern Britain, c. 1970 – 2000s

Introduction:

In 2016, Ed Balls, former Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families in the Labour Government under Prime Minister Tony Blair, reflected in his political memoir on the surreal experiences and challenges of bringing up children in the public eye. As an ex-politician still married to a serving Member of Parliament he observed:

In a way, politics and the media have always been a part of our children's lives. When they were very young, Yvette was increasingly asked to appear on *GMTV* or *BBC Breakfast*. One unusual morning quickly became routine: the children would come down to breakfast, say 'Where's Mum'? - and I'd turn on the TV so they could see her. It's weird how quickly something like that can become normal.¹

Such candid reflections often feature in publications about exiting public office. Yet, political historians have neglected to explore the political clichés, family fictions, and social realities, behind this public-relations exercise.² Nor have political scientists studied the ethics of political parents (whether an ex-politician, or their spouse) who mine family stories for future worldwide book sales. In Britain during 2005-6 the *House of Commons Select Committee on Public Administration* did review political "memoirs and money", identifying three personal motivations: "to set the record straight; to make money out of the experience; and *vanity or pride*" [sic].³ In fact, three former British Prime Ministers have featured in the *Guardian* newspaper's league-table of the largest publishing advances – Margaret Thatcher £3.5m (1993, & 1995), Tony Blair £4.6m (2007), and David Cameron £800, 000 (2018) – compared to former Presidents like Bill Clinton who secured \$15m, George Bush Jr earning \$7m, and a \$60m joint-advance paid to Barak and Michelle Obama.⁴ As Sir Simon Jenkins a former newspaper editor explains, speedy production always secures lucrative fees – "a quarter of a million tomorrow, £100,000 next week, £10,000 two months from now. How fast can you write them? It was as simple as that ... It is show business".⁵ Most political authors know their writings must be "titillating", "instant" and "juicy" to sell; an economic reality reiterated by John Lloyd of the *Financial Times*:

Politicians and politics and public figures have become much more the feed-stuff of entertainment in satire shows, comedy shows, so that politics or news about politics has to some extent migrated from the hard to the soft part ... and that has vastly increased the market for gossip, for revelation ... the market for character stories is now vastly increased... especially, obviously, leading politicians, prime ministers, cabinet secretaries and so on, has expanded hugely in the last 20 or 30 years.⁶

Seldom, however, has the exposed position of the politician's child been considered in this fast moving publishing world, even though their private lives are often subjected to a close relative's concerted media campaign as part of a book or lecture tour.⁷ Instead, the predominant historiographical trend has been to depict the politician's child as a family actor, only worthy of study at times of political scandal, resignation, or retirement from high office.⁸ There thus remains little substantive research on what is it like to experience a parent's political roller-coaster, or to have that parent script family life by recycling it for media consumption on leaving public office. This major gap is important because the vast majority of recent former British politicians have been generally insensitive and tactless about publishing details of their children's characters, educational and medical profiles. It remains the case that the exclusive perspectives of politicians have captured the publishing centre-ground. We need therefore to engage with the problems created *for* children in Britain by their political parents' writings: the central focus of this article.

Not only did the negative and positive aspects of authority, power, agency and emotion impact on the British politician's child growing up in the public eye, but such understudied childhood perspectives reprise a number of enduring themes in the historical literature on family form, function and meaning, notably the public/private boundaries of nuclear families. Related themes include the role of fathers as totemic heads, deeply embedded in signals of masculinity; the role of women in providing household and family coherence; the changing balance of power in families between parents and children; as well as the need to consider the family as an organic unit in society, rather than merely a demographic reference point.⁹ Sections I and II thus engage with the *Richard Crossman Diaries* (1975-7), arguing that his writings were emblematic of a wider media threshold crossed by many other British politicians that entered the publishing world after him.¹⁰ For Crossman not only disclosed the inner-workings of civil servants in Whitehall government, his diaries were a catalyst for greater media exposure of his (and others) children. His intimate family history format proved popular with the reading public, even though those personal revelations remain under-studied. This neglected perspective is not a niche academic focus. It is fundamental to re-appraising the public stories politicians retell, notably what these reveal about the historical importance of evaluating the politics of family lives, connected to ethical questions of book production, financial gain, dynamic publishing campaigns, and their political legacies.

The global tendency meanwhile today for official and unofficial biographies to lay bare the childhoods of those from political dynasties or controversial politicians whose family-life has been restricted in their home countries is well-established in modern political literature.¹¹ Recently the international focus has shifted to children of notorious political dictators.¹² There has been however much less historiographical focus on the complex ways that children were affected by, and experienced the careers of, the ordinary politicians who populated the British and now devolved Parliaments in the United Kingdom. Indeed, recent political diaries tend to feature offspring of high-profile politicians – generally ex-Cabinet Ministers¹³ – or those political spin-doctors connected to leading Prime Ministers.¹⁴ The politician's child in these storylines is often just behind the scenes, consigned to the role of spectator or a supporting actor with a short walk-on part. Yet, as we shall see, in Section III, first-hand children's experiences of this political roller-coaster are often mediated by a parent's exclusive perspective.¹⁵ Occasionally children have become co-opted political actors. During the British BSE crisis (mad-cow disease infecting cattle) in 1990, for instance, John Gummer, Conservative Agriculture Minister, promoted his daughter being filmed eating a beef-burger. More generally, the media tends to depict the politician's child as the beneficiary of nepotism, or its opposite, a restrictive childhood, seen as formative preparation for future public service.¹⁶

We will be examining how this simplistic dichotomy does little justice either to the potential range of life experiences and social histories of political children, or to the complexion of the matrix of opportunities, restrictions and missteps that have framed their family lives in the public eye.¹⁷ It also importantly neglects the history of emotions, as Monica Scheer highlights, in families that are 'socially situated, adaptive, trained, plastic and thus historical'.¹⁸ Moreover historians of the family have yet to fully engage with 'the politics of researching feeling differently' – the mismatch between a parent's write-up of family life and their offspring's 'emotional dissent' about 'parental forms and scale of political intervention' into the publishing world.¹⁹ Section IV thus explores Crossman's genre of political literature that opened up the politician's child to media consumption.

Against this backdrop, Section V considers Marc Santora's recent remarks in the *New York Times*: "Politicians strive to control the message. Teenagers and young adults are not known for their ability to stay on script."²⁰ Indeed, children have a remarkable capacity to assert their personalities in the face of even the most sophisticated political-machine, as

Tony Blair found in July 2000 after his son Euan was arrested for being “drunk and incapable” in Leicester Square, London.²¹ Or in the trans-Atlantic case of his political ally George Bush, when his daughters “were arrested and accused of trying to order margaritas at a restaurant despite being under the legal drinking age.” The *New York Post* headline — *Jenna and Tonic* — “was the first in what would be months of relentless needling.”²² The same relentless coverage was experienced by Sarah Palin’s teenage daughter too when her pregnancy out of wedlock made global news. It was also something that Chelsea Clinton had to navigate during the “Monica Lewinsky affair”. Ironically going astray could and can sustain a sense of family “normality”. It does even occasionally revitalise a leading politician’s lack-lustre image by making their private life seem more relevant to the electorate – as John Major Conservative Prime Minister found in the 1990s when he generated more media- coverage as Tory party leader after his son James married a former topless model and featured in *Hello Magazine*.²³ More widely, the growth of social media in the last two decades has given political offspring opportunities to enter the public arena unscripted, and featuring in our final Section VI.²⁴ Some have experienced cyber bullying, many have stayed below the Twitter radar; others have embraced a Facebook culture. How then can such children, “make sure that family is family and friends are friends?” - asked Michelle Obama, when her two teenage girls were growing up in the White House.²⁵ It is a reminder to historians of the family of the potential international reach and scholarly impact of this neglected area of contemporary childhood studies in Britain, and beyond its European shores. We begin therefore with the *Richard Crossman Diaries*.

I.

The *Richard Crossman Diaries* caused a publishing sensation in the political world of mid-1970s Britain. Janet Morgan explained that for an ex-Cabinet Minister in Harold Wilson’s Labour Government (1964-6) their candour was exceptional. Some “three million-words” appeared in a revised edition, *The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister*, after an extraordinary legal battle, co-ordinated by Harold Evans, *Sunday Times* editor.²⁶ He explained that Crossman consciously broke publishing conventions on a personal and political level. It was a diagnosis of terminal liver cancer, which made him determined to go public. Crossman told Evans over lunch in September 1973: “there’d be pressure for suppression and truncation of his work from both Whitehall (the civil service) and Westminster (politicians)”.²⁷ After his death, the

Times and Crossman family executors were told not to “disclose” any part of the manuscript without government censorship, otherwise the book would breach the Official Secrets Act.²⁸ Evans explained how: “For nine weeks I played cat and mouse with the Cabinet Office, accepting some requests for deletion, but in the end we published some 100, 000 words and broke every restriction.”²⁹ Following a series of court challenges and subsequent Parliamentary Inquiry, legally “ministers’ memoirs could no longer be regulated by statute.” As Evans remarked, “The logjam had been broken” and it was a “great publishing victory” for the Crossman executors.³⁰ The diaries soon climbed the best-sellers list and continue today to be an important primary source for political studies of modern Britain. Yet, few scholars have considered the family history record they left of the Crossman children and the long-term publishing legacy such public depictions had for other politicians’ children that came afterwards in the public eye.³¹ As we shall see, they were a catalyst for opening-up family life in ways that would have been unacceptable before WWI, and indirectly they emphasise the importance of family history for a wide range of topical debates about the state, the political system, and personal networks of power.

In Britain, it had been conventional when writing political accounts of public life that whilst a politician recalled their childhood, they generally toned down familial problems or sibling rivalries. Whilst leading politicians did occasionally write about their schooling - sometimes almost exclusively - they seldom, if ever, wrote about their intimate family circle before the 1930s. Or, if they did so, they used a formulaic-framing of childhood snippets. For this reason, modern political histories reliant on autobiographies, diaries, and memoirs, often bemoan their lack of family personality. Usually a politician’s background is condensed into a fragrant potpourri of family trees. This publishing trend has recently been analysed for the *Observer Magazine 100 Political Book Series*. Steve Richards and Gaby Hincliff found that: ‘British Prime Ministers are usually good actors, artists fascinated by their own role on the public stage’.³² They promote their natural talents and personal political journeys to success. Indeed sampling a selection of one hundred general political memoirs published from 1950 to 1970, reveals just how common family history censorship was. As Jeremy Paxman explains, pre-Crossman a typical political memoir contained: “A childhood deprived of affection, unusual sensitivity, an outstanding mentor, extreme self-discipline and over developed religious sense, aggression and timidity, overdependence on the love of others”, but with little immediate family intimacy.³³ Another noteworthy feature

of their personal content is that of the 51 British Prime Ministers (1721 to 2007), 28 were the children of former MPs, and 24 of those “had lost a father before they reached the age of twenty-one”. Against this family backdrop, the publishing fashion had been for leading British politicians to manipulate “public” access to their “private” lives.

What Crossman changed fundamentally was his recycling of family life and presenting it as if this was not a political act in itself – a misleading publishing trend that was to then match the media thirst for personalized news-stories. And this should have raised ethical questions that have often been neglected by historians of the family and political life. Seldom was the well-being of the politician’s child a priority when presented with a generous publishing contract. Securing new income streams meant that Royalty payments were increasingly dependent on humanizing a politician’s lack-lustre image once their political heyday had passed. On publication-day, family life was opened-up and readers invited into private worlds. Politicians often excused this action by stating that they could not help the fact that increasingly the media was treating them as a new type of celebrity. Sometimes, as in the case of ex-Prime Minister Tony Blair, a significant part of the publishing advance was donated to charity to try to counter media criticism of money-spinning revelations. The publicity machine thus stressed how former politicians were not ethically responsible if their advances, serialisation and promotional events, had to balance restraint with the public interest. But as the former BBC political correspondent Jeremy Paxman points out, what was really happening in human terms was that many politicians “do not seem to realize that, just as one day they were elevated to power, so another day they will be jettisoned.”³⁴ Most believe “they will go on for ever” and when the reverse happens, they fall back on the career consolation of a book deal. Usually there is a personal awakening that “there is nothing so ex as an ex-MP”. The necessity of reinvention has however sometimes had real consequences for family-life. As we shall see below, its timing can be emotionally damaging if it coincides with the growing pains of childhood or teenage years. Nevertheless, in modern Britain, it was a publishing option that many signed up to – both former Cabinet Ministers and ordinary backbenchers, without considering the ethics of renewing family access after a life in politics. It was however Crossman that broke this barrier to publication for his offspring. We need hence to examine closely what sort of open access policy he created, before looking at its longer-term ramifications.

II

Historians concur that Richard Crossman Labour MP (1945-1974) had a puzzling personality. As Cabinet Minister for Housing and Local Government (1964-66) and Shadow Secretary of State for Education (1963-4) he was sensitive to the needs of others in social deprivation and highly insensitive about social graces. Those outside his intimate family circle recalled his habit of resorting “to provocative talk and tactless teasing”, which some found “unbearable.”³⁵ Like many gifted people, he often divided the political crowd with his precocious natural talents and sharp intellect honed at New College Oxford. He also possessed a flair for journalism, writing for the *Mirror* Group and editing the *New Statesman*. And he consolidated his successful media career as a regular BBC radio and television broadcaster. Crossman was a polymath, interested in poetry, opera, theology, theatre and politics. His private Winchester College education had schooled him in “*Manners Maketh Man*.” Few of his contemporaries doubted that he was a man who liked to do things “wholeheartedly” with compassion, but he was also accused of being “inconsistent.”³⁶ In relation to his children, there was merit in this personal criticism.

Before however we engage with the diaries we need to reflect, briefly, on how an historian of the family should read them given the complex motives Crossman said he had for writing. Early reviews of the diaries noted that Crossman admitted he was motivated to analyse both “the pursuit of power” and his actions as an “intellectual *in power*”.³⁷ In other words, he had a strong sense of his political authority, emotion, identity and power which predominated in his mind as he penned the personal entries and which need to frame an analysis today. Many subsequent British politicians have copied these justifications, notably the prolific political diarist Tony Benn, a Labour MP from 1950 to 2001 who published nine volumes (1987-2013). As Roy Hattersley (former Deputy Leader of the Labour party) commented in the *Observer* newspaper in 2005 after another round of ex-MPs dairies was published: “all insisted that they kept and published the diaries not to massage their ego or improve their bank balances but as a contribution to history”.³⁸ Yet he also noted, the real attraction of such diaries to the public is to “peep through a metaphorical keyhole at the lives of people they call celebrities.” Nobody wants to read a diarist that is boring and pedestrian in their personal life. To achieve high sales all politicians are under commercial pressure to enliven their political record with salacious gossip and personal disclosures, raising “questions of taste and propriety”. Witness Seminars convened at the Institute of

Historical Research in London have explored this financial fact of life, reconsidering the aesthetics and ethics “surrounding the editing of political diaries, including what to edit, the motivation of the diarist, and the value of the dairies to historians”. Yet, at the symposia there was little discussion of the publishing impact or legacy *for* the politician’s child, the politics of family life or the importance of family life for politics.³⁹ Instead the focus was (and is) the hidden-side of national political life or international relations.⁴⁰ We need therefore to engage with how Crossman’s personality fashioned his parental images *for* his children.

Richard Crossman’s parental character first appeared in his political diaries when his eldest son was born on October 5, 1957. It was the Labour party autumn conference, and like most men of his generation he was not at his wife’s side during the birth. By October 24, he hence recorded: “Since my last entry, the main interest in my life has been fatherhood, which doesn’t concern this dairy, but which may yet affect my character and chances as a politician.”⁴¹ It was a candid admission that family life should be sacrosanct and not the subject of political musings later intended for public consumption. Crossman was likewise privately conceding that the image of a family man mattered for a successful high-profile political career, for he had in fact become a father late in life. Having been married twice before and childless, he was delighted when Patrick arrived.⁴² His third wife, Anne, was fourteen years younger than him, and whilst he enjoyed a high public profile, she much preferred domesticity. Having a young family therefore brought them both joy and the challenge of achieving a work-life balance with their first-born. Even so, from his first mention in the diaries, Crossman documented how his son had to play a walk-on-part in his father’s career plans. He thus wrote in the diaries on his eldest child’s ninth birthday: “We telephoned him. Poor boy, he was born on the Friday of the Brighton Conference 1957 and the next time we came to Brighton was for the Conference five years later when nanny brought the children. Here we are again on his birthday. It’s no fun being a politician’s son.”⁴³ Patrick was therefore loved but in his family hierarchy he was also ascribed a public-private role - in that order of priority - by his father’s political penmanship.

A related and noteworthy feature of the *Crossman Diaries* seldom commented upon by political commentators was that as his two children grew up their father decided to record the siblings’ developing characters; glimpsing his parental authority as opinion-maker. Again, it is worth stressing that issues of identity, privacy, emotion and hierarchies in the politics of his family life were to go public later, despite his acknowledging that private

lives did not belong in a politician's diary. For Patrick welcomed a sister, Virginia, into the family-nursery in August 1959. During the summer recess from Parliament, Crossman thus returned to the family's country-seat, at his wife's Oxfordshire ancestral home. There in a long diary entry for July 17, 1963, Crossman recorded Patrick and Virginia's temperaments, interactions as siblings, and their growing intellectual aptitudes. His son was pictured playing with his "building bricks" and "toy soldiers", with which he was "creative and constructs a great story and calls it a film show."⁴⁴ Sometimes he shared this activity with his sister but generally he sought his father's approval first. Crossman likewise recounted: "Patrick can now read, pretty well, and every morning I go into his bedroom and find him reading away." One day he found that he could recount the Prayer Book *Benedicite* and thus was depicted as having impressive academic abilities. His daughter however was presented in a gendered manner; the children's natures became a matter of public-private record:

Virginia is very different. She is not interested in reading so much and she reads in bed, as she puts it. For her, this means looking at the pictures. She already sews neatly and is wonderfully nimble as a person, tough, vital and practical. I have already got one theoretical, thoughtful, strong, violent boy and one unspeculative, practical, loving, flirtatious, vigorous, sporting girl. Patrick is old enough not to want me to be a Minister because he wants to see more of me.⁴⁵

Like many older fathers of his generation, Crossman's children had growing characters that fascinated him. Yet, he was also acting in an indiscrete and thoughtless manner by depicting intimate self-portraits that would last a lifetime for his offspring in the public eye. The impression created was that Virginia from an early age was not academic, though this would prove to be the opposite case in adulthood.⁴⁶ Charitably, perhaps, being late to parenthood Crossman may have wanted to fix them in his mind during the balmy summer of 1963. Equally, however, at some point in their teenage years it was going to be necessary for them to grow beyond his political sketch-writer's impressions, which he had created for them. To achieve their independence, they needed the private space to fashion futures that were not in their father's image-making; very necessary to preserve their psychological well-being. There is therefore self-evidently a missing child's perspective in the *Crossman Diaries*. He did not consider in print what it must have been like to have a parent decide to make his children's characteristics and growing pains this high-profile. This facet of family life is seldom explored in the standard historical literature but it was one that was to have far-reaching consequences for the Crossman children, and others like them.

Two long excerpts of the *Crossman Diaries* first appeared in the *Sunday Times* after Richard Crossman's death aged 66 in April 1974. His grieving wife Anne was determined to fulfil her husband's last wishes that his political diaries should be publicly available no later than 1975 to maintain their freshness in the public eye.⁴⁷ In the intervening months, whilst the legal wrangling continued (recounted above), the impact of their eventual publication became poignant for Crossman's children. For in February 1975, Patrick Crossman, aged 17, committed suicide. Anne and her daughter Virginia told the coroner how they had gone out on a shopping-trip and returning home they found Patrick hanging by his judo-belt from a hook in the kitchen ceiling; tragically, he could not be revived. There was, predictably, extensive national and local press coverage, which, though sensitive in its editorial tone, did ask some uncomfortable questions about what it was really like to be a leading politician's child. An obituary of Richard Crossman in the *Spectator* on April 13, 1974, was informative. It described how: "the electricity of his mind caused many doubts about his stability, just as the speed of his intellectual analysis, and his determination to voice his thoughts immediately they occurred, encouraged men who could assert themselves against him to mutter angrily about the highwayman tactics of his conversational technique."⁴⁸ Others spoke of how: "he could be a man of exceptional grace and kindness. With his young children he was the epitome of ebullient fatherhood." Now those same commentators were asking, which was the true portrayal, and whether his children suffered from their public exposure in print? Three features of Crossman's story emphasise the importance of family historians engaging with the politician's child.

The first was that the Crossman family had debated how best to educate their children. There had been two clear choices – either to send them to a state or private school. Richard Crossman had been privately educated at Twyford preparatory school and Winchester College in Hampshire, before going up to New College Oxford. And it had been his stated intention to send his son to the Dragon School in Oxford and then to his alma mater at Winchester (both private schools). Indeed, he and his wife had pre-paid their son's school fees to the Dragon, but then they took the joint decision to send both children to the local state school in Banbury. This was politically correct because the Labour party in the 1960s was a strong supporter of reviving the substandard state school system, and so their educational choices were highly symbolic for a leading Socialist politician: indeed, such educational choices, as we shall see in sections III and IV, have often troubled Labour

politicians. Crossman meanwhile stressed that Anne wanted to keep their children at home and this ruled out a private boarding school (supporting his political position as the Labour Party's Shadow Cabinet, Minister of State for Education).⁴⁹ He thus pronounced that since his children were financially comfortable they needed an education that was intellectually stimulating and socially diverse, incentivising them to achieve more in life. Yet, after Patrick's death, it was reported that this educational decision may have had several unanticipated, adverse effects on his mental well-being. The *Daily Mail* thus picked the eye-catching headline "The split world of Patrick Crossman" – and asked could a former politician's child reside on a large country estate and be a pupil at a local [state] comprehensive school?⁵⁰ Surely this would cause the child of such a prominent politician to have a dual personality. Anne Crossman denied this was a factor in her son's death, reportedly telling the coroner that: "there was no reason" she could identify for his decision to take his life.⁵¹ Citing close family friends, and school pupils in his class, however the press interviewed some of Patrick's inner circle who contradicted Anne's story. They claimed that there may have been a connection between Patrick's father's recent death, difficulty in making friends at school, and suicide.⁵²

The second reporting feature covered in some media depth was whether Patrick had difficulties living up to his father's dazzling reputation. An unnamed family friend was reported as saying: "I was always worried about Patrick. He was a very quiet chap. The trouble may have been aggravated by the fact that he was not perhaps as bright as he felt he should be. Living up to Dick Crossman was always on his mind and I think that he may have isolated himself."⁵³ There was some substance to this claim that Patrick did fear failure, as his mother explained in a *Daily Mail* interview two years later. Reflecting on her double bereavement, she told Lynda Lee-Potter: "I still don't know what triggered it off. He was working well, everyone was pleased with him. The only thing I can think of sounds so trivial. He was due to take his driving-test the next day. He thought he was going to fail and he didn't like failure. Perhaps he thought some people might laugh."⁵⁴ She also explained how: "Looking back I can see he was more like me than I realised. He did keep his emotions bottled up; he didn't talk about his feelings." There had been a growing recognition in the remaining Crossman family that one psychological aspect of being a famous politician's child was the necessity of learning to be emotionally reserved.

A third feature of the contemporary reporting was that some in the close Crossman social circle did link the publication of the diaries more directly to Patrick's decision to commit suicide. Tam Dayell Labour MP for West Lothian in Scotland and the former Private Secretary of Richard Crossman made the personal connection. For eleven years, Dayell had lived in the Crossman's London town house. Having known the family intimately, he appeared to be in a position to comment about Patrick that:

I can't think of a person less likely to commit suicide but one thing that haunts me is the publication of the diaries. I asked Patrick if he wanted them to be published and he said he did. After the first instalment appeared I rang to ask him what he thought of it. He said he had enjoyed reading the piece but I had a feeling that the cold light of hard print may have affected him a bit.⁵⁵

The sub-text was that however practiced the politician's child was at curbing their natural instincts out of fidelity to their parent, it was nonetheless difficult to suppress a deeper personal sense of a private life being more exposed to public scrutiny. Indeed the degree to which the Crossman children had become skilled at the art of discretion, was again revealed by their grieving mother two years after Patrick's suicide:

My daughter doesn't express emotions easily. She seems remarkably unmoved by Patrick's death. We have been a distant, polite family. We all got on with our own lives. We didn't interfere. I think it went too far. I am sure it is difficult having a very clever famous father. My daughter certainly would have preferred anonymity.⁵⁶

Loyalty to a dead parent, and pride in their political achievements, required a personal cost of silence, introspection, and learning the art of being painstakingly inscrutable.⁵⁷ It was self-evident at the time that the government had been so concerned in court to defend its privacy and the reputation of its civil servants that it failed to consider at all the media threshold that Crossman had crossed for his children. For, as a new genre of political source material it also set the tone for what was about to happen in print to other politicians' children too. As publisher's advances escalated, it was to prove a very difficult media trend to reverse.

III

Hugo Rifkin writing for the *Spectator Magazine* first drew attention in 2014 to the false childhood portrayals found in political diaries and memoirs after the 1970s. As a child of a leading Conservative Cabinet Minister, Sir Malcolm Rifkind (MP 1974-1997), Hugo has written candidly about sometimes feeling misrepresented and misunderstood as a politician's child of the Thatcher era. Recently he highlighted how: "Quite often I get the

impression that people have an entirely erroneous conception of what life is like in a political family. You do not, as appears to be commonly understood, grow up in an atmosphere of certainty and entitlement. Instead you grow up wary and a little nervy.”⁵⁸ Being a politician’s child, he explained, tended to involve being over-shadowed by the latest parliamentary debate in the media spotlight. In a typical scenario, a teenager might experience embarrassing press exposure after engaging in under-age alcohol consumption and waking up the next morning to find that their hangover was a front-page newspaper headline. As Hugo Rifkind emphasizes even a cursory glance of recent political writings and their constant media focus, reveals little basic consideration for this comprised position of the politician’s child: “Obviously, politicians should not be able to hide behind those silent and bewildered children in their homes. Those in the front line know the deal ... Some political kids end up nuts or in public life; others end up both, or neither. Probably, on average, it’s a boon. But I worry about the way that public sentiment seems to have no technique for connecting with” the social reality of “how difficult family life can be”.⁵⁹

This sort of insightful commentary is part of the untold child’s story of the publishing legacy of the *Crossman Diaries*; yet, it remains unacknowledged today. Indeed, however subtle Rifkind’s rendering, seldom have other children spoken about, or been given the opportunity to speak about, living out their lives under the public gaze.⁶⁰ In adulthood, Hugo has been advantaged as a journalist. He can shape his media message, but many other political children have lacked personal agency or a media platform to have their voices heard. To begin to correct this parental bias, it is essential to engage with the commonplace ways that political parents have depicted their children. In this way, it is feasible to start to interact with their hidden histories often lived out in plain sight of the general public.

Sampling the one hundred or so political diaries and memoirs that were published since the early 1980s in Britain, it is evident that there has been a tendency to depict children of political dynasties in stock ways.⁶¹ In what follows however we will be focusing on emblematic examples that are representative of information that typically came into the public domain. This research approach does not overlook those children who did not feature in published accounts provided by their parents or those who did but have never been heard of again. Instead, it has been characteristic in political writings to encounter the politician’s child in a range of passive public engagement roles. Occasionally they can be seen centre-stage when for instance a new Prime Minister takes office, exemplified by the

Blair (Labour), Brown (Labour), and Cameron (Conservative) children entering and leaving No. 10 Downing Street. Or they are more often pictured just behind the scenes in the role of spectator, often a supporting-actor with a short walk-on part, usually at election time. As we shall see, such children's experiences of the political roller-coaster are generally mediated by a parent's exclusive perspective. The children know to smile for the camera but they are expected to remain silent actors on the public stage. This sort of minor but important part in a parent's media image-making is then usually refracted through the lens of narrow historical hindsight when written up for public consumption - notably in the recent case of the Blair, Campbell and Thatcher political memoirs (discussed below).⁶² Sometimes children have become co-opted political actors to reassure the general public in some way that government policy works so well that a politician would not hesitate to have their children experience it for themselves. As Anne McElvoy of the *Guardian* reflects, however, when political parents use their children as political props for unpopular policies (intentionally or inadvertently) then they invite an invasion of family privacy that should be off-limits.⁶³

A related depiction is the truism that being a politician's child is about nepotism, or its opposite, a very restrictive upbringing, and thus a useful preparation for future public service. We have seen this conspicuously in the family dynasties for instance of Malcolm MacDonald or Maurice Macmillan, the offspring of former Prime Ministers Ramsey MacDonald (Labour) and Harold Macmillan (Conservative) respectively. More recently it has happened in the cases of the children of Neil Kinnock and Tony Benn too – offspring of leading Labour politicians that are still serving in the House of Commons – Stephen Kinnock in Aberavon, Wales – Hilary Benn at Leeds Central.⁶⁴ Yet, this simple dichotomy does little justice to the potential range of life experiences of these so-called privileged political children. Each has had to learn to live with a matrix of opportunities, restrictions, and missteps, in the public eye.⁶⁵ We need therefore to take our lead from the *Crossman Diaries* and reflect on the three main social contexts of public exposure that shaped his and other children's lived experiences. Firstly, a politician's child's educational profile and parental school choice needs to be considered, since this is often their initial entry into the public eye. Secondly, each child's growing character and reserves of personal resilience ought to be factored in, especially once their parent gets criticised in the press for a political scandal or unpopular policy decisions, as this is usually their second entry-level into tabloid journalism. Thirdly, the vexed question of how much personal choice they have to act

independently because lacking freedom-of-speech can persuade some children to go off political message out of frustration; generally resulting in their third entry-level into media coverage. Testing these three human experiences is feasible and involves exploring representative examples. After the arrival of New Labour on the political scene in the early 1990s, their progeny became high profile. Concentrating on the case of Tony Blair's children provides an historical prism to explore the common childhood features that they shared (unwittingly) with the Crossman children in popular print culture.

IV

It is noteworthy just how many political diaries and memoirs published post-Crossman open by featuring the pivotal family decision of how best to educate the politician's child. The majority of political offspring from an early age have found themselves under intense newspaper scrutiny because of controversial parental schooling choices. This happened regularly to members of New Labour. Like Crossman, their choice of state versus private school was symbolically emotive for two reasons: picking a state school was supposed to distance New Labour from accusations made against the Conservative party of social cronyism and the policy reflected Labour's traditional working-class values. This ideological emphasis was often however undermined when it came to an individual politician's school choices for their children because New Labour MPs knew that most comprehensive schools in London performed below average compared to leading grammar schools in Manchester or Edinburgh or Belfast around the United Kingdom.

Thus, the Alistair Campbell diaries featuring *The Blair Years* begin the reprise of his tenure as press secretary with a notable conversation about the Blairs' controversial choice of the London Oratory to educate their eldest son. It was a grant-maintained, selective Catholic school located in West London. As such, it was effectively a semi-private school because it had a pupil-screening entry-system to select the most able children who could benefit from a faith school education beyond local government control. The Oratory was also geographically outside the educational catchment area of No: 10 Downing Street and therefore a political liability. As Campbell recorded – "I had another go at dissuading him from sending the boys to the Oratory. I said that line in [John] Major's speech [Conservative Prime Minister] about people doing the best for their children was laying down a line of attack. What did he gain from going to the Oratory? You get all the grief politically; Euan will

get attention he won't want or need and is it really that much better than the [state] school down the road?"⁶⁶ As Campbell predicted the school issue kept rumbling in the press, a crucial three years before Tony Blair won a landslide Labour election victory in 1997: "I alerted Derry [Lord Chancellor and family friend] to the school problem. He said, again, that you need to be careful about crossing the line on what were in the end personal decisions. I said sure, but where there are political implications, it was as well to be open about them."⁶⁷ Later that day Campbell had a long chat with Tony Blair:

I used it to raise again my view that he was leading with his chin in sending Euan to the Oratory. I couldn't see the point in generating all the fuss it would cause. He said he'd decided it was the right school for Euan and that was that. I felt it would give him a political problem, and put Euan in a spotlight in a way I thought he wanted to avoid. The press would say it made the kids fair game.⁶⁸

This lengthy argument culminated in Tony Blair disagreeing that politics and personal choice were incompatible when it came to his children's schooling: "*I am not going to sacrifice my kids' education for political correctness. It is not as if it is a private school, for heaven's sake. It's a state comprehensive.*" Campbell replied: "Up to a point, I said. I asked him to imagine the Heseltine speech [Deputy Leader of the Conservative Party] on the Labour leader who expected ordinary kids to go to the local sink school but shipped his across London to a GM school [grant maintained] the likes of which his own party opposed."⁶⁹

Campbell asked Blair to rethink: "I said imagine the boost to morale if you did send your kids there [to the local state school]." It was an argument that Crossman had conceded for offspring, Patrick and Virginia in the 1960s, but not Blair by the 1990s. He refused to budge. Hence, later the next month Campbell recalled how on 30 November 1994: "Then the bleeps [media texts] started coming through re: the Oratory. I called Cherie [Blair] to warn her and said it is important the kids don't get too caught up in it. *I didn't know you cared about these things* [sic] she said, not without sarcasm. I said you'd be surprised. I said it was always bound to come out, it did not surprise me it was the *Mail*, they and the Tories would play it for all it was worth, and I'm simply alerting you."⁷⁰ By December 4, 1994, Campbell recorded: "I don't think Tony fully grasped the potential damage being caused by the Oratory. He said anyone would think I'd sent him to Eton [leading private school]."

In the end, the Blair boys (Euan, Nikki and Leo) were sent to the London Oratory and further press coverage revealed that they "received private tuition on the side from masters at Westminster school."⁷¹ Yet, not once in subsequent published accounts of the political

decision-making behind the controversy were the actual children's voices involved heard. They were the subject of numerous private political briefings that were then brought back into the public domain in book deals after their parents and friends left high-profile office, in the way that Richard Crossman originally pioneered. No detailed official record is available of what the Blair children said in their words about their schooling, their experiences of the unwelcome media attention, or what they felt in retrospect as adults about having their childhoods exposed to repeated public scrutiny in a best-selling political dairy by Campbell or Blair's memoirs styled as his personal political journey.⁷² Did they, like Patrick Crossman, find it strange to read about their schooling choices in the cold light of day? For the current article, this is highly relevant because one of the Blair children according to some political commentators did have a very difficult time at school. In particular, Blair's only daughter seems to have experienced the negative aspects of being a politician's child at school. Kathryn Blair had, like Patrick Crossman, tried to commit suicide (as reported on political blogs):

On or around Thursday 13th May 2004 Tony Blair's 16 year old daughter Kathryn attempted to commit suicide. She is in the middle of exams, believed to be GCSE's and took an overdose of unknown pills. She was rushed to hospital and a news blackout was requested by the PM's office and adhered to by the British Press. Katherine is believed to be studying at the Sacred Heart School in Hammersmith, West London, a Roman Catholic state secondary school. News about the suicide attempt was confirmed by Alan Johnson, Labour MP for West Hull and Hess.⁷³

On this occasion, the full weight of New Labour's political spin-doctoring swung into action. Rupert Murdoch agreed that as Kathryn Blair was a minor, News International would comply with the Press Complaints Commission's code of conduct and not publish any details of the attempted suicide. They were joined by a wider media agreement upheld by the BBC, ITV and Channel 4 news to blanket-ban television coverage. Yet, many political bloggers saw this evasive action as "two-faced." After all Tony Blair was photographed with his children outside No: 10 Downing Street; the Blairs also sold images of their new baby Leo for charity to media outlets, and generally featured family life in New Labour election press releases, popular print culture, and on television. It seemed, therefore, to be self-serving to withhold information that was in the public interest during Blair's second political term of office, especially as he had cited "family reasons" for possibly not serving a third term at the time of Kathryn's suicide attempt. If, as was reported by some lobbyists, his daughter was being

bullied at school, excessively worrying about her impending exams (and sense of failure), as well as the emotional toll of being needled about her father's support for the Iraq war, then Kathryn had gone through childhood experiences equivalent to those of Patrick Crossman. Indeed, Tony Blair in an interview with the *Mirror* in April 2017 did finally admit: "What they did do was once say to me when I was saying, *It wasn't that bad you never got much stick really*, and they said, *No, you don't realise we used to get a lot of stick* [sic]." ⁷⁴ For obvious reasons, both Kathryn Blair (and her siblings) like Patrick Crossman had hidden emotional lives that remain unspoken and therefore still undocumented. Indeed Cherie Blair told the BBC in June 2019 that she accepted that in public life complaining about: "the British press is like complaining about the weather' but it is "certainly necessary to protect children" when the Press Complaint Commission's rules were "not respected". ⁷⁵ She added "whether it is do-able or not, I only know from my own experience that there were plenty of times when we had to literally do a lot of fire-fighting", especially when "their health issues were explored, so I think you have to be constantly vigilant about that".

This difficulty of educating a politician's child in the public eye was not however an exclusive Labour party problem in a post-Crossman publishing world. The Tory party in theory could pick private schools for their children without offending their traditional voters but they also had their equivalent parenting dilemmas. In the 1970s, for instance, the media-image that was carefully cultivated by Margaret Thatcher was that of a caring, loving mother with a happy home life. Indeed, her family history and the lessons of settled domesticity fed directly into Conservative Government philosophies and policies. She did by all accounts love her twins, Mark and Carol, born in 1954. But their schooling and the associated psychological impact of a domineering parent was akin to the situation of the Crossman children. Mark went to a boarding school aged eight and Carol to a separate private girls' school aged nine. Mrs Thatcher recalled: "Mark went because he revels in people all around him, and Carol went too, to stop her thinking he was getting preferential treatment." ⁷⁶ Her daughter's recollection as an adult was though subtly different concerning the gendered way she was schooled and thus written-up for public consumption: "*As a child I was frightened of her. I always felt I came second of the two. Unloved is not the right word, but I never felt I made the grade.*" She went on to explain that her brother was expected to attend boarding school, whereas she got a similar education

because her mother's attitude was: *"there wasn't much point in running a household for one child"*. Carol then revealed:

*"All my childhood memories of my mother were just someone who was superwoman before the phrase had been invented. She was always flat out, she never relaxed, household chores were done at breakneck speed in order to get back to the parliamentary correspondence or get on with making up a speech. You couldn't distract her... she had tunnel vision in terms of whatever she was doing ... I've written books. I won, I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!, but nobody will ever know me for being anything other than Margaret Thatcher's daughter, so at the end of the day whatever I did was never good enough."*⁷⁷

As the *Daily Telegraph* pointed out: "It's a painfully harsh judgment, but one, it must be remembered, that she makes on herself"; it cannot be dismissed out of hand.⁷⁸ It was certainly revealing for a politician's child in the Conservative party to speak candidly about her gendered schooling. Like Hugo Rifkind earlier in this article, Carol Thatcher became a journalist. Having felt over-shadowed, she shared with Virginia Crossman the re-scripting in adulthood of her career achievements. This much-neglected theme of a child's growing character traits being exposed to public scrutiny, its psychological impact long-term, and the question of how much childhood autonomy they could develop in terms of resilience, is seldom featured in modern political writings, to which we now turn. For in the face of so much media pressure the politician's child can sometimes react to feeling a sense of failure by going off party message out of frustration, and in a social media age the opportunities to do so have multiplied in the public eye: highlighting aspects of their second and third entry-level into popular print culture.

V

The *Crossman Diaries* were written at a time when the majority of British parents took a more liberal attitude to parenting than the previous generation. In the 1960s there was more emphasis on allowing children to realize personal goals of greater educational and social mobility in Britain. There was an enhanced emphasis on the emotional bonds of families, building on long historical trends for the family to be increasingly viewed as an emotional rather than simply a socio-demographic unit.⁷⁹ Politicians' children did experience this cultural trend, but they were also shaped by ongoing family expectations, continued loyalty to a high-profile parent, and avoiding social embarrassment in the public eye. This made their childhood choices rather narrower compared to many of their social counterparts embracing the counter-culture of the 1960s. It also sometimes left a false

impression that they benefited from nepotism by virtue of their parent being part of the political establishment. As a result some conspicuous children did get fed up with being political props. Increasingly, by the 1980s there were going off message, and troubling their prominent parent's political spin-doctors. Again, some key examples printed for public consumption stand for many at the time.

Thus, a second-entry level into the media for the politician's child was that post-Crossman they usually came to public prominence after a political scandal featuring their parent. This tended to initially feature in British tabloid newspapers, then the quality press picked up on the salacious story, and ultimately it could be later rehashed into a published book deal when the political parent left office and needed a new income-stream. Often by the 1980s it was leading members of the Conservative party whose illegitimate children, the revelation of a hidden mistress, or intimate details of an unconventional sex life, got exposed to public scrutiny. In 1983 it was thus revealed that Cecil Parkinson Conservative MP (1970-1990) had been forced by a tabloid press exposé to acknowledge a baby he had conceived with his long-term mistress and secretary of twelve years standing. At the time, Parkinson was a popular Tory Party Chairman, who had secured a second landslide election victory for Margaret Thatcher. He had thus been due to be rewarded with the post of Foreign Secretary. Instead, he had accepted the lesser position of Minister for Trade and Industry because unbeknown to the press his mistress was about to expose their affair.

Then during the annual Tory party conference in October 1983, the BBC quoted a forthright press release from Miss Sara Keays concerning an unplanned pregnancy: *"My baby was conceived in a long-standing, loving relationship which I allowed to continue because I believed in our eventual marriage [sic]."* She also claimed that political pressure from Cecil Parkinson to remain silent or go abroad had been intense. This she resisted on the basis that she felt it would "cast doubt on her own reputation and the child's *fundamental right* [sic] to know its father's identity".⁸⁰ Parkinson strenuously denied to the press that he had made two offers of marriage or asked Sara to abort his love-child to save his political career. She however countered his public statements, telling the *Times* that he was being economical with the truth: "I was not aware that political expediency was sufficient grounds for an abortion."⁸¹ Angry at the Tory media labelling her a jilted mistress, Sara expected her lover to leave his wife. After a family conference on a holiday in Portugal, Parkinson publicly conceded that he had lied to the press – he admitted proposing marriage

twice to his mistress – but then announced to Sara’s distress that he had decided not to divorce. He reassured Margaret Thatcher that the scandal had revived his marriage to Anne and family commitment to his three daughters. Meanwhile Parkinson’s illegitimate child was born on New Year’s Eve 1983. By the early 1990s, it was necessary for Sara Keays to go to court to secure maintenance payments because her daughter had complex medical needs. In the course of which, Parkinson sought and was granted a super-injunction that forbade Flora, his baby daughter, from speaking publicly until she was eighteen years of age. As the *Mirror* newspaper reflected after Parkinson’s death in 2016 the impact of this publishing ban on the politician’s child to speak out in her own words was at best inconsiderate and at worst callous: “This meant she was never photographed alongside her classmates or allowed to take part in school activities in case it led to her identification. She was even left off the school’s board of scholastic achievements.”⁸²

Flora Keays-Parkinson by virtue of her untimely birth and medical profile had self-evidently gone off political message. She had been born with severe epilepsy. As a toddler aged eighteen months, she began to fit repeatedly. Eventually, the symptoms were so severe that she had to have surgery for a brain tumour aged four. It left Flora mentally incapacitated with learning difficulties, and eventually she was diagnosed with Asperger’s syndrome too. Parkinson meanwhile tried to protect the remnants of his political reputation, as Thatcher had been grooming him as her successor for high office and he still hoped to make a political comeback after the scandal.⁸³ He thus controlled his child’s story through the courts, both to protect her medical profile and limit future revelations about his lack of involvement in her upbringing. In subsequent statements to the press, he reflected that being exposed to public censure was: “like being in a car crash; you can’t move. Just utterly stunned.” The super-injunction he took out essentially curbed his ex-mistress’s public statements, and in theory limited press access to his disabled offspring, but, in practice, it also made his love-child a non-person. Flora had to wait until becoming an adult to be able to explain in her own words: “I would like to see him ... If he loved me, he would want to see me and be in my everyday life ... I feel jealous that my mother has known him, but I haven’t, and jealous of other people who go on holiday with their fathers, when I don’t.”⁸⁴ It was an unedifying demonstration of the public power of the politician over the private life of his child. Parkinson was permitted legally to print his version of events in his published autobiography timed to be released by his literary agent as he left the House of

Commons to take up a life peerage in the House of Lords.⁸⁵ Meanwhile Flora had no public right-to-reply.

Furthering compounding this inequitable situation was a generous legacy that Parkinson left in his will after his death in 2016 to his wife and three adult children. There was no named codicil with a deed of gift for Flora. Instead, the family court monthly maintenance allowance of £2, 500 granted in 1993 stopped. There was, however, a life policy put in trust totalling £350, 000, revealed by the Parkinson family solicitor. This nonetheless necessitated Sara Keays going back to the High Court in 2018.⁸⁶ The sum, her legal representative argued, would not in investment returns cover the lost monthly maintenance allowance, nor pay for accumulated mortgage arrears, or support a full-time care assistant for Flora. Sara felt she had no choice but to challenge the probate and the family executor's powers to decide on how the inadequate insurance policy was spent. This contrasted with generous gifts that Parkinson's three legitimate children had received during their lifetimes to help pay for London town houses, their education and medical bills, as well as the considerable residual estate funds. Yet, all was not as it seemed inside the close Parkinson family circle either.

Mary Parkinson, the eldest daughter, had struggled to come to terms with the public revelation of her step-sister. She found it very difficult to live up to her father's high-profile and then downfall in politics. Once the family scandal broke, Mary started to suffer from anorexia nervosa in her teenage years, turned to Class A drugs at University, and eventually had to attend rehab to wean her off years of substance abuse that she funded occasionally from prostitution. Getting clean, with her parent's extensive financial support, did however mean also having to face up to going off message as a prominent politician's child. She was thus left with a legacy of severe depression and bi-polar disorder from her years of drug-taking. In essence her political father's success and scandal had eclipsed her private life, and so she found a very destructive way to win back public attention for herself. Sadly, after her father's death, her severe mental ill-health symptoms returned again and she committed suicide in December 2017. Before her untimely death she explained that she had reconciled with her father but her upbringing was tougher than it looked. Mary had rebelled for psychological reasons: "I was the eldest daughter and I was very bright. I wanted to be successful and I wanted to be the best in his eyes, as any daughter does. There was a lot of pressure on me."⁸⁷ A close friend recalled:

Over the years Mary had told close friends about the rift with her family after the publicity about her father's affair with his secretary and their lovechild Flora Keays. She grew up in a privileged life, but she ran away from it all into a life of degradation - cocaine addiction paid for with prostitution in a crack house in Notting Hill. She talked about terrible rows with her family. When she was at her lowest ebb, they could not bear to hear about her circumstances ...Underneath it all, she was a lovely human being and kind to others even when she was in a bad way. I shall miss her very much. My only hope is that she is now at peace.⁸⁸

Both an illegitimate and legitimate child had experienced in their different ways the need to circumvent the political machine to be heard in the public domain in their own right. They rejected having the written record of their lives overshadowed by a charismatic father determined to protect his political reputation. The question of whether a parent's personal conduct should influence to this extent the political recycling of childhood experiences in print, was to feature in other Tory diaries too.

The *Alan Clark diaries* were published to acclaim in 1993. They featured an insider's account of Margaret Thatcher's fall from power in the Tory party from the frank perspective of her former Minister of Defence. Readers relished Clark's fascination with high politics: "There are no true friends in politics. We are all sharks circling and waiting for the traces of blood to appear."⁸⁹ Charles Powell thus said of Clark that he was: "The Lucifer of the Thatcher government: a brilliant, dark, quixotic, bawdy presence". Antony Howard too praised the political diaries for being "staggeringly, recklessly candid ... tells the truth as he saw it without fear or favour."⁹⁰ Clark had taken the commercial decision to pepper his diaries with salacious private details of his unconventional marriage, mistresses, and privileged lifestyle at his wealthy family seat at Saltwood Castle in Kent, which he had inherited from his famous father the art historian Lord Clark of *Civilisation*. Choice chauvinist phrases were soon picked up in the media as the diaries became an instant best-seller. After Cecil Parkinson's resignation, for instance, Clark met him on Westminster Green. Clark thought that Cecil had mishandled his mistress, but he had sympathy for his political plight. The diaries thus record their shared patriarchal values – "Cecil said he could never see the child. But what, I asked if it was a son?" Parkinson had three girls but no male heir. Clark wrote: "He didn't reply. You would have to embrace it. You would have to go down on your knees to Ann [Cecil's wife] for permission. He drew the conversation to a close and we parted."⁹¹ Clark was self-evidently unconcerned about having a user-friendly public image –

he was regarded as someone with an original mind and rich enough to be independent in politics – but ambitious for power and a determined admirer of Thatcher. Even so, few political commentators criticised what he wrote about his children (or others) with remarkable candour: again a publishing feature shared with Crossman.

In the diaries it was apparent that Clark shared with Crossman the characteristics of being a loving, older father. His two sons were born on February 13, 1960 (James) and February 2, 1962 (Andrew) when Clark was in his thirties. Yet, by his forties and fifties, he had an undisguised habit in his political diaries of talking about their personal problems in their teenage years, notably their education and health issues. He also detailed his parental worries about their growing pains. The full range of the lived experiences of the politician's child thus appeared again in popular print but ones edited by a political parent. Clark had a tendency to keep ranking his children, as Crossman had done, in terms of their character traits and innate abilities – the eldest always outshining the second-born. In a typical entry from the early diaries he thus recorded candidly on August 5, 1973:

Another reason, worried, in a kind of hopeless way, about the boys – particularly James – being so sort of rotten and anarchic, languidly lacking in initiative, and yet very ready to take offence. In fact, noticeably, poorer in quality than even one or two years ago. James 'gets away with things' (being quick and fly in retort) too easily and that coupled with natural laziness leads him to dodge anything in the slightest bit arduous. Yet, without nourishment his intelligence, initiative, eagerness, will all wither. He's such a dear, I do hope 'its turns out all right'. I don't know quite what I ought to do.⁹²

This was an endearing portrait. For diary readers it was a shared parenting dilemma. But it was also a long-term sketch that James Clark would have to live with in the years ahead. Frequently Clark family intimacies were depicted. Once the teenage boys started drinking alcohol and going out socially with girls, their father displayed a characteristic level of indiscretion; on May 29, 1975 he thus wrote: "Boy [James] out at a party at St. Mary's Bay; usual mixed emotions of jealousy/frustration at the two *maidens* [sic] (heavily-built, but one somewhat shy and lecherous I would think) and worry at his using the 1000 [car], which has already been put in the ditch once."⁹³ In fact over the course of the three diaries James's topsy-turvy love-life became a regular feature – covering his two divorces, plus a miscarriage, until he happily fell in love for a third time with a childhood sweetheart and had a son. What it felt like, even as an adult, to read entries that he was the chief cause of every family crisis, remains undisclosed: "Yesterday a sort of horror day. James (who else?) played

a major role. Full depths of horror never plumbed without a James intervention.”⁹⁴ Perhaps James shrugged it off knowing his father loved him deeply but whether equivalent politician’s children would have been so casual concerning their personal courtship histories becoming public property remains an important question once publication barriers like this were breached.

Another noteworthy feature of the *Clark Diaries* was just how often he depicted his children’s medical problems – normally the third entry-level for the politician’s child into popular print culture, and one that Clark shared with many of his political contemporaries. Although he suffered from hypochondria, Clark also did not think twice about breaking family confidentiality in return for a lucrative publishing deal. And this is because a medical crisis with children is the most easily relatable aspect of a politician’s family life to hook in a reading public to a private world. Indeed, the early *Clark Diaries* provide considerable medical details concerning his two son’s growing pains. James (the eldest) was reported as having had various serious skiing accidents in Switzerland, breaking his leg twice, and subsequently losing his nerve to get back on the slopes. Andrew (his younger sibling) meanwhile suffered from childhood asthma, anxiety, and physical under-development. Later his father recorded his worries about his second son’s career chances in the armed forces – “Tip [Andrew] talked to me thoughtfully about his exams. Today we had a letter from G [army contact], following his careers interview. I felt almost faint reading it, sickish. Talk of ‘asthma may effect his entry into the Para[chute] Regt [regiment] etc [sic]. Don’t want him to be blighted by asthma.”⁹⁵ Clark admitted that he was reluctant for him to go into a regiment with such a strong emphasis on action-packed activities since Andrew lacked physical prowess. But this was also breaking the basic ethical code that political parents should protect their children’s medical profiles.

Such vignettes were thus played out against the backdrop of the two boys schooling mishaps and career flops too. This made Clark an “FP” [Famous Person], but the price of his celebratory status was to open up his children’s emotional and physical trials to his reading public. When for example James was offered a place at Eton (Clark’s school) his failure to pass the Common Entrance exam got exposed in a way that few of his social counterparts experienced. Andrew too would initially fail the Army Regular Commission Board, eventually retaking to join the Life Guards, but this was all played out for public consumption in Clark’s publishing deal. Diary entries like: “I just don’t understand this” penned when Andrew was

rejected the first time for officer training – were sketched out with frank comments such as: “I am *shitted* [sic] by it, *shitted* [sic] for him, who genuinely and unbelievably against all odds triumphed at Pirbright and *swotted up* [sic] for his lecturette [sic].”⁹⁶ Undoubtedly Clark was proud of his children and loving, but he clearly did so in his own way. This *modus operandi* would be part of the fashioning of his children’s future self-images into adulthood on publication. Perhaps therefore it is unsurprising by the millennium and the advent of social media to find equivalent politicians’ offspring finding alternative ways to express their public voices, to which we now turn in our final section.

VI

Once the politician’s child entered the internet era, new personal challenges started to confront them. As Alistair Campbell had experienced during his decade as Tony Blair’s press secretary, it was the speed of media delivery online that would prove to be the biggest challenge for all politicians at Westminster. If a politician’s progeny went off message or they were caught in a semi-legal (under-age drinking) or illegal position (taking banned drugs), then they were much more likely to be exposed by the press. An added complication was that as fast as political diaries and memoirs were being published, the media were also making similar publishing deals too. So even if a politician had been reticent or was unwilling to discuss the intimate details of a family scandal involving their children, the extra information could be filled in by a celebrity commentator with an equally powerful media presence. Again, one emblematic case stands in for many.

Jack Straw MP rose to high office in Tony Blair’s New Labour government. During his tenure as Home Secretary his son William aged 17 was caught selling cannabis by two undercover reporters working for the *Daily Mirror*. The “facts” of the case were to be the subject of a tabloid exposé, Downing Street briefings, and grist for the celebrity diaries of the former editor of the *Mirror*, Piers Morgan. The question of whose version of the politician’s child’s story was the correct one would take years to be established. Social media eventually allowed William Straw to put across his version of events.

According then to Piers Morgan, William offered two reporters cannabis for the going-rate of £10 for ten joints at a public house in Clapham near the Straw London family home in December 2007. They concluded from this unprompted action that this “was not the language of someone unacquainted with the drug world.”⁹⁷ Keen to follow up the story,

Morgan, as *Mirror* editor, said that his reporters discovered that William was going to a “spliff party” the following Saturday. Naively, on the phone he invited one of the undercover reporters telling them there would be “plenty of drugs.” Ordinarily, such incidents by a minor were subject to the same Press Complaints Commission Code of Conduct that covered the suicide attempt of Kathryn Blair (described above). The difficulty was that William was the son of the Home Secretary responsible for law and order. Piers Morgan thus decided that he should check with Jack Straw how best to proceed. He rang him to make an offer of keeping the story out of the newspapers. What happened next would be reported in the tabloid press and subsequently published in detail in the *Piers Morgan Diaries*, illustrating the heightened exposure of the politician’s child in the popular print culture of a social media era.

According to Piers Morgan he talked privately to Jack Straw, and left him as a father to deal with William’s misdemeanour: “All I would ask Jack, is that if you decide to make this public, then you let me know.”⁹⁸ To which he replied: “Of course, I understand.” The next day Straw rang Morgan and explained off the record how: “I have had a long series of chats with William since we spoke, and he has confirmed what you told me. It has obviously been a hell of a shock and we are still coming to terms with it to be honest. I don’t think we will be saying anything at this stage, but we are still talking it over as a family, and I will let you know what we decide to do.” Morgan wrote that Straw said “you have been fair to me.” It was Alistair Campbell, press secretary, who then revealed in passing to Morgan at a Christmas party on the following Monday December 22, 1997 that “Jack’s taken William to a police station this evening.” He had decided that as Home Secretary he had no choice. Incredulous, Morgan replied that Campbell knew the story would be leaked to the *Sun* newspaper, the *Mirror*’s chief competitor. He now had to run it or face the ire of Rupert Murdoch for missing the political scoop. The headline, “Cabinet Minister’s son sells drugs to *Mirror*” did not name the politician’s child but its timing on Xmas Eve was inauspicious. It created a media storm for a week and ended up in court, which was ironic, according to Morgan’s account. But how reliable was this celebrity coverage and what about the blurring of copyright ownership of William’s story when it was recycled again in Morgan’s best-selling celebrity diaries? Originally, the *Guardian* had forewarned about the *Piers Morgan’s Diaries* in 2005:

This version of events is so economical with the truth, as to be laughable. In fact, Straw was the victim of a sophisticated sting engineered by a freelance journalist with the help of the *Mirror* reporters and the connivance of two of his friends. Morgan's whitewash attempt has prompted one of those friends, Jordan Brooks, to speak out. He confessed his part in the entrapment to the Straw family six months after the incident, and they are aware of his decision now to tell what really happened.⁹⁹

There had in fact been a sophisticated sting organised by a freelance-reporter named Peter Trowell who worked on a contractual basis for the *Mirror*. He paid one of William's close school-friends a retainer of £2, 000 to lure the politician's son to the pub in Clapham and stage the cannabis exchange with two attractive female *Mirror* reporters. Morgan, as editor, had personally guaranteed Jordan Brooks, aged 19, anonymity. But Brooks was later to confess: "I know it was horrible to rat on a friend but I was short of money and I just didn't realize that it was going to be such a big story." He went on to explain: "I felt so depressed about what had happened. I began to drink heavily. I needed help and I found it by going to church."¹⁰⁰ In 1998, he decided to confess to the Straw family. Jack Straw welcomed him into their family home and forgave him when he broke down in tears: "*He hugged me* [sic], says Brooks who, later that evening, also confessed to Will." Brooks also revealed that Peter Trowell went on offering money for any scandal surrounding William's cannabis use, especially during his gap year in India. Sums of up to £30, 000 were rejected by his close circle of friends; as the *Guardian* asked – "what price 'the devil-may-care cheque-book journalism of Piers Morgan?" Self-evidently when a politician's child went off message getting back control of their version of the political storyline could prove very challenging.

The *Guardian* in 2014 eventually gave William Straw aged 33 a chance to speak out: "He has gone from tabloid sting victim to Oxford student union president to standing for MP in his father's neighbouring constituency. But the Labour hopeful insists there is much more to him than *Jack Straw's son* [sic]."¹⁰¹ William voiced his perspective when campaigning to win a seat in Rossendale and Darwin in Lancashire at the last election:

It was a horrible experience realizing that one of your friends had essentially betrayed you ... It made me wary of trusting people, which is a sad thing for a 17-year-old to deal with. But I think it's probably a good lesson for life, that you're really clear what people's motivations are before sharing too much with them ... What I want to do is prove myself and the thing I have to contend with is that often I will be

described as Jack Straw's son, which is fair enough – it's a fact. But I also want to establish myself in my own right and show people what I can do.¹⁰²

Today on Twitter, William Straw, the adult politician's child has learned how to use social media as a force for social good, campaigning for better glasses to improve eyesight in the Commonwealth. He is also able to be more assertive about intrusions into his personal life, as a tweet in February 2018 revealed in response to a death threat that his fellow MP, Andrea Leadsom received: "Thoughts tonight with @andrealeadsom & her family. I was sent a death threat the day after Jo Cox was murdered. Although you try not to take it seriously, it's a horrible feeling. No one in politics or any other walk of life should have to put up with this cowardly nonsense."¹⁰³

And yet, this social media trend stands in contrast to Nick Clegg - former Deputy Prime Minister and ex-Leader of the Liberal Democratic Party. He recently shared on Twitter the news on September 13, 2017 that his eldest child, Antonia, aged 14 had been diagnosed with Hodgkin Lymphoma (blood cancer), which he decided to feature online and with Bloodwise UK. In the 737 retweets and 1, 607 likes that appeared on Twitter, the majority of comments were caring and supportive, but a few made the ethical observation: "I would have thought it was a personal thing and not to be used for publicity."¹⁰⁴ Antonia is a politician's child that until recently attended the same London Oratory School as Tony Blair's youngest son Leo. Even in cancer remission, he is the subject of public scrutiny. Although for Clegg it represented an act of charity to campaign on his sick son's behalf, it was also a broken promise. For before leaving public office, he had vowed to protect his children from media intrusion. He thus told the *Guardian* in March 2015: "I have always felt very, very strongly that my children are entitled to an innocent childhood just as much as any other kids.... – I don't want them when they go to school to suddenly have someone sitting next to them saying *I saw you on telly* [sic]. It makes them feel different".¹⁰⁵

It remains the central dilemma in a social media age – from Ed Balls to Nick Clegg – what is a "normal" life – and who controls its media message in family politics? How much should children, or teenagers be allowed to speak out about their Facebook, Whats App and Snapchat families? Where is the fine line between the public and private sphere? ¹⁰⁶ And why do politicians keep blurring basic child protections in print once out of office that frame so much British contemporary political history? The *Crossman Diaries* it would seem

bequeathed a profound publishing legacy for politicians' children everywhere that lives on in an internet age of faster global communication.

Conclusion:

In 2016, Paddy Ashdown, former Liberal Democrat leader, spoke about the impact of his time in frontline British politics and the damage it could have done to family-life. Promoting his political memoirs at the Henley Literature festival he admitted that: "I think I was not a very good father, I think I was a bit of a Victorian father, I tried to impose my will on my kids ... They soon told me I couldn't."¹⁰⁷ In retrospect, he regretted how insensitive he had been, conceding that the problem of a lack of privacy and proper consideration "was particularly rife within politicians' children. [They] have terrible stories; far too many of them really suffer as a result." He praised how his wife had "carried that burden" and prevented his "goal-driven" determination damaging his offspring. Few politicians have been so candid or recognised the potential pitfalls once out of office. Ashdown did not want to compound past mistakes by printing private aspects of his family-life for public consumption. The evidence in this article indicates how those lived experiences can too often in teenage and adult years become a personal groundhog day with the political button pressed on repeat by a parent's publishing deal once out of office. Four new findings need henceforth to be the focus of more concerted research on this neglected aspect of modern British political family-life. For histories of individual families are an important vehicle for understanding social and political worlds; they also point to historians needing to reflect on the ethics of researching hidden childhood perspectives of adult worlds often lived out in plain sight of the general public.

The first observation is that the schooling of a politician's child is an emotive subject. It often represents the first time that family life will be exposed to press intrusion. And it is a trend that cuts across the political spectrum in Britain – whether from Diane Abbott, Old Labour, who criticised Tony Blair's New Labour stance, but sent her son to a £10, 000 a year private school in 2003.¹⁰⁸ Or Harriet Harman (Labour Solicitor General) and Nicky Morgan (Conservative Secretary of State for Education, 2014-16) who both praised state schools but then sent their children to the private sector too. Of those that did attend semi-state schools (with selective pupil entry) most were not in their local state school catchment area: highlighted by the Sutton Trust in 2010.¹⁰⁹ Instead, it is noteworthy that once out of office most political parents devote more time to picking up their children from their school of

parental choice. Recently, Ed Balls (who opened this article), David Cameron (outgoing Prime Minister), George Osborne (ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer) and Ed Miliband (former Labour Party Leader) were all photographed in their first week out of power either on the school-run or at an after-school café. Yet, having set aside quality-time for their families, they are equally engaged with penning their diaries or memoirs for publication in which schooling aspects of their children's lives will feature. And this repeatedly happens, because few politicians want to risk their child's educational chances. They often break ideological rank and force the practical issue to suit their personal circumstances. In the case of Crossman, he did follow his Socialist political instincts but publishing his children's academic abilities and growing pains was also to have unintended consequences of the most tragic sort. The historical lesson that seems to have therefore been neglected is that a politician child's schooling will always expose them to some sort of public enquiry regardless of their political heritage. If not handled in a timely and sensitive manner, it can have a negative impact on their formative years. And yet, there is no protocol for this in Parliament because its political dimensions for family history have never been studied: a future research agenda.

The second trend that is self-evident is that being a politician's child will have a psychological impact, especially during the teenage years in the media spotlight. Even the most protective parents like Jack Straw soon discover that it is impossible to guard against the normal mishaps of growing up and these are often exaggerated because of the potential for public exposure. Politicians often deny, or want to distance themselves from, the mental pressures that their offspring can feel under to succeed. Many progeny feel eclipsed by their political parent's charisma, natural talents, and powerful positions, as Carol Thatcher explained in adulthood. The media rhetoric of materially advantaged children is often undercut by the unspoken reality of emotionally vulnerable teenagers; something Hugo Rifkind remains concerned about for the current generation. This is further complicated by feelings of loyalty to a high-achieving parent that they are proud of, but also feel daunted by in career terms. To know from an early age that offspring can never escape the media label of being their famous parent's child can be burdensome to carry into adulthood and damaging to their sense of well-being. This is an important area of mental health research that requires further sensitive study, not least because learning the painstaking art of being inscrutable to fend off non-family members can sometimes be detrimental to emotional stability in adulthood. Being skilled at pushing people away seems to have a downside of

damaging already nervy and wary personalities that need to reach out to others and yet are persuaded by a sense of family loyalty to do the opposite. The unwritten history of a politician's child's loneliness and social isolation is all too apparent in those cases of attempted suicide that have featured in this article: worthy of more considered study.

A third finding is that the politician's child will have their medical history exposed at some point to public enquiry. The evidence in this article has purposely only focused on accounts that came into the public domain for ethical reasons. Its research base is those that chose to recycle the details in their publishing deals, notably by Clark. Others, like Clegg, claim they will protect their children's faces from television exposure but then share their most intimate medical diagnosis on leaving high office. This is justified as helping others - something Cameron emphasised when being photographed with his severely disabled eldest child, Evan (who sadly died). Whether such sensitive family matters should feature in book deals is an ethical question that needs more serious future political study. However well-intended there appears to be the need for some sort of independent review of the potential psychological legacy. In many respects, politicians seem oblivious to the fact that in controlling legally the copyright and recycling their child's life-stories they are effectively saying this is "my story" and "not yours", as the thought-provoking case of Parkinson exemplifies. It is a reminder that in the political literature, ironically, the lived experiences of politicians' children run counter to a considerable weight of new research in the history of emotions pioneered by world-leading scholars like William Reddy.¹¹⁰ If such children are not given the safe space and time to talk through the "navigation of their private feelings" then they can find themselves doubly exposed by a political parent and a media commentator, as Piers Morgan's account of William Straw's drugs sting exemplified. Entering a social media forum does provide a chance to set the record straight later, but it is also difficult to unpick personal inaccuracies once they have featured in tabloid culture. The alternative option, to embrace a Facebook, Whats App, Snapchat, or Twitter feed remains significantly understudied in terms of whether it can or cannot become the politician's child's political tool, and what its potential pitfalls could be. One thing is though certain, once a childhood story is on the worldwide web retrieving it is a Herculean task fraught with difficulties of how to police the internet: requiring more research with political offspring.

The fourth, and final, finding in this article is that women remain the bedrock of the politician's child's domestic stability notwithstanding second wave feminism in the 1970s.

Yet, this social trend is seldom studied in-depth either in modern British politics. Although the number of women elected to Parliament at Westminster has increased by a third since the 1970s, and in the general workplace females have now broken many glass-ceilings in their career choices in the business and public sectors, nonetheless it is the mothers of children who continue to provide consistent emotional stability that political offspring need for their well-being. Indeed, when family bereavement strikes – notably in the cases of Samantha Cameron and Sarah Brown who both lost a child whilst their husbands had high-profile jobs in government – it was they who closed the family door to press intrusion. On resigning as Prime Minister both men spoke affectionately of the strong role that their wives played in preserving privacy for their children in Downing Street. Samantha Cameron in particular emphasised how she was relieved that they were now out of the political spotlight but she also pointed out that in the future her children’s lives would be challenging too. Interviewed by *Grazia Magazine* on July 5, 2017 she reflected: “I’m 46 and for years we lived in Downing Street, where we were incredibly protected. To change that approach to your life - and when you didn’t grow up with social media - isn’t easy.”¹¹¹ She did not miss the pressures of living in the public eye but it would be naive to think that however privileged her children had been that slipping back to a “normal” life would be simple. And this also raises the unanswered question of what is “normality” for political children of blended families, post-divorce, single-parent households, and those in civil partnerships that may involve gender reassignment. Definitions of love and the nuclear family, still remain very narrowly held in modern British political studies. And indeed few political scientists study the widows of leading politicians that agree to share their children’s upbringings to preserve their husband’s political legacy in the public eye, as Anne Crossman and Jane Clark did to fulfil a publishing deal after their husband’s untimely deaths. This article has therefore indicated a potentially new vibrant field of family history study. In this endeavour, we must return to the classic roots of British family history, where the study of the individual or the individual family can yield fundamental lessons both for the nature, shape and meaning of families themselves but also for a wider palette of socio-economic, political and cultural debates on the national and international stage.¹¹²

Over a lifetime, perhaps, it is the internalisation of the external political world of their high-profile parent, which is the most complex legacy of all for the politician’s child. Their parent writes the *dramatis personae* role they play in the public eye – trained to smile

through childhood stories recycled for public consumption – they are often supporting actors given a family script to deliver – thus learning from an early age to dissemble about their true feelings. As Rupert Heseltine, son of Lord Michael Heseltine, former Deputy Leader of the Conservative Party, put it when pressed for an answer about a personal family business matter in the *Guardian* in 2011: “You’re going to get stonewalled is possibly my answer ... Listen, I’m the son of a politician. I’m not going to give you a different route to ask the same question.”¹¹³ And yet, sometimes real-life answers are indispensable because future politician’s children in a social media era are going to need more protections in a global world of faster media communications. For as Chelsea Clinton tweeted when Donald Trump’s son was being cyber-bullied in 2017: “It’s high time the media, and everyone leave Barron Trump alone and let him have the childhood he deserves ... I have repeatedly said and will keep saying, Barron Trump deserves the space and privacy and time to grow up.”¹¹⁴ Will it be a sentiment however that his political parent will respect too, either in or once out of high office when penning his next best-selling book – only time will tell for the politician’s child growing up in the public eye both in Britain and beyond its shores. **15, 140 text**

Notes

17, 561 with endnotes

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² On literatures of work-life balance in politics, see, Michael White, Stephen Hill, Patrick McGovern, Colin Mills, and Deborah Smeaton, “High Performance Management, Practices Working Hours and Work-Life Balance,” *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 41, no. 1 (2003): 175-195. On a lack of female politicians, see Kristan Kanthak, “Work-Life Balance and Why Women Don’t Run” accessed July 2, 2018: <https://blog.oup.com/2012/09/work-life-balance-and-why-women-dont-run/>.

³ “Whitehall Confidential? The Publication of Political Memoirs”, *House of Commons, Public Administration Select Committee, Fifth Report of Session 2005-6*, Q. 54, and Q. 55, 18.

⁴ Sian Cain, ‘Printing money: 10 of the richest book deals of all time’, *The Guardian*, 1 March 2017, accessed June 4, 2019: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/mar/01/richest-book-deals-of-all-time-hillary-clinton-james-patterson>

⁵ Oral evidence on *Ethics and Standards*, House of Commons, February 2, 2006, 884-i, Q. 55.

⁶ *Ibid*, February 2, 2006, House of Commons, 884-i, Q 3.

⁷ See, Alison Flood, 'The economics of political memoirs', *Guardian*, August 17, 2010; Daniel Denvir, 'Authors for President: The Curious History of Political Memoirs', *Huffington Post*, Nov., 4, 2011.

⁸ Refer, for example, Matthew Parris and Kevin Maguire, *Great Parliamentary Scandals: Five Centuries of Calumny, Smear and Innuendo*, (London: Robson Books Ltd, 2004); Jeremy Paxman, *The Political Animal: An Anatomy* (London: Penguin Press, 2007).

⁹ Themes explored in, Rebecca Earle, *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-Writers, 1600-1945* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999); Anthony Fletcher, *Growing up in England: The Experience of Childhood, 1600-1914* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Leonore Davidoff, *Thicker Than Water: Siblings and Their Relations 1780-1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Laura King, *Family Men: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Britain, 1914-1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

¹⁰ The Estate of Richard Crossman and Janet Morgan ed., *The Backbench Diaries of Richard Crossman edited by Janet Morgan* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1981).

¹¹ Selected post-2000 publications include: Gerard and Ann Gawalt, *First Daughters: Letters between US Presidents and their Daughters* (New York: Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers 2004); Laurence Learner, *Sons of Camelot: The Fate of an American Dynasty* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 2005); Curtis Roosevelt, *Too Close to the Sun: Growing up in the Shadows of my Grandparents* (New York: Public Affairs Press, 2008); Whitney Stewart, *Aung San Suu Kyi Fearless Voice of Burma* (London: Lerner Publishing Group, 2008); K. C. Lawson and B. Dunne, *Rosemary: The Hidden Kennedy Daughter* (New York: Mariner Books, 2015); Eric Burns, *The Golden Lad: The Haunting Story of Quentin and Theodore Roosevelt* (London and New York: Pegasus Books Ltd, 2016).

¹² See, Jay Nordingler, *Children of Monsters: An Enquiry into the Sons and Daughters of Dictators* (London: Encounter Books, 2015).

¹³ Refer, notably, Alan Clark, & Ion Trewin ed., *A Life in his Own Words: The Complete Diaries, 1972-1999* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2010 edition, 3 volumes, 1993, 2000, 2002). Hereafter *Clark Diaries* by date entry.

¹⁴ Alistair Campbell, *The Blair Years: Extracts from the Alistair Campbell Diaries* (London: Arrow Publishers, 2008).

¹⁵ See, for instance, Charles Moore, *Margaret Thatcher: The Authorised Biography, Vols. 1&2* (London: Penguin Press, 2013-15)

¹⁶ For example, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, *This Child will be Great: Memoir of a Remarkable Life by Africa's First Woman President* (London: Harper Perennial, 2010)

¹⁷ Childhood studies literature is seldom applied to political children – see notably: Sharon Stephens, *Children and the Politics of Culture: Princeton Studies in Culture, Power and History* (Princeton, USA: Princeton UP, 1995); Priscilla Anderson, *Young Children's Rights: Exploring Beliefs, Principles and*

Practices, 2nd edition (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2008); David Archard, *Children: Rights and Childhood*, 3rd edition (London: Routledge, 2014); Jonathan Bradshaw, *The Well-Being of Children in the UK*, 4th edition (London: Policy Press, 2016).

¹⁸ Monique Scheer, 'Are Emotions a kind of practice?' *History and Theory*, 51, no. 2, (2012): 193-220, 193.

¹⁹ Benno Gammerl, Jan Simon Hutta and Monique Scheer, 'Feeling differently: approaches and their politics', *Journal of Emotion, Space and Society*, 25 (Nov. 2017): 87-94.

²⁰ Marc Santora, "When a Politician's Child Goes Astray", *New York Times*, December 24, 2013, 1.

²¹ *BBC News*, "Blair's son drunk and incapable", July 6, 2000, 1 and Tony Blair, *A Journey*, (London: Arrow Publishers, 2010).

²² Santora, "When a Politician's Child", 2.

²³ "Exclusive: The Wedding of James Major and Emma Noble", *Hello Magazine*, front cover, June 8, 1999, Issue 563 and John Major, *John Major: The Autobiography* (London: Harper Collins, 2010).

²⁴ Sonia Livingstone, *Children and the Internet: Great Expectations, Challenging Realities* (London: Polity Press, 2009) highlights social media challenges for all children in the public eye.

²⁵ Philip Sherwell, "Michelle Obama bans daughters Malia and Sacha from mixing with celebrities", *Daily Telegraph*, January 31, 2009, 1.

²⁶ Crossman, *Diaries*, 13.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 411.

²⁸ Harold Evans, *My Paper Chase: True Stories of Vanished Times* (New York: Random House, 2009), 410.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 412.

³⁰ Evans, *My Paper Chase*, 412.

³¹ They are briefly mentioned in Paxman, *Political Animal*, 236, where he questions "the price of fame" but still privileges the politician's account of "less than idyllic" family lives.

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³³ Paxman, *Political Animal*, 36, 40.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 265.

³⁵ Crossman, *Diaries*, 10. Richard Howard Stafford Crossman (Dick) was born December 15, 1907 in Bayswater, London, to Charles-Stafford and Helen Crossman, the third of six children. He died aged sixty-seven from liver cancer on April 5, 1974.

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- ³⁶ Richard Crossman, "A Short Biography", Modern Record Centre, Warwick University.
- ³⁷ Peter Clarke, "Crossman and Social Democracy", *The London Review of Books*, April 16, 1981, Volume 2, Issue 7, 8-10.
- ³⁸ Roy Hattersley, "No one likes a sneak", *Observer*, July 10, 2005, Book Reviews Section, 1
- ³⁹ See, Janet Morgan et al, "The Crossman Diaries Reconsidered", *Contemporary Record*, Volume 1, Issue 2 (1987), 22-30, and Institute of Historical Research Witness Seminar, "Editing Political Diaries", *Contemporary Record*, 7, (1993), 1: 103-131.
- ⁴⁰ See, engaging books by Antony Seldon, *Cameron at No 10: The Inside Story* (London: William Collins, 2015), with Guy Lodge, *Brown at No 10* (London: Biteback Publishing, 2010) and *Blair's Britain 1997-2007* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007).
- ⁴¹ Crossman, *Diaries*, Thursday October 24, 1957, 621.
- ⁴² Crossman's married Erika Susanna Gluck on July 15, 1932, separated six months later, divorcing in 1934. He married secondly, Inezita Baker, known as Zita, December 18, 1937. She died in 1952. On June 3, 1954 Crossman married Anne Patricia McDougall, fourteen years his junior who died in 2008.
- ⁴³ Crossman, *Diaries*, Wednesday October 5, 1966, 65.
- ⁴⁴ Crossman, *Diaries*, Wednesday July 17, 1963, 1016
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.
- ⁴⁶ Virginia Crossman is a renowned Professor of History with an admirable academic career.
- ⁴⁷ The case of Attorney-General v Jonathan Cape Ltd [1976] QB 752.
- ⁴⁸ "Richard Crossman Death", *Spectator*, April 13, 1974, Obituary Section, 1.
- ⁴⁹ See, Crossman, *Diaries*, Sunday October 17, 1965, 351.
- ⁵⁰ Peter Birkett, "The Split World of Patrick Crossman: boy found hanged with his own judo belt", *Daily Mail*, February 19, 1975, Issue 24486, 3.
- ⁵¹ See, "Crossman Suicide a Mystery", *Daily Mail*, February 27, 1975, Issue 24493, 11.
- ⁵² Themes that again featured in, Birkett, "The Split World of Patrick Crossman", 3.
- ⁵³ Ibid. 3.
- ⁵⁴ Lynda Lee-Potter, "Anne Crossman", *Daily Mail*, March 7, 1977, Issue 25118, 6.
- ⁵⁵ Birkett, "The Split World of Patrick Crossman", 3.
- ⁵⁶ Lee-Potter, "Anne Crossman", 6.
- ⁵⁷ Family historians have become increasingly aware of the need, signalled also by the study of modern political children, to consider the family as an emotional rather than simply a socio-demographic unit. This point is made forcibly by Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, and Patronage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) and by Joanne Bailey, *Parenting in England, 1760-1830: Emotion, Identity, and Generation* (Oxford:

Oxford University Press, 2012), for the early modern period. Family historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have also increasingly engaged with this challenge. See Fletcher, *Growing up in England*, pp.168-79 and *idem* 'Courses in politeness: The upbringing and experiences of five teenage diarists, 1671-1860', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 12, (2002): 417-30; as well as Julie-Marie Strange, *Fatherhood and the British Working Class, 1865-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

⁵⁸ Hugo Rifkind, "The truth about being a politician's child", *Spectator*, May 31, 2014, 1.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶⁰ Refer notably, Caroline Bradbury-Jones, *Children as Co-Researchers: the need for protection (Protecting Children and Young People)*, (London: Dunedin Academic Press, 2014).

⁶¹ There are too many to cite here. In what follows emblematic examples are footnoted.

⁶² See, for example, Moore, *Margaret Thatcher*.

⁶³ Anne McElvoy, "Politicians should not use their children as props", *Guardian*, December 3, 2014, Politics Section, 1.

⁶⁴ Again, see, books like, Sirleaf, *This Child will be Great*.

⁶⁵ Refer footnotes 11 and 40 on the lack of this focus in childhood studies of political arenas.

⁶⁶ Campbell, *Blair Years*, October 15, 1994, 25.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, October 31, 1994, 28.

⁶⁸ Campbell, *Blair Years*, October 15, 1994, 28

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 28-9.

⁷⁰ Campbell, *Blair Years*, November 30, 1994, 34.

⁷¹ See also, Rachel Johnson, "It's not how Euan got his scholarship, but why", *Daily Telegraph*, May 23, 2006, Educational Section, 1, featuring Yale University's award to Euan Blair of a £50, 000 scholarship to study a Masters in International Relations. Reporters noted his parent's wealth and that normally an applicant needs a first class degree (he had a high 2:1) to be Ivy League funded.

⁷² See footnote 14 above.

⁷³ "Tony Blair's Daughter in Suicide Bid", http://www.whale.to/c/tony_blair2.html;

⁷⁴ Jason Beattie, "Tony Blair reveals his son Leo has joined Corbyn's Labour Party", *Mirror*, April, 30, 2017, 1.

⁷⁵ Cherie Blair QC, BBC News-Night, 14 June 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-politics-48636679/cherie-blair-you-have-to-accept-the-press-in-public-life>.

⁷⁶ Clare Beckett, *Thatcher (British Prime Ministers)*, (London: Haus Publishing, 2006), Chapter 3, 3.

⁷⁷ Judith Woods, "Margaret Thatcher – Yes, I wish I had seen more of my children – but I cannot regret", *Daily Telegraph*, April 9, 2013, Politics Section, 1.

⁷⁸ See, Carol Thatcher, *A Swim-On Part in the Goldfish Bowl* (London: Headline Review, 2013)

⁷⁹ The broad lessons of these observations also find resonance with a much longer span of family history writing. See for instance, Julie-Marie Strange, 'Fathers at Home: Life Writing and Late-Victorian and Edwardian Plebeian Domestic Masculinities', *Gender and History*, 27, (2012): 703-17 and Joanne Bailey, 'The "Afterlife" of Parenting: Memory, Parentage, and Personal Identity in Britain c. 1760-1830', *Journal of Family History*, 35, (2010): 249-70.

⁸⁰ BBC News, "1983: Parkinson Quits over Love-Child Scandal", October 14, 1983.

⁸¹ The personal dimensions featured again in, Paris and Maguire, *Great Parliamentary Scandals*, quote at 252. Cecil also made reference to it in his political memoir, *Right at the Centre: An Autobiography* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1992) where he devoted seven pages to "The Keays Affair". Sara Keays published her version of events in national newspapers and a book, *A Question of Judgement* (Sydney, Australia: Quintessential Press Ltd, 1986). In view of the super-injunction granted to Cecil Parkinson, she published abroad.

⁸² Jason Beattie, "Cecil Parkinson: The good Tory who left a trail of hurt by making his daughter disappear", *Mirror*, January 25, 2016, Politics Section, 1.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Daniel Martin, chief political correspondent, "Haunted to the end by that love-child furore: How Lord Parkinson, the golden boy Mrs Thatcher wanted as PM, had his reputation shattered by an affair with his secretary", *Daily Mail*, January 26, 2016, 1.

⁸⁵ Refer, footnote 81 above.

⁸⁶ Case Number [April 9, 2018] EWHC 1006 [CH], England and Wales High Court (Chancery Division) Decisions before Master Clark between Flora Elizabeth Keays by her litigant friend Sara Keays (the claimant) and the Executors of the late Right Honourable Cecil, Lord Parkinson (the defendants), 1-12. The Judge found in Flora's favour.

⁸⁷ Victoria Wood and Martin Edwards, "Mary Parkinson, the troubled elder daughter of Tory grandee Cecil Parkinson, is found dead at home", *Daily Telegraph*, December 12, 2017, News Section, 1.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Quotes all cited in, Trewin, *Alan Clark Biography*, 424.

⁹⁰ Ibid., Introduction, 1-5, and Charles Powell, "Clark Diaries", *Times*, June 10, 1993, Book Section, 1.

⁹¹ Clark, *Diaries*, Wednesday December 14, 1983, 57.

⁹² Ibid, Sunday August 5, 1973, 29

⁹³ Clark, *Diaries*, Thursday July 29, 1975, 67.

⁹⁴ Ibid, Friday June 26, 1992, 50.

⁹⁵ Clark, *Diaries*, Wednesday March 8, 1978, 113.

⁹⁶ Piers Morgan, *The Insider: The Private Diaries of a Scandalous Decade* (London: Elbury Press, 2005), 180-3.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 180-3.

⁹⁸ Morgan, *Insider*, 180-3.

⁹⁹ Roy Greenslade, "The story behind the Straw splash", *Guardian*, March 21, 2005, Media Section, 1.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Helen Pidd, "William Straw, I don't want special treatment. I want to prove myself", *Guardian*, May 4, 2014, Interview Section, 1.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ See, Will Straw, Twitter - <https://twitter.com/wdjstraw?lang=en>

¹⁰⁴ https://twitter.com/nick_clegg?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor, Nick Clegg Twitter feed.

¹⁰⁵ Nicholas Watt, Chief Political Correspondent, "Nick Clegg vows never to let his children be filmed by the media", *Guardian*, March 12, 2015, Political Section, 1.

¹⁰⁶ These observations resonate with a literature on the historical dimensions of celebrity culture, which has become increasingly vibrant. See, for instance, Janet Purcell, "'Behind the blessed shelter of the microphone': Managing celebrity and career on the early BBC – Mabel Constanduros, 1925-1957", *Women's History Review*, 24 (2015), 372-88; Jane Fawcett, *Spectacular Disappearances: Celebrity and Privacy, 1696-1801* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2016); Laura Nym Marshall, "'Its your face that is carrying you through!' Class, gender and celebrity in Nancy Astor's 1919 campaign for parliament", *Feminist Media Histories*, 2 (2016): 64-83.

¹⁰⁷ "Paddy Ashdown interview", *Daily Telegraph*, December 26, 2016, Book Review Section, 1.

¹⁰⁸ See, notably, "Abbott speaks out on school row", *BBC News*, October 31, 2003.

¹⁰⁹ https://www.suttontrust.com/wpcontent/uploads/2010/05/1MPs_educational_backgrounds_2010_A.pdf - "The Educational Backgrounds of Members of Parliament in 2010", *The Sutton Trust Report* (London: Sutton Trust Publication, May 2010), 1-11.

¹¹⁰ William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge UP 2001).

¹¹¹ Samantha Cameron, "I don't miss the pressure of No: 10", *Grazia Magazine*, July 5, 2017, 1-2.

¹¹² See, for example, the way in which the particular histories of individual families inform and reshape much bigger debates about the history of literacy, the nature of work, the intellectual and cultural roles of women and twentieth-century culture, in: John Burnett, *Useful Toil: The Autobiographies of Working People from the 1820s to the 1920s* (London: Allen Lane, 1974); David Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture: England 1750-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

1989); Leonore Davidoff, Megan Doolittle, Janet Finch and Katherine Holden, *The Family Story: Blood, Contract and Intimacy, 1830-1960* (London: Longman, 1999); Amanda Culley, *British Women's Life Writing, 1760-1840: Friendship, Community, and Collaboration* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014).

¹¹³ Peter Kirwan interview with Rupert Heseltine, "Is Haymarket an empire in decline? Don't say that to its heir", *Guardian*, January 24, 2011, Business Section, 1-2.

¹¹⁴ CBS NEWS, "Chelsea Clinton comes to Baron Trump's defence again", August 23, 2017, and https://twitter.com/ChelseaClinton?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cbsnews.com%2Fnews%2Fchelsea-clinton-defends-barron-trump-from-conservative-site-criticizing-his-clothing%2F - Chelsea Clinton, Twitter Feed.