

MANCHESTER, PETERLOO AND THE RADICAL CHALLENGE

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Provincial pride and the language of class entered political discourse during the radical challenge of the post-war years, the beginning of a period of regional predominance which was to persist until Westminster and the City of London reasserted their hegemony in late-Victorian Britain. These developments, the stuff of early nineteenth-century history, caused considerable tension particularly in the north-west, leading to the tragic events at Manchester on 16 August 1819. Peterloo, indeed, must be studied in the context of central-local relations and inter-class antagonism. In the industrial districts radicalism acquired an independent and working-class character, much to the alarm of the local authorities, aggrieved by the seeming insouciance of central government, distant from the action.

Strongest in the north-west, the post-war mass platform campaign marked a fundamental advance in popular collective behaviour. The spontaneous direct action of the eighteenth-century crowd, rebellious in defence of custom, was motivated and legitimized by a backward-looking mentalité which sought the redress of grievances through the restoration of the hallowed (doubtless mythical) ways of the past.¹ Influential out-groups, temporary opponents of Court and ministers, sometimes encouraged the urban crowd onto the streets,² but for the most part those in power and place were in firm control of the politics of open space. During the last decades of George III's reign, national consciousness was promoted through public celebrations of loyalty and royalty, spectacular pageants which elicited appreciative popular support for the existing order, enthusiasm which carried over into Church and King violence.³ No mere mob, the riotous loyalist crowd was a powerful and popular force on the streets until the late 1790s when radical and trade union groups seized the initiative. Planning and propaganda preceded the north-west food riots of 1799-1801 in which magistrates, clergy and the old paternalists were condemned along with speculators, factors and middlemen as members of the repressive propertied class. Trapped between falling wages and spiralling prices — by 1799 wartime inflation had reduced weavers' wages to well below half their real value in 1792 — cotton workers rallied behind a new set of slogans: 'No War', 'Damn Pitt', and 'A Free Constitution'.⁴

As war continued, politicization proceeded apace. Despite petitions, industrial action and collective bargaining by riot, hard-pressed Lancashire weavers were repeatedly denied the legislative protection previously extended to Spitalfields silk-weavers. During the war parliament finally abnegated its paternalist responsibilities in favour of laissez-faire and the peremptory demands of the export trade. Workers' combinations were condemned, minimum wage petitions were rejected, and the wage-fixing and apprenticeship clauses of the Statute of Artificers, the keystone of the old Elizabethan labour code, were symbolically repealed, leaving workers defenceless against the ravages of inflation and unregulated competition at the workplace. Defeated and disabused, workers in Lancashire and the



Henry Hunt.

other Luddite counties abandoned the ways and means of the past to embrace radicalism, the forward-looking struggle for democratic control of the state and the economy. Cobbett's cheap journalism, his 'Twopenny Trash', completed the process, instructing these 'country cousins' in their political exploitation. The victims of inflation and regressive taxation, they were the people who paid for 'the Thing', the system of political corruption and financial plunder which had flourished during the war, widening the gap between rich and poor, between the parasitic plunderers and the hard-working plundered, the tax-gorgers and the tax-payers, the politically-privileged and the politically powerless. Cobbett, Samuel Bamford recollected, 'directed his readers to the true cause of their sufferings — misgovernment; and to its proper corrective — parliamentary reform. Riots soon became scarce, and from that time they have never obtained their ancient vogue with the labourers of this country.'⁵

Amidst the distress of the transition to peace without plenty, 'Orator' Hunt inaugurated the radical mass platform, unrestrained 'constitutional' pressure from without for universal manhood suffrage, annual parliaments and the ballot. Open to all, this populist arena offended the exclusive propensities of the reform 'establishment', the gentlemanly alliance of old country-party ideologues and middle-class reformers who favoured direct-taxation suffrage and close co-operation with the Whig opposition.⁶ Elected at mass meetings held in the wake of Hunt's impressive performance at Spa

Fields, northern delegates to the Hampden Club convention refused to endorse any 'doctrine of exclusion'. Fourteen delegates representing the cotton towns in and around Manchester, where weavers' wages were down to four or five shillings a week, held a briefing meeting at Middleton before setting off south. 'They must seek a Power in the Constitution', they agreed in language which incorporated a basic labour theory of value:

... a Power that will curtail luxury — by diminishing Taxation, and will enable the people to buy shoes, stockings, shirts, coats, hats, etc. and then there will be a demand for labour ... suffrage commensurate with direct Taxation, seems to grant, that property only ought to be represented; whereas, labour makes property, and therefore in the name of common sense ought to be represented.⁷

Having spurned the moderate reformers, the northern delegates were soon inveigled into bibulous discussion with the 'revolutionary party', heirs of the Despard insurrectionary tradition.⁸ Angered by the rejection of the petitions and the prompt repression of the platform in 1817, northern radicals were prepared to consider the politics of violence, but not in this elitist conspiratorial form, a recurrent difference of approach. Encouraged by spies and agents-provocateurs, the London underground favoured an immediate putsch in the metropolis, precipitate insurrectionism which served only to legitimize government repression. By contrast, provincial militants hoped to mobilize an irresistible show of force, culminating if necessary in a mass invasion of the capital. To this end, they had to be certain of popular legitimacy and support before moving across the threshold of violence, considerations which led to self-defeating delay in 1817 and later occasions, most notably after the Peterloo massacre. The events of 1819, indeed, were to expose the flaws of militant provincial radicalism.

When the repressive legislation of 1817 came to an end, most energies were concentrated on industrial action, on inter-trade assistance for the striking Manchester spinners. The early general unions of 1818 did not endure but the close co-operation between radical and trades' leaders was carried forward into a renewed campaign for reform.⁹ Supported by Dr Watson and John Gast, Hunt took to the platform again to mobilize support for a Remonstrance to the Regent, an ominously-worded document which eschewed the language of humble prayer in demanding economic and political protection — 'every industrious labourer, manufacturer and mechanic, has a right to reap the ample and substantial fruits of his virtuous and USEFUL TOIL'. Disappointed by the response in London, the 'Orator' decided to journey north, at which point Manchester became the crucial testing-ground for the radical challenge.¹⁰

A crowd of 8,000-10,000 turned out on St Peter's Field on 18 January 1819 to greet the celebrated gentlemanly radical, 'the intrepid Champion of the people's rights'. Midway through the proceedings the platform collapsed under the combined weight of the regional leaders, organizers and martyrs present on the great occasion!¹¹ Most of these figures, the indispensable second-level leaders, were drawn from the 'uneasy' or 'middling' class,¹² small manufacturers, traders, shopkeepers and members of the lesser professions. Identified by interest and sympathy with the working class below, they were of sufficient financial independence to assume the public functions which economic circumstance and the fear of victimisation denied the rank and file — on the day of Hunt's meeting, large numbers of Manchester workers

were locked in their factories by anti-radical employers. John Knight, the 'Lancashire Major Cartwright', had a varied career in cotton manufacture and schoolteaching. The Royton leader William Fitton, another Jacobin veteran, was a surgeon, a profession practised none too scrupulously by Bamford's Middleton associate, 'Dr' Healey. Second only to Hunt in platform delivery, Joseph Harrison, their 'Chaplain on the Field of Battle', was an orator by trade, a nonconformist minister closely connected with the Stockport Union Society. Draper turned pamphlet-seller, Joseph Mitchell was the first self-appointed political missionary, unwitting travelling companion of Oliver the spy. Sub-editor of the *Manchester Observer*, John Thaxter Saxton was virtually a full-time political organizer, using the platform and the press to co-ordinate the radical campaign in the region — despite its popular appeal, the *Observer* was unable to establish the network of full-time working-class political agents later made possible by the success of the Chartist *Northern Star*.

The 'middling' class provided funds, facilities and leadership, but the strength of northern radicalism was its community base, most evident in the out-townships where Hunt, a distinguished visitor from the south, was held in the highest esteem. Specially-selected gangs from the townships descended on the Theatre Royal to avenge the honour of their champion, evicted from the previous evening's performance by a group of socialites and army officers led by the Earl of Uxbridge. Much to their dismay, the 'Lancashire lads' were denied the satisfaction of flexing their muscles, clogs and cudgels against the offending dandies as the management kept the doors firmly closed.¹³ After Hunt's bruised departure for the south, the radical momentum was maintained by less boisterous means through the political education and cultural facilities provided by community-based democratic societies. The Stockport Union for the Promotion of Human Happiness provided model rules, a political adaptation of the Wesleyan class system — 'We recommend and teach industrious habits', Hunt was informed during his visit to the Union Rooms, 'but we, at the same time, inculcate the right of the industrious to the enjoyment of the fruits of their own labour'.¹⁴ The various local societies, established 'for the purpose of spreading *Political Information* amongst the useful class of society', reinforced the strong social structural foundations for collective action in single-industry out-townships, offering the kind of cultural and educational provision that was to be such an important part of the Chartist experience.¹⁵ This 'movement culture', together with the popular interest generated by the *Manchester Observer* and the organizational talents of the local leadership, enabled the north-west radicals to mobilize with a facility much envied down in the capital. Driven from pub to pub by landlords who feared for their licences, London radicals were unable to attract community involvement, a problem exacerbated by their uninviting predilection for arcane ideological dispute.¹⁶

When Hunt was finally denied the right to present the Remonstrance — by which time 'General Distress' had made an unwelcome return, 'beating up for Recruits in all the Manufacturing Districts of the Kingdom'¹⁷ — the northern societies provided the framework for a concerted campaign of 'forcible intimidation'. In early June, delegates from 28 northern towns met at Oldham to co-ordinate plans for an Address to the People, 'expressive of the deplorable conditions of labourers in these districts'. They issued a Declaration recommending 'the formation of Union Societies, in every town and

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village . . . and also the frequent holding of public and district meetings, in order to connect, complete and harmonize our political understanding and feeling'.¹⁸ Over the next few weeks, Union Societies and Political Protestants spread from their respective bases in Lancashire and Yorkshire to other distressed manufacturing areas — Birmingham and the West Midlands, Newcastle and the North East. A system of parochial unions was introduced to overcome the problem of size and communication in London and large cities. Particular efforts were made to enlist the growing number of Irish immigrants 'in the cause of Universal Civil and Religious Liberty'. Non-political trades were converted to reform, starting with the most distressed of all, the handloom-weavers of Carlisle whose only hope previously had been government-assisted emigration to Canada. By these and other means, the mass meetings of summer 1819 were transformed into outings for whole families, trades and communities — in the North-West, special female reform societies were established to emphasize the extent of community involvement.¹⁹

Middle-class reformers were quite welcome to participate in this democratic arena of those *without* the political nation — not a class-exclusive programme, radicalism was addressed to all the useful and unrepresented classes in society — but they chose to absent themselves. Once working-class radicals realized they were performing on their own, the mass platform became an expression of class pride. Carnivals for all the family, mass meetings displayed a rich repertoire of rituals, symbols and

iconography, a language of class without words.²⁰ At the great Blackburn demonstration on 5 July, the first meeting at which the female reform societies took a prominent part, the women arrived in a great procession to present the chairman with 'a most beautiful Cap of Liberty, made of scarlet silk or satin, lined with green, with a serpentine gold lace, terminating with a rich gold tassel'.²¹ Once prominent in loyalist iconography, the cap of liberty was well-chosen as the rallying symbol of the post-war radical challenge. The Roman badge of freedom, it was an ancient and revered emblem which had adorned Britannia's spear and the coinage of the realm until the 1790s when it acquired revolutionary connotations as the livery of French anarchy and Jacobin terror.²²

In the summer of 1819, radicals managed to appropriate the legitimizing language and symbols of the loyalist establishment, winning the battle for the popular mind on a populist platform of history, the constitution and the rule of law. Radicals appeared in heroic guise as the true loyalists, upholding the rights of the freeborn Englishman, the constitution which had been 'won by the valour and cemented with the blood of our ancestors'. Proud guardians of 'the cause for which HAMPDEN fell in the field and SYDNEY died on the scaffold', radical orators pulled in the crowds with their thrilling rhetoric, the emotive evocation of the glorious ancestors, the invocation of impending violence and righteous retribution. Auxiliaries to the cause, the female reform societies struck another populist chord, supporting



Massacre at St Peter's or "BRITONS STRIKE HOME"!!!

London published August 11 1819 by George III Churchman

manhood suffrage through the hallowed rhetoric of motherhood and domestic responsibility, the appeal to a 'natural' order threatened by economic change and adversity.²³

True to the strategy of forcible intimidation — 'peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must' — radical orators proscribed any departure from moral force until all constitutional channels had been explored.²⁴ Peaceable and orderly, the monster demonstrations established an image of legitimate extra-parliamentary behaviour which the government had no real right to infringe, a considerable victory for the radicals in the politics of public space since the legal status of mass meetings was far from certain. Community and class pride ensured the requisite discipline and good order as each meeting contributed to the 'national union', a cumulative display of irresistible strength marshalled through a series of huge regional demonstrations, of which that planned for Manchester in August, under Hunt's chairmanship, was to be the largest yet, 'rather a meeting of the County of Lancashire etc. than of Manchester alone'. In his intercepted correspondence with Joseph Johnson, brushmaker, part-owner of the *Manchester Observer* and secretary of the Manchester Patriotic Union Society, Hunt gave detailed instructions of the kind of 'management' required to ensure that the meeting would be the largest ever, attracting people 'from almost all parts within 20 miles round'. 'We have nothing to do but concentrate public opinion', he wrote as he set off north, 'and if our Enemies will not listen to the voice of a whole People, they will listen to nothing, and may the effects of their Folly and Wickedness be upon their own Heads'.²⁵ In the confrontation of 1819, an early exercise in the politics of modern collective violence, both sides — radicals and government — hoped the other would be the first to overstep the mark, transgress the constitution and lose public sanction.

In the tense days before the meeting, at a time when the more faint-hearted local leaders were on the point of withdrawal, Hunt kept the radicals in line for a great display of constitutional mass pressure from without. Dismayed by the extent of arming and violence, the open pike-making, attacks on unpopular police officers and nocturnal drilling on the moors, Joseph Johnson was most willing to comply with the magistrates ban on the meeting planned for 9 August. Well-versed in the law, Hunt challenged every move of the authorities, countering the Royal Proclamation against seditious meetings and unauthorized drilling with his own 'Proclamation', a defiant assertion of the legal right of assembly, in which he lampooned the magistrates for ordering the people to 'abstain at their peril' from the banned meeting! To prevent further legal difficulties, all references were removed to an election, a ploy recently introduced at Birmingham where Sir Charles Wolseley, a titled rival as the people's champion, was elected the first 'legislatorial attorney' of the unrepresented people. This illegal act, an election without the king's writ, overstepped the mark of platform politics, enabling the authorities to intervene when the radical advance appeared unstoppable. Vain as he was, Hunt had no interest in being 'elected' for Manchester — he later described the legislatorial attorney scheme as 'foolish and absurd'. Nothing was to jeopardize the meeting itself, the provincial climax of the summer platform campaign, the final preparation for a general meeting of the non-represented million. As he travelled north, he issued a series of strident addresses, calling the Lancashire radicals to order for the rescheduled meeting on 16 August. They were to cease

'playing at soldiers', and must come to the meeting 'armed with *no other weapon* but that of a self-approving conscience; determined not to suffer yourselves to be irritated or excited, by any means whatsoever, to commit any breach of the public peace'. Having heard a rumour that the magistrates had issued a warrant against him, he offered himself up on the Saturday night before the meeting, in order to leave them no pretext for breaking up the proceedings.²⁶

Despite repeated pleas from northern magistrates, the Home Office refused to introduce special legislation to curb the radical threat. Viewed from Whitehall there were insuperable legal and parliamentary difficulties in establishing new powers to silence a campaign on the borderline of legality, to counter what Sidmouth described as the 'unprecedented Artifice with which the Demagogues of the present day contrive without transgressing the Law, to produce on the Public Mind the same effect which used only to be created by means unquestionably unlawful'.²⁷ Convinced that Whitehall was being unduly circumspect, the Manchester magistrates decided to 'bring the matter to issue'. 'If the agitators of the country determine to persevere in their meeting', the stipendiary magistrate announced, 'it will necessarily prove a trial of strength and there must be a conflict'.²⁸ On 16 August Norris and his colleagues gained their bloody victory. At least eleven people were killed and many hundreds injured when the magistrates sent in the inebriated publicans, butchers and shopkeepers of the local yeomanry to arrest Hunt and the other leaders on the platform, and then ordered the 15th Hussars to disperse the peaceable crowd on St Peter's Field.

The Peterloo massacre inflamed radical spirits, aroused middle-class public opinion and unnerved the government. The failure to advance beyond this vantage ground pinpoints the critical flaw in popular radical strategy. Situated on the borderline of legality, the mass platform offered a powerful alternative to other patterns of 'collective violence': the unstructured 'turmoil' of pre-industrial riot; and the elitist, spy-ridden 'conspiracy' favoured by the revolutionary underground.²⁹ But at some point the leaders had to decide whether or not the social compact had been violated, whether the time had come when the oppressed people could and should exercise their sovereign right of physical resistance as sanctioned by history, Blackstone and all other authorities. It was this question of timing, this issue of judgement, rather than any absolute commitment to 'moral force' or 'physical force' which divided the radicals at critical moments like the post-Peterloo crisis. At such times, the emphatic insistence on popular legitimacy proved self-defeating. As radicals agonized over their constitutional right they lost their physical might: while they hesitated and deliberated, mass support dwindled, excitement was squandered, and the initiative passed back to the relieved authorities, who had defended the Manchester magistrates to the hilt while taking the utmost care to ensure against any repetition or emulation of their actions.³⁰

At the crucial point Hunt refused to sanction plans for a full-scale confrontation through simultaneous mass meetings: indeed, he decided to forgo the platform altogether, choosing to rest the radical case on Peterloo itself, looking to public opinion and the courts of law for vindication and victory. The unconstitutional outrage of Peterloo would stir the nation where petitions and remonstrances had failed: the courts would be a national platform for the radical cause as the Manchester murderers were brought to condign punishment. Popular

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THE RENOWNED

ATCIEVEMENTS OF PETER-LOO,

ON THE GLORIOUS SIXTEENTH DAY OF AUGUST, 1819.

BY SIR HUGO BURLO FURIOSO DI MULO SPINISSIMO, BART. M. Y. C. and A. S. S.

The Music composed by the celebrated DR. HORSEFOOD; to be had at the Cat and Bagpipes, St. Mary's-Gate, Manchester.

RECITATIVO.

WHEN fell sedition's stalking through the land,
It then behoves each patriotic band
Of NOBLE MIND'D YEOMEN CAVALIERS;
To rally forth and rush upon the mob,
And execute the MAGISTERIAL JOE
Of cutting off the Raganuffin's ears.

ARIA BRAVURA.

(*Forze.*) HOW valiantly we met that crew
Of infants, men and women too,
Upon the Plain of Peterloo,
And gloriously did hack and hew (A)
The d—d reforming gang;
Our swords were sharp you may suppose,
Some lost their ears—some lost a nose,
Our horses trod upon their toes
E're they could run t'escape our blows,
With shrieks the welkin rang.

(*Andante.*) So keen were we to rout these swine,
Whole shoals of constables in line,
We gallop'd o'er in stile so fine,
By orders of the SAPIENT NINE,
First Friends—then Foes—laid flat;
By Richardson's best grinding skill,
Our blades were set with right good will,
That we these Rogues might bleed or kill,
And "give them of Reform their fill,"
And what d'ye think of that?

(*Piano*) They swear, for work they're not half paid,
By 'th tyrants of the weaving trade,
Who live like Kings (B) by th' toil they've made—
These lies of us are daily said
By this ragg'd hungry swarm.
No reason have they thus to prate,
While we've recourse to 'th Parish rate,
We'll send them there for hours to wait
The diff'rence to receive we 'bate
Of wage—and where's the harm?

(*Sotto voce*) These tag-rag, bob-tail herds of brutes,
Are not content with wholesome roots, (C)
But think therewith that beef well suits,
Their chops, e'en water for rare fruits,
The lousy growling dogs;
They think forsooth, that they should dine
Like Gentlefolks, and drink their wine
Or guzzle ale, or eat pig's thine,
For game and fish they even whine,
Itank treason 'mongst these hogs!!

(*Pianissima-mente*) And then those Owls who think, because
They've slich'd the Pow'r to make our laws,
They'll raise their rents thro' th people's maws,
We'll gull by thunders of applause
For doubling th' price of corn.
We'll curse and fight through "thick and thin,"
All those who make a dev'lish din
About dear bread—for there's no sin
In taking ths the great folks in
For th'itates by 'th LAND are borne.

(*Con Balanza*) With "ell-wide jaws" (D) we'll roar and sing,
We'll bravely fight for Church and King;
Those who so arms with them shall bring;
And may each vile Reformer swing
That we miss cutting down;
To our good things we'll stick like wax,
And throw the laws upon their backs;
These bare-bone herds we'll make out hack,
Then nobly gobble Tythe and Tax,
And thus support the Crown.

and hard-fought as it was, this campaign for legal redress served the movement ill. By concentrating on the courts and vacating the mass platform, confrontation was transferred to the authorities' own ground where the magistrates were exonerated without question. In the forum of public opinion it was the established opposition, not the democratic radicals, who benefited from the public outcry. The moral and propaganda triumph of Peterloo thus proved a pyrrhic victory.³¹

The alternative strategy of outright confrontation, favoured by Thistlewood and the 'revolutionary party', failed to attract much support in the north where few were prepared to challenge Hunt's moral authority. Most local leaders and organizers, particularly those drawn from the lower middle class, were ardent supporters of his unremitting campaign in the courts. The rank and file were less patient, but most accepted the veto on the platform. Reporting the arguments over the proposed simultaneous meetings on 1 November, Norris noted a socio-political division separating the established Huntite leaders, the 'higher radicals' of the Patriotic Union

Society and the *Manchester Observer*, from the militants or 'lower radicals' of the breakaway Ultra Union Society, formed in anger at the cancellation of the meetings.³² The division, however, was less clear-cut, complicated by various factors, not least the dubious role of W.C. Walker, secretary of the new society. Unusually virulent in his condemnation of Hunt, sailor-boy Walker, 'the Thistlewood of this part', was almost certainly an informer, providing Colonel Fletcher with details of the secret delegate convention at Nottingham where plans were laid for simultaneous meetings on 13 December to coincide with the introduction of repressive legislation, a cover for insurrection.³³ On the basis of this information, the authorities decided to assert themselves, a show of force which compelled the radicals to abandon all meetings, including those planned by the Huntites to protest against the new laws. As suspicions grew about a 'spy-system' — secretary Walker was conveniently 'out of the way' — most radicals were prepared to follow the advice of James Wroe and the *Observer* to cancel the meetings, but the very vehemence and persistence with

which the 'higher radicals' argued the case suggests that there was still considerable support for platform confrontation, a simultaneous display of strength across the country. To pre-empt any subsequent move, Norris and the magistrates arrested a group of militants, including the weaver James Lang, Walker's successor as secretary of the Ultra Union Society, and Namaan Carter, a most indiscreet pike-maker.³⁴

Angered by the collapse of mass support and the imposition of repression, Thistlewood and the London 'revolutionary party' reverted to conspiracy to be promptly entrapped in the Cato Street affair. Forced underground, provincial diehards began to plan a national rising, at which point the initiative passed from

Lancashire to the West Riding, a pattern repeated in the Chartist crisis of 1839.³⁵ The defiant last act of the post-war mobilization, the rising of 1820 followed immediately on the news of Hunt's conviction at the Peterloo trials in York: the insurrectionists marched behind banners proclaiming 'Hunt the Intrepid Champion of the Rights and Liberties of the People'.³⁶ Shortly afterwards, the Lancashire militants were finally released from summary committal. Attending a meeting to discuss the failure of the Huddersfield rising, they stated their regret that Hunt had not 'made a stand' back in the autumn of 1819. 'We must have some Popular Character of Weight and Influence to head us', they reflected: 'This would stamp Revolution on the People's Hearts'.³⁷

NOTES

1. E.P. Thompson 'Eighteenth-century English society: class struggle without class?', *Social History*, iii (1978), 133-65. See also John Bohstedt *Riots and Community Politics in England and Wales 1790-1810* (1983).
2. G. Rudé 'Collusion and Convergence in Eighteenth Century English Political Action' in his *Paris and London in the Eighteenth Century* (1970), 319-40.
3. Linda Colley 'The Apotheosis of George III: Loyalty, Royalty and the British Nation 1760-1820', *Past and Present*, 102 (1984), 94-129; and 'Whose Nation? Class and National Consciousness in Britain 1750-1830', *ibid*, 113 (1986), 97-117.
4. A. Booth 'Food riots in the north-west of England 1790-1801', *Past and Present*, 77 (1977), 84-107; and 'Popular loyalism and public violence in the north-west of England, 1790-1800', *Social History*, viii (1983), 295-314. J. Foster *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution* (1974), 37-9.
5. Samuel Bamford *Passages in the Life of a Radical* (2 vols, Manchester, 1844; rpt 1 vol. Fitzroy edn, 1967), 13.
6. John Belchem 'Orator' Hunt: *Henry Hunt and English Working Class Radicalism* (Oxford, 1985), ch.2.
7. *To the People of England . . . meeting of Deputies . . . Middleton, the 16th Day of December, 1816* (Manchester, n.d.). See also, Bamford, 15-6; and *Manchester Political Register* 4 Jan.-1 Feb. 1817.
8. T.M. Parssinen 'The revolutionary party in London, 1816-20', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, xlv (1972), 266-82.
9. I.J. Prothero *Artisans and Politics in early nineteenth-century London: John Gast and his times* (1981 edn), 99-104. R.G. Kirby and A.E. Musson *The Voice of the People: John Doherty 1798-1854* (Manchester, 1975), 18-28.
10. Belchem, 86-90.
11. There are full reports in *Manchester Observer* 23 Jan. 1819, and in H(ome) O(ffice Papers: Public Record Office) 42/183.
12. R.S. Neale *Class in English History 1680-1850* (Oxford, 1981), 147-53.
13. See the reports in HO 42/183. Bamford's poem on the theatre outrage is in R. Walmsley *Peterloo: The Case Reopened* (Manchester, 1969), 47-9.
14. *Manchester Observer* 23 Jan. 1819.
15. Craig Calhoun *The Question of Class Struggle: Social Foundations of Popular Radicalism during the Industrial Revolution* (Oxford, 1982), chs 1 and 6. For the best local study of Chartist 'movement culture', see James Epstein 'Some Organizational and Cultural Aspects of the Chartist Movement in Nottingham' in James Epstein and Dorothy Thompson (eds) *The Chartist Experience: Studies in Working-Class Radicalism and Experience, 1830-1860* (1982), 221-68.
16. Belchem, 97.
17. Nottingham posting-bill, enclosed in Enfield, 2 May 1819, HO 42/189.
18. Chippendale, 7 June 1819, HO 42/188. *Manchester Observer* 12 June 1819. See also D. Read *Peterloo: The 'Massacre' and its Background* (Manchester, 1958), Appendix A.
19. Belchem, 98-9.
20. Paul Pickering 'Class Without Words: Symbolic Communication in the Chartist Movement', *Past and Present*, 112 (1986), 144-62.
21. *Manchester Observer* 10 July 1819. See also the reports of Fletcher and Norris in HO 42/189.
22. See J. Epstein's forthcoming paper on 'Understanding the Cap of Liberty: symbolic practice and social conflict in early nineteenth-century England'.
23. J. Belchem 'Republicanism, popular constitutionalism and the radical platform in early nineteenth-century England', *Social History*, vi (1981), 1-32.
24. T.M. Kemnitz 'Approaches to the Chartist movement: Feargus O'Connor and Chartist strategy', *Albion*, v (1973), 67-73.
25. Between 3 July and 3 Aug. 1819, 4 letters from Hunt to Johnson and 6 letters from Johnson to Hunt were intercepted, see HO 42/189-91.
26. Belchem 'Orator' Hunt, 102-4. For a comprehensive collection of Hunt's addresses and radical, loyalist and official publications, see, *Impartial Narrative of the Late Melancholy Occurrences in Manchester* (Liverpool, 1819), 8-31.
27. See the Home Office correspondence with Norris, Chippendale, Lloyd and Hay in HO 79/3 and HO 41/5.
28. See Norris's letters 14-31 July, HO 42/188-9.
29. For the classification of political violence, see T.R. Gurr *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton, 1970), 9-13.
30. Belchem 'Orator' Hunt, 110.
31. *Ibid*, 112-21.
32. Norris, 19 Oct., HO 42/197, and 1 Dec., HO 42/200.
33. John Belchem 'Henry Hunt and the evolution of the mass platform', *English Historical Review*, xciii (1978), 766-7.
34. Belchem 'Orator' Hunt, 131.
35. R. Sykes 'Physical Force Chartism: The Cotton District and the Chartist Crisis of 1839', *International Review of Social History*, xxx (1985).
36. For the best study of events in Yorkshire, see F.K. Donnelly 'The General Rising of 1820: A Study of Social Conflict in the Industrial Revolution', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sheffield, 1975.
37. 'Alpha's' reports, enclosed in Fletcher, 13 and 19 April, HO 40/12, and 25 May 1820, HO 40/13.

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