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Thesis Abstract

Andrew Jonathan Lane, The development of democracy as a political ideal in the second half of the nineteenth century: with special reference to Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, and Co. Durham.

(Submitted for the degree of Ph.D., University of Durham, 1992).

This thesis commences with a general review of pre-chartist democratic sentiment in Great Britain followed by a brief study of Chartism's ideology and motivation. It then examines the various aspects of the democratization of the British political system between the years 1850 and 1900. Certain chapters are devoted to key time-spans, notably 1885 and 1867-1868, while others consider particular aspects of electoral practice, including the ballot and women's suffrage. Other chapters consider the Reform movement prior to 1867, the distribution of parliamentary constituencies, the House of Lords and other, less prominent, issues.

The thesis addressed events on the national stage, and the opinions of national political figures, but equal weight is accorded to, and where possible a comparison attempted with, local political opinion. The latter has been sampled essentially via the local press but, as well as local newspaper editorials, the thesis also extensively quotes the opinions of locally-elected MPs, local political figures and local Reform activists. The two localities studied were selected to provide a comparison in themselves. Hence, as well as national against local and Liberal against Conservative, opinion in rural Tory-dominated Cambridgeshire is compared with that of industrial and overwhelmingly Liberal County Durham. The thesis concludes with an overall review and a short survey of the changing national and local attitudes to "democracy" as such.

The development of democracy as a political ideal in the second half of the nineteenth century : with special reference to Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, and Co. Durham.

(Submitted for the degree of Ph.D., University of DURHAM, 1992).

ANDREW JONATHAN LANE

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- 5 MAY 1993

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

The late twentieth-century saw the reintroduction into mainstream political debate of the issue of democracy. Approximately sixty years after the attainment of so-called universal suffrage the nature of representation and of personal 'rights', returned to the agenda.

The pressure group which symbolized that process, Charter 88, was not unwilling to look back in time for the causes of supposed contemporary deficiencies in the constitution, just as its name laid claim to an old democratic tradition. Anthony Barnett, its co-ordinator, certainly noted the supposedly bourgeois attitudes underlying the 'democratic' victories of the previous century : 'John Stuart Mill and Walter Bagehot attempted to discover how 'we' could have a system whereby 'we' could debate freely with each other, but where the great unwashed...did not threaten the democracy 'we' enjoyed.'[1]

From a position further to the left, Gwyn A.Williams has written in a similar vein. 'The oligarchy has shifted, changed and adapted over two centuries, now opening to admit selected new groups into the elite, now closing up again...Contrary to much of our platform rhetoric, we never won the vote in this country. The vote was doled out to us in carefully phased and rationed packages, so that the inner and essentially occult heartland of power survived unscathed. It has been an enormously successful regime, which has skilfully managed consensus through its junior partner of a parliament ...it has conditioned the people of Britain into the belief

that this regime, with its Westminster parliament and its allegedly unparalleled achievement of social peace and cohesion, is the only form of democracy which exists.'[2]

The contrary view, mentioned by Professor Williams, has often been expounded by another "voice of the left". Tony Benn, one of the last survivors of the Victorian tradition of dissenting radicalism, claims that, 'if you look back historically there are two views of parliament and government. The official view is that from time to time either through wisdom or the generosity of their hearts, the establishment has given votes to working class men, given them to women, allowed the trade unions to develop. Its what you might call the Civics Lesson view. Look from the point of view of the people and all gains and advances have been made by people making struggles.' Despite this apparent contradiction of Gwyn Williams, Benn also writes, 'We've a feudal society with a veneer of democracy...You realize ...that parliamentary democracy is still a bit of an optional extra.'[3]

Despite such retrospectives of the Victorian movement towards democracy, it is impossible to deny that such a movement did take place. In 1850, "democracy" remained firmly beyond the pale as a concept, while as a word it continued to be more generally used as a synonym for the "masses". A senior politician referred to the general public as, 'the unknown multitude',[4] and the idea of popular government, or of a natural right to a share in self-government, was strictly limited to the political extremes, extremes including those few romantic fools also engaged in

such lost causes as pacifism and the elimination of the opium trade. The national representative body was at best a fallacy, at worst a farce, and even in that form the "house of the people" was only judged fit to govern if "minded" by an unambiguously unrepresentative "upper" house.

Just fifty years later all had changed, in style if not in fact. There was not universal suffrage, or even universal manhood suffrage, but both were palpably drawing closer. Open opposition to the principle of responsible representative administration had been left as isolated, and considered as "extreme" politically, as support for it had once been. Political parties, in their modern extra-Parliamentary sense, had emerged, created and moulded by their need to appeal to the new mass electorate. By 1900, two political parties were well established in the trusty populism of nationalist rhetoric and a third was also establishing itself as an effective electoral structure. The Liberals, ironically the slowest to act, were finally dropping their old mid-Victorian slogans, and leaders, for the social reformist policies which came to be known as "New Liberalism". The Commons, shorn of at least its most obvious corruption and misrepresentation, was clearly the pre-eminent political power in the land, despite the continuing resistance of the noble lords. Power, privilege, and patronage lay, theoretically, in the gift of the collective actions of the "ordinary working men".[5]

Clearly, opinion on "democracy" and on the true nature of just government, had altered fundamentally during a half-century. It is my intention to attempt to examine the

speed and nature of that change. However, first, a qualification must be attempted. True, that is to say direct, democracy lies in the self-government of the individual. That state of affairs, for purely logistical reasons, is attainable only under anarchism or the classical city-state. That was rendered patently impractical by the rise of the nation-state, and "democracy" was instead watered down as a political term until it came to represent a form of government merely responsible to the people via a freely-elected assembly. Hence, in Victorian Britain, "democracy" comprised so-called parliamentary democracy, and the slide into democracy essentially comprised reforms of the Houses of Parliament, which were the national representative assembly.

Clearly, to be truly democratic, Parliament had to represent, as accurately as possible in an indirect system, the beliefs and aspirations of the population, of whatever age, gender or circumstances. An assembly's democratic credentials, however, are generally felt to be unimpaired by the exclusion from participation of certain sections of the population deemed incapable of doing so, notably the insane and the infant. Even in the Britain of 1900, the same exclusion was imposed upon sections of the population as large as the female and the poor.

The 1900 House of Commons also failed the democratic test in that its representation of the people was clearly inaccurate. Arguably, in the context of party politics, which has generally been adopted as the optimum means of organizing various strands of popular opinion for

electoral purposes, the truly democratic assembly must include such parties in true proportion to the number of votes cast in their favour. The "first-past-the-post" electoral system fell short, by varying degrees, of that mark.

Lastly, a democratic assembly must be open to the election of any section of the population. Quite apart from mirroring restrictions of the franchise, Parliament has also seen the effective exclusion of the poorer sections of the body-politic. Whether via an official property qualification or the less blatant means of non-payment of MPs, the levy of electoral expenses or the deposit, elections were never allowed to be truly free in the United Kingdom.

For the purposes of examining the process of democratization, I have chosen to divide my thesis along essentially topical lines. Hence, each subject, though each was essential for the attainment of the democratic assembly I have attempted to define above, is granted a distinct chapter. While certain radical politicians did inevitably line up on the democratic side of any argument, it would not be over-stating the case to claim that each issue produced a distinctive division of the political establishment. In order to emphasize the advance of the democratic ideal over this period, I have structured the thesis along essentially chronological lines. The central issue, that of the franchise, has been divided, essentially in order to keep the chapters concerned to a manageable length, but also due to the distinct differences in the arguments concerning the franchise, and the atmosphere in which they were being expressed, which developed as time passed.

For the purpose of examining the process of democratization, I have studied the situation in the Counties of Durham and Cambridgeshire in order to compare them with the national scene. These two counties were distinctly different. Cambridgeshire, rooted in agriculture, had its political life dominated by a Tory aristocracy, notably the Yorkes and the Manners. Huntingdonshire, and its twin Boroughs of Huntingdon and Godmanchester, were veritable redoubts of ultra-Toryism. Cambridge itself was a Conservative Borough, but as the centre of the county's sole industry, bar the agriculturally-dependent coprolite workings,[6] could swing Liberal on occasion. Outside of the county town, the only Liberal influence of any importance came from the independent small farmers of the Isle of Ely, influenced by a strong tradition of non-conformity and unintimidated by the sort of aristocratic agricultural practices which existed further South.

County Durham was, of course, very different. Though it had its agriculture, the area's wealth generally came from below the ground. Durham's gentry were distinctly less Conservative, largely due to the presence of Lord Durham who had inherited at least part of the Radicalism of his esteemed predecessor. His influence, and that of lesser notables such as the Shaftos and the Peases, tended to outweigh that of the Conservative houses of Wynyard and Brancepeth, especially when aided by the vacillating Vanes of Raby. Meanwhile, the coal interest gradually drifted from the hands of the aristocracy into those of the rising, and usually Liberal, local industrialists.

Durham's urban nature also contrasted sharply with the situation in rural Cambridgeshire. Sunderland, South Shields, Gateshead, Darlington, Hartlepool and Stockton all held influence which only Cambridge in the southern county could hope to match. Durham City itself, though generally Liberal, could return Conservatives via the influence of both the Londonderrys and a Tory Dean and Chapter who played a role similar to that of the ultra-Tory University in Cambridge. County Durham and most notably Sunderland, harboured a distinct, if minority, Radical tradition of which there was no equivalent in Cambridgeshire. It was reinforced over several decades by raids across the border from the Newcastle base of the Blaydon-born Radical, Joseph Cowen junior.

Sources for the political opinions of these two counties, especially on the Radical fringe, are unfortunately few and far between. The only relevant primary information comes from the Durham Miners Association and Cowen, the lynch-pin of North-Eastern Radicalism. Unfortunately, as Reginald Groves states, no similar records have survived the demise of the Victorian agricultural trade unions.[7] As a result, my view of these areas and especially of rural Cambridgeshire has, like that of Dunbabin before me,[8] had to come primarily from newspaper evidence.

Fortunately, both Cambridge and Durham enjoyed a partizan political press. Conservatives were represented by the Cambridge Chronicle and the Durham County Advertiser, while the Cambridge Independent Press and the Durham Chronicle served local Liberals. Whatever their, indefinable, influence over local public opinion these

newspapers are quite accurate as barometers of public opinion. None held such a strong circulation that it could ignore the opinions of its readership, or attempt too obviously to force local party supporters down policy avenues which they did not wish to pursue. In both county towns the press proprietors tended to be members of the exclusive cliques at the head of their respective local parties. London correspondents were an important part of the Cambridge papers' political coverage, but such metropolitan articles appeared in Durham papers only during what appear to have been sporadic experiments. That state of affairs might be felt to reflect a closer relationship between Cambridgeshire's politicians and the central Westminster parties but, at least at the start of the period, it may simply have been the result of the relative geographical proximity of Cambridge to London.

In considering parliamentary support for the various "reform" measures, I have attempted to calculate the voting support in the country for each motion. Clearly, the raw division numbers are somewhat coloured by the mal-distribution of Parliamentary seats since the vote of a West Riding MP was obviously indicative of rather more support in the country than that of a member for the tiny Borough of Thetford. I have attempted to calculate national support by calculating the vote in terms of the numbers of electors registered, at the previous general election, in constituencies represented by MPs voting for the proposed reform in each division. In the event of a multi-member constituency, each MP has been awarded the relative

proportion of the registered electorate concerned. The final support for each measure is then calculated as a percentage of the national registered electorate at the previous general election. The figures concerned have all been taken from the volumes of electoral statistics compiled by F.W.S.Craig covering the period between 1832 and 1918.[9]

Before commencing a review of the process involved in the adoption of the democratic ideal, we must attempt a review of events prior to 1850.

Notes to Chapter 1

1) Tribune, 13 July 1990.
2) G.A.Williams, 'Europe and Nation : Little and Large', Marxism Today (April 1989) 49-51.
3) 7 Days, 5 November 1988.
4) D.Read, Peel and the Victorians (Oxford, 1987), p.1.
5) This power was only theoretical. Plural voting, and a registration system which discriminated against the relatively mobile urban working class, meant that the working classes continued to be clearly discriminated against. See N.Blewett, 'The Franchise in the United Kingdom 1885-1918', Past and Present, xxxii (December 1965).
6) R.Grove, 'Coprolite Mining in Cambridgeshire', Agricultural History Review, xxiv (1976), 36-43.
7) R.Groves, Sharpen the Sickle! The History of the Farm Workers Unions (New York, 1976), p.242.
8) J.P.D.Dunbabin, 'The Revolt of the Field : The Agricultural Labourers Movement in the 1870s', Past and Present, xxvi (November 1963), 68-97.
9) F.W.S.Craig (ed), British Parliamentary Election Results 1832-1885 (London, 1976); F.W.S.Craig (ed), British Parliamentary Election Results 1832-1885 (London, 1974).

Chapter 2 - Democracy before the Chartists

The development of democracy in Great Britain was a long and very gradual process. Victorians had looked back, especially through Radical eyes, to a past golden age of democracy before the "Norman yoke", that is to say the aristocracy, came to crush the once free Saxon yeomanry. That may have been a myth but it still, in Victorian folklore as well as certain political circles, placed the beginnings of English democracy as early as 1381 and the famed "Peasants Revolt". That view, if based only upon a rhyming couplet by a radical priest, was expressed as early as in the time of the Lollards,[1] and was to gain great currency with its citing by men as illustrious as Thomas Paine and the historian G.M.Trevelyan.[2]

The truth of their claim must be doubted. Evidence of the aims of a rebellion, so many centuries ago and largely among the illiterate, are necessarily difficult to discern. However, certain indications do reach us. Walter Tyler, leader of the main revolt, in the Home Counties, is said to have declared, 'all the laws of England would emanate from his own mouth', but our witness for this was a mouthpiece of the victors.[3] However, even if that evidence is insecure, it seems common sense that a man rooted in fourteenth-century society would have adopted exactly such an attitude.

The Eastern Counties, though necessarily only via Government eyes, supply evidence of similar outlooks. Geoffrey Litster, the shadowy leader of those Norfolk in rebellion, supposedly declared himself "King of the

Commons", and was supposedly the, 'idolum Northfolkorum'.[4] If such reports were at least rooted in reality, we can perceive the revolt as a nationalist rather than a democratic phenomena in which local peasantry rallied to local, and sometimes ancient, political units. They were not attempting to purge their localities of the political structures of absolute monarchy. Hence, Litster would have been as much a dictator as his previous counterparts in London. For Cambridgeshire rebels such complexity was absent, with peasants following two local landowners against the traditional grievance, the local despotism of the University.[5] Though an attack on unjust privilege, it would be hard to claim that their conduct was a struggle for popular liberty in any wider sense!

As the centuries pass, later popular uprisings can provide us with their insurrectionary programmes, and some did include demands for popular representation. In 1450, Jack Cade's Kentishmen were to demand the free election of their County's Knights of the Shire.[6] Eighty six years later, the Pilgrimage of Grace, in its Copie of the Articles to the Lordes of the King's Counsell at our comyng to Pontefract, was to demand, if again low down the list, 'reformation for the election of the Knights of the Shire and burgesses.'[7]

In Norfolk, 168 years after the time of Litster, Robert Kett was to reveal the increasing sophistication within the art of subversion. His initial success allows us to glimpse the style of government which one particular "rebel" and his peasant followers were to establish. It comprised a mixture of ancient Athenian city-state and mediæval

Parliament. Kett's Camp Council, obviously modelled on the House of Commons, contained two representatives of the rebels from each of the twenty three Hundreds involved.[8] Kett's Demands being in Rebellion included, though again well down the list, 'We pray that all bonde men may be made ffre for God made all ffre with his precious blode sheddyng.'[9] However, Kett's most important constitutional construct was his mass jury, an assembly of all men, rebel or not, ready to attend at the "Oak of Reformation". In a display of direct democracy, Kett's camp enjoyed full freedom of speech, even for defeatists, and of decision, even on the crucial issue of the continuance or otherwise of the rising.[10] Such freedoms stand in stark contrast to the situation in London for centuries after.

The so-called Levellers took advantage of the unique circumstances of Civil War Britain to advance the British democratic movement via the establishment of the first national democratic organization, even if its support was concentrated in the traditionally radical Home Counties. Fortunately, the Levellers have left us a great body of literature. It reveals that, as a national organization they, perhaps inevitably, declined to follow Kett into experiments of direct democracy, instead producing perhaps the first demand for genuinely representative national Government via a democratically elected House of Commons.[11] They also furthered the democratic cause by establishing an early form of the type of party machinery necessary to fight such a campaign. Agents were appointed, subscriptions collected, a newspaper acquired and an headquarters and party colour

established.[12] County organizations spread throughout the South-East, and were to appear as far afield as Oxfordshire and Cambridgeshire.[13] Thus, for the first time, democrats appear to have been in a position to communicate with the English people.

As was the case with Kett's men, Leveller routes into democratic sentiments tended to follow dissenting or socio-economic paths. The latter, and clearly the minority, route was encapsulated by Henry Marten, the Republican MP for Berkshire, and the title of his pamphlet, England's Troublers Troubled, or the just resolutions of the plain men of England against the rich and mighty, by whose pride, treachery, and wilfulness they are brought into extreme necessity and misery.[14]

Such socio-economic motives for democratic proposals, so skilfully ascribed by Cromwell's choice of their nick-name, were to be firmly denied by Lilburne and many other Levellers.[15] Unsurprisingly, considering their milieu, they were in fact largely motivated by notions of Christian equality.[16] Some, including Overton and Walwyn, were also from that long tradition of "reactionary democrats" who sought to return to a Saxon idyll.[17] According to his, The Free Man's Freedom Vindicated, of June 1646, Lilburne based his democratic sentiments upon more than his devout Protestant beliefs. He wrote, 'Every particular man and woman that ever breathed in the world...are and were by nature all equal and alike in power, dignity, authority and majesty', making it, 'unnatural, irrational,...devilish and tyrannical ..., for any man whatsoever, spiritual or temporal;,

clergymen or laymen to...assume unto himself a power...to rule, govern or reign over any sort of men in the world without their free consent.'[18]

In the following month the democratic movement was launched via the Remonstrance of Overton, Walwyn and Marten. Reflecting its times the document was dominated by the need to emphasize the primacy of the Commons, and hence of popular sovereignty, over both the Monarchy and the House of Lords. As it told MPs, 'Ye only are chosen by us the people, and therefore in you only is the power of binding the whole nation by making, altering, or abolishing of laws.' By contrast the Lords acted, 'as intruders...thrust upon us by Kings...We desire you to free us from their negative voice, or else tell us that it is reasonable we should be slaves.' This was not an original view concerning this leading issue of the day, but it was none the less an essential step forward in the advance towards a "Parliamentary Democracy". The Levellers' vital contribution lay in their further step forward, when they rebuked MPs for past arrogance and reminded them of the, 'universality of the people, their sovereign LORDS, from whom their power and strength is derived, and by whom it is continued.'[19] Lilburne was later to echo those sentiments.[20]

Having established that popular representatives should rule, it was a short step for any radical to take to argue that the Commons should become more truly representative. That step was taken in July 1647 when Overton published his Appeale from the Degenerate Representative Body of the Commons of England...To...The free People...of

England. Having fore-shadowed the Enlightenment with, 'Reason is the fountaine of all just presidents [precedents]', Overton continued, 'I shall and do from henceforth utterly disclaime and renounce all triall and judgement by the degenerate Members Associated therein, and shall hold all Orders and Ordinances whatsoever proceeding from them...as altogether invallid, and void of all Parliamentary authority and power, not obligatory or binding at all to the power, but to be opposed and resisted to the death.' He firmly insisted that the sole qualification for MPs had to be the mandate.[21]

Lilburne, in his pamphlet England's Birth-Right, of 1645, had already proscribed the means of obtaining Overton's aim. Popular representation, so crucial in a nation where the law was paramount, would be obtained via annual parliaments, while manhood suffrage was only introduced as something of an aside![22] Rash Oaths added equal electoral districts to the Leveller shopping-list, while more clearly declaring for manhood suffrage in order that, 'the people... may meet together in their severall divisions, and every free man of England, as well poore as rich...may have a Vote in chusing those that are to make the law, it being a maxim in nature that no man justly can be bound without his own consent.'[23]

Unsurprisingly, the Levellers were to make their first appearance en masse among the volunteer armies of Parliament, a home of the politically and/or religiously motivated. In April 1647, Norfolk cavalrymen, fearing demobilization, established what were centuries later to be

known as "soviets". Their example spread and paid Agitators appeared.[24] Considerable numbers were to support their efforts, with 2,400 signing Eastern Counties petitions against the threatened demobilization. Such opposition lay rooted in fear of unemployment but the Agitators displayed truly democratic sentiments in their Declaration, or Representation, of the Army. It demanded reform, though it did not go as far as the Leveller leaders. The Agitators preferred triennial parliaments and a redistribution of Commons seats according to rating, rather than the numbers of electors involved. Almost needless to say, the document also contained the ritual denunciations of the Monarchy and the Lords.[25]

By October of the same year, Army opinion had somewhat shifted and five regiments were to join with the Levellers in producing The Case of the Army truly stated. It progressed to biennial parliaments and made an impressive first franchise demand on behalf of, 'all the freeborn at the age of twenty one years and upwards...excepting those that have or shall deprive themselves of that their freedom, either for some years or wholly by delinquency', by which they meant royalism.[26] Such an exclusion was undemocratic but perfectly natural under war-time conditions. The Leveller and Army programmes were more carefully married when sixteen regiments united with the party behind An Agreement of the People, in October 1647. It linked the Army's biennial parliaments with the Leveller's redistribution according to numbers, though the franchise, never a priority with the Levellers, was once more forgotten.[27]

The common man and his vote were not, however, to be forgotten at the famous Putney Debates of October-November 1647. As Pettus said, 'We judge that all inhabitants that have not lost their birthright should have an equal voice in Elections.'[28] Colonel Rich practised the almost inevitable English political practice of looking backwards, in this case to ancient Rome's system of manhood suffrage "moderated" by, 'weightage for the benefit of property.'[29] Wildman, one of the few genuine "Levellers", declared that, 'Every person in England hath as clear a right to elect his representative as the greatest person in England. I conceive that as the undeniable maxim of government : that all government is in the free consent of the people. If then upon that account, there is no person that is under a just government, or hath justly his own, unless he by his own free consent be put under that government.'[30] The gallant Rainsborough expressed his oft-quoted opinion that, 'I think it clear that everyman that is to live under a government ought first by his own consent to put himself under that government; and I do think that the poorest man in England is not at all bound in a strict sense to that government that he hath not had a voice to put himself under;...insomuch that I should doubt whether he was an Englishman...that should doubt of these things.'[31]

Manhood suffrage pursued a chequered career in the Leveller press. Even after its eventual appearance, in Rash Oaths, it was not to remain unmolested for long. The Army Council of November 1647, and Lilburne's petition of January 1648, excluded minors, criminals, beggars and servants from the fold, while using a mediæval definition of "servants"

which was wholly unsuitable for any supposedly representative system entering the capitalist era.[32] It was, from a democratic point of view, an entirely unsatisfactory measure against voter intimidation, mooted at a time when the ballot was an available alternative.[33] By September 1648, manhood suffrage was, along with the redistribution of seats, to go unmentioned in the Leveller petition signed by 40,000 people as well as by eighty four corporations, including Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Moderation was not the cause of the omission for annual parliaments were included, as were the abolition of both the monarchy and the House of Lords.[34]

In December 1648, Foundations of Freedom finally appeared to abandon manhood suffrage by limiting the vote to, 'Natives or Denizens of England...[who] have subscribed to this Agreement, not persons receiving Alms, but such as are assessed ordinarily toward the relief of the poor; not servants to or receiving wages from any particular person : and in all elections (except for the Universities) they shall be men of one and twenty years old, or upwards, and Housekeepers, dwelling within the division for which the Election is.'[35] Clearly, such a franchise could in no sense be termed democratic. It would, in effect, have formed a property franchise, a partizan franchise and a male franchise. Each clearly contradicted the previous, more theoretical, writings of at least one of the Leveller leaders. One can only speculate on the reason for this. The onus might be laid upon the gentlemanly Lilburne, but a more likely explanation is the wish of the Leveller leadership to co-operate with the gentrified administration. It is

noticeable that, once that wish had proved futile, the third Agreement of the People, of May 1649, returned to manhood suffrage, bar servants, paupers and minors, though active Royalists were also barred from voting for ten years. The document included an early demand for the payment of MPs as well as, in another backward glance at ancient Athens, proposing the prohibition of consecutive terms for legislators. The latter was clearly initiated due to the rise of such over-mighty leaders as Old Noll.[36]

Hence, the Levellers, though democratic in principle, did not immediately advocate the annunciation of such a system. They were inclined to compromise on their demands if such concessions could be productive. The point at which willingness to make such concessions negates a generally democratic sentiment is a matter of opinion, but the Levellers were hardly the only politicians ever forced to thus choose between principle and expedience. It seems impossible to deny the democratic sentiments of such men as Overton, Wildman and Rainsborough. However, due to the restrictions on such groups as "servants" and paupers, those sentiments were never to be formed into concrete democratic proposals. Despite their short-comings, it would be churlish to deny the Levellers their place in the process by which popular government came to be proposed.

Leveller activity did not cease with the party's banning, but it was also not to progress. In July 1653, The fundamental Laws and Liberties of England claimed declared that, 'The people cannot be a free people, while the supreme power or authority is wrested out of their hands into the

hands of one particular or some few...The supreme authority cannot be devolved upon any person or persons, but by election of the free people.'[37] One newspaper, as something of a straw in the wind, felt moved to adopt the dead party's name in 1659.[38]

The Levellers also provided another, if more symbolic, gift for the future radical movement. Their party colour, sea-green, adopted from their martyred hero Rainsborough, was to prove far more tenacious than the rash of Leveller uprisings, though the latter did extend into the 1720s. Sea-green was to clothe the more radical of King Billy's legions, to provide the name of one of the numerous Whiggish clubs of the eighteenth-century and to be sported by many in the London crowds of 1781. It may also have been the inspiration for Chartism's green banner[39] and of the green favours which were traditionally worn by Radical parliamentary candidates. The latter association was to continue at least until Joseph Cowen's 1885 campaign. Green continued to hold radical connotations in the North-East as the Labour Party colours well into the 1970, and it was to be as a symbol of radicalism that green came to join the socialist red on the national rosettes of that party.

The doom of the Levellers lay in the fact that their radicalism won precious few echoes from the establishment during the Commonwealth. That state seems little to deserve its reputation as an haven of liberty, as expounded by many Victorians anti-aristocratic radicals, Hovell[40] and the later "heritage" industry of Huntingdonshire. Henry Ireton, the ideologue of the Cromwellian Revolution, was to propose

only biennial parliaments and a redistribution of seats in his Heads of the Proposals, and his party's attitude to democracy was to be exemplified by "Pride's Purge" and the reservation of the Commons benches for the "godly", meaning government supporters, of course![41] The only general election permitted, in 1654, was to establish the "godly" as those possessing £200 and, by retaining the traditional franchises, allowed the return of few radicals. Wildman suffered the fate of numerous ultra-radicals over the centuries, securing a mandate only to fall foul of a "technicality".[42] It was symbolic that all organized opposition in the Rump Parliament was to be purged in 1649 but the rotten boroughs had to wait until 1654 for their removal.[43]

The Levellers were not the only democratically-influenced group active in the 1650s. The True Levellers may have been essentially an utopian socialist group, and Winstanley a mystic, but his Light Shining on Buckinghamshire, of 1648, included a proposal that, 'The honest man that would have liberty cries down all interests whatsoever; and to this end he desires Common Rights and Equality.'[44] Rival mystics, the Fifth Monarchists, in their A Standard Set-up, of 1657, mooted a Sanhedrin to be annually elected in a manner representative of, 'the Lord's freemen.'[45] The London Weavers, in 1649-1650, analysed the nature of government structures with impressive clarity : 'All legal jurisdiction over a number of people or society of men must either be primitive or derivative. Now primitive jurisdiction is undoubtedly in the whole body and not in one

or more members, all men being by nature equal to other and all jurisdictive power over them, being founded by a compact and agreement with them, is invested in one or more persons who represent the whole and by the consent of the whole are impowered to govern ...without the performance of which mutual contract all obligations are cancelled and the jurisdictive power returns unto its first spring - the people from whom it was conveighed.'[46]

With the setbacks of the Commonwealth and the Restoration, the hard-won establishment of Parliamentary sovereignty was rapidly reversed. The struggle, however, did not cease. Monmouth's rebels, though far from democratic, were eager to replace the absolute monarchy with a freely and annually elected Parliament, imbued as they were with Protestant and Civil War values.[47] They fore-shadowed the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688-1689, a movement for those same aims but which was based upon an intellectual tradition basically devoid of democratic feeling. Tracts written during the Stuart domination of Parliament merely stressed the need to defend ancient Parliamentary rights and restore the, 'primitive and immortal Foundation of Liberty and Property.'[48]

In that atmosphere, it should be no surprise that the "Glorious Revolution" was one for, 'protection and retrenchment.'[49] Its manifesto, the Declaration of Rights, was undoubtedly intended to establish Whiggish aristocratic control. It finally established Parliament as the supreme legislative authority, but its eighth point, 'That election of members of parliament ought to be free',[50] merely granted

freedom to territorial magnates and Borough-mongers, rather than to the great mass of the people. Parliament, though no longer operating under Royal sufferance, was left unreformed, that unreformed structure not having yet had an opportunity to prove its insufficiency. Even the "Common Wealth Party", as represented by Ferguson,[51] had no doubt that Locke was correct to state that power should be related to landed property.[52] Wildman could secure election to the Commons in 1689 but was to prove powerless against official indifference.[53] The only support for mass natural rights came from the posthumous pen of the Earl of Romsey and he had already demonstrated his radicalism in the most graphic manner possible.[54]

While the establishment of parliamentary government was a vital step forward in British constitutional history, the notoriously corrupt government of Walpole was to prove the need for further advance. However, reform was retarded by the lack of a tradition of mass political campaigns and by the comfortable governing tradition of the political "left".[55] It was the end of that monopoly, via a royal effort to manage Parliament, which allowed Reform to express itself, via the unlikely form of John Wilkes.

Though a supposed, 'friend of liberty'[56] since 1754, Wilkes rose into the Radical pantheon via Government over-reaction rather than his own rakish "journalism". By negating Wilkes' repeated elections for Middlesex, popular powerlessness, and the royal control of Parliament, became too obvious a scandal and too good a Whiggish opportunity to be missed. The authority of the mandate, essential to all MPs'

privileges, could not help but excite defence. Hence, various trends could unite behind the unsavoury personage of Wilkes and his 1770 statement that the Commons was, 'no longer a just and fair representative of the collective body of all the electors.'[57] In that way, the pro-Wilkes petitions of 1769 raised 56,000 signatures,[58] a considerable feat of opposition organization. In the North-East, Rockingham Whigs raised petitions in both the County and the City of Durham, assisted by the Newcastle Chronicle, and behind them lay more radical sentiments expressed in demonstrations of support by Stockton, Sunderland, Gateshead, Darlington, South Shields, Bishop Auckland and, at a lesser level, 'almost every town of Northumberland and Durham.'[59]

In the East, petitions were absent but popular support was not. On Wilkes' visit in 1771, 'Wherever he was recognized, enthusiastic crowds followed him...At Cambridge, the acclamations of the people were prodigious',[60] sentiments shared by the populous of King's Lynn, Swaffham, Norwich[61] and Downham Market. The agitation, itself a novelty, was after the fall of the hapless Lord North to secure the invalidation of Wilkes' expulsions, hence establishing the vital, 'principle that the electorate shall be free to choose its own representatives.'[62]

The next step forward, establishing MPs as delegates rather than free agents, was to be attempted in certain strongly Wilkesite districts, but the man himself was one of only very few willing to thus restrict his legislative options. During this period, the route to greater popular control of representatives was instead considered to be

shorter parliaments, and annual parliaments were to join a redistribution of parliamentary seats as the key demands of the reform tracts of the period.[63]

Generally, Wilkesites saw their role as the restoration of the traditional constitution.[64] Wilkes' lieutenant, Frederick Ball, stood in the 1773 City of London by-election on a programme of short Parliaments and the exclusion of placemen from Parliament, in order, 'to establish a fair and equal representation of the people in parliament.'[65] Twelve MPs were returned on similar programmes at the 1774 general election.[66] They, like Wyvill's Yorkshire Association of 1780, were clearly not democratic, rather seeking to return to the system of Parliamentary freedom and dominance established in 1689.[67]

In 1770, Wilkes said, 'I firmly and sincerely believe the voice of the people to be the voice of God',[68] and when he finally entered Parliament he did introduce a democratic note via his 1776 Reform Bill. Noting that all men were under the law, he argued, 'Some share...in the power of making those laws which deeply interest them...should be reserved even to this inferior but most useful set of men in the community...Without a true representation of the Commons our constitution is essentially defective, our Parliament is a delusive name, a mere phantom, and all other remedies to recover the pristine purity of the form of government established by our ancestors would be ineffectual.'[69] Having made his gesture, and inevitably been laughed out of court, Wilkes retired from the fray. By 1780, his "radical" legions, as well as his henchmen Bull and Sawbridge, had been lost to

Gordon's influence.[70]

Inside Parliament, Reform sentiment tended to be purely geared towards freeing Parliament from the Executive. Only Pitt was truly willing to go further, claiming that universal suffrage and annual parliaments were, 'so reasonable to the natural feelings of mankind, that no sophistry could elude the forces of the arguments which were urged in their favor',[71] and even he was to abandon Reform after his supposed Commons majority had rejected his meagre Reform Bill of 1785.[72]

The Duke of Richmond was apparently more adventurous, moving a 1780 Bill for annual parliaments and the enfranchisement of, 'every man not contaminated by crime, nor incapacitated for want of reason.'[73] However, his Grace's motive was far from democratic. As he said, 'The protection of property appears to me one of the most essential ends of society; and so far from injuring it by this plan, I conceive it to be the only means of preserving it; for the present system is hastening with great strides to a perfect equality in universal poverty.'[74] Under his radical reform all would have votes, but only in order to act as portions of great blocks of influence which would be wielded by the great magnates. Therein lay the reason for Richmond's fierce opposition to the ballot, and his support for a property qualification for MPs. Only Fox's Committee of Reformers felt able to endorse all of what were to become known as the Six Points.[75]

Thus Whiggism retained a stranglehold on eighteenth-century Reform. Democracy had little, or nothing,

to do with their demands. Franchise extension was a minor element in the Reform Associations' programmes, where it appeared at all. That was true of the Yorkshire Association, the Society of the Supporters of the Bill of Rights, Horne Tooke's Constitutional Society (which established foot-holds in Durham, Newcastle, and Northumberland), the Revolution Societies, and the Societies of the Friends of the People.[76] Contemporary nonconformist pamphleteers were no more democratic. As Dr Price wrote, they felt it, 'safest to leave the work of government in the hands of an aristocracy, and to withhold the franchise from men who had not a substantial property qualification." Priestley, though he accepted the democratic principle, would not have it put into practice![77]

The democratic light was kept aflame only by Major Cartwright, the latest in a long line ready to give their lives over to the apparently lost cause of democracy. His own motives were far from original. As a Christian he declared, 'The very scavenger in the streets has a better right to his vote than any peer to his coronet, or the king himself to his crown; for the right of the peer and of the king are derived from the laws of men, but the scavengers from the laws of God', while Take Your Choice revealed Cartwright was also a reactionary democrat : 'Making our Parliaments annual and our representation equal can neither of them in any sense, nor without a direct falsehood, be styled innovations. Both of them were the ancient practice of the constitution.'[78] However, Cartwright was to burn his Whig boats when he declared that, 'Personality is the sole foundation of the

right of being represented and Property has in reality nothing to do with the case.'[79] In 1776, he declared for the full democratic programme of universal suffrage, the ballot, abolition of plural voting, annual parliaments and payment of MPs, four years later adding a call for the abolition of the property qualification. Despite his support for the House of Lords and his close association with Richmond, Cartwright was a supporter of true democracy.[80] His attitude to the Upper House was perhaps explained by the presence in his propaganda machine, the Society for Promoting Constitutional Information (SPCI), of such doughty proletarians as Lords Richmond, Bedford, and Derby![81] Despite its Whiggish name and constitution, the SPCI, by supporting the Jacobins in 1792-1793 and selling 200,000 copies of The Rights of Man, was to mark the arrival of a new era.[82]

Tom Paine's writings, as the cutting edge of Enlightenment Liberalism in the English-speaking world, were to perform a crucial role in the development of the British Reform movement by providing it with the means whereby it could escape from its previous groundings in the gospel and myths of ancient Saxon liberty. By noting the decline of absolutism abroad, Paine could present democracy as the coming movement, while by popularising the concept of the "general will" in England he provided, 'an inclination to take the action necessary to bring society into conformity with rationally demonstrable principles.'[83] He certainly struck a chord, with eighty Paineite societies rapidly established some of which, for the first time, included a working-class majority.[84] It was to co-ordinate such groups

that Thomas Hardy, in 1792, established the London Corresponding Society for Diffusing Useful Political Knowledge among the people of Great Britain and Ireland and for Promoting Political Reform (LCS). From humble origins, it had risen to 5-6 000 members by 1794[85] and had established links with other large and small groups throughout the country.

Though the LCS denounced the existing structure as 'unconstitutional' and Felix Vaughan aimed at, 'reclaiming the rightful Constitutional', their manifesto was clearly Paineite.[86] It stated, 'Man, as an individual, is entitled to liberty -it is his birthright.' He had, 'a right in sharing in the government of his country; - without it, no man can with truth call himself FREE...every individual has a right to share in the government of that society of which he is a Member - unless incapacitated...nothing but non-age, privation of reason, or an offence against the general rules of society can incapacitate him.' In a manner indicative of its nature, the LCS also raised working-class hopes as to the consequences of reform : 'in consequence of a partial, unequal, and therefore inadequate representation, together with the corrupt method in which Representatives are elected; oppressive taxes, unjust laws, restrictions of liberty, and wasting of the public money have ensued...the only remedy to those evils is a fair, equal, and impartial Representation of the people in Parliament.'[87] Similar sentiments were expressed across the country.[88] The LCS's importance was in its establishment and retention of the first nationwide democratic movement.

That organization's success was also the cause of

the mounting Government repression in 1794-1799, culminating in the banning of the LCS. The democratic movement was left with few establishment friends by the events in France but radical, if not necessarily democratic, voices did survive. For example, the Cambridge Intelligencer, a local newspaper with a national readership, was to survive as a radical newspaper through from 1793 to 1803, a considerable achievement in itself.[89] Other Paineites, including Thomas Spence in Newcastle, were also active though they often, like Spence, tended to concentrate upon socio-economic, rather than democratic, issues.[90]

Though 1799-1816 were dark days for British democracy, when even Cartwright despaired,[91] they did, via disgust at the perceived corruption of the Pittite and Foxite regimes, provide the pre-Chartist democratic movement with its greatest leader, and another of its few effective parliamentarians. It was Cobbett's press, aided by Cartwright's tireless touring, which transformed the elitist Hampden Club into a nationwide and distinctly more democratic, in every sense, network. By 1817, their work had secured a 500,000-strong petition for the soon to be traditional radical-democratic programme of manhood suffrage, annual parliaments and the ballot.[92] Sufficient sentiment was roused in 1818-1819 to allow the "Union" Societies to repeat the feat of establishing a nationwide movement, as well as fuelling the remarkable series of "monster" meetings which were to lead to Peterloo.[93]

That massacre was to fuel, ably assisted by the omnipresent "Bristol" Hunt, a short-lived boom in democratic

feeling. Tens of thousands gathered, organized by their trades, on the Town Moor in Newcastle,[94] while 1818 was to see popular pressure push Sir Francis Burdett into universal suffrage, though the latter did attempt to explain his actions via Benthamite quotes and Tookeite reactionary democracy.[95] Whether true or not, Burdett's Reform resolutions of 1818 were comfortably the most radical proposals yet presented before Parliament.[96] Despite such advances, however, enthusiasm was on the wane even before the crudely justified repression of 1820. The efficacy of that clamp-down was proved by the fact that even Birmingham, later one of the most radical of British cities, was to hold no great Reform meetings between 1819 and 1830.[97]

For several years, Reform campaigning was forcibly limited to sporadic and opportunistic episodes, of which Cambridgeshire provides an example. That county's leading reformer, Gunning, rejected universal suffrage as certain to lead to violent revolution, but he was to witness the capture of one of his Whig meetings, in 1823, by a faction demanding just that, as well as annual parliaments.[98]

On a higher plane, democracy was to receive valuable intellectual respectability via the utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham. He, despite a temporary flirtation with democracy in revolutionary France, was essentially a reactionary democrat.[99] In 1810, via his Catechism of Parliamentary Reform, Bentham expressed support for annual parliaments, the ballot and equal electoral districts. Unfortunately, his assertion that a literacy franchise, since it was easily obtainable, was not an

exclusive electoral qualification clearly did not impress Cobbett, who was to delay the Catechism's publication for seven years.[100] Bentham's early support for women's suffrage and insane voting was to be sacrificed for political expedience, despite his refusal to court Burdett's similar feelings concerning the ballot in his 1818 resolutions.[101]

It would appear to be incorrect to suggest that Bentham was a democrat at heart. His Reform proposals instead emanated from his belief that proportionate representation of all interests in the Parliament was a precondition for his Utilitarian aims, and that universal suffrage was the route to that required proportionality. His Utilitarian comrades and disciples were not to share that belief, hence the less democratic proposals submitted by Hume, Grote and James Mill.[102] Despite that fact, Benthamism provided the intellectual and philosophical base which democracy required if it was to secure support among the influential middle-class.

The traditional democratic demands were to reappear in 1829 via the programme of the Radical Reform Association (RRA), a coalition of Huntite veterans, victorious Catholic emancipators, worker-dissenters and co-operators.[103] Though capable of defeating moderate opposition, the RRA was only to prosper after the Reform movement had taken off in the provinces.[104] The Birmingham Political Union (BPU), which had been founded by Hampden Club veterans, though it stood only for a tax-payer franchise and triennial parliaments, was to establish by its success the potential mass popularity of Reform as well as the existence

of bourgeois democratic feeling, as exemplified by the fact that Thomas Attwood's part in the founding of the BPU was his first political act.[105] Similar organizations were to develop nationwide, even in areas as unlikely as Cambridgeshire and small-town Sussex, while Charles Attwood's Northern Political Union organized Northumberland and, despite fierce intimidation, Durham.[106] With the formation on Paineite principles of the National Union of the Working Classes (NUWC), by former Trades Unionists as well as the remnants of the RRA and other democratic groups,[107] London finally obtained the effective Reform leadership already present elsewhere.

The passage of the Whig Reform Acts, themselves clearly not motivated by democratic sentiment even among such "radicals" as T.P.Thompson,[108] was to provoke disarray on the "left". Benthamites were happy to accept the Bill as a beginning if not as an end and the same also held true for the Dissenter-Radicals, the Durhamite Radicals and the few establishment democrats, such as Lord Radnor.[109] A similar line was also followed by those workers organized in more moderate groups, such as the BPU and Place's National Political Union.[110] Even the radical NUWC was finally to accept, in that classical phrase of the Victorian Reform movement, "half a loaf". Few, bar the ever prickly "Orator" Hunt and the perspicacious Hetherington, were to realize that the Whigs were in fact giving only a distinctly smaller fraction, and that the rest would be a long time coming!

The Reform Act of 1832, initially only felt by a minority to be, 'tyrannical, infamous, hellish',[111] was to

rapidly, via the inept and conservative governments it caused to be returned, dwindle in the eyes of the democratic movement. "Bronterre" O'Brien provides an example of that shift in opinion. In February 1832, for Bronterre the Bill was, "an instalment of past payment of the debt of right due to us... capable of expanding and purifying itself into a perfect representative system', but it rapidly became, 'The Bill originated in fraud', which, 'will terminate in a military despotism, and was identified in 1839 as the reason why , 'the government of the country is essentially lodged in the hands of the middle classes.'[112] Cobbett was renouncing his half-a-loaf as early as 1833 : 'What did we want the Reform Bill for? that it might do us some good...not for the gratification of any abstract or metaphysical whims.'[113] However, these were lone voices in the wilderness. Most of the Reform movement had melted away in the euphoria of its "victory" in 1832 and even its more stubborn elements rapidly followed suit. The BPU, though it could still boast 20,000 members in 1833, was to rapidly collapse after its grande bourgeois elements, and hence its finances, left it.[114] The NUWC, despite a long struggle for survival, rapidly lost its members to more immediately relevant working-class movements.[115]

Inside Parliament, though the Commons had its Radicals, the words of the newly-elected Wakley in 1835 - 'In a little time, you aristocrats will be swept out of this, like chaff before a whirlwind'[116] - were to prove wildly over-optimistic. The party of reform mainly consisted of elements, including the Durham Chronicle and Cambridge Independent

Press, which would endorse only the Durhamite programme of the ballot and moderate franchise reform. Radical MPs were over-dependent on the Irish Party, which had its own quite different priorities.

In 1832, Hume and Roebuck signalled their intention to fight for Reform by taking the opposition benches[117] but, of the ninety six possible recruits identified by J.S.Buckingham, too few were to become active even to maintain the Westminster Club! By December 1836 continuing apathy, and reverses at the 1835 polls, had left Mrs Grote estimating that just thirty Radical MPs remained.[118] Despite a balanced Commons, they failed even to force the Ballot.[119] Roebuck's democratic outburst of 1837, though it won the plaudits of numerous Workingmen's Associations, was almost totally unsupported in the Commons and did nothing to assuage the rout of the Radicals later that year.[120] Most "Radicals" in Parliament continued to support only the ballot and shorter parliaments. MPs willing to go further were extremely rare, though Hume and Attwood did support household suffrage,[121] while Buckingham was among those endorsing an educational franchise in order to place, 'the suffrage within the reach of every man who really desired it.'[122] It seems impossible to deny one contemporary's bleak attitude towards the "Radical MPs" : that they were unreliable, and too thin upon the ground to be of any use![123] Wise democrats knew that they would have to look elsewhere for an engine of new Reform.

The period did however witness interesting developments concerning the relationship between MPs and

their constituents, an issue largely dormant since Wilkes had proved powerless against Burke's assertion that, 'Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgement : and he betrays instead of serving you if he sacrifices it to your own opinion.'[124] The consequences of such an attitude for any system of representative government are obvious but in the 1830s a few MPs were unselfish enough to abandon Burke's lofty pedestal.

Buckingham was one of the first to deliver annual reports of his activities to his constituents for their approval or otherwise, pointing out, 'We are sent...as the representatives of the people. How can we possibly represent them, without respecting and giving expression to their will?'[125] Evans did not go so far, but in 1833 did declare that he would attempt to defer to his constituents' views, 'on every occasion that was in his power.'[126] The phrase was marvellously ambiguous but nonetheless accepted the central principle that an MP should represent his constituents. T.P.Thompson chose to write weekly signed reports, which appeared in his local Liberal press, having in 1832 urged the Political Unions to attempt to elect mandated candidates with, where necessary, Soviet-style enforced resignations. Interestingly, Thompson also, 'maintained that members would be kept to their pledges if their constituents paid them.'[127]

Outside Parliament, the democratic movement made little progress prior to the formation of the London Working Men's Association (LWMA). Several localized organizations appeared which were pledged to reform but none made much

progress. Lovett and others failed in their effort to win the Owenite movement over to universal suffrage[128] but at least one trade unionist did back the democratic suffrage, if only, 'viewing it as a means by which trade unionists could eventually achieve political power and, at some future date, Parliament itself could be displaced by trade unions as the representative institution of the people.'[129] Augustus Beaumont was one of several Radicals to found a newspaper, 'devoted to democracy and therefore to the true interest of the people,'[130] but it rather symbolically folded within a few weeks of its launch. If such efforts made no immediate progress, they did perform the vital task of maintaining democratic ideology during the difficult period between 1832 and 1837.

Notes to Chapter 2

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Chapter 3 - The Chartist Movement

Chartism comprised a further step forward for the democratic movement. While maintaining, and proselytising for, the existing tradition it also saw the formation of the National Charter Association (NCA), the most organized democratic structure since the Levellers. Its framework of an 'organ', elected executive, membership cards and regular payment of subscriptions; as well as the more traditional features of a popular extra-parliamentary campaign, provided Chartism with a political cutting edge beyond anything possessed by preceding democratic movements. Indeed, the NCA was sufficiently well organized to have been described as a 'political party' by one member of the establishment, as well as by at least two later writers.[1] However, it is clear that we must first consider the strength and nature of this supposed mass movement for democracy.

Initially, any attempt to gauge Chartism's support must consider the membership of its organizations. While this is complicated by Chartism's repeated peaks and troughs it is clear that numbers were consistently small. Early organizations, based as they were in London, suffered from the capital's notorious apathy. The London Democratic Association (LDA) peaked at just 3,000 members in eleven branches[2] though it was a veritable giant beside the parent of the People's Charter, the London Working-Men's Association (LWMA), which in three years enrolled a mere 279 full members.[3] The latter figure may, however, be somewhat explained by the fact that dread of both middle-class

manipulation and lumpenproletarian outrages caused its founding document to order branches to, 'strictly...adhere to a judicious selection of their members.'[4] For all of their labour-aristocratic sensitivity these, 'self-elected London adventurers',[5] and the power of their democratic programme, were to spread a network of at least 136 sister-organizations nationwide.[6]

The revived Birmingham Political Union (BPU) achieved a membership of 8,000 in June 1837[7] but that figure was of course inflated by assorted supporters of currency reform and Household Suffrage. Indeed, efforts to break out of London experienced mixed fortunes. The LDA was to be side-tracked by the shadowy Cambridgeshire Farmers' Association and its leader, James Bernard, who mistakenly felt that his personal brilliance could attain universal suffrage within six months![8] The history of Cambridgeshire Chartism is perhaps best summed up by the fact that the Central National Association was to be the nearest it came to a high-point.

The North-East was more fertile ground for the Chartists, in no little part due to the vigorous efforts of Beaumont among the, 'semi-barbarous colliers of the North of England.'[9] His Northern Political Union (NPU) enlisted several thousand members[10] and was second only to the Glasgow democrats in adopting the National Petition in 1838.[11] South of the Tyne, the Durham Charter Association (DCA) could raise demonstrations of up to 6,000 in Darlington, 5,000 in Stockton and 15,000 in South Shields,[12] as well as virtually daily rallies in its Sunderland base. The DCA was also strong enough to fund a local worker, Robert Knox, as a Member of the

Chartist Convention (MC).

It was only with the formation of the NCA, in 1840, that a national Chartist membership figure first became available. However, even these statistics, based as they are upon historians' estimates, are unreliable. In 1842 Ward categorically places NCA membership at 40,060, but Stevenson estimates 48,000 and Gammage had mooted 400,000![13] Wiener states that the NCA membership in 1845 was 40,000, but Schoyen maintains that it never exceeded 2 000 after 1842![14] Despite Chartism's notoriously schismatic nature, the NCA was undeniably supreme with none of its rivals achieving above a few hundred members.

A better indication of NCA membership may be provided by a study of the number of Localities claimed by the NCA, though it should be noted that, of 401 Localities claimed in late 1842, only 176 were active enough to contribute to central funds.[15] This was the figure at the zenith of the NCA organization, raised from less than forty Localities at its formation.[16] Later weakness in depth was perhaps exemplified by the fact that, in 1846, Ernest Jones was elected a MC despite the fact that his application to join the organization had not even been processed![17] By 1850 Harney could control the Executive with the support of just fourteen Localities, despite the supposed existence of fifty in all.[18] The following year even the NCA offices were lost to fiscal necessity.[19] However, recovery by 1853 allowed Gammage to appeal for funds from fifty eight Localities, as well as twenty eight People's Paper Readership Groups,[20] while in its last spasm of activity, the NCA could still fund fifty eight

MCs via seventy one Localities, several of which had only recently been resuscitated.[21]

While NCA activity in Cambridgeshire was restricted to an abortive meeting in Cambridge and a violent response in Cottenham,[22] the North was rather more productive. In 1841, the release of Binns and Williams from Durham Gaol saw celebratory rallies in Durham City, Sunderland, Houghton-le-Spring, West Auckland and Darlington.[23] Further South, Stockton temporarily enjoyed both a Chartist Co-operative and a Chartist Mechanics' Reading Room,[24] while a revival in 1847-1848 established Localities in Hartlepool and Middlesbrough and saw 10,000 attend a rally in South Shields.[25] The latter town was in 1851 to support a MC, D.W.Ruffy,[26] but the last Teesside subscriptions were already drying up. The revived Stockton Locality of 1856-1857 had just twelve members.[27] The days when a Government Inspector could be shocked by the popularity of Chartist literature on Tyneside were long gone,[28] though in 1853, when Gammage could not find a single Chartist on Teesside, he could still list NCA Localities in Crook, Darlington, Durham City, South Shields and Sunderland.[29]

However, these somewhat slim membership figures tell far from the full story. Limited resources, fear of victimization and basic human nature, meant that most Chartist sympathizers never took a card. Hence, Matthew Lishman, a Stockton Chartist, wrote to the People's Paper in July 1857 : 'There are not many of us...[however] there are plenty of democrats here.'[30] In a national and more famous

example, 16,000 could petition Attwood to form a new Reform group in 1843, but very few joined his National Union when he complied![31] Gauging such peripheral support is, however, very difficult as was proved by the wildly varying estimates of the Chartist crowd on Kennington Common in 1848.[32]

Newspaper circulations can assist but multiple-readership again causes under-estimation of Chartist support. The Northern Star achieved a circulation of 50,000 in 1839 and was again to touch 21,000 in 1848, both extremely creditable figures for the period.[33] The numerous other Chartist publications never came close to equalling the Northern Star's feats,[34] but a democratic and anti-sabbatarian publication, James Hill's The Star in the East, did prove sufficiently successful to survive for three and a half years in Wisbech, and in the process bankrupted the bourgeois paper set up to oppose it.[35] The sale of Hill's paper, and the existence of local Owenite communes, seem the only explanations for a local historian's comment that Chartists were active in the Fens.[36] Later, while the People's Paper sold just 3,000 copies, there can be little doubt that it had to cede potential readers to the huge 50,000-strong circulation of Reynold's populist Journal of Democratic Progress.[37]

Electoral activity, owing to the factors which caused Chartism's existence, can only assist in our task via sporadic glimpses. Most notable was Feargus O'Connor's victory at Nottingham in 1847. However, quite apart from his supposed Tory alliance in that election, it is worth noting the Birmingham Journal's view that his constituents were, 'a

mass of unmitigated scoundrelism, who have sold and will sell their souls to the highest bidder, without a moment's inquiry as to his principles.'[38] Chartist organization was reflected by the number of Chartist, or pro-Chartist, candidates at each general election. Seventeen constituencies were contested in 1841 and twenty four in 1847, but just six candidates appeared in 1852.[39] Certain notable Chartist victories were achieved in the shows of hands which were traditionally taken on each election hustings. The West Riding, Britain's largest constituency, was "won" in both 1841 and 1848, on the latter occasion against John Bright, who was standing in for the ill Liberal candidate.[40] 1841 also saw Binn's "victory" on the Sunderland Hustings.[41] Six years later, Palmerston was overwhelmingly "beaten" in Tiverton and Wood in Halifax, while Thomas Dickinson prevailed in South Shields.[42] As late as 1857 Jones could still comfortably win the Nottingham show of hands.[43]

Chartist petition figures are another source of information, but of course as 1848 showed, they were distorted by forgeries and duplications. However, it remains a safe assumption that each of the three National Petitions were endorsed by more people than were on the electoral register in the year concerned.

If it is accepted that Chartism did receive considerable public endorsement then the motives for that approval must be considered. It has long been maintained, by many historians, that the central motivation of many Chartists was socio-economic rather than democratic. Some, like Cole and Tholfsen, do so from a socialist position[44]

while other historians take the more conservative view that, 'there will always be numbers of hungry and unscrupulous men to listen to the assurances of hot-headed or ambitious enthusiasts, that the panacea for all their grievances is to be found in revolution.'[45] That view of Chartism, as a socially motivated movement, was also widely prevalent during its existence. Contemporary political reviews were united in the belief that Chartism, 'seemed to threaten a breakdown of society in the form of revolution and confiscation of private property',[46] a view echoed by those venerable voices of the establishment, The Times and the judiciary.[47] One Liberal MP's wife could even write of, 'The Chartists...who wish for nothing but revolution and misrule and call it reform.'[48]

Proof of this opinion has been seen to lie in the quite remarkable correlation between Chartist activity and economic recession. However, a rather more humdrum solution does exist for this undeniable link. During the Chartist period, with Peterloo within easy memory and Poor Laws which bore no resemblance to a "welfare state", Chartist activism, with its risk of violence or victimization, was only to be considered as an act of desperation when the times bit so hard that there was little to lose. Once the economy picked up and the average worker had more to lose all, bar the particularly motivated, returned to the natural policy of avoiding unnecessary risks. Hence, after 1851, even explicitly socialist Chartism proved powerless against the general economic upturn which was then under way.

Chartists who emphasized economic aims tended to

fall into two camps. First those who, never true democrats, arrived at Chartism via the Anti-Poor Law movement and who attempted to use the new movement's massive popularity for their own Tory-Radical ends. The clearest example of this phenomena, J.R.Stephens, is also, revealingly, an oft-quoted example of the "social chartist". Though seldom as openly undemocratic as his mentor, Oastler,[49] Stephens did say, 'There has already been too much of what is called political reform, the juggling of places from one to another, the passing of the pea from one cup to another cup to amuse and to deceive, and ultimately to destroy the people; and every step you take is a step nearer to hell.'[50]

At the other end of the political spectrum, but placing the same emphasis upon effect rather than cause, were the socialists. Men like Bronterre O'Brien argued, 'Without the franchise you can have nothing but what others choose to give you and those who give to-day may choose to take away to-morrow.'[51] However, it should be noted that Bronterre could also, five years later, devote his new publication to, 'Whole Hog Chartism', pledging to, 'advocate genuine Chartism, and no mistake! No factious politics - but real Democracy!'[52]

The Scientific Socialists were rather more dialectical. Karl Marx realized that Britain's uniquely emergent proletariat meant that universal suffrage could provide the means, though not a guarantee, of what Harney unambiguously termed, 'the ABOLITION OF CLASSES AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF LABOUR.'[53] Engels was certainly in no doubt as to the Charter's potential to play a part in that process,[54]

while both "Howard Morton" and Ernest Jones openly declared that Chartism fought below the Red Flag.[55] Jones stressed, 'What do we want political power for, except to grant free access to all the means of labour, land and machinery?',[56] while Harney declared in 1851 that, 'Henceforth Chartism is Democratique et Sociale.'[57]

Clearly, "Marxists" appear to have entered Chartism, in about 1850, for their own motives. However, all is not as it seems! Both Harney and Jones were democrats before, and were to be democrats after, they were socialists. Harney wrote, in 1837, 'Kings, aristocrats, and tyrantry of every description...are slaves in rebellion against the sovereigns of the earth, which is the people,'[58] while at the height of Harney's socialism Marx noted, 'He's stuck deeper in the democratic mud than he wishes to admit.'[59] Jones, a straight democrat before his imprisonment,[60] was to drop his socialism later in his political career but never his democracy.

Though Chartism had its share of crotchet-mongers, notably Stephens and Attwood,[61] a stronger motivation was the widely held belief that democracy would simply provide better government, whether springing from scorn of the "upper" classes, as with Bairstow,[62] or from Lovett's simple faith in democracy's , 'superiority over governments based on any other foundation.'[63] The oligarchical system under which they had lived had ignored the needs of the population and, via class legislation, had weakened the nation for, as the LWMA card stated, 'The man who evades his share of useful labour diminishes the public stock of wealth and throws his

own burden upon his neighbour.'[64] For Chartists the only solution was the removal of the oligarchy.

Hence, by ending oligarchical rule, Chartism would both remedy the state of the masses and improve the situation of the nation. That message came from the whole wide spectrum of the Chartist movement : from Feargus O'Connor to Sturge; from Ernest Jones to Bernard; and from Linton to Lloyd Jones.[65] That state of affairs should not be surprising, for this was the message most likely to shake men from their natural state of apathy, and thus to transform useless democratic sentiment into useful democratic action.

It should not be surprising that, considering the conditions under which the English working-class lived and laboured, social factors should have formed such a large part of the Chartist vocabulary. It was sound political sense for, as Benjamin Wilson explained, 'the easiest way to get to an Englishman's brains is through his stomach.'[66] However, social motives were the tool of democratic ones and not the other way around. In confirmation of this assertion, it must be stressed that economics were far from being the sole argument made for the Charter.

There seems little doubt that democratic sentiment was widespread. In Bradford, W.E.Forster noted that the, 'resolute, long-held determination by the local body of the operatives', was for universal suffrage.[67] Elsewhere, sentiment in Bath was, 'fit...for the propagation of... democratic ideas',[68] while, 'Lancashire working-men were... in groups discussing the great doctrine of political justice', manhood suffrage,[69] and even in Sussex, McDouall

could find, 'unadulterated democrats', even if they were playing cricket![70] Contrary opinions only tended to come from those with an axe to grind. Stephens had no interest in democracy,[71] while both Harney and Jones tended to down-play popular democratic feeling in order to emphasize the need for an explicitly socialist policy,[72] hence Jones' nostrum : 'Social right is the priest that shall wed the charter to the people's heart! The Charter is the guide that shall bring social right to the people's home.'[73]

Chartism certainly drew heavily upon past tradition. The old dictum of "no taxation without representation" was picked up by both Lovett and Wilson,[74] while Vincent, Lovett, Sturge and the Chartist Church movement, all harked back to the even older scriptural tradition.[75] As the North-East's Robert Lowery explained, 'He was a friend to democracy, because it was the political law of God.'[76] Even Jones could declare that, 'democracy is the gospel carried into practice.'[77] Reactionary democracy also survived into the Chartist movement, as Frost argued that he fought for, 'a restoration of the ancient constitution,'[78] a claim echoed by both O'Connor and Lovett,[79] while Duncombe simply saw Chartism as a continuation of the grand old English Radical tradition.[80]

At least one Chartist was, initially, inspired by humanitarianism,[81] and another by anger at the political system's supposed denial of his humanity,[82] but the final major wedge of Chartist opinion rested upon the assertion of R.K.Douglas, author of the National Petition, that universal

suffrage was a, 'right.'[83] They called, as did the South Shields Political Union contingent on Newcastle's Town Moor in May 1839, for, 'Equality and justice, man is man, and who is more.'[84] That was a County Durham echo of the old LWMA declaration that, 'we hold it to be an axiom in politics, that self-government, by representation, is the only just foundation of political power.'[85] The expression of democracy as simple justice was another concept which was to span the Chartist movement, including O'Connor, Lovett and Bronterre,[86] while even Jones, at his "reddest" on the Halifax Hustings in 1852, could deliver a defence of all Six Points on arguments as democratic as they were social.[87] Even Linton, that most idealistic of Chartists was, for all of his endorsements of, 'the sacred principle of man's natural equality and sovereignty over himself,'[88] to be outflanked within the Chartist spectrum by the apparently anarchist Sheffield Free Press.[89]

Any attempt to define the Chartists as either socialist or democratic is made upon a false appreciation of the movement's nature. The vast majority of Chartists saw their political and economic aims as merely two sides of the same coin of natural, or God-given, justice. Their attitude might best be encapsulated by quoting Bezer, 'Politics...was with me just then, a bread-and-cheese question. Let me not, however, be mistaken; - I ever loved the idea of freedom - glorious freedom, and its inevitable consequences, - and not only for what it will fetch, but the holy principle, - a democrat in my Sunday School, everywhere - and whether the sun shines on my future pathway, or the clouds look black as they

have ever done, neither sun nor cloud shall alter my fixed principle.'[90]

It should in no way be surprising that a democratic movement, and especially one unwilling to understate the effects of its programme, gained little support among the privileged classes. Few of the enfranchised million were ready to pick up Harney's challenge : 'If the middle classes are honest, let them adopt our Charter and join our Association.'[91] They were not inclined to join Thompson in adopting the title of, 'despised Chartist.'[92] Those that did so tended to hold similar attitudes to their working-class compatriots, as well as mirroring the differences among the wider movement. Hence, while "Honest John" Fielden was a democrat at heart, T.P.Thompson preferred to endorse the belief that there would be better government under democracy, or at least no worse![93]

By contrast, Charles Kingsley, the Christian Socialist author, could only accept the Charter if it was shorn of all social consequences, while P.H.Muntz took the opposite position : 'He would acknowledge no abstract right of suffrage in either rich or poor...The suffrage that would produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number of his fellow men was the suffrage he would work for,'[94] in the process providing an echo of the old Utilitarian argument for democracy. Joseph Cowen junior, though the scion of a new business family, was one of the few members of the middle classes ready to declare himself a "Chartist", and later even a, 'Chartist and something more.'[95]

Parliament, as the assembly of the ruling classes,

mirrored their overwhelmingly hostile attitude towards Chartism, 'regarding [its]...principles as quite impracticable, not worth serious consideration.'[96] After 1848, even forcing a division on a Chartist motion proved something of an achievement! In 1850, O'Connor's motion was counted out while 1851 saw him unable to secure a seconder due to Duncombe's illness. Perhaps worst of all, in 1852 though Cobbett was willing to second, and Pellatt was ready to present a petition, no MP was willing to risk the stigma of proposing a Chartist motion![97] The three divisions which did take place were only to prove the movement's weakness in the Commons (see Table 1). It is interesting to note that, bar Yorkshire, Parliamentary support tended to reflect Chartist support upon the ground, possibly suggesting that MPs, or the more radical ones at least, were willing to attend to their "constituents" opinions, always assuming that they did not know more about the true number of Chartist voters than we suspect! In the bulk of constituencies, however, it seems certain that Chartist canvassers would have garnered a similarly meagre return to that secured from Dunning in Cheshire.[98]

Victorian MPs should not be judged with undue harshness for they represented an electorate which leaned far from the opinions of an O'Connor, or even those of a Sturge.[99] With the Radical electoral debacle of 1837 as an example before them, it should not be surprising that MPs were reluctant to appear as Chartist sympathizers! Time proved that perceived danger to be very real. Of thirty seven pro-Charter MPs in 1839, twelve (32.4%) were either to lose their

seats or chose not to contest seats which were subsequently lost at the following general election. The equivalent figures were : twelve of thirty nine (30.8%) in 1842; and, in 1849, six of fourteen (42.9%). The effect of the threat, and subsequent humiliation, of Chartism (in 1848) on the 1849 supporters, both in terms of the numbers involved and their fate, is clearly discernible. The figures seem to endorse Sturge's rueful comment after his crushing defeat at the Birmingham by-election of 1844 : 'the feeling of the electors against giving the franchise to the working classes was becoming more and more strong every year.' He could reflect upon that poll's contrast with his massive victory in the earlier show of hands.[100] Francis Place was accurately to warn Lovett, when the latter attempted to secure middle-class co-operation in 1848, that, 'It will be some time to come before the words Chartism and universal suffrage will meet with favor in the direction you seem to be looking.'[101] Holyoake felt that this was due to middle-class concentration upon the battle against feudalism,[102] but it seems somewhat more likely that a self-conscious defence of a privileged position was in fact responsible.

MPs views were reflected in the mainstream national press. The Spectator may have declared for the Charter[103] but the overwhelming media attitude was either abusive, or ignorant, or both! More locally, Durham and Cambridge newspapers provide an interesting insight, via their reports of the one post-1850 Chartist event which they considered worthy of comment, the 1856 London celebration of the return of Frost from enforced exile. Both the Durham

Chronicle and the Cambridge Chronicle were to ignore even this meeting, though five months later, the Cambridge paper did notice a rally of 16-20,000 London "unemployed" who, after a Jones oration, unanimously declared for the Charter.[104] Both the Cambridge Independent Press and the Durham County Advertiser did comment upon the 1856 meeting and adopted, despite their supposed mutual opposition, a very similar line. Most notably, both papers were to question the wisdom of Frost's royal pardon. The Independent Press was to reveal its ignorance when it, despite noticing that the rally was co-organized by an "Exiles' Democratic Committee", mistook the flag of Hungary for a Chartist tricolour! Both papers were careful to raise bourgeois hackles by noting socialist involvement, whether by citing red flags and socialist slogans or, as in the case of the Advertiser, quoting an entire verse of Ernest Jones' poem, "The Workmen's Song to the Rich"! Despite such revelations, recalling their working-class readers, both papers were also careful to down-play the rally's importance. As the Advertiser soothingly declared, the meeting, though an assembly of up to 20,000 people, needed not alarm even, 'persons of equally loyal principles and tender nerves.'[105]

Against this strong national tide, a small band of middle-class democratic politicians did labour, even if the London Democrat did dismiss them as, 'sham radicals, timid radicals, [and] trading radicals, as well as honest and determined democrats.'[106] The most remarkable personal case was that of T.S.Duncombe, the Chartist parliamentary spokesman-cum-leader, an aristocratic dandy who was to win

the hearts of the hard-bitten rank-and-file, as well as being the only MP, with the obvious exception of O'Connor, to take a NCA card.[107] Unlike many other MPs, Duncombe was not an isolated figure since his constituency, Finsbury, was to elect with him Wakley, another dedicated democrat. In their bailiwick the two MPs were both to honour Lovett, while receiving the assistance of such notable local figures as Linton, Hetherington and Richard Moore[108]

Constituencies ready to return two democrats, and hence avoid the suspicion of an eccentric representative, were few and far between. Of five democratic motions in 1839-1849, Finsbury's delivery of both votes for four was only to be matched by Birmingham, while only two other Boroughs, Oldham and Wolverhampton, were to deliver both votes in a majority of the divisions. Bridport's democracy was extinguished by the 1841 polls, while Bath and Marylebone only delivered immediately after that election, presumably due to fresh pledges! Wycombe, Stockport and Durham City, though they had two democratic MPs at times, never saw them endorse the same motion! Perhaps the most interesting was Leicester where both MPs endorsed a democratic motion on two occasions though, perhaps due to pressure from "General" Cooper's detachments, neither Ellis nor Easthope were to vote for any of the three National Complete Suffrage Union motions in 1841-1847.

Before Chartism faced its crisis in 1839-1840, the democratic faction in Parliament was closely linked to the LWMA.[109] However, as Chartism became increasingly associated with the threat of violence, those of the middle classes who

inclined towards democracy became increasingly unwilling to be associated with Chartism as such. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to suggest that this process alienated democracy's already small constituency in the ruling classes. Support for Lovett's respectable National Association was, for example, impressive, if it was minimal among the workers! Fifteen MPs and two peers were to subscribe to the organization while, outside Parliament, Place, John Stuart Mill and Grote, all endorsed it, and Stansfeld, along with other young radicals of University College, actually lectured for it.[110]

As I have attempted to suggest above, sympathy for Chartists, and their Six Points, was rather more widespread than specifically Chartist feeling among the privileged classes. One self-acknowledged Humeite on Tyneside, though no Chartist, could declare the Charter, 'not only unobjectionable but strictly just.'[111] Some Radicals, including Cobden and the Westminster Reform Society, could be more or less democratic while feeling, 'strong distaste',[112] for Chartists, and that was also true of men as radical as Walmsley, as principled as W.J.Fox, or as committed as J.M.Cobbett.[113] Perhaps the finest example was "Tear'em" Roebuck who, despite his pugnacious attitudes, was to receive the support of the Sheffield Chartists since, as Clark said in 1849, his views on the, 'franchise...approximates so closely to us, that opposition to him would, I think be both unwise and unseemly.'[114]

Notoriously Chartist areas could generate middle-class sympathy, but it was of varying sincerity. Hence, Francis Crossley could speak for Jones on the Halifax

hustings and provide employment for victimized activists[115] while, on the other hand, the famous Bradford Observer letter, engineered by T.P.Thompson's committee, was designed to be, 'a real anodyne to the mob.'[116] Hence, all was not necessarily always as it seemed.

Though a handful of towns saw mergers of their local Chartist and Radical organizations, most middle-class democrats shared Miall's view that their movement could only advance via a clear separation from the "tainted" Chartist name.[117] In this, the National Complete Suffrage Union (NCSU) was clearly crucial. Engels termed it, 'the Jacobinical bourgeoisie', and scorned its, 'ridiculous title',[118] but he was perhaps unjust. Sturge and his collaborator, Sharman Crawford, were quite capable of writing a Declaration that, 'a large majority of the people of this country are unjustly excluded from that full, fair and free exercise of the elective franchise to which they are entitled by the great principle of christian equality and also by the British Constitution.'[119]

The NCSU was perfectly placed to acquire the support of both non-NCA Chartists and non-Chartist democrats, but its creation was in fact only to reveal democracy's weakness outside of the working classes. Sturge faced hostility even from his own, traditionally radical, Quakers, while the readership of Miall's newspaper, the Nonconformist, dwindled after the publication's declaration for universal suffrage.[120] However, Bright and Potter did rally to the NCSU,[121] while support proved strong among the middle-classes of such towns as Sheffield, Nottingham, and

Birmingham.[122] It is interesting that each of the above towns was also a Chartist centre, and that may again suggest that Chartism did not necessarily turn the higher classes against democracy. Sturge was also to achieve an important coup when his ideas were endorsed by a meeting at the Manchester conference of the Anti-Corn Law League (A-CLL) in November 1841, though some observers have preferred to see this as proof that the NCSU was merely a product of the Free Trade movement's perceived need for Reform.[123] This theory would suggest an order of preference in policy matters which would have been most surprising for such A-CLL leaders as Cobden, Thompson, and Bright.

The NCSU did reveal the existence of a strand of non-violent democratic feeling via the rapid development of its organization. With fifty branches established as early as January 1842, there were ninety by the end of the year and the representatives of 146 localities attended the organization's second conference.[124] Locally, County Durham, or at least Sunderland and its hinterland, proved something of a strong-hold for the NCSU, the potential for such a movement there having already been indicated by the dispatch of Deegan to the 1841 Leeds Reform Conference.[125] Sunderland's Chartists mainly followed the omnipresent Williams into the Sturgeite camp, a situation reflected in the town's election for the December Conference of the NCSU. Williams, a local democratic solicitor Thomas Thompson and the symbolic Sturge, were all returned, a moderate trio counter-weighted only by the O'Connorite "pitman's attorney", W.P.Roberts, who was clearly the representative

of the surrounding pit villages. However, if the North-East reflected the NCSU's rise, it also mirrored its decline. With their working-class followers lost to the persuasive arguments of Samuel Kydd, both Williams and Thompson were to abandon democratic activism, leaving for the A-CLL in 1844.[126] By 1848, when Williams, who was drifting into support for household rather than universal suffrage, addressed Sunderland's Chartists it was to be on behalf of self-help and temperance, rather than democracy.[127]

Like Chartism, the NCSU was to suffer from a chronic weakness in Parliament. However, this did not prove that democracy was as repulsive to MPs as Chartism for, over the course of 1842, the NCSU had lost its weaker stomached members as it had drifted ever closer to Chartism. By December, just one MP was ready to attend its conference - Crawford - as even Duncombe refused election, though supposedly not on policy grounds.[128] Not only was the NCSU never to gain a majority in Parliament, it was even to fall short of the twenty committed supporters necessary to implement Sturge's plot to block all budgets until a Bill of Rights was passed.[129] Though the 1841 election initially gave the NCSU support from forty eight MPs (9.2%) this figure was soon to dwindle (see Table 2). It is also worth noting that NCSU motions, by their very nature, did not secure the votes of those MPs who supported consideration of Chartist petitions purely in the interest of free speech. It is safe to assume that the latter category included the thirteen MPs who voted for consideration of the Petition, but did not do so for any of the three Complete Suffrage motions. They included, as

well as the two Leicester MPs, such noted Radicals as Hume and Viscount Duncan.

As with the Chartist motions, support tended to be concentrated in Scotland, the South-West, the North-West, London and the West Midlands. Of a total of 66 MPs involved in 65 seats (Trelawney replaced Rundle in Tavistock), twenty were to lose their seats to non-democrats in the following election. That figure (30.8%) was hardly in sharp contrast to the figure for definitely pro-Chartist MPs, those who voted for both the Petition and the NCSU motions, who suffered eight casualties out of their total number of twenty eight (28.6%). However, there was a clear contrast between those figures and the casualty rate among "fair play" supporters of the Petition, just one out of thirteen (7.7%). In electoral terms, it can be seen that to hold democratic views was actually more unhealthy for a MP than being seen to support the Charter itself, while those MPs able to excuse their votes via liberal attitudes were left almost untouched. These figures were, of course, also affected by other factors since the last of the three democracy divisions was all of three years before the 1847 general election.

Chartism and democracy were far from the only movements active among the working classes in early and mid-Victorian Britain, and the various movements' inter-relationships are worthy of study, especially those between Chartism and the main economist movement, trade unionism. This political/economic divide has attracted considerable comment from historians and it was greatly complicated by the fact that poor communications, and the recent collapse of the

Grand National Consolidated Trade Union, had left British trade unionism a fragmented, and localised, entity. The only secondary structures in place during the Chartist hey-day were a few local Trades Councils. There can be little doubt that the palpable weakness of the trade unions during this period, and the all too obvious state oppression of it, was a major factor in the meteoric rise of Chartism. As well as providing evidence of the workers' need for political influence, a lesson certainly not lost upon the South Lancashire NCA,[130] that situation also left many of the small band of British working-class activists temporarily redundant and hence able to devote their energies to the new cause. Hence, early Norwich Chartism was led by two prominent figures in the ailing Norwich Journeymen Weavers' Union, and Carmarthen Chartism rose as the Rebecca Riots, a primitive precursor of agricultural labour unions, fizzled out.[131]

Chartism and trade unions have sometimes been regarded as having been engaged in fierce competition for the workers' sympathy, and this has spawned suggestions that both Chartism and the "New Model Unions" arose from the body of the rival tradition. There undoubtedly did exist friction between the two strands of activism, friction most evident in the periods of Chartist weakness, when workers' democratic activism seemed to have been sapped away by economist campaigns. Both O'Connor and Jones articulated Chartist frustration,[132] while Harney, in his Red Republican, proclaimed that, 'the trade-union and co-operative movements would be sub-ordinated to the real working-class task of achieving political power...For the working classes there is

but one way of righting the wrongs, that of obtaining mastery of the state.'[133]

Both of the above comments tend to suggest a stark division between the "political" and "economist" wings of the active working class, but that was not necessarily so. Harney was a man particularly motivated by democratic sentiment, and was perhaps the single Chartist leader one would most expect to produce the preceding statement. Despite his words, examples of co-operation between Chartism and trade unionism, and of men with a foot in both camps, were common. The Chartist press, despite the lapse noted above, certainly could not be accused of ignoring, let alone deprecating, the trades unions. The People's Paper provided excellent coverage of union affairs, and both it and the Northern Star were to sacrifice valuable space in order to publish the weekly reports of the National Association of United Trades for the Protection of Labour.[134] O'Connor's paper was even to relaunch as the Northern Star and National Trades Journal in 1844.[135]

The North-East, with its active working class, was to be prominent among areas which saw links between the Chartist and trade unionist movements. As early as March 1839, local workers were writing to the Northern Liberator, apparently to justify their acceptance of the Charter in purely socio-economic terms, 'being', as the Newcastle and Gateshead Shoemakers explained, 'deeply convinced that we never can fully protect our labor with our unions, and believing that the establishment of universal suffrage is the only means of securing a full protection and remuneration of

our labor.'[136] However, it should be noted that such comments did not necessarily preclude democratic sentiments among the men involved. In May 1839, the Darlington Operative Tailors' Society was to be found sending a subscription to Bronterre, clearly a Chartist rather than a trade unionist, and urging other Trades to follow suit. By October 1839 no fewer than twenty three Trades had nominated delegates to the Northern Political Union (NPU)'s district convention in Newcastle.[137] One union leader, Thomas Hepburn, figured prominently as a Chartist in 1839, both as founder-President of the Newcastle Working Men's Association and as a member of the NPU Council chairing the mighty mass meeting on Newcastle's Town Moor. However, since Hepburn was barred from trade union activity by his employers, his work for the Charter may merely have been a substitute for his first love and he was to vanish from the Chartist scene in 1839.[138] Whatever the true attitude of their famed leader from South Shields, there seems little doubt that democracy was a powerful creed among the Durham pitmen.[139]

1839 saw the reverse side of the coin when the NPU was to suffer harshly for its over-confidence in its local industrial strength, and these events are worthy of consideration. Though it had claimed 40,000 Tynesiders and 20,000 Wearsiders pledged to the "Sacred Month", and one historian suggests that the Durham miners, at least initially, redeemed their pledge,[140] the national failure of the strike even to begin was a calamity for the NPU.[141] Its' strike rapidly crumbled in the North-East, possibly explaining the contradiction between Chase's view and that of

other historians who feel the strike also failed to bite in the Durham coal-field.[142] Certainly, with the strike doomed by other regions' apathy, and both Williams and Binns gaoled the previous month, Robert Knox chose to hold his Sunderland-based supporters back from committing themselves to it. This, apart from leaving the strike as an under-estimation of true Chartist support in the North-East, left Sunderland, almost alone in the region, able to play an active part in the events of 1842.[143]

Such sensible husbandry of the working-classes' meagre resources, whether via wise leadership or rank-and-file common sense, seems at least as adequate an explanation of the Sacred Month's failure as Maehl's claim that the local workers were too "prosperous" to strike and unwilling to, 'strike for principle alone.' Whichever explanation is correct, the North-East still saw instances, however isolated or misguided, when workers were ready to strike for the Charter even when success seemed impossible. Whitbridge miners declared that, 'it was for their political rights they were struggling and quite unconnected with the question of wages', a claim perhaps validated by the fact that it was delivered to the bench, where it was hardly likely to curry favour![143] Such bravado was, however, too expensive to be considered by most of their contemporaries.

Such co-operation was in no way restricted to the North-East. Nottingham NCA was to "de-select" its local democratic MP, Gisborne, due to his opposition to a Ten Hours Bill, while some Chartists, one historian claims, were to go so far as to hold syndicalist views.[145] Among the leadership,

Jones was notable for his efforts on behalf of trade unionism and allocated twenty two of the mooted one hundred seats in the proposed National Assembly to the unions.[146] Jones, though he was always a campaigner against the splitting of working-class energies, as W.E.Adams discovered, was himself to diversify into economist issues via his Labour Parliament Mass Movement and wrote, in November 1857 : 'Grasp democracy by the hand, wherever, and in whatever form you may behold it : in the Trades Unions, strike committees, and co-operative associations especially.'[147]

Such Chartist gestures might be regarded as merely a bid to "capture" trades unionism but this would be a simplistic analysis, despite the case related by Engels of the veteran Chartist W.P.Roberts who, by becoming "The Miners' Attorney General", supposedly secured the support of two-thirds of Britain's miners, some 30,000 men, for the Charter.[148] Trades unionists were to appear in Chartist colours and not only in times of high Chartist activity. One might expect trades union banners to have appeared at Chartist demonstrations in Birmingham and Glasgow during the Chartist high-tide of 1838 but what possible economist advantage could the Aberdeen Trades Council have hoped to gain by marching for the Charter, in full regalia, in Autumn 1843?[149] While it is arguable that the Dundee Chartists may have captured their local trades unions, other groups, including the Manchester Mechanics and the Owenite Spirit of the Age under Lloyd Jones, declared for the Charter without having lost their autonomy.[150] If two Chartists, Delaforce and Murray, did swing the Metropolitan Trades Council behind

the Charter they did not, in any way, attempt to destroy its separate structure.[151] Works' branches of the NCA did exist in London, Cuffay at different times being a member of two of them,[152] without precluding the existence of trades unions among those particular groups of workers. It must be instructive that trades unionists continued to associate with Chartism long after its usefulness to them ceased, with one even chairing part of the, obviously final, Chartist Convention of 1858.[153]

An event of great historical controversy, precisely because it showed trades unions independently declaring for the Charter in a situation where they had little or nothing to gain by doing so, was the so-called "Plug Plot" of 1842. Pimlott and Cook scented a Chartist hijack, Engels adopted O'Connor and Harney's paranoid view of a bourgeois plot, and both Stevenson and Read felt the strikes to have been for purely economic motives.[154] However, the evidence seems to suggest that Jenkins, Schoyen and Trevelyan are more accurate, feeling that the strike was a spontaneous movement for social aims which later chose to also adopt the Charter.[155] However, if that was so, it is difficult to understand why, in terms of their primary purpose, the secondary aim should have been taken up. It could in no way assist in persuading their employers to settle! The strikes certainly do not appear to have been "captured". Though McDouall and Cooper were involved in the Trades' decision to adopt the Charter,[156] both O'Connor and Harney, as has already been noted, were openly hostile to the strikers. Further evidence that the strikes were not "hijacked" by

Chartists is provided by the fact that the overwhelming majority of the grass-roots union leaders involved were also Chartists, and the fact that the cry for the Charter did not only come from the malleable Trades' delegates in Manchester, but also arose from local strike meetings.[157] Those facts perhaps indicate that the 1842 strikes may simply have been a case of the workers demanding all that they needed, both social advance and the political influence required to protect it. There is certainly evidence of such sentiments among the pronouncements made by the strikers themselves.[158] Their aim was both sides of the coin of justice, both bread and freedom, summed up in one group's words as, 'Our rights and liberties, the Charter, and more to eat.'[159]

As Chartism declined the "New Model Unions" rose but, once again, it would be grossly simplistic to suggest that widespread political beliefs simply transformed themselves into economist ones. In certain areas, such as Halifax, though Chartism duly fizzled out the trades unions remained weak.[160] In East Anglia, the periodic lapses in Chartism did not encourage the appearance of unions, the local populous instead preferring to return to their old tradition of incendiarism.

Various Chartists were to emigrate, join trades unions, defect to mainstream Radicalism, or throw their weight into religion or temperance. Others moved to self-help via co-operatives or friendly societies, while a few stubbornly stuck to independent democratic action. Many became involved in two or more of the above. Though Chartism died in 1858, or in 1861 in the case on Newcastle,[161] many old

Chartists remained loyal to the democratic ideal, even if some did come to see household, rather than universal, suffrage as the more sensible, and obtainable, demand. The movement's decline did not see any simple transfer of its support, either to the trades unions or any other organization, and its collapse did not necessarily reflect any decline in the popularity of the democratic line.

The early and mid-Victorian period witnessed a working class of limited resources, both in terms of material and of time, forced even in times of material advance, that advance being from a scandalously low base, to devote them to the main possibility of progress. Only during short periods, generally coinciding with desperate poverty, did that mean Chartism, a movement attempting to defeat the entire power of the British establishment, and hence with little possibility of success. In periods of political calm, when Chartism's strategic weakness was all too clearly defined, it could rely upon only a dedicated few activists, however popular its proposals may have been. Hence, Chartism's decline did not necessarily indicate a decline in democratic sentiment, and the Mass Movement's failure indicated that there was no automatic transfer of support to economist causes. Even after the fall of the People's Charter, democracy retained its grip upon the "political serfs" of Britain, a fact proved by the sporadic reappearance of Chartists, of every rank, in the democratic movement during the remainder of the nineteenth century.

Table 1

Breakdown of Parliamentary Divisions on the Charter -

Year	MPs	Support	Sc	NW	N	Y	WM	W	SW	EM	S	L	EA
1839	37	7.3%	1	7	0	2	7	0	6	3	3	6	2
1842	39	7.7%	5	7	0	2	7	1	6	2	4	5	0
1849	14	4.0%	1	4	0	1	1	0	1	2	1	3	0

Table 2

Breakdown of Parliamentary Divisions upon Complete Suffrage (i.e. NCSU) Divisions -

Year	MPs	Support	Sc	NW	N	Y	WM	W	SW	EM	S	L	EA
1842	48	9.2%	6	9	1	4	7	1	7	1	3	6	3
1843	29	5.5%	2	9	1	1	6	1	5	0	2	2	0
1844	30	5.5%	5	9	2	1	4	0	3	2	1	3	0

KEY : Sc - Scotland NW - North-West N - North
Y - Yorkshire WM - West Midlands W - Wales
SW - South-West EM - East Midlands S - South
L - London EA - East Anglia

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Chapter 4 - The Rise and Fall of British Reform 1850 -1865

The accelerating decline of Chartism, in part due to its negative connotations was, along with the steady consolidation of Free Trade, ironically to leave the early years of the eighteen-fifties as a window of opportunity for Parliamentary Reformers. Their victory on Locke King's motion in 1851, however temporary, was to join with the perceived stagnation of Whig politics in persuading the Premier, Russell, to cast off his reputation as "Finality Jack" and return to the dangerous task of Reform.[1]

Though he was basically conservative,[2] John Bright, Cobden's lieutenant in the long fight against the Corn Laws, placed himself at the heart of the new effort and his motive for doing so was explicit : 'We have deluded ourselves with the notion that we are a free people, and have a good government and a representation system, whilst in fact our representative system is for the most part a sham, and the forms of representation are used to consolidate the supremacy of the titled and proprietary class.'[3] His dedication, speaking as a manufacturer, was proven by his proclaimed willingness to face a little, 'commercial depression.'[4] However, despite the Parliamentary support uncovered by Hume's exertions,[5] efforts to raise new Reform groups outside of Saint Stephens proved uniformly abortive.[6]

While Reform did gain the support of trade unionists, certain audiences and a few young Radical politicians,[7] Cowen expressed the frustration of the genuine

Democrat who despaired of any meaningful assistance from either the upper- or the middle-classes.[8] The young Blaydon Radical accurately saw the stain of moderation which spread through the middle class, a tendency which caused such prominent politicians as Roebuck to restrict their desires to household suffrage, and MPs within Cowen's own region, notably Hutt and Wawn, to back-slide from even that position.[9]

Cobden, the embodiment of middle-class politics, had held a view of Reform dominated by his over-riding desire to secure Free Trade.[10] By 1850, though he had abandoned his past hesitations, he remained well aware of his personal limitations without a popular head of steam to back him up.[11] Cobden's experiment with the Freehold Land Societies was perhaps the clearest indication of his despair of that essential element, agitation.[12] As he knew, too many Radicals, including William Brockie in South Shields, were inclined to endorse Radical Reform in theory, but only for an unspecified future date![13] There was little evidence supportive of Harney's claim that Chartism had begun, 'to exercise an influence over the country's politics.'[14] Hence, though it had a branch in Cambridge, Linton's basically anarchist movement for democracy proved spectacularly unsuccessful![15]

With few exceptions, essentially either devout Christians or Philosophical Radicals,[16] Reformers, not least due to expediency, tended to concentrate upon household, rather than manhood, suffrage. Bright was even to suggest that the former would produce, 'a more democratic House',

than the latter![17] Though enraged by such moderation,[18] Radical Reformers were powerless in a situation where there remained at the political helm a strong "finalist" tendency, including such notables as Palmerston, Aberdeen and Graham.[19] Even among supposedly reform-minded Ministers, Grey would brook no Little Charter while Russell continued to ruminate upon the potential of indirect electoral systems, initially starkly refusing to condone even Locke King's motion.[20]

It was into this atmosphere that the National Political and Financial Reform Association (NPFRA) was launched in 1849. Though it united the leading Radicals and held hundreds of public meetings[21] it was to establish only thirty six local organizations and rapidly stagnated.[22] That failure, despite an initial prominence which secured the publication of the NPFRA's manifesto in the Liberal papers of both Cambridge and Durham City,[23] may in part have been engendered by a failure to correctly target its efforts. Certainly, it seems peculiar that the organization should have been virtually invisible in radical Durham, but staged a major meeting in Cambridge, addressed by both Sir Francis Knowles and its Secretary, Thomas Beggs ,in 1850. Their speeches tended to emphasize what was already apparent from the NPFRA's name : that its aim was to tie retrenchment, the middle-class's primary aim, to Reform. Knowles argued that Cobden's fiscal reforms were obtainable only via household, or preferably manhood, suffrage, a belief shared by the great man himself.[24]

The NPFRA's absence from County Durham might be

explained by the fact that the local Liberals, and their Durham Chronicle, already supported household suffrage as an hangover from the era of "Radical Jack" Durham as well as out of a desire to keep aristocratic fingers out of the public purse.[25] Cambridge, by contrast, had a Whiggish heritage and a Liberal paper which, while sympathetic towards the NPFRA, refused to be moved from its defence of Britain's, 'well and beautifully balanced system of government.'[26] Hence, though both papers endorsed Locke King's efforts, there was a clear difference between the Cambridge Independent Press's conservatism and the view of the Durham Chronicle : 'In England the representative machinery is so framed as to exclude, not the whole, but an enormous proportion, of the practical intelligence and good sense of the people from any voice in the making of the laws, good or bad, which they must submit to; and to bring an immense portion of the constituency in boroughs, as well as in counties, altogether under the grasp and greed of the aristocratic nucleus.'[27] Interestingly, the abortive Cambridge Radical candidate in 1851, W.H.Roberts, was to align himself with the latter view rather than that of his own local Liberal press.[28]

The Tory press, in the local areas studied, was also divided. For C.W.Naylor, proprietor of the Cambridge Chronicle, Hume's motion was, 'Chartist and Leveller', while the NPFRA merely comprised an effort by a now Feargus O'Connor-influenced Anti-Corn Law League to, 'set up a vulgar, tyrannical, Red Republic.'[29] Such spleen was unsurprising since, for the Ultra-Tory Naylor, even the mild 1852 Reform Bill comprised an attempt by Russell to hand all

political power over to, 'tyrannical democratic domination', by the working classes![30]

If emphatically Tory, the Cambridge Chronicle seems to have been less representative of wider conservative opinion than its northern equivalent, the Durham County Advertiser which, though it considered the Bill a, 'crude and ill-digested abortion', was at pains to deny that Conservatives opposed all Reform. For the Advertiser, reform of the 1832 settlement, one after all imposed by Whigs, was not just advisable - it was necessary![31] In national Tory circles, while Naylor would have found a ready ally in Lord Robert Cecil, and Derby was at pains to present himself as a potential saviour of the nation from democracy,[32] opinion was shifting in Conservative quarters. The second Earl of Salisbury and, one writer suggests, the Tory Cabinet of 1852, were ready to contemplate outflanking Russell's Bill from the left,[33] a policy facilitated by the fact that the anti-democratic attitudes of even such establishment figures as Lord Aberdeen and Sir Robert Inglis were softening.[34] There was also considerable sympathy for the Advertiser's fear that, without Reform, increasing education in the rising population could only lead to a, 'convulsion'.[35] Palmerston in his "Civis Romanus" speech had warned of the dangers of continuing popular frustration and, though he would not apply the model to Britain, others did, including four prominent Northern Liberals - Fenwick, Hutt, Douglas, and Joseph Pease.[36]

Even if, as Duncombe Shafto and Holyoake argued, the working classes were loyal to the Crown and

Constitution,[37] the ruling classes, most notably at the Palace, felt in need of some insurance![38] Ernest Jones was well aware of the dangers implicit in a middle-class leadership of the Reform movement[39] and his worst suspicions were to be confirmed by Cobden in 1851 : 'I tell all the manufacturers, and the capitalists, and the men of station in the country that, whether it be a time of crisis or a time of tranquillity, the only safety for them is to be at the head of the great masses of the people.'[40] The Advertiser merely adopted a different form of words : 'a nation cannot be safely progressive without being Conservative, nor on the other safely Conservative without being progressive.'[41]

The contrast with the Cambridge Chronicle, which still denounced the 1832 franchise as too wide,[42] needs hardly be pointed out, especially since the Durham paper had moved onto the future radical demand of an educational franchise.[43] Conservative politicians were similarly split. In the North, unlike in Cambridge, it was no longer acceptable simply to pledge yourself to the, 'Glorious Protestant Constitution as by Law established.'[44] Hence, Liddell, Lord Adolphus Vane Tempest, and Hudson were all to refuse to rule out Reform.[45]

Liberal politicians were no more united. If Jones fiercely opposed any mere Reform "instalment" and Greville railed against universal suffrage, the Liberals filled all possible positions in between![46] That situation was reflected at the local level. Cambridge's self-confessed Palmerstonian, Campbell, followed his hero in considering that the 1852 Bill went too far but he said the same of Locke

King's measure![47] The majority position nationally was supportive[48] and it was adopted by most of Cambridgeshire's Liberal candidates, as well as Spearman and Harry Vane in Durham.[49] Most Northern Liberals were not so satisfied, as was proved by their presses' view of the Bill as, 'Legitimate, but comparatively puny.'[50] Numerous Liberal candidates there, along with Mowatt in Cambridge, were to press for household suffrage,[51] though only the Sunderland Times, needing to distinguish itself from the whiggish local Herald, chose to actually oppose the Bill as too small.[52] Its' candidate, Digby Seymour, though initially opposing all property qualifications, was not to fall into line but did join Ingham in demanding an educational fancy franchise.[53] Their discontent, however, was only matched by Radicals nationally[54], and the only support for universal suffrage locally came from Alderman Smith of Cambridge and a Liberal non-elector, with even their meeting summarily dismissing a visiting Lancashire Chartist.[55]

The Durham Chronicle was perhaps, of the Liberal organs studied, the most prominent in continuing the battle for Reform, though it did so on the basis of national moral and intellectual advance rather than as a matter of natural right.[56] It raised a number of arguments during the course of 1853. Reform would make electoral corruption impractical, it would provide representation of the unrepresented one-third of the nation's tax-payers and it would end government ignorance of the "lower classes".[57] Interestingly, the paper also proposed "fancy franchises" prior to the 1854 Bill, warning that, if Reform was to be limited, it would have to be

'fastidious' comprising the representation of all workers and not just, as the national trend in opinion suggested, those influenced by bourgeois ideas.[58]

The 1854 Reform Bill "enjoyed" a political climate almost identical to that of 1852. Palmerston and the Cambridge Chronicle remained entirely hostile,[59] while the Liberal majority, by now including such Peelites as Herbert and Gladstone, remained inclined to accept a moderate measure, if only to head off a potentially larger one.[60] The same sentiment probably inspired the Durham County Advertiser to take the extremely rare step of favourably receiving an "enemy" Bill, declaring that it, 'undoubtedly suggested a basis whereon a really valuable and enduring superstructure of Reform may be hereafter built.'[61] That view was in stark contrast to the ever more conservative Sunderland Herald's fearful allegation that the measure meant, 'very large changes.'[62]

Despite such views, the general political tendency, both nationally and locally, seems to have comprised a drift towards the centre, a centre comprising a Bill similar to the 1854 proposals. Hence, Cambridgeshire and Durham Liberal candidates all endorsed that Bill, with no demands for a larger measure and even Campbell ready to endorse what was to be conceded.[63] That phenomena was matched among Conservative MPs, with even Cambridge candidates ready to match Vane Tempest's, admittedly vague, acceptance of Reform.[64]

Three local Conservatives were ready to be more specific. Mowbray, generally a moderate, was supportive of,

if he would not pledge himself to, a taxpayer franchise.[65] Edward Ball, the representative of the Isle of Ely dissenting tradition, was ready to grant the vote to any adult male prepared to pay an unspecified annual sum. As Ball optimistically suggested, 'Under such a system none could complain of being deprived of the franchise.'[66] Frater, a Durham Tory, did not go so far but, in a Reform memorandum which he sent to Russell in October 1853, did support £5 Boroughs so long as their impact was moderated via a system of indirect election.[67]

Nationally, Liberal opposition, as exemplified by Lord Palmerston, seemed to be ever more explicit in its class-based nature. Palmerston enunciated his fear of trade unions, and was sufficiently unsympathetic to suggest that the workers could be represented via their influence over their employers![68] Despite that, though household suffrage remained almost friendless,[69] even Peelites such as Graham and Aberdeen were steadily moving towards Reform.[70] They, and moderate Liberals, were no doubt assisted in that movement by Bright's conscious efforts to appear harmless, and Cobden's indifference to Westminster's machinations over Reform.[71] The Bill would probably not have passed, even had events in the Crimea not intervened, but Reform's advance remained clear.

That advance was, however, to fizzle out over the following year, assisted by the stubborn refusal of the general public to organize for Reform.[72] Lack of enthusiasm for such limited Reform Bills was perhaps inevitable, but the collapse of the Chartist organization had already left

democrats devoid of a political lead. The Political Reform League, built as it was out of despair and cynicism,[73] proved unable to establish itself as a mainstream pressure group, despite coverage in the local Liberal press[74] and its success in uniting Chartists, trades unionists, and Parliamentary Reformers.[75]

In the North, Joseph Cowen, via his National Republican Brotherhood, in 1855 appeared to moot referenda : 'we look beyond even Universal Suffrage. We have but small hope of good from any description of Parliament arrogating to itself the power of making laws without submitting its proposed enactments to the direct vote of the people. Only in the people themselves being their own lawmakers can we recognize the "SOVEREIGNTY OF THE PEOPLE".'[76] However, by 1858, he had cast off such Lintonite sentiments and formed a more orthodox group, the Northern Reform Union (NRU), with the support of local Chartists.[77] Described by the Sunderland Herald as being devoted to, 'democratic subversion',[78] the NRU was nevertheless to establish a considerable presence in County Durham (see Table 1).

The NRU was rapidly to establish forty branches, address 40 000 people and enrol 1 000 members.[79] Its publications included the monthly Northern Reform Record and over 90,000 tracts.[80] The organization's importance was shown not only by the fact that its petition was to be signed by 34,456 men, half of the relevant adult male population, but also by the NRU's bitter-sweet claim to have held three times the number of meetings held in the rest of the country combined.[81] Cowen, himself from an impeccable Reforming

family, was to acquire a considerable, if occasionally garbled, reputation.[82] He was to receive nomination to the Council of the Financial Reform Association and, via his tours of the North, solicited requests for NRU membership from outside of its own area.[83]

NRU Branches often comprised a class-coalition ranging from the worthy middle-classes to eager, if ill-educated, workingmen.[84] Two Branches provided a break-down by occupation of their memberships and, while South Shields comprised just four shopkeepers and ten artisans, Stockton included fifteen of the middle-classes and just nine workers.[85] The NRU's demand for universal suffrage was diluted by Cowen's insistence that it did not include paupers, a restriction Lord Teynham would have extended to trades unionists,[86] but the group remained devoted to Radical Reform and proved ready to endorse Bright's 1858 Reform proposals only as an instalment.[87] The interest in Reform engendered by Bright's Bill and Derby's effort later the same year were to provide the NRU with its strongest period.[88]

The NRU's 1859 campaign was to be well reported in the Durham Chronicle, which later even endorsed P.A.Taylor's campaign in the Newcastle by-election of 1860. Initially Cowen was the key speaker, but NRU platforms always also included local men. The movement was hence, unlike the NPFRA, rather more than merely a deputation of travelling speakers. Each meeting unanimously declared for universal suffrage, endorsing the sentiment of Robert Ramsey in Crook : 'He had ever been in favour of an extension of the franchise to the whole people - not a class, or a faction, but to every

citizen.'[89] Certain local speakers, including J.M.Browne, were to appeal to class-pride while others, such as Thomas Nelson, adopted a more theoretical line and argued that men, rather than houses or land, should vote.[90] Other speakers restricted themselves to practicalities arguing that Reform would return, 'more capable men' to the Commons, or was necessary for the passage of financial reform.[91]

Washington Wilks proved a popular guest speaker, reminding Barnard Castle of past victory over the Corn Laws and lecturing Darlington's mechanics on England's ancient democracy.[92] His tour-de-force came during his endorsement of the NRU programme in Stockton : 'There was nothing unconstitutional or revolutionary in this! They proposed only to deal with the government as...shipbuilders of the Tees and Tyne did with their ships. They would take out the rotten planks and spars, put a new heart of steam and iron within the old sea-going hulk, and then, with the Queen still at the prow, the national flag overhead, and the hand of their choicest statesmanship upon the helm, the dear old ship would meet every storm, plow her way through the severest sea, and shed from her wings on every shore the blessings of peace, and liberty, and true civilisation (loud and prolonged applause).'[93]

The Durham Chronicle's excellent coverage of the NRU was perhaps unsurprising for Robertson and Calvert, its proprietors, had already written, 'For our own part, we should not fear to entrust the suffrage to every one of our countrymen who can read and write, is of full age, of sane mind, and has never been criminally convicted.'[94] Others were

not so easily impressed and the Sunderland Herald was to freely fan Wearside prejudice against Cowen's, 'Northumberland dialect', as well as his, 'pretentious, but really insignificant, organization.' It was indicative of the Herald's bias that it refused even to be impressed by a NRU meeting in Sunderland which attracted Mayor Candlish, two Aldermen, and no fewer than six town Councillors![95]

From the distance of London "Metropolitan Gossip", writing for the Cambridge Independent Press, felt no sympathy for the, 'democratic gentlemen' of the NRU,[96] though he was enough of a Reformer to have written, 'With a Parliament that does not answer to her thought, England is but a labourer with palsied hands. The final remedy is the arrival of a time when the whole people may be trusted, as only a part now is, with the Elective Franchise.'[97]

Closer to home, the NRU's canvass of Northern politicians in January 1858 also revealed, with the exception of Digby Seymour, precious little support. The three Liberal respondents from County Durham - Lindsay, Hutt, and Ingham - each endorsed the ballot and abolition of the property qualification, but stopped shy of manhood suffrage.[99] The only Durham Conservative to deign to reply, Adolphus Vane Tempest, did so in an entirely negative manner[100] but Durham City's Tories seem to have respected the NRU sufficiently to attempt to use it to split the Liberal vote there, and thus oust Atherton. Their conduit, William Bulmer, the Steward of Durham's Freemen, gave the game away when, suggesting the NRU fight his city upon temperance principles (!), he wrote : 'I believe a few years of Tory government would do more for the

Liberal cause than all the years we have suffered of Whig misrule.'[101]

Once the 1859 election had been fought the NRU rapidly declined with a series of grim Branch reports epitomized by that of Bolton from Hartlepool : 'I regret to state that the "Branch" Body has completely fallen off and no one seems to take any interest in this matter.'[102] The decline described was perhaps inevitable. The NRU had never enrolled the support shown by its petition success, in part due to the poverty of the working class but also due to the fact that many of the petition signatories did so as Christians and were basically lacking in political knowledge.[103] William Horney of the group of pro-Bright workers who formed the Easington Lane Branch of the NRU was, revealingly, to ask for, 'food tracts', from the NRU headquarters.[104]

The NRU was also handicapped by official hostility, the embarrassments of Taylor's 1859 candidacy for Newcastle[105] and its need to compete with a variety of other causes for the small pool of activists in the North-East.[106] The NRU's basic structure was extremely fragile, with each Branch basically dependent upon one or two activists, and the whole entirely looking to Cowen for leadership - a state of affairs which too often came perilously close to descending into servility.[106] Disaster was inevitable should the local contact of Cowen prove either indolent or non-existent,[107] but even the best Branch organizer could via illness, pressure of work, or bereavement, leave his members rudderless.[108] The fundamental weakness of the movement was proved by a September 1858 note from Thompson of Jarrow

protesting at the difficulty in keeping track of his working-class membership : 'I have never found some of them at all. so i (sic) think if we had a meeting we would have a chance of getting more members and perhaps find out some of those that did join last February.'[109]

Local Liberal politicians seem, in the years between 1854 and 1858, to have deferred almost entirely to the centre. All agreed with Heathcote that the current situation was, 'a farce, a mockery, a moral injury, and a national disgrace,' but most also joined him in failing to suggest what should replace it![110] Only two Liberals from our regions broke that pattern. In Cambridge, the radical John Hibbert was explicit enough to endorse household suffrage, with fancy franchises to catch those similarly appropriate men who were not actually householders.[111] Though Hibbert regarded that as a concession, only one candidate went further, the Honourable Arthur Gordon, who had ironically been denounced as a "Peelite" upon his appearance in Cambridge. For Gordon, the franchise had lagged behind education and, 'the time was coming when every man who had not unfitted himself would be allowed to exercise it.'[112]

With the anti-Reform Palmerston at the national helm, and a Cabinet packed with men who considered even £10 counties only as a means of embarrassing Lord Derby,[113] it is unsurprising that some local Liberals, notably the proprietors of the Sunderland Herald, were to rage against Reform acerbically doubting the credentials of the capitalist Bright to demand worker-representation.[114] Only at the Cambridge grass-roots did there appear any Liberal

enthusiasm for Reform, a meeting being held in March 1857. H.T.Hall, a mainstream Liberal, claimed manhood suffrage using Paineite arguments, while Audley attempted to rouse the poor against the injustice of a corrupt electorate calling them untrustworthy.[115] A Cambridge Liberal leader, Marshall, declared himself disgusted by property franchises and demanded the vote for all taxpayers and educated men, but he was a lone voice.[116]

Nationally, Radicals continued to face a supposedly Reforming Government which stubbornly failed to produce the goods. Some democrats, including Goderich, responded by moderating their views[117] but even the Little Charter and its supporters organized as the Parliamentary Reform Committee (PRC) had been left effectively powerless by the 1857 elections.[118]

Those elections had seen local Liberals apparently haunted by the possible loss of Whig votes. While, nationally, there remained considerable Whiggish support for Reform,[119] local candidates were well aware of their need to stress Reform's potential as an anti-revolutionary measure.[120] Hence, Fenwick stated, 'I believe that every working man who is introduced to the pale of the constitution has a heart that will beat for it in the hour of need, and an arm that would strike for it if the necessity for so doing arose (Loud cheering).'[121] Some Liberals attempted to use the conveniently respectable tactic of stressing the importance of education to Reform[122] but as moderate a measure as Locke King's could not unite even local Liberals, as Atherton's 1857 vote against proved. (see Table 3).[123]

On the hustings, however, Liberals knew the usefulness to them of Reform, hence Duncombe Shafto's frustrated demand that Palmerston apply himself more to, 'that progressive reform of which we hear so often on the hustings, and so seldom in the House of Commons.'[124] Henry Pease was perhaps more typical in delivering a rousing Reform war-cry while refusing even to pledge to Locke King's proposal![125] Nationally, however, the PRC shared Shafto's frustration at the Government's inactivity and responded by commissioning Bright to produce a Reform Bill. He was the perfect choice, as a man ready to endorse manhood suffrage but who would actually propose household suffrage, the desire of the dwindling clique of Radical MPs.[126] Bright aimed at passing a Bill but his persona was that of a middle-class leader battling aristocratic privilege[127] and he was thus unable to secure the Whig support necessary for success.[128]

Durham City's Reformers were supportive, their Chronicle even criticizing the moderation of Bright's proposed county franchise,[129] and a meeting was held with every speaker endorsing household suffrage, 'the good old Saxon franchise.' Speakers included the City's Independent Minister and two Aldermen. One of the latter, Bramwell, a future Liberal leader in the City, scorned any Conservative Reform Bill and looked for a real one to Bright who, 'knew how to concoct a measure that should be satisfactory, and, at the same time, not alarm the fears of those who always prognosticate revolution out of everything which would improve the state of mankind (applause).'[130]

Such meetings were not rare nationally, but they were not numerous enough to impress the "establishment".[131] Cobden had warned Bright of the difficulties of the Reform politician : 'If you are intense on Reform, you will have a hearty response from the meeting, and little beyond it. If you are cooler than your wont, you will disappoint your hearers.'[132] Bright certainly had the latter effect on Ernest Jones : 'It was Manhood Suffrage they cheered in John Bright - not compromise, expediency and betrayal.'[133] The agitation duly proved ineffective, quite possibly due to the fact that Bright's aims did not match those of the people.[134]

Without mass support, a measure so radical as Bright's could not hope to override the hostility evidenced by the local Liberal press. The Cambridge Independent Press accepted the proposed franchises but was perhaps relieved to be able to oppose the Bill's redistribution and Bright's accompanying attacks upon the Lords and the Church.[135] The Sunderland Herald was less cautious, quoting both Palmerston and Lowe against Bright and his supposed efforts at, 'downright, premeditated treason.'[136]

If the Radicals could not secure Reform, the Conservatives were increasingly interested in settling a troublesome issue. Their leadership had gradually fallen into line behind Reform, pushed on by defeat at the 1857 polls,[137] while remaining predictably cautious to avoid any empowerment of numbers.[138] Reconciling those two aims was the key task for all reformers prior to 1867. Even Disraeli, though he remained committed to landed aristocracy, became willing to call for Tory Reform,[139] leaving only ultra-Tories

to oppose all.[140]

Nationally, certain Tories had considered educational reform as early as 1857[141] but, as we have seen, Durham Tories were well ahead of them. The educational franchise itself did receive some support among Durham and Cambridgeshire Conservatives[142] but "lateral extension" was the scheme which caused an almost universal attachment to "Reform" in the two counties, even including General Peel, in 1857.[143] Their reasoning was explained by the Cambridge Chronicle, itself a convert, in 1858 : 'Reform has become a necessity : it is quite useless to shut our eyes to the fact that; for good or for evil, the electoral system of 1831 must now be disturbed.'[144] However, caution was required, as the local Tory press proved. Hence, the Duke of Cleveland received support from the Advertiser for his notion of a £50 income franchise,[145] but the Durham Chronicle correctly doubted the depth of their analysis : 'Does the noble Duke really know whom such a franchise would include?...We fear... his Grace will not relish the idea that nearly all the miners in this county, every superior artisan, and, we dare say, every occupant of a ten pound house into the bargain, would, in this manner, become county voters.'[146]

British politics, by 1859, were exemplified by the East Norfolk by-election in which both candidates declared for Reform, but neither chose to elaborate![147] In such an atmosphere the task of the Government was to maximize support via moderation, the latter being facilitated via comparison with Bright's efforts. Rose's £6 Boroughs were rejected and a Bill finally adopted which left the majority of even the

thirty most doggedly Tory MPs able to swallow their objections.[148] Discretion was also felt the better part of valour by those Conservatives who felt the Bill too small,[149] though there inevitably were a few exceptions at both ends of this spectrum.[150]

That process was reflected in the local Tory press as the Durham County Advertiser, by now supportive of £5 Boroughs,[151] accepted the Bill despite grumbling at a missed opportunity to ameliorate the working classes,[152] while the Tory Cambridge Chronicle lauded the Bill's potential to save the nation from, 'oligarchical monopoly', by not, 'giving a vote to every reprobate who beats his wife and cheers John Bright.' Unsurprisingly, all of the Durham and Cambridgeshire Conservative politicians rallied to their Government's Bill,[153] but several, including Ball as well as Hudson and Pemberton from Sunderland, were ready to admit that it was not perfect![154]

However, amongst the erstwhile Peelites at Westminster, a group crucial to the Bill's success while untied by partizan interests, no such process took place. While Gladstone accepted the Bill as the minimum possible concession, Herbert scorned it as, 'democratization,'[155] and the Palmerstonians were equally divided. If the Times could not accept the Bill, even a Northern Whiggish paper realized that one shorn of all "vertical" extension simply could not be sufficient.[156] The Sunderland Herald's genuine disappointment at having to make that decision, however, revealed that it would have been all too willing to join those, including the two Peterborough MPs, who were willing

to accept an ultra-moderate solution to the Reform question from the Tories.[157] Mainstream Whigs, however, were to prove an illusory hope for the Bill.[158] Politicians like Russell and Graham, though no democrats, shared the Sunderland Herald's opinion that Britain's advance simply could not be politically accommodated via lateral extension.[159]

Bright's view of the Tory Bill was shared by the 180,000 people who rushed to sign petitions against it, and also by the Norwich Reform Committee which declared the Government proposals to be, 'an insult to the intelligence of the nation, and utterly unworthy of the support of anyone who professes to be Reformers.'[160] Locally, a protest meeting was held in Durham City, even if only belatedly and after prompting by the Durham Chronicle.[161] None of the speakers involved were surprised by the sham nature of Derby's effort but the veteran reformer Linnæus Banks did express dismay on behalf of the ignored, 'noble hard working', classes. Councillor Boyd, a prominent local Liberal leader, took the opportunity to note that fancy franchises only seemed to enfranchise those who already had votes![162] Quite apart from the NRU meetings all over the North, Cambridge also held an "indignation meeting", though it was truncated by an alleged student riot. Local Liberals had, however, had time before the violence erupted to express their disappointment at the Bill, which Patrick Beales warned, 'disturbs everything and settles nothing.'[163]

The local Liberal press was similarly scornful, with the Bill described by the Cambridge Independent Press as a mixture of, 'equal parts of sham Liberalism and real

Toryism, with a strong infusion of the incomprehensible and the impracticable.'[164] "Metropolitan Gossip" believed the whole issue to be a, 'simple matter of confidence or no confidence in the working classes.'[165] Like the Liberal MPs of both Durham and Cambridgeshire, the papers did not feel it necessary to propose an alternative to the Bill!

Even local Whigs, including Twisleton and Williamson, felt able to denounce the 1859 Bill as insufficient,[166] though the ultra-moderate Heathcote preferred to denounce franchise assimilation as unconstitutional.[167] As one might expect, the lack of vertical extension was a favourite target[168] but Mowatt was perhaps wrong to claim Russell's Resolution, which he supported, would enfranchise 2 500 000![169] In general, it is unlikely that any of the Liberals in the two counties would have disagreed with Harry Vane's comment on the Bill's second reading : 'He should be extremely sorry to see any measure supported and passed in that House which would have the effect of withdrawing their true preponderance of power from the middle classes.'[170]

Thomas Thompson, the ex-Chartist solicitor, delivered a fell warning to those polling in Sunderland in 1859 : 'If the electors forgot their fellow-men, the non-electors, who had no voice, then they deserved to be forgot in their hour of need - (applause) - they deserved to be fleeced by the aristocracy - (Laughter and cheers) - they deserved to have ten millions spent on the navy where seven millions would do the business for them.'[171] There was considerable feeling during the 1859 election campaign that it comprised a battle

between rival conceptions of Reform, with the result that the Liberals, having removed the Derby Ministry on the issue of Reform, found themselves forced to hazard a Bill.

Nationally, their Bill was to be doomed by the fact that the Prime Minister's view of an adequate Borough franchise, £8, was effectively as fossilized as Derby's![172] Russell, whose own £6 Boroughs could not hope to inspire popular enthusiasm, found himself simply too radical to rally the Cabinet behind him.[173] A luke-warm Gladstone detected the mood of "ultratoryism" within his new party before he joined it by preferring to scupper Russell's Bill rather than take parliamentary time from his own budget.[174]

By contrast, £6 Boroughs were perfectly acceptable for the Liberal back-benchers of Durham and Cambridgeshire including even W.S.Lindsay, whose faith in the Government as Reformers had been proved by his initial vote, with Roebuck, to keep Derby in office after the 1859 election![175] Only Henry Adeane, the Cambridgeshire Whig, was dubious[176] and that was not surprising when even the Sunderland Herald preferred to take a philosophical line : 'No more moderate Bill is likely. A more mischievous one might have been presented. Let us shut our eyes, open our mouths, and take what the recklessness of public men has given us.'[177] It is interesting that, once Lowe's opposition became clear, the Herald's resolve was to stiffen and the Bill was denounced as, 'treason.'[178] The paper was to echo Palmerston's worries : 'As for the influence of intelligence what would this avail, in case of a Trades' Union, convinced, perhaps, by the influence of a Potter or an O'Connor, that their interests are bound up in the return of a

socialist orator, or a determined Protectionist.'[179]

Though Cowen's chief henchmen remained loyal to manhood suffrage[180] Radicalism had declined so far by 1859 in its old County Durham stronghold that only two Liberal candidates declared for household suffrage on the hustings.[181] That reflected the national tendency among Radicals to endorse £6 Boroughs as the best possible, even if manhood suffrage would be left 150 years away![182] It was perfectly evident, even to supporters, that the latter remained distant.[183] One man felt that Bright's moderation meant that he deserved, 'to be kicked on his bare bottom thru the streets',[184] and Evans was given a rough time in Westminster, but such stubbornness was only shared by maverick politicians such as Ayrton.[185] In truth, the people were little inclined to kick anyone through the streets, or even to provide the agitation which Bright expected.[186] Far from Reform being, 're-established as a political issue', the public had refused to act as a stage army in battles, such as that for £6 Boroughs, which were not their own.[187]

The 1860 Bill was unfortunate in that it found political opinion running strongly against it. Despite Carnarvon's fears,[188] Conservatives joined the Herald and the previously Reform-minded Prince Consort[189] in denouncing the Bill. It was regarded as either radical in itself, or the thin end of the democratic wedge.[190] Conservatives with political fore-thought had been denouncing £6 Boroughs as early as the 1859 hustings while, locally, the "Talk of the Week" columnist of the Cambridge Chronicle claimed that the Government's proposal effectively amounted to manhood

suffrage. His paper, regarding Radical moderation as a new, more subtle, danger, spelled out the sliding scale of Reform which, on the national scale, Cranborne also mentioned : 'six pound franchise; ballot; household suffrage; universal suffrage; commercial democracy; despotism!'[191] Both Cambridge Conservative MPs were to follow their paper's lead, and both, unusually, also felt strongly enough to speak in Parliament against the Bill which Steuart described as, 'very subversive and very pernicious', in that it would swamp most Boroughs without actually scotching the Reform issue.[192]

Worthy of note is the parliamentary speech on the 1860 Bill by Lord Robert Montagu, a MP for ultra-Tory Huntingdonshire. Despite his reputation for sympathy with the trades union movement,[193] Montagu claimed that any further extension of the franchise would leave, 'no defence ...against the fickleness of popular opinion, or the heat of popular fury.' Montagu remained loyal to landed power, warning that the Bill could help place power, 'in the hands of the mob - to raise a mere scum to the surface - to enable the poor to tax the rich.' Montagu confessed that the workers required better representation but warned that given any power the latter would have, 'many defeats to avenge, and much despotism of capital to repay.' His speech contained echoes of both Lowe - 'They could govern only through their reason,' - and Palmerston - 'Every man had a right to the best Government, but to nothing else.'[194] Montagu's class-based antagonism towards democracy, and the progressive taxation which he knew would follow it, anticipated the arguments expressed on the national stage by such figures as Cranborne

and "Bear" Ellice.[195]

With the fall of the 1859 Bill, the unanimity on Reform which had been temporarily established among Conservatives crumbled. Stanley estimated that the hard-line views of Cranborne were shared by only twenty five of his parliamentary colleagues[196] but local evidence suggests others seem to have occupied the other end of conservative opinion. While the progressive Ball remained neutral on £6 Boroughs in 1859,[197] and Reform arguments did appear on Conservative tongues, they tended not to be carried to their logical conclusions. Hence, Macaulay argued that Parliament, if it set taxes, should represent all taxpayers, but did so in order to argue only for a "fancy franchise" rather than in support of a taxpayer franchise.[198] Similarly, a Cambridge Conservative leader, Fawcett, denounced the equation of fitness to vote with possession of a certain type of property, but did so in order to oppose the enfranchisement of all householders rather than to support manhood suffrage.[199] A Conservative candidate for Bedford, Polhill-Turner, went furthest, supporting £6 Boroughs despite his belief that they were, 'about equal to household suffrage.'[200]

The 1860 Reform Bill, so fearsome for most Tories in both Westminster and Cambridge, was to be scorned as, 'the poor little Bill' by Mowbray, himself no moderate, and was regarded as so mild as to be inoffensive by the Durham County Advertiser![201] The paper was happy to pass the "credit" for that measure's downfall onto the apathetic and/or querulous Liberals.[202] The Cambridge Independent Press, which felt the Bill innocuous, provided a fuller analysis of its defeat :

'the irresolution of the Cabinet, - the timidity of real reformers, - the tergivisation of sham reformers, - the violent speeches out of town, - the folly and wickedness of the strike in the building trade, - and the general apathy of the People.'[203] The Durham Chronicle, though it wanted more, felt the Bill's defeat the destruction of, 'the last opportunity the House of Commons may ever enjoy of quietly repairing its ancient framework.'[204]

Despite that claim, the local Liberal press was soon to recognize the deflation of the Reform balloon and their increasingly desperate appeals for action were proof of that fact.[205] The majority opinion among the political classes seems to have been adequately encapsulated by a Cambridge Chronicle editorial : 'Theoretically, no doubt many improvements might be made in the representation of the people; but practically the machine, with the exception of details easily remedied, works smoothly enough, and with as near an approach to equal justice as we are likely to attain by any alteration that it is possible to make. There are affairs more earnest and real to engage the attention of Parliament than playing at Constitution-making.'[206]

Reform's lack of prominence was to be graphically revealed during Russell's visit to the North-East in October 1861. At each meeting, the statesmen and the eight local MPs present all neglected to even indirectly mention Reform.[207] Russell's Blairgowrie speech of 1863 was to be roundly denounced by both the Cambridge Independent Press and the Durham Chronicle,[208] but the latter's demand that Russell either produce a reform Bill or quit was unrealistic.[209]

Revealingly, Conservatives were not to take this obvious opportunity to denounce Reform per se. While contesting by-elections in Cambridgeshire, both Francis Powell and Lord George Manners, neither of whom were in any sense progressive, pledged to such Reform as changing circumstances demanded.[210] Even the Cambridge Chronicle remained ready to accept Reform, so long as it did not empower the working classes, the latter being a proposal which Naylor felt, 'as bad in its principle as giving liberty to garrotters and burglars!'[211] He felt the enfranchisement of such 'idle' and 'envious' folk, 'would be just as wise as to place the keys of your door in the hands of housebreakers previously to retiring to rest.'[212] As one might expect, the Advertiser went further, even condemning Palmerston for his failure to honour past Reform pledges![213] Of areas studied, only in Huntingdonshire were the Tories still to assume that Conservatism required total loyalty to the Constitution, and to denounce Disraeli and Lytton for their supposed attachment to "rational progress".[214]

The calm among Lancashire workers during the "cotton famine" of the 1860s, often cited as easing the road to Reform, barely rippled the political surface in Counties Durham and Cambridgeshire. Though Conservatives were active collecting for Lord Derby's relief fund, their press chose only to pick up on the isolated outbreaks of violence in the North-West.[215] Amongst Liberals, even Atherton and the Durham Chronicle were to mention Lancashire as an argument for Reform only after Gladstone had done so at his speech in Newcastle.[216] Only Adair, Fawcett and the Independent Press

independently picked up upon this rare pro-Reform point![217]

Whilst Durham Liberals continued to call for Reform, all must have realized that they lived in what Gladstone called, 'anti-reforming times.'[218] Even the less formalized cries for Reform, as in Peterborough in 1862, were spontaneous and hence powerless.[219] It would be wrong to ignore those localized groups which continued to keep the democratic flame burning[220] but they had cause to regret the absence of a Chartist-type umbrella organization though the appearance of the Bee-Hive was encouraging.[221] The Independent Press attempted to hang isolated Reform activities above anti-Reformers heads[222] but they had far too little ammunition for that to be effective. The Bee-Hive itself did not hide its intentions : 'We do not seek an extension of the suffrage, etc, for abstract reasons, not for party purposes, but as a social necessity to combat the deteriorating influence of society, the diminishing earnings of the great body of the people, and their gradually increasing outlay on the necessaries of existence'. However, despite such sentiments, Cobden was right in his estimation that Reform lacked the popular head of steam it needed to progress.[223]

The grim years, for Reformers, of the early 1860s were to cause the Durham Chronicle to temporarily drop its role as a Liberal party organ and blame the lack of progress upon the domination of the nation by, 'two great Parliamentary parties - who represent the landed interest and the wealth of the country.'[224] In truth, at Westminster,

Reform relied totally upon a few individuals, notably Locke King and Baines. Their Bills were to keep the issue alive and regularly in the Liberal press, while allowing MPs to express their support for Reform if they wished to do so.[225] However, such efforts alone were by no means a satisfactory cutting edge for a potential mass movement.

The defeat of the 1861 Baines Bill, by a Commons elected to extend the Borough franchise, did spark some local press comment. The Durham Chronicle was enraged[226] while, as one might expect, the Tory papers welcomed the downfall of a Bill they felt to be intended to, 'open the floodgates of ignorance and vice to the franchise.'[227] They preferred to continue to hark back to their old ministry's failed 1859 Bill, even five years after its defeat.[228]

While the local Liberal parties continued to argue, with little or no evidence, that there was a silent majority for Reform,[229] local MPs and grass-roots Liberals seemed to provide only residual support.[230] Most of the latter showed the same reluctance to pledge themselves to any Reform measure as was shown by Sir Hedworth Williamson in his North Durham by-election campaign of 1864, though it is worthy of note that even the ultra-moderate Williamson retained a commitment to some form of vertical extension.[231] Of local MPs only Henry Pease, the Quaker MP for South Durham, delivered any sort of a ringing endorsement of Reform : 'The strength of that House depended upon its being a full, free, and hearty representation of the views and opinions of the country, and until the representation was placed upon that footing, Members must be expected to bring in Bills for the

removal of admitted evils.'[232]

The road to 1867 may be said to have begun with Gladstone's speech in the 1864 debate on Baines' Bill. Though he had done no such thing, it was vitally important that a senior politician had appeared to endorse universal suffrage.[233] If nothing else, the virulent response of the Liberal leadership proved the essential moderation of men like Palmerston, Brand and Wood.[234] The local Tory press was also surprised, but delighted, and quite ready to believe that the Chancellor had become a raving democrat![235]The local Liberal press in the two counties studied chose to follow the national press in welcoming the speech, whatever it meant![236] The attitude of the Sunderland Herald perhaps casts some light upon this matter. Initially Gladstone's speech, hostile as it was to the party's beliefs, merited only a wry fourteen lines but, as the national furore mounted, it actually commented upon the speech's contents a week later. This perhaps indicates that the speech's importance, which is to say its perception as democratic, was not as immediate or as obvious as might otherwise be suspected.[237]

In 1865, James Watson, the North-Eastern Reformer, wrote to Cowen thus, 'At home affairs are stagnant...as to the movement for extension of the suffrage it appears to me to possess no vitality.'[238] Watson was describing a state of affairs similar to that bemoaned by R.B.Reed in 1861,[239] but on a national level, despite Palmerstonian attempts to muzzle newspapers such as Cowen's,[240] the green shoots of Reform were starting to appear. Bradford's workers, and Baines' middle-class petitioners, had already proved their interest

but such feelings only regained political importance with the formation of the National Reform League (NRL) in 1865.[241] As well as reuniting such working-class reformers as Jones, Holyoake and Howell, it was to connect them with such key middle-class figures as Cowen, Beales and Taylor, not to mention the purse of Samuel Morley![242] While this NRL and its programme of manhood suffrage garnered mass support, Bright's followers themselves organized as the National Reform Union (NaRU), a group which, as well as exerting external pressure upon the Government, helped prevent the marginalization of working-class Reformers.[243]

In the field of electoral politics the imminent general election was to boost discussion of Reform in 1865. However, the fact that, at the local level, this process tended to be Tory-led may reveal something of the perceived mood of the electorate. Nationally, Disraeli certainly seems to have been inclined to emulate Derby by posing as the nation's bastion against the democratic hordes,[244] and the local Tory press was not far behind him. For the Cambridge Chronicle, Bright, still the figure-head of Reform, was an, 'impudent Chartist', plotting to enfranchise, 'the vulgar, the uneducated, the rabble-gipsies (sic), coster-mongers, uneducated labourers, coprolite diggers, itinerant street-singers, inmates of union workhouses, journeymen sweeps, and the great fraternity of uneducated blackguards : these are his people'![245] One of the paper's correspondents, "Talk of the Week", concerned himself with another prominent Reformer - 'Mr Mill's "opinion" is that there should be universal suffrage; others have the tyrannical "opinion" that it would

be just as wise to arm monkeys with razors'![246] Mill's brand of intellectualism was also to fail to impress the Independent Press which declared that only a surfeit of Mills among the Liberal candidates could secure a Tory victory at the election![247]

While the Cambridge Chronicle's attacks were predictable it is more surprising that, by 1865, the Durham County Advertiser had also swung behind the old 1859 Conservative Reform proposals.[248] In this, however, it only reflected the mood of Tories on the local hustings. The latter continued to use support for the 1859 proposals as proof that they were not opposed to "reasonable" reform. Even Thomas Baring from the United Boroughs of Huntingdon and Godmanchester, the most ultra-Tory of the constituencies studied, was to follow that line, declaring for Reform via, 'caution and discretion, and intelligence.'[249]

However, Conservative adherence to that view was not automatic. Lord George Manners argued that fancy franchises were too unpredictable to support,[250] while Surtees, in South Durham, declined to endorse £10 Counties merely because they had been part of a Conservative proposal six years earlier![251] Lord Royston, Manners's colleague in Cambridgeshire, quoted two Liberals, Lowe and Horsman, against any extension of the franchise, but only the two Huntingdonshire MPs were to join Royston in opposing even moderate Reform, doing so on the grounds that Britain had done well enough without it![252] It is noticeable that in 1865, unlike in 1852 or 1859, Tory dissidents were to the "right" of their party's mainstream though they, at least in most cases,

remained well to the "left" of Disraeli. In fact, just one Conservative, James Hartley in Sunderland, endorsed vertical extension, presumably in support of his claim to be an "Independent", when he declared the franchise to be, 'much too limited.'[253]

Tory hopes of Palmerstonian support in 1865 may have been boosted, certainly in the North-East, by the decision of the Sunderland Herald to endorse only lateral extension.[254] Nationally, a similar impression was given by the utterances of Lowe[255] and the decision of twenty five Liberal MPs to vote against Baines' Bill in 1865.[256] On that occasion, one of those MPs had even quite blatantly switched his vote upon the grounds that this time the Bill might pass![257] These Palmerstonians perhaps gained yet greater prominence for their views via the fact that, while most Liberals retained their feeling for Reform,[258] the Radical wing of the party remained surprisingly quiet, perhaps sharing Cobden's view that £6 Boroughs were, 'little better than child's play.'[259]

Locally, Liberal politics could only be described as chaotic. While both Liberal candidates in Cambridge supported £6 Boroughs and fancy franchises, both their local paper and Durham City's Henderson flatly refused to endorse the latter.[260] In North Durham, Shafto, also a supporter of £6 Boroughs, rightly pointed out the less liberal views of his "colleague", Williamson.[261] Ultra-moderation was to contribute to the demise of at least two local Liberals, with Adeane "deselected" by Cambridgeshire's Liberals and replaced by a local nonconformist, while Beaumont's defeat in

South Durham was to be blamed upon his lack of emphasis in Reform.[262] Beaumont's constituency was a peculiar case in that its two Liberal candidates were starkly moderate while the Chairman of their Committee, and at least one other prominent Liberal, were supporters of universal suffrage![263]

The general local Liberal moderation was perhaps inspired by the example of Sunderland, where the Herald and W.S.Lindsay proved ready to endorse Hartley rather than a renowned Radical who, despite his efforts to remain moderate, was a supporter of household suffrage.[264] Whatever the supposed apathy nationally on the matter of Reform at the 1865 general election, virtually every candidate spoke on the matter and it did at least reshuffle the Commons.[265] While the local Liberal press naïvely demanded a Reform Bill of at least £6 Boroughs[266] and the Liberal Parliamentary party informed Brand of their opinion that a Bill had to come,[267] the majority of the party,encompassing a span from Bright to Clarendon, were ready to accept £6 Boroughs, or at least to keep contrary opinions to themselves![268]

Reynold's Newspaper perhaps best summed up the Liberal Party's dilemma : 'The great problem now attempted to be solved by aristocratic statesmanship is how to confer on the unenfranchised millions the form without the reality of political power.'[269] The option of inactivity no longer existed for, if Torrens and J.B.Smith still looked in vain for an agitation, and Cobden's 'great crisis' was yet to materialize,[270] the more nervous antennae of the Times and the Sunderland Herald already sensed change in the air.[271]

Table 1

NRU Activity in County Durham -

Locality	Petition	Status	Membership
Sunderland	2551	Branch	n/d
Gateshead	2393	Branch	42 (7/1858)
South Shields	1665	Branch	19 (7/1858)
Darlington	1054	Branch	30 (3/1859)
Crook	852	Branch	19 (4/1858)
Hartlepool	682	Branch	32 (9/1858)
Blaydon	570	Branch	n/d
Shotley Bridge/Blackhill	568	Branch	n/d
Winlaton	462	-	n/a
Stockton	403	Branch	24 (2/1859)
Swalwell	400	-	n/a
Sheriff Hill/Felling	384	Branch	41 (3/1858)
Birtley/Chester-le-Street	340	Meeting	n/d
Greenside Barlow/the Spen	254	-	n/a
Jarrow	251	Branch	n/d
Windy Nook	250	Branch	20 (7/1858)
Easington Lane	239	Branch	24 (1/1859)
Hetton-le-Hole	163	Activists	n/a
Ebchester	80	-	n/a
Houghton-le-Spring	72	-	n/a
Bishop Auckland	-	Activists	n/a
Barnard Castle	-	Meeting	n/a
Middlesbrough (Yorkshire)	1871	Branch	58 (2/1859)

KEY : n/a - not applicable. n/d - no data.
Dates are given as (Month/Year).
Petition - Signatories of the February 1859 Petition
Meeting - Meeting held during 1859 NRU campaign.

SOURCES : All references are to items in the Cowen Papers:
General - C6.
Gateshead - C96 and C122.
Sunderland,Blaydon,Jarrow and Shotley Bridge - C136.
South Shields - C98, C126, and C654.
Darlington - C161 and C586.
Crook - C51 and C99.
Hartlepool - C164.
Stockton - C381 and C503.
Felling - C73 and C93.
Chester-le-Street and Barnard Castle - C669.
Windy Nook - C162.
Easington Lane - C298, C317, and C383.
Hetton-le-Hole - C419.
Bishop Auckland - C586.
Middlesbrough - C408 and C528.

Table 2

Parliamentary Division Lists on Reform 1832-1865 -

Nature	Year	MPs	Support	EB	EC	EU	WB	WC	SB	SC
Reform	1837	15	4.9%	13	0	0	0	0	1	1
	1839	64	12.8%	56	1	0	2	1	4	0
Little Charter	1839	43	9.0%	39	1	0	0	0	3	0
	1848	76	21.5%	57	7	0	2	0	9	1
	1849	73	20.0%	59	7	0	0	0	6	1
	1850	78	23.1%	61	5	0	2	0	9	1
	1852	74	22.0%	61	6	0	0	0	6	1
Locke King	1850	91	24.3%	67	12	0	2	0	10	0
	1851(L)	58	16.0%	39	8	0	3	0	6	2
	1851(2R)	43	13.1%	33	6	0	1	0	3	0
	1852	134	30.0%	96	16	0	5	1	13	3
	1857	148	32.7%	110	14	0	2	2	15	5
Baines	1861	183	39.0%	134	18	1	6	0	17	7
	1864	195	38.5%	145	21	0	8	2	14	5
	1865	198	40.2%	137	20	1	10	3	19	8

KEY : L - Leave. 2R - Second Reading.

EB - English Boroughs. EC - English Counties.

EU - English Universities. WB - Welsh Boroughs.

WC - Welsh Counties. SB - Scottish Boroughs.

SC - Scottish Counties.

Table 3

Reform Votes of Durham and Cambridgeshire MPs -

Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Hon. E.T.Yorke	X	X	X	A	A	A	X	F	A	A	A	A	A
Lord G.Manners	A	X	X	A	A	X	A					A	A
C.W.Townley	A	A	X	A	A	X							
R.A.S.Adair	F	F	F	A	X	F	F						
Hon. W.F.Campbell	A	X	A	A	A	X							
E.Fellowes	X	X	X	A	A	A	X	F	A	A	A	A	A
Viscount Mandeville	X	X	X	X	X	X							
J.Peel	X	X	X	X	A	X	X	F	A	A	A	A	A
T.Baring	X	X	X	A	A	X	A	F	A	X	X	A	A
R.D.Shafto	A	X	F	F	X	F	F	A	F	F	X	F	X
Lord Seaham	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						
J.Farrer		A	X	A	A	A	A		A	A	X	A	A
Lord H.Vane	A	X	X	A	X	A	X	X					
W.Atherton							A	X	F	F	F		
Spearman	X	X	X	A	X	X							
T.C.Granger	X	X	F	F	F	X							
H.Bowes	X												
G.Hudson	X	X	X	A	A	X	X	F	X				
Sir H.Williamson	A	X	A	A	X	X							
W.Hutt	A	F	F	X	X	F	F	A	F	F	F	F	X
R.Ingham							F	A	F	F	F	F	F
J.T.Wawn	F	X	F	F	F	X							
E.Ball							A	F	A	A	A		
J.R.Mowbray							A	F	A	A	A	A	A
Lord A.Vane-Tempest							X	F	X	X	X		
F.Mowatt							F						
H.Fenwick							X	A	F	F	X	F	F
J.Rust							A	F	X	X	X	X	X
H.J.Adeane								A	X	F	X	X	A
K.Macaulay								F	A	X	A	A	A
A.Steuart								F	A	A	X		
H.Pease								A	F	F	F	X	F
Lord R.Montagu									A	A	A	A	A
W.S.Lindsay									F	F	F	F	X
F.S.Powell												A	A
J.Henderson												F	F
Sir H.Williamson(ii)													F

KEY : X - Did not Vote. F - Voted in Favour.
A - Voted Against. - MP not in Parliament.
1 - 1850 Little Charter. 2 - 1850 Locke King.
3 - 1851 Locke King (Leave).
4 - 1851 Locke King (Second Reading).
5 - 1852 Little Charter. 6 - 1852 Locke King.
7 - 1857 Locke King. 8 - 1859 Reform Bill.
9 - 1860 Reform Bill. 10 - 1861 Locke King.
11 - 1861 Baines Bill. 12 - 1864 Baines Bill
13 - 1865 Baines Bill.

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257) Gillespie, Labor and Politics, p.245.
258) Robbins, Bright, p.173; G.B.Smith, Bright, ii, 184-188; B.Russell and P.Russell, The Amberley Papers : The Letters and Diaries of Lord and Lady Amberley (London, 1937), i, 364; Morley, Gladstone, i, 767; Leader, Roebuck, p.299.
259) Read, Cobden and Bright, p.172.
260) Cambridge Independent Press, 3/6/65; 17/6/65; 1/7/65; Durham County Advertiser, 14/7/65.
261) Durham County Advertiser, 21/7/65; Durham Chronicle, 16/6/65; 30/6/65.
262) Durham Chronicle, 22/12/65.
263) Ibid., 23/6/65; 30/6/65; Durham County Advertiser, 21/7/65.
264) Sunderland Herald, 9/6/65; 16/6/65; Nossiter, Influence, pp.126-127; W.Brockie, Sunderland Notables : Natives, Residents and Visitors (Sunderland, 1894), p.329.
265) Cambridge Chronicle, 15/7/65; Smith, Second Reform Bill, pp.50-51; p.53.
266) Durham Chronicle, 4/8/65; Cambridge Independent Press, 25/11/65.
267) Feuchtwanger, Gladstone, p.125; Argyll, Argyll, ii, 229; Reid, Forster, i, 375.
268) Robbins, Bright, pp.176-177; Trevelyan, Bright, p.343; Vincent, Stanley, p.238; Fitzmaurice, Granville, i, 498.
269) Gillespie, Labor and Politics, p.247.
270) W.McCullagh Torrens, Twenty Years in Parliament (London, 1893), p.33; Robbins, Bright, p.178; Read, Cobden and Bright, p.159.
271) Sunderland Herald, 22/12/65.

Chapter 5 - The Break-through for Reform 1866-1867

As 1866 dawned, the absence of Lord Palmerston, the perceived victory of "democracy" over "oligarchy" in the American Civil War, and the increasingly respectable image of the working-classes meant that it carried a greater potential for the passage of Reform than perhaps any year since 1858,[1] though it was probably not true that, as Feuchtwanger claims, 'Reform was in the air.'[2] There was little or no sign of enthusiasm in Parliament and Brand, with the expert knowledge of a Liberal Chief Whip, felt that no Reform Bill could pass.[3] Indeed, by February 1866, the Durham Chronicle so feared for its Government that it was ready to moot a "National Unity" agreement to settle Reform.[4]

That atmosphere was perhaps best exemplified by the Whiggish fringe which was to become the so-called "Adullamites", a group which refused to believe that the death of Palmerston had marked the end of a political era. Its support ranged from the Prince of Wales to The Times, while including men like Grosvenor whose motives for dwelling within the "Cave of Adullam" were somewhat difficult to perceive.[5] There is evidence that their sentiments were also widespread among Whigs "out-of-doors" allowing some, notably Clarendon, to claim that their ultra-moderation merely followed public opinion,[6] though Horsman and Lowe, now of course the symbol of the "Cave", were unusual among Liberals in their opposition to *all* "vertical extension", a view which even Lowe had only recently adopted.[7] Lowe's prominence

perhaps derived from his willingness, engendered by violent personal experience, publicly to pronounce political positions which others preferred to hold in secret. For Lowe, anti-democratic mania was in no way incongruous with Liberalism for, as he noted, increasing prosperity anyway engendered automatic enfranchisement, via the 1832 franchises.[8]

As has previously been noted Lowe, like Cranborne, the figure-head of ultra-Toryism, feared Reform due to a central belief that politics necessarily comprised class war.[9] Amongst both Tories and Whigs, opposition was sharpened by fear of a Radical assault upon land's remaining political power.[10] However, by March 1866, even Clarendon was being forced to admit that, 'reform hangs like a millstone round the necks of all parties, and no combination or strong government will be practicable until the question is settled.'[11] Gladstone knew the usefulness of this argument for Reform's cause but himself proved malleable under pressure from more moderate Cabinet colleagues.[12] Such pragmatism, displayed by Russell as well as Gladstone, was ironically to play its part in the 1866 Bill's defeat. Parliamentary Reformers, despite frequent appeals, remained isolated, no doubt due to the fact that the public found it impossible to become excited by the Reform proposals which appeared. Prospective Reform Acts so clearly designed to deny the working-classes any meaningful political power were thus denied the numerical strength which they required if they were to become law.[13]

If Derby was initially reluctant to oppose the 1866 proposals, the measure's alleged weakening of the landed

interest, its enfranchisement of the Liberal "labour aristocrats", and the apparent provision by the "Cave" of an opportunity to obtain office, persuaded him to do so.[14] Nationally, several Conservatives certainly did feel it best not to oppose the Bill,[15] though their view was to be swept away by a wave of ultra-Tory vituperation aimed at obscuring the Bill's moderation. While some Tories despaired for the land, others talked of "leaps in the dark" and first steps toward the Republic![16]

The local Tory press was notable in this process. Any vertical extension faced the most apocalyptic denunciations. The Cambridge Chronicle, specifically opposing household suffrage warned that it would endanger national prosperity by undermining, 'that which should ever stand foremost, the political power of the more wealthy and more intelligent classes.'[17] Unusually, the Durham County Advertiser felt inclined to go even further, with references to 1381, 'unrestrained democracy' and, worst of all, direct taxation![18] The Bill, supposedly the child of the notorious Bright, would introduce rule by numbers and swamp the County influence.[19]

Tory feeling refused to accept the safety of any rental franchise for, as Gorst warned, unpredictable house values could transform them into Universal Suffrage. This echoed the sentiments being expressed on the national stage by such figures as Carnarvon.[20] Gorst was quite clear that his intention was to stem the passage of power to the, 'ignorant and democratic portions of the community.'[21] Also at the local level, both the Cambridge Chronicle and Mowbray

attempted to denounce the 1866 Bill while not appearing entirely negative, a feat achieved via extolling the virtues of a rated franchise.[22] General Peel displayed no embarrassment in opposing the 1866 Bill as too small to satisfy the democrats, even while opposing all vertical extension as the route to increased direct taxation![23]

However perplexing was Peel's attitude, two other regional Conservatives did display efforts at moderation. Hence, Viscount Royston unequivocally supported Reform, though he opposed the 1866 Bill for hurling power, 'into the hands of the democracy',[24] and F.S.Powell, though no progressive, was enough at odds with his party to denounce Gladstone's Bill as too small to settle Reform for any meaningful period.[25] These MPs may merely have been, like Disraeli and Manners at the national level, unworried by Reform so long as the Liberals could not be credited with having passed it![26] The Durham County Advertiser had certainly already begun to claim for Conservatives the role of true friends of the workers, contrasting Tory politics with the, 'revolutionary tendencies' of Russell's Government.[27] It was noticeable that Royston's support for the 1866 Bill, as amended by Dunkellin, was expressed only once the measure had been dropped by the Government![28]

Lord Robert Montagu was the most verbose of the local Conservatives in 1866. A self-conscious defender of the landed interest, he was also eager to expose the Liberals' dubious record as reformers. Montagu warned that the 1866 Bill would grant demagogues, via the working-classes, 'irresistible power.' It was, quite simply, an attempt to

manufacture Liberal voters : 'That was the very point - it was the lust of power which lay at the bottom of this Reform mania.' Montagu spoke for all Conservatives when he scornfully denied that the vote was a right (rather than a trust) : 'If that were the case, it was clear that the suffrage should be extended not only to all householders, but to criminals, and paupers, and women, and children.' Liberal warnings that the defeat of the Bill would lead to agitation were brushed aside upon the grounds that they had cried wolf too many times before![29] Montagu was, despite his long opposition to all Reform, to be drawn by the Dunkellin debate into endorsement of a rated franchise, both because several Bills were funded via the rates and due to his idiosyncratic view that such a franchise would destroy the existing political associations by removing the old process of registration. The 1866 Bill would destroy the, 'store of tradition', which preserved the nation from the elected dictatorship which democracy comprised. Montagu, like most Whigs and Tories, heartily hoped that Reform would again be allowed to drop once the 1866 Bill had folded![30]

Such hopes were dashed by the fact that at the national level, despite his supposedly dictatorial attitude, Gladstone had retained a remarkably broad coalition behind his effort, despite the presence in the Cabinet of certain Ministers who would have preferred no Reform at all![31] The strain of retaining such a coalition perhaps explained Gladstone's tendency to simultaneously "talk-up" Reform while stressing his own Bill's minor nature![32] However, it is worthy of note that Gladstone's declaration of Reform's

inevitability was echoed, not only by the local Liberal press, but also by the rising generation of new Liberals nationally.[33]

The overwhelmingly majority Liberal view in 1866 seems to have been support for their Government's Bill, along with a careful warning that the next one might not be so palatable![34] Even the leading Parliamentary Radical in the Counties of Durham and Cambridgeshire chose to stress the wisdom of settling Reform while all was calm, and declared his willingness to accept "half-a-loaf" despite his belief that, 'the franchise was a right belonging to man as man, and not a privilege conferred by anyone (Loud and prolonged cheering).'[35] Locally, only the Durham Chronicle, while declining to name its preferred franchise, also dared declare that its acceptance of the 1866 Bill was as an absolute minimum. It is illustrative of the great differences within the Liberal local press that the Cambridge Independent Press's declared preference comprised only £6 Boroughs and £10 Counties.[36]

The latter paper explained its support for the 1866 Bill on the grounds that, with Reform inevitable and Radicals so ready to accept instalments, only partizan Tories could oppose it![37] That opinion perhaps lay behind the savage attacks which the local Liberal press launched upon the "Adullamites". According to the Durham Chronicle they were a, 'small band of discontented men and crotchety politicians', while the Independent Press felt them to be motivated by fear for their own personal political "influence".[38]

In the two counties studied, only the Sunderland

Herald chose to take the "Adullamite" line. Feeling Bright's £5 Boroughs were too much, but £6 rated Boroughs were, 'a mere mockery', the paper left little room indeed for Reform.[39] That was perhaps surprising for a paper which aligned itself with the visionary schemes of Lord Grey, who despite being an "Adullamite" had, in 1864, suggested a course of action similar to the original 1867 Reform Bill.[40] The Herald's position was contradictory, in that it felt the time was ripe to settle Reform but feared that Tory corruption would turn any enfranchised workers against the Liberal party.[41] For the Herald, Gladstone's Bill was based upon false assumptions of a low number of worker-voters,[42] but the paper was finally to endorse it as the minimum possible concession, until rated Boroughs became a possibility![43]

The real importance of the 1866 Bill lay perhaps in its rejection. That such a moderate measure could be denied passage was an obvious message to the populous that the vote was not available via purely constitutional means. The agitation which arose in response was slow, but certain. 100,000 or more met at rallies in London, Birmingham, Leeds, Glasgow and Manchester,[44] but perhaps even more important than the numbers was the effective organization which lay behind them. Working-class activists had established 233 Branches of the National Reform League (NRL), quite apart from the separate London Working Men's Association (LWMA).[45] These organizations, despite Marx's claim that one was the product of his International Working Men's Association,[46] drew their strength from the fusion of various strands of working-class culture. There were prominent figures from the

International[47] but also many representatives of the earlier Chartist tradition.[48] Active secularists[49] rubbed shoulders with prominent trades unionists.[50] It was to be a vital source of the strength of organizations like the NRL and IWMA, as well as that of some local groups, including Cowen's Northern Reform League (NoRL), that they enjoyed considerable support from the trades union movement, though they also shared the old Chartist problem of a membership which could not afford to finance it.[51]

If the working-class organizations enjoyed the assistance of certain maverick Radicals,[52] middle-class Reformers were mainly marshalled in the 186 Branches of the National Reform Union (NaRU), a conscious imitation of the old Anti-Corn Law League.[53] Fortunately these various groups, though they had differences in their aims,[54] proved willing to co-operate even to the extent of modifying their own positions in order to suit the others' demands.[55] Hence, the NRL could provide the agitation's engine-room, while Bright acted as figure-head. Experience had taught the latter his impotence without the former![56] Bright, himself, held the essential ability to rouse audiences via stirring but ambiguous language, though his intention was undoubtedly only the transfer of power to the middle-class, hence his demand for household suffrage.[57]

Edmond Beales supported manhood suffrage for philanthropic reasons and was echoed by the LWMA, if in more class-based terms.[58] If the International, or certain sections of it, sought political power as a route to ulterior social aims, it seems to have been in a minority.[59] While

crowds had previously been hesitant to agitate there is no doubt that the almost forgotten experience of economic recession, as well as Lowe's unwise candour and the clearly anti-trades union nature of existing legislation, joined the scandal of 1866 in motivating the Reform agitation which helped smooth the way to the events of 1867.[60]

Cowen's NoRL, despite its residual distrust of the London Reformers who had so badly let down its predecessor in 1859-1860, was a model of Reform organization having inherited the experience of the old Northern Reform union, as well as its hand-bills![61] The NoRL's wider Council included, as well as a number of prominent miners and other workers, a membership reflecting its geographical presence in Newcastle itself, North Shields, Sunderland, Jarrow, Seghill and Blyth/Bedlington.[62] Its aims were clear, manhood suffrage if possible, household suffrage if not.[63] The NoRL was, most notably, to organize Cowen's mighty demonstration on Newcastle's Town Moor in 1867, a rally which attracted, as well as 50,000 people, deputations from at least twenty trades unions and a glittering array of speakers. The latter were joined, in Cowen's usual style, by many worker-speakers who were all to echo Gammage's sentiments : 'The full and just measure of their rights did not halt at a £10 franchise, nor a £7 franchise, but would never be satisfied until the motto of their cause - manhood suffrage - was inscribed upon the statute-book of the land (great cheering).' Of the speakers, only G.O.Trevelyan preferred household suffrage, and Ernest Jones perhaps best summed up the theory of the whole agitation : 'The house was the framework - the members were the mercury -

and they were the atmosphere (loud cheers).'[64]

Other NoRL meetings were reported in Stockton, West Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Monkwearmouth and North Shields, as well as three small ones in Darlington. However, the main meeting in the latter town was organized by the NaRU , and sparkled with the local Liberal elite.[65] Lt-Col. Scurfield, the senior Liberal in South Durham, while casting a longing look back at the 1866 proposals, emulated Bright when he declared that he would rather trust his future to a skilled working-class MP, 'than to the intelligence of a lordling who lolled away his evenings on the sofas of the House of Commons (cheers).' The ex-MP Henry Pease, while remaining a supporter of a property franchise, also endorsed class domination of the electorate, so long as there remained, 'a good sound basis for the returning of members to Parliament.' Only one speaker, Benson, preferred to endorse universal suffrage and rejoice at the 1866 Bill's failure, but he did so to great cheers![66]

Bishop Auckland was the site of a NRL meeting,[67] but its agitational high-point lay in the October 1866 visit of the Cambridge-born Edmond Beales, the President of the NRL. Beales naturally spoke against, 'the present restricted representative system', while revealingly, despite being pledged to manhood suffrage, accepting that household suffrage was a, 'just and equitable measure.' Having thus placated his middle-class listeners, Beales went on to prove his knowledge of the working-class by making an appeal to national pride, noting that Britain was falling to the rear of European nations in terms of liberty.[68]

Durham City, rather outside of the influence of the NoRL, perhaps reveals some interesting aspects of the agitation. Its first meeting, held in April 1866, simply endorsed the Liberal Bill, and was overwhelmingly a middle-class occasion bar, as the Durham County Advertiser scornfully noted, a large number of workers from Henderson's carpet factory! The speakers were, apart from Henderson himself, the Rev. Sam Goodall and two other members of the City's middle-classes. One of those, William Proctor, who proposed a household suffrage amendment, was to fail even to obtain a seconder![69] The local working-class Reform movement, the City of Durham Reform Association (CDRA), was founded only in August 1866, after the failure of Gladstone's Westminster Bill. That body took the somewhat unusual step of announcing its support for household suffrage via the letters column of the Durham Chronicle, rather than at a local public meeting,[70] a phenomena perhaps explained by the fact that the CDRA was led by two men, Stephen Lumley and J.Lane, with little or no political pedigree.[71] The CDRA's first orthodox political meeting, an outdoor rally held on the Sands in September 1866, attracted only 2-300 people. Very much a low-key local affair with Lumley speaking for the ballot and household suffrage, it was perhaps most notable for Robert Jackson's assertion that the Queen supported the workers' cause![72] Two months later, events had progressed as Henderson and Goodall again appeared at the Town Hall, but this time as guest-speakers for the CDRA, along with T.C.Thompson the oft-mooted Radical candidate for the City. The latter confessed to holding, 'extreme opinions', and proceeded to

prove it by proclaiming the suffrage to be, 'the right of the British people (Cheers).' Thompson held to the old arguments of the "reactionary democrat" but was notable in that he provided middle-class respectability for the CDRA's policies by declaring that he would go even further![73]

The CDRA's second mass rally and evening meeting, held in March 1867, reflected the nation-wide advance in the Reform movement. Workers from the City were joined by miners' bands and banners, as well as contingents from Shincliffe, Framwellgate Moor, Coxhoe, Brandon and as far afield as Willington and Chester-le-Street. Six hundred attended, an audience no doubt swelled by the decision of a prominent local pit-owner to close his pits in order that his men could attend. Whether that was a gesture of support, or recognition of an impending political "day-off", we cannot tell! The format of an outdoor afternoon rally, followed by an indoor evening meeting, was of course an adoption of external practice and the same was true of the CDRA's adherence to manhood suffrage along with a refusal to accept anything short of household suffrage. The latter was, of course, the NoRL position and it is instructive that, alongside local workers on the platform were Cowen, Dr. Gammage and the Rev. Rutherford, all prominent figures in the Newcastle-based organization, as well as Samuel Storey, the rising star of Sunderland politics.[74]

On a slightly larger scale, events in Sunderland were strikingly similar to those in Durham City. Like Durham, the initial meeting was a mainstream Liberal one in support of the Government proposals. The speakers were local Liberal

leaders and only Alderman Gourley, the future MP, was of interest, terming as he did Christ, 'the Great Reformer'! Reform was generally advocated upon such middle-class grounds as the supposed eminent respectability of the workers, and the general feeling was that Parliament required invigoration.[75] As in Durham, Radicals formed their own organization, the Sunderland Advanced Liberal Association (SALA). Though it had appeared earlier, as Candlish's electoral machine, it was more radical, no doubt due to the presence of Dr. Gammage, the Chartist veteran and devoted follower of universal suffrage.[76] As early as December 1865, Gammage had organized the SALA's working-class members as the Sunderland Working Men's Reform Association. Its speakers, all local workers, were united behind universal suffrage, by instalments if necessary, but only Robert Hawkey, a shipwright, commented along class lines : 'Why should the working class, who created the wealth, not have a vote?'[77]

Sunderland's Radicals were to display some imagination, even attempting to inherit the crowd attracted by the opening of the New Park in July 1866,[78] but their real strength lay in local speakers like Gammage, Halcro and the SALA's Storey, who could draw crowds of their own! Physical force was an extinct volcano, as all but one in the old Chartist centre knew, and the future lay in Reform. Hence, Beales, visiting Sunderland in October 1866, was attempting to moderate his image by stressing that his "registered residential manhood suffrage" would not enfranchise, 'mere passing vagabonds.'[79]

As with the CDRA, the highlight for Sunderland

Reformers had to wait until 1867. Meticulously planned, under the guidance of Storey, fifty six trades marched to the March 1867 demonstration on Sunderland's Town Moor behind their banners, joining there a crowd of 30,000 which, under NoRL tricolours, heard a series of speakers, all of whom were local workers. Wearsiders were joined there by deputations from Newcastle, Seaham, Gateshead, South Shields and even Durham City! Feeling there ran strongly for manhood suffrage, which was repeatedly described as, 'their just right', though several speakers, including E.T.Gammage, did feel the need to explain just how moderate and safe manhood suffrage was! The supposedly more respectable soiree saw speakers almost match the radicalism of the morning, though that was perhaps unsurprising since their numbers included Cowen, T.C.Thompson and Charles Larkin, as well as Dr.R.G.Gammage! It should be recognized, however, that those voices of the Sunderland radical middle-class which were present, notably Storey, Gourley and Robert Cameron, all preferred to endorse only household suffrage.[80]

The Sunderland Reform League (SRL) was founded as late as March 1867, almost too late to influence events. Though it declined to affiliate to the "Geordie"-dominated NoRL, the SRL endorsed registered residential manhood suffrage, a move "left" for many of its office-holders since they included, as well as the two Gammages, three prominent local Advanced Liberals - Storey, Cameron, and Robert Swan. The SRL was finally to organize a Reform Conference but it took place only in May 1867, by which time discussion had already passed on to possibilities for the period after the

Act had passed.[81]

Cambridgeshire, lacking the working-class organization and middle-class radicalism of a town like Sunderland, saw much less Reform activity. The most blatant example of this was Wisbech, where the nearest that the once radical town came to a Reform meeting were a few comments made at a "Grand Banquet" to Richard Young, the locally-based Liberal MP for the County. Its non-Radicalism was indicated by the fact that one speaker was C.S.Read, the Tory, if independently-minded, MP for West Norfolk. Unsurprisingly, he hoped that the Reform agitation could, 'fuse all men of moderate opinions into one great constitutional party', though he did also declare for, 'a just, comprehensive, and truly liberal measure of Reform (cheers).'[82]

Newmarket witnessed a similarly moderate gathering, with Tebbutt's call for £10 Counties the only specific endorsement of a franchise. However, it might be argued that it was sufficient for any national Reform agitation that towns like Newmarket should have held any form of a meeting at all![83] A Peterborough Reform Association was established, even if one of its speakers did denounce the original 1867 Reform Bill only to declare his preference for £5 rated Boroughs! St Ives, as well as a well-reported Reform meeting, enjoyed a visit from Henry Vincent who, though no longer a politician, took the opportunity to call for Reform, 'the ark of England's safety', even if he only supported the enfranchisement of educated workers.[84] The St Ives Reform meeting itself was dominated by moderate local Liberals such as Neville Goodman and Charles Veasey, who acted upon

partizan motives, deriding the concept of 'safe-guards' in a Reform Bill and pouring scorn upon any suggestion that the Tories' 1867 proposals were radical. Support for manhood suffrage was limited to a single heckler.[85]

Cambridge enjoyed a visit by its prodigal son, Beales, but the local attitude to him might be best summed up by the words of a local writer several years later : 'this gentleman loved nothing better than to be seen in the company of all kinds of toughs and blackguards, marching beneath the ample folds of the red flag.'[86] Beales' visit was marked by a surprisingly respectable gathering, including four Aldermen and ten Town Councillors, but it was almost inevitably broken up by local Tories once the "arch-demagogue" attempted to speak! The occasion did, however, allow the radical Councillor H.T.Hall to speak sympathetically of manhood suffrage, and for W.C.Smith to declare his support for householder voting.[87] Cambridge's only other Reform event, a gathering of 1,500 on Parker's Piece to denounce the rejection of the 1866 Bill, was low-key, a local Conservative, Shilleto, even being allowed to praise the actions of the"Adullamites"![88]

It is worthy of note that several Liberal MPs were to take part in the agitation in both Durham and Cambridgeshire. That phenomena included men as moderate as Richard Young and Sir Hedworth Williamson,[89] as well as Henderson and Candlish. Ironically, the supposedly more radical Hutt was to be virtually forced to attend a Gateshead meeting by local distaste at his allegedly anti-Reform activities in 1866.[90] The Durham City Reform meeting of April

1866 may have been unusual in that it received epistles from both of the City's MPs, the Tory Mowbray as well as Henderson.[91] J.W.Pease also sent his apologies to his local meeting, in Darlington, but for a reason no other Liberal in the regions studied was ready to admit : 'I should be unable, either by my vote or voice in Parliament, to advocate full effect to the resolutions that will be passed at it (i.e. a Rate-Payer franchise).'[92]

The agitation, of course, did not take place in a vacuum. The local Liberal press was certainly happy to blame its necessity upon the Tories[93] and to extrapolate upon the point in 1866 - 'If a measure is not passed next year, the discontent will be as bitter as it already is general, and the results must be seen in the ordinary business of the country.'[94] The Durham Chronicle was to actually urge trades unions to abandon their economist activities in order to join in the political agitation, though the paper was forced to admit that the ability to march did not necessarily reflect ability to vote![95]

Such comments seem to have been rather out of step with the feelings of some Liberals upon the national stage,[96] but Conservatives tended to be rather better co-ordinated. Hence, Stanley's initial reluctance to accept that an agitation even existed was mirrored in the columns of the Cambridge Chronicle.[97] When proved wrong, the latter paper was repeatedly to call London demonstrators, 'scum', and NRL supporters, 'the rabble'.[98] The Durham County Advertiser rather reflected the views expressed by Cranborne on the national stage when it discussed the events in Hyde Park.

Such, 'MOB LAW', led by, 'Atheists, infidels, fraudulent bankrupts, and Knaves of every description,' merely proved that, where numbers ruled, 'there will be no security for property, and an end to all order and good government.'[99]

In general, Tory opinion, locally as well as nationally, proved somewhat ambivalent concerning the agitation, presumably in an effort to snatch political advantage from such an hostile atmosphere. Hence, the County Advertiser scorned rowdy Reform meetings as, 'fairs', while orderly ones merely proved the wisdom of Tory efforts to enfranchise the skilled workers![100] If, at Westminster, Northcote was facetious, Derby was certainly later to use the, 'genuine demand', for reform as an explanation for his Government's peculiar actions in 1867.[101]

Traill probably best summed up the agitation's importance : 'That [it] materially affected the counsels of the Government in the sense of influencing the direction and determining the magnitude of their Reform Bill it might be too much to say; but one can hardly doubt that, like all such noisy demonstrations it succeeded in persuading Ministers that more people cared about Reform than they had suspected.'[102] Writers inclined to oppose that view are relatively rare, and either attempt to deny the evidence of the agitation's existence[103] or to over-state its importance, whether from a Marxist view-point or through ultra-Tory anxiety to prove the alleged spinelessness of a flexible Conservative Ministry.[104] Only Southgate seems to raise an original point, when he suggests that the agitation in fact merely formed an excuse for the Government's reforming activities.[105]

With the collapse of the 1866 Bill, and spurred on by the development of the agitation, Conservatives at Westminster rapidly had to decide on what Reform, if any, to introduce. There is clear evidence that, for all of their and Southgate's later claims, the Tory leadership was initially inclined to leave such a thorny subject well alone. The local Tory views mentioned above also tend to suggest that that sentiment would have been widespread[106] and it can only have been strengthened by the lamentable failure of the attempt at "fusion" with the Palmerstonians.[107] Both Disraeli and Stanley, the progressive elements within the Cabinet, seemed wedded to the equivalent of £8 Boroughs, a proposal which could never rouse popular enthusiasm![108]

That situation should not, however, be taken as a suggestion that the Conservatives were pledged not to Reform. While, locally, the Cambridge Chronicle had mirrored Cranborne in rejoicing at the, 'severe and salutary', check which "Democracy" had received during the 1866 Session[109] other Conservatives were already looking further ahead. Hence, in Cambridgeshire, Viscount Royston had declared, 'For his own part, he would rather give his vote to extend the franchise to every householder in the Kingdom who paid taxes, because there would be some finality in that principle.'[110] F.S.Powell, in Cambridge itself, had noted, 'how deeply Conservative was the feeling of the English working classes,'[111] and though they would not necessarily have gone so far, even such Tories as Mowbray and General Peel were not ruling out all Reform.[112] In fact, the only provincial support for "finality" seems to have come from the Tory

grass-roots.[113]

For Conservative back-benchers, the Reform agitation was a breach of the public calm, and hence of their voters' apathy. They had to be seen to be attempting to solve the situation, and Royal anxiety imposed the same prerogative upon their leaders.[114] It was at this moment that the concept of a "coup", an apparently radical settlement of the whole troublesome mess, first entered Conservative minds, only three years after it had occurred to Lord Grey![115] By November 1866 the idea was being aired provincially, however half-heartedly, in the columns of the Durham County Advertiser,[116] though that paper generally remained closer to the kind of attitudes which caused the Cambridge Chronicle to denounce household suffrage as, 'madness.'[117] In fact, under Naylor, the latter paper continued to stubbornly hold out for lateral extension alone![118]

Local Conservative opinion, despite the existence of extremes of opinion, seems basically to have awaited a lead from the centre, but it is worth a glance at those extremes. Ralph Ward-Jackson, in the Hartlepools, eagerly awaited the great conflict between the conservative and democratic views of Reform, and Surtees also looked forward to a Government Bill in 1867 but Lt-Col. Sir David Wood still felt justified in urging Reform's delay until a solution had been found to the thorny problem of falling Army recruitment, and did so from the same platform![119] The ultra-Tory argument of "finality" still came from such local sources as the Rev. Shilleto in Cambridge, but it is instructive that even he faced two local Conservative MPs who expressed their

willingness to support any Reform Bill which did not inaugurate rule by numbers.[120]

In Durham, the perspicacious Salkeld knew well that if a Reform Bill was attempted it would have to be, 'broad and comprehensive,' in order to spike revolutionary guns, and the same opinion was gaining weight upon the right of the Liberal spectrum.[121] Hence, the Sunderland Herald, though it regarded the agitation as a, 'foul array of lawlessness and blackguardism', made up of the, 'scum of the populace', knew that it made Reform essential.[122] As early as January 1866, that paper had been considering household suffrage, even if only for Boroughs with populations of over 100,000.[123] Such thoughts had clearly been initiated by the need for working-class representation - 'If we could secure this by means of household suffrage in the large boroughs there can be little question, we should conceive, that the country would be a far greater gainer than it could possibly be a loser by the direct or indirect democratic influences of such a change.'[124] The Herald was well aware that MPs wanted this troublesome issue finally settled'[125] but it is interesting that such a Whiggish paper should have made a positive, however guarded, reference to democracy as early as October 1866.

On the national stage, many of the "Adullamites" faced a barrage of criticism for their actions, some even finding themselves forced to confess that they had opposed the 1866 Bill as, 'insufficiently comprehensive.'[126] Though the "Cave" was to make relatively little progress in its later efforts to moderate events'[127] that fact lay rather at odds with the generally silent moderation of Liberals, both

national and local.[128] The latter was true despite the fact that support for household suffrage had crept beyond the Radical fringe reaching, for example, the moderate proprietor of the Cambridge Independent Press.[129] That paper's columnist, "Metropolitan Gossip", was scornful in October 1866 of the latest London rumour : 'certain lunatics aver that the franchise the Government will propose will be household suffrage.'[130] The columnist should not have been so surprised by the rumour, Cobden had had no doubt as to the flexibility of the Conservative mind upon this subject almost twenty years earlier![131]

Though such rumours were flying around, the sorely tempted Premier continued to be forced to be extremely circumspect in his communications upon the subject of Reform with his Chancellor of the Exchequer.[132] Efforts at preserving party unity via first the Reform Resolutions, and later the "Ten Minutes Reform Bill", revealed perhaps a lack of confidence among the Conservative leadership, and such schemes were soon to collapse[133] in the face of Liberal scorn.[134] Even Naylor's Cambridge Chronicle could not see the Ten Minutes Reform Bill as a satisfactory solution to the issue but it is rather ironic that that paper's Liberal equivalent took the opportunity to call upon the Government to propose an, 'household rating suffrage.'[135]

Derby, and it appears also Disraeli, had sensed a mood in the Commons against allowing Reform to drag on as an issue, a mood which certainly had life enough to reach both the Palace and The Times.[136] It is noticeable that, if that sentiment had not influenced Lowe, even Horsman had expressed

himself willing to introduce a Reform Bill should the Government fail to do so![137] Facing Liberals overwhelmingly concerning themselves with £5 Boroughs or above,[138] it was to be a master-stroke of political unscrupulousness by the Government to out-flank them, and via the old Radical mantra of "household suffrage".

Even Radicals were well aware that support for household suffrage in the Commons probably amounted to comfortably less than one hundred MPs[139] but the phrase held a powerful resonance "out of doors" and was thus a possible means of removing one leg of the traditional Liberal "trinity" of policies. Carnarvon seems to have been one of the first Tories to recognize this, along with the fact that even defeat after proposing such a measure could only enhance Conservative credibility![140] Other Ministers rapidly fell into line behind this daring manoeuvre[141] but it should be recalled, as Seymour explains, that the Tory proposal was far from democratic and was so hedged about that it was effectively sailing under false colours! It was in fact a rated residential suffrage, rather than household suffrage, and conceded precious little to the working classes.[142]

Ministers were no doubt influenced by the very real head of steam for rated residential suffrage which was developing behind them on the Conservative benches,[143] a phenomenon being repeated in the country itself, even in back-waters such as West Norfolk.[144] This suggests that the idea did not originate in the Tory leadership and that the movement for a radical proposal, which so impressed Bright, may have been fuelled by those few Tories returned by popular

constituencies.[145] Even though its London correspondent was to line up behind the Cabinet resignees the Cambridge Chronicle was to carry, in both its editorials and its letters column, evidence of the movement in Conservative opinion, and of a general feeling among uncommitted Conservatives that they could trust to their MPs not to allow the passage of a 'democratic' measure.[146]

Conservatives stood by rated residential suffrage not because it was democratic but because it would block the possibility of democratic advance.[147] Hence, opposition to the tactic centred around those who could not trust the safe-guards proposed,[148] and some of those unconvinced, including Stanley, were to be mollified by assurances that the new franchise would in fact create fewer new voters than past Reform proposals![149] Clearly, all such evidence suggests that the Conservatives were seeking a proposal with the appearance, but not the reality, of radicalism. It is also indicative that Disraeli already looked beyond "safe-guards" to the, as noted by Graves, anti-democratic potential of rated residential suffrage itself.[150] That calculation lay behind Disraeli's developing faith in "personal payment", which was to allow him to ignore the electoral statistics which so alarmed both Cranborne and Carnarvon. For Disraeli, the working-classes of the small Boroughs were not a danger, for they lay firmly under the control of local patronage,[151] and that fact lay at the very heart of the Chancellor's actions in 1867 for he was in search not of a "Tory Democracy", but rather of the foundations upon which he could construct a popular Toryism.[152]

The appearance of Disraeli's 1867 Reform Bill again highlighted Liberal disunity, as was illustrated by Gladstone's desperate bid to denounce the proposals as both too moderate and too extreme![153] In the provinces the Sunderland Herald was in no doubt, having already considered such matters, that the Bill was moderate and hence worthy of support,[154] an opinion, if not a conclusion, which was shared by many Liberals,[155] though not by the obviously perplexed proprietors of the Durham Chronicle! It is interesting that Robertson and Calvert were to attempt to hitch their political wagon to the agitation by declaring manhood suffrage to be the obvious resting-place for the franchise, and residential, i.e. genuine, household suffrage the only acceptable instalment towards that end.[156]

The vocal Lord Robert Montagu, though effectively silenced by his acceptance of minor office, rather epitomized local back-bench Tories at this point. Having long been profoundly sceptical concerning Reform he gleefully swallowed the 1867 proposals, even adopting the popular argument that the Government was merely restoring the pre-1832 franchise, a suggestion he had himself refuted only a year earlier! This is, however, not to suggest that Montagu did not retain his past principles sufficiently to praise Disraeli's Bill as a guarantee against the future passage of, 'ultra-democratic measures.'[157] Cambridgeshire did, however, witness some dissension among local Tories. Gorst and Peel both doubted the efficacy of the planned safe-guards and they were joined by Thomas Baring, who refused office in 1867 upon the grounds that the Reform Bill

was neither satisfactory nor a settlement.[158]

The Cambridge Chronicle, true to its ultra-Tory tradition, went yet further. It regarded the Government's proposals as, 'far too expansive', 'utterly repugnant' and, 'fraught with danger to the country.' The astonished Naylor repeatedly printed his mantra that the Conservative Government could not be truly intending to abandon its old, 'constitutional principles', and continued to urge Tories, 'to stem the democratic flood that now threatens to crush us.'[159] Such confusion over the Government's motives and actions also extended to the local grass-roots, as was illustrated by the case of the Rev. Leonarde Orde of North Shields. Even while the Government was introducing its "radical" Bill, a Bill which Orde did not oppose, he continued to claim his party to be the best to deal with Reform owing to its, 'strict attention to the ancient landmarks of the constitution'![160] Further North, Salkeld, via his Durham County Advertiser, accepted the Bill, but did so by declaring his belief that any mere rental or rated franchise could only recommence the long slide into democracy.[161]

The Government was, with Disraeli caring little for the safe-guards, rapidly to discard those which it had tacked onto the rated residential suffrage. Those devoted to the safe-guards' survival, essentially the faint-hearted and the maverick, were powerless to halt the process.[162] However, the removal of Disraeli's own preferred bulwark against democracy, the principle of "personal payment", was mainly due to the hard work of individual Radicals.

Among local Liberals, the Cambridge Independent

Press was hopeful that the Conservative Bill could be knocked into practical shape, and it was correct not to accept at face value Stanley's Westminster pledge of support for the safe-guards.[163] In the event, Conservative back-benchers proved unwilling to see their Bill endangered by undue stubbornness over basically peripheral matters[164] but "personal payment", the removal of which would leave household suffrage a reality in the Boroughs, was a very different matter. The few Radicals who had fronted the battle against the safe-guards were, however, also to realize the political situation's potential for the squeezing of the Government into conceding household suffrage.[165] Those MPs, though they did not necessarily hold a pre-pledged list of concessions from Disraeli were, unlike their predecessors, knowledgeable of both their constituents' opinions and the probable consequences of Reform decisions.[166] Several of the men were certainly in contact with Disraeli[167] but it would probably be wrong to take that fact as proof that a conspiracy was in action.

While some Liberals were dubious as to the genuine nature of the supposed Radical support for household suffrage,[168] Clarendon had no doubt that Disraeli was being manipulated[169] and some Radicals certainly did support it.[170] McCullagh Torrens, in his autobiography, ascribed the success of household suffrage to the fact that, 'rumour was rife that a numerous section [of Liberals] were pledged', to it, and that claim is supported by the fact that Disraeli certainly did, at one point, wildly over-estimate the strength of the "Tea-Room" group of Radicals.[171] Whatever

such rumours were flying around, one must suspect that McCullagh Torrens and his colleagues were responsible for them!

The Sunderland Herald was to look back wearily upon the key issue of 1867[172] but the proposed rated residential suffrage, due to its exclusion of the compounder, was entirely unworkable. The Herald's distress was no doubt in part due to the genuine confusion, in the Commons as well as outside of it, created by the fact that, though the vast majority of MPs supposedly supported it, Gladstone's attempt to impose £5 rated Boroughs was to fail.[173] Initially some Liberals who preferred household suffrage, including the proprietors of the Durham Chronicle, did fall into line behind Gladstone's Instruction[174] but it was to fall before the opposition of the "Tea-Room", perhaps the clearest manifestation of Radical Parliamentary feeling in 1867[175] though it also included some moderates and the only County Durham MP involved, Candlish, declined to endorse the group's missive to Gladstone.[176]

The local press can provide an interesting snap-shot of Liberal opinion concerning the "Tea-Room". The Cambridge Independent Press was openly hostile, fearing that a defeat of Gladstone would allow the unacceptable rated residential suffrage to pass, but the Sunderland Herald supported the "rebels", and for the very same reason![177] In Parliament much the same motivation lay behind the defeat of Gladstone's second bid to turn the Bill in the direction of £5 rated Boroughs[178] though the MPs involved were in fact merely tools of those Radicals who sought to keep the Conservative

Bill alive solely for the purpose of further radicalizing it later. These latter were men, like Whalley from Peterborough, who felt a chance at household suffrage a better bet than mere pledges from Gladstone[179] and they were undoubtedly assisted by the desire of MPs to, 'try every possible and plausible device anything like a large enfranchisement.'[180]

Gladstone's defeats seemed to fill Conservatives with a feeling of invulnerability[181] but in fact discussion seems merely to have moved on to direct consideration of the compounder issue. Interestingly, certain Liberals, and locally the Independent Press, proved sufficiently frustrated to demand household suffrage as an alternative to the unacceptable Government proposal, the newspaper even suggesting that the change be achieved via constant agitation, obviously a surprising recommendation from this generally moderate source.[182] Local Conservatives continued to deny any problem concerning the compounders for, as the County Advertiser stressed : 'The Bill is founded on a principle so simple, so intelligible, and so just, that it has approved itself to the good sense and understanding of the nation at large.' Nervous Tories were reassured that the enfranchisement would not include, 'the migratory or shifting classes.'[183] The paper's Liberal equivalent responded by wryly noting that one-ninth of the proposed new voters would come from the notorious town of Sheffield![184]

The last effort to pull the 1867 Bill back from the radical brink, Hibbert's Amendment, came from one of those Radicals previously in contact with the Cabinet and failed, according to Cowling, only due to the over-ruling of Disraeli

by his fellow Ministers.[185] These Liberal efforts, aimed at the moderation of the Bill, had undoubtedly been, in part, motivated by the clear opposition of Conservatives, and not least Disraeli and Hardy, to genuine household suffrage.[186] There had seemed no possibility of the defects of the Bill being remedied via attempts to push it in that direction but it was in just such an atmosphere that Hodgkinson's Amendment was allowed to pass! That turn of events is clearly worthy of consideration.

One question is the depth of Disraeli's knowledge as to the results accruing from that amendment. Some writers feel that he was well aware of the consequences and deliberately withheld the information from his Cabinet colleagues.[187] However, Cranborne was perhaps nearer to the truth when he ascribed Hodgkinson's success to, 'sheer panic', on the part of the Ministry.[188] The protracted passage of the Bill through the Commons' Committee stage, allied with a heated and noisome atmosphere, no doubt contributed to back-benchers' impatience concerning the compounders, an issue which the Sunderland Herald had already described as a, 'gigantic bore.'[189] The average MP seems to have wanted the whole tiresome question of Reform settled and the problem for Ministers lay in the fear that Parliamentary boredom could lead either to the total abandonment of the Bill or the adoption of an amendment proposed by one of Gladstone's henchmen.[190]

On the day that Hodgkinson proposed his amendment just forty five Conservative MPs were present, despite their having been "whipped" for a matter of, 'vital importance.'[191]

Thus, Disraeli, from a weak position, had to face Liberal MPs who were seizing upon an available, and simple, way of dispatching a knotty problem. His resolve had perhaps already been weakened by over-estimates of the amendment's support, which had cunningly been provided to him by one of Hodgkinson's maverick Radical colleagues. In the circumstances, it is perhaps surprising that Disraeli chose to believe Hodgkinson's view that the "residuum" did not pay rates, and so accepted his amendment.[192] Once conceded, however, Disraeli certainly found it impossible to retrace his steps![193] It is worthy of note that none of the rest of the Cabinet initially realized the importance of his decision either![194]

The local press's reactions to these events were eminently predictable. Conservatives applauded the sensible solution of what they now confessed to have been a troublesome matter[195] while Liberals scented Conservative surrender to the Radicals[196] and a disappointed Sunderland Herald merely ruminated upon this climax to a, 'series of surprises.'[197] F.S.Powell, the Cambridge Conservative MP, was in exalted company when he accepted in good grace the slide into household suffrage[198] but it is perhaps indicative of the chaos of 1867 that, while most Liberals quietly accepted the fait accompli,[199] one so-called Radical whimpered : 'We don't know where we are, or where we shall be, thank God there is yet the Third Reading to come on, when we can throw it out altogether.'[200]

In fact, the remainder of the Bill's progress contained little of interest. £12 Counties were accepted,

perhaps in the knowledge that the next time round would see household suffrage there too.[201] The sniping of MPs such as J.W.Pease against household suffrage was clearly in vain[202] and the proposed enfranchisement of under-graduates interested few other towns apart from Cambridge and Durham City.[203] The House of Lords proved a thriving base for Cassandras[204] but Lord Derby, and the salutary example of 1832, proved able to tame it.[205] Indeed, opposition in the Lords proved as impotent as had the earlier Tory resistance within the Commons.[206] In the upper house, quite apart from the considerable support for the Bill,[207] hesitant Tories generally either chose the way of party loyalty or, like Lord Ilchester, saw no advantage in fighting against the inevitable slide into, 'Chaos, and pure democracy.'[208] Opposition was restricted to the sort of futile cynicism expressed by Lord Ormathwaite in 1868 : 'The General Election has been the Conservative Sadowa, with this difference - that we ourselves made the needle guns, and handed them over to our adversaries to destroy us with.'[209]

Events moved so rapidly in 1867 that local sources were only able to fully comment retrospectively. The Independent Press felt 1867, 'the swiftest revolution in the opinions of a party ever known',[210] while its columnist "Metropolitan Gossip" claimed that Ministers had passed the Act, "as children take a disagreeable dose.'[211] The essential message from Liberal sources, however, consisted of the oft-repeated claim that the Bill was the product of Liberal, and not Conservative, work.[212] Such claims did not however dissuade the Independent Press from its undemocratic hope

that MPs would not be subject to the, 'demoralizing expedient of making themselves popular.'[213]

The Durham County Advertiser certainly had no qualms in claiming the 1867 Act for the Conservatives' own and praised it as putting, 'the franchise within the reach of every individual who will give a guarantee of fitness by bearing his share of the burdens of the State, and to throw upon him the responsibility of disfranchising himself.'[214] Hence, the paper was not democratic in its attitude, a fact underlined by its description of the Act as Reform's, 'permanent settlement.'[215] Quite naturally, in the circumstances of Durham's Boroughs, the paper stressed repeatedly that the, 'multitudinous class of laborious toilers', were, 'indebted to the present Conservative Government for the restoration of those ancient electoral privileges Lord JOHN RUSSELL was the means of abolishing.'[216]

The old divisions between the Conservative newspapers of Cambridge and Durham City continued however. The Cambridge Chronicle's metropolitan correspondent, "Talk of the Week", remained loyal to Cranborne and shared his antipathy towards the extension of the franchise[217] but his comments may only have been printed by Naylor as a counter-weight to his own optimistic editorials, which were clearly designed to calm the doubts which we shall see existed in the minds of many Cambridgeshire Conservatives.[218] With the Act won, Naylor, in the face of continuing NRL and LWMA agitations, was careful to draw a line : 'pause before any further political advancement is made, just to see how the new

Reform Bill will affect the interests of this great empire.'[219]

Of the five newspapers studied, the Sunderland Herald perhaps had most cause to feel offended, and took its opportunity : 'public morality, we venture to suggest, has been not a whit more shocked by the versatility or cynicism of Mr Disraeli than by the dishonesty of all leaders and all parties in dealing with Reform.' Though it considered the final Act to be relatively undamaging the paper continued to allege that the Commons had been duped by, 'concurring circumstances and clever management.'[220]

Nationally, the Conservative party followed its leadership in, understandably, attempting to seize the maximum possible electoral advantage from the passage of the Act,[221] though certainly Disraeli's claims were not always in any way related to reality![222] His suggestions of long running devotion to "Tory Democracy" were somewhat at odds with the contents of his Reform speeches of 1865-1866, as published in January 1867.[223] For Disraeli, the Bill had in truth been awkward but necessary, in that it settled Reform for a while and allowed him to pose as the prospective leader of a potentially popular party.[224]

Both Derby and Disraeli were to appeal to the strength of the British social system as proof of safety for their more nervous supporters, who included such prominent figures as Stanley and Hardy.[225] While the majority of the Conservative leadership proved content to swim with the tide[226] a minority of "Ditchers" inevitably preferred to fill their pens with venom[227] and that situation was almost

exactly duplicated on the local stage.

Mowbray's comment that, 'the path of boldness was the path of safety',[228] was the majority attitude among County Durham Tories who, in hostile territory, were understandably eager to stress that, while Liberals only talked about Reform, Conservatives actually passed it![229] The same was true of Powell in Cambridge, who described the basis of the new Act in Conservative terms : 'it was the principle that a man who bore his share of the local burdens of the town in which he resided, should be entitled to vote for that borough (great cheering).'[230]

Cambridgeshire Tories, facing few new voters, often displayed less pleasure at the Act. One was apologetic and another simply dubious[231] but General Peel, retiring from politics in 1868, had already made his opinion starkly clear : 'I have no intention of sharing in the responsibility which will attract to, or being included in the censure which will be passed hereafter on, the great Conservative party for their condition in regard to this Reform Bill.' He scornfully denounced the supposed "simplicity" of household suffrage which he felt, 'equalled only...by that of the honourable members who...are prepared to accept it as a great Conservative measure.'[232]

Peel's closest follower in Cambridgeshire was ironically later to become pre-eminent among "Tory Democrats" but, as a young MP, Gorst warned of the 1867 Act's effects upon men, 'whose political character was not formed and who would have to stoop to make themselves popular.' Despite such bitter criticism, Gorst as a Cambridge MP had to

learn that Parliament was one thing, the hustings were quite another! Hence, while on Third Reading, Gorst declared that, 'he believed that the Conservatives who went to the country clad in the false cloak of Liberalism would be certainly rejected by the people.' Once before his constituents, in the Barnwell Theatre, Gorst's opinion seemed to change and he stated that he, 'had the confidence to think that [the] "residuum" would not be on the Radical side at the close of the election'![233]

Lord George Manners appears to have been in no doubt that many of his constituents were discontented by the Bill, but he did not allow that fact to alter his support for it.[234] Lord Royston, though he also endorsed the Bill, revealed his own unease while speaking in Newmarket : 'I have been open to the charge of having contradicted some statements which I made to the constituency about Reform when I was first elected. I admit it frankly. I admit that the Conservatives were obliged to depart from their old path in regard to the extension of the franchise. Mark you that departure was forced upon them by the systematic clamour throughout the country that the people were determined to have a Reform Bill passed.' A month later Royston sounded more pugnacious and less inclined to blame the agitation, perhaps owing to the national Conservative determination to claim the Act as the work of their own party : 'If there was inconsistency in... supporting so broad and liberal a measure of Reform, let that inconsistency be nailed to me, because I rejoice that I was so inconsistent (cheers and uproar).'[235]

There were certainly misgivings among the Tory grass-roots, as Royston found in Cambridge and the ultra-Tory Rev. Shilleto made clear at Barnwell. Indeed, as late as 1872, an abortive "Liberal-Conservative" candidate for Stockton was to denounce the Act.[236] The fundamental feeling in the localities studied seems, however, to have been confusion. Hence, J.H.Trotter, in Tynemouth, could oppose the revolutionizing, or Americanizing, of the State even as he endorsed the 1867 Act[237] and Lt-Col. Wade of Willington, only a year after his party had conceded household suffrage, claimed that the, 'Conservatives would try to stem the tide of democracy which the Liberals were trying to introduce into the nation'![238]

The ill-reported local Liberal grass-roots revealed the three responses to the Act which came from their party. Lt-Col. Scurfield would accept the Act only as an instalment, matching Cowen's view that household suffrage had been the result of a mere, 'compromise.'[239] However, few Radical voices expressed that opinion nationally and both the NRL and the IWMA, in their efforts to maintain the momentum of Reform, were to be frustrated by the willingness of former fiscal supporters to follow the NRU in accepting the Act as sufficient.[240]

Dr Wray, of March, argued that the Act had been saved by the Liberals, however many Tories in 1868, 'claimed the credit.'[241] While certain Liberals so despised the Act that they were willing to ascribe it to their opponents' efforts,[242] Wray and the majority knew the wisdom of claiming that the Act had resulted from Liberal pressure in order to

capture the votes of grateful new electors.[243] Indeed, of the local Liberal candidates only Hankey in Peterborough gave the "credit" to the Conservatives though, four years later, T.C.Thompson was to follow him in doing so.[244] The opportunism underlying the Liberal claim was perhaps revealed at the national level by the fact that both Harcourt and Fitzmaurice were, once the electoral advantage had passed, to reverse their opinion.[245]

Nationally, Liberal reactions to the finished Act were curious to say the least. Bright and other figure-heads of English Radicalism were far from fearless at the appearance of household suffrage[246] while the supposed new standard-bearer for Reform, Gladstone, was even more graphic in declaring that he accepted the 1867 Act only, 'as I would avert to cut off my leg rather than to lose my life.'[247] It is ironic indeed that many supposedly Whiggish figures did not express any such doubts, and the same could be said of the old Radical who had supposedly been most left behind by the forward march of British politics![248]

Lowe and Goschen were rare among national Liberal figures in that they shared Cranborne's acerbic view of the Act[249] but they did reflect a sense of unease which is more easily discerned among local Liberals including, ironically, Patrick Beales, the Kinsman of the NRL President. Still a defender of the 1866 proposals as late as October 1868, Patrick Beales said of Conservatism : 'How strange a change had come o'er the spirit of their dreams', and ascribed the heinous Reform Act to the Conservatives, and to the Conservatives alone![250] Richard Young, the Cambridgeshire

MP, shared Beales' continuing support for the 1866 Bill but blamed the final Act upon Liberal pressure even as he continued to assert that he was, 'never an advocate of household suffrage.' Young's assertion that £14 Counties were as much as was prudent may well have cost him the few votes which lost him his seat at the 1868 elections.[252]

Further North, another County MP, J.W.Pease, was similarly disconcerted. Having termed the Act, 'a bastard kind of household suffrage', and stressed his opposition to, 'hovel voters and to persons whom lived in cellars having votes', Pease was among those moderate Liberals who temporarily in 1867 wedded themselves to, 'the sacred and holy principle of personal payment of rates.' Pease escaped Young's fate via one of those conversions so common when MPs are forced to face their public, and it is notable that he was among those 1868 Liberal candidates whose claim of Liberal "credit" for the Reform Act was purely temporary![251] Several other Northern Liberal MPs, but this time from the Boroughs, were to denounce the Act's Rate-Paying clauses with particular vigour, an activity in which they were joined by Hamond, the Newcastle "independent". Those clauses' ill-effects on such candidates' hard-pressed working-class prospective constituents also forced them to be among the few Liberals ready to accept that the Bill had indeed been a conservative measure.[253]

With the passage of the 1867 Act, British politics moved into a new era, one which opened electoral politics to a wide section of male British society for the first time. The following years were to witness, and almost immediately, the

commencement of the campaign to spread this new political openness into the excluded Counties. After 1867, the campaign for Reform began to centre upon the Act's real safe-guards, which had survived the 1867 debates almost untouched, that is to say the conservative County constituencies, the open voting system, and the still hopelessly gerrymandered distribution of the Parliamentary constituencies.

Table 1

Reform Votes of Durham and Cambridgeshire MPs -

Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
F.S.Powell	A	A	F	F	F	A	F	F	X	A	A	A
J.E.Gorst	A	X	F	F	F	A	A	F	A	X	A	X
Lord G.Manners	A	A	F	F	F	A	A	F	A	X	A	A
Viscount Royston	A	A	F	F	F	A	A	F	X	A	A	A
R.Young	F	F	A	A	A	F	F	A	F	F	F	F
J.Peel	A	A	F	F	F	A	A	F	X	X	X	A
T.Baring	A	A	F	X	F	A	X	X	X	A	A	X
E.Fellowes	A	A	F	F	F	A	A	F	A	A	A	A
Lord R.Montagu	A	A	F	F	F	A	A	F	A	A	A	A
J.Henderson	F	F	A	A	A	F	F	A	F	F	F	F
J.R.Mowbray	A	A	F	F	F	A	A	F	A	A	A	A
J.Candlish	F	F	A	A	A	F	F	A	F	F	F	F
J.Hartley	A	X	X	F	F	A	F	F	A	X	A	A
Sir W.Hutt	F	F	A	A	A	F	F	A	X	F	F	F
R.Ingham	F	F	A	A	A	X	F	A	X	F	F	F
R.D.Shafto	F	X	A	X	A	F	X	A	X	X	F	F
Sir H.Williamson	F	F	A	A	A	F	F	A	X	F	F	F
J.W.Pease	F	F	A	A	A	F	F	A	A	X	F	F
C.F.Surtees	A	A	F	F	F	A	A	F	A	A	A	A

KEY : F - Voted in Favour. A - Voted Against.
X - Did not Vote.
1 - Second Reading of the 1866 Reform Bill.
2 - £14 Counties (1866).
3 - £20 Counties (1866).
4 - £14 rated Counties (1866).
5 - Dunkellin Amendment (1866).
6 - Gladstone Amendment (1867).
7 - Ayrton Amendment (1867).
8 - Principle of Personal Payment (1867).
9 - Torrens Amendment (1867).
10 - Enfranchisement of £5 copyholders and other non-freeholders (1867).
11 - Colebrooke Amendment (1867).
12 - Enfranchisement of copyholders and leaseholders (1867).

Notes to Chapter 5

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4) Durham Chronicle, 9/2/66.
5) P.Magnus, King Edward the Seventh (London, 1964), p.80; A.I.Dasent, John Thadeus Delane : Editor of "The Times" : His Life and Correspondence (London, 1908), ii, 167; G.Huxley, Victorian Duke : The Life of Hugh Lupus Grosvenor First Duke of Westminster (London, 1967), p.76.
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246) Seymour, Electoral Reform, pp.276-277; F.B.Smith, Second Reform Bill, p.193; Himmelfarb, Victorian Minds, pp.376-377; p.387.
247) Morley, Gladstone, i, 870; Seymour, Electoral Reform, pp.269-270.
248) Durham Chronicle, 24/7/68; Huxley, Duke of Westminster, p.8; Buckle, Disraeli, iv, p.548; Leader, Roebuck, pp.313-314; Himmelfarb, Victorian Minds, p.380.
249) Williams, Rise of Gladstone, p.121; Himmelfarb, Victorian Minds, pp.370-371.
250) Cambridge Independent Press, 17/10/68.
251) 3 Hansard clxxxvii, 699-700; Durham Chronicle, 31/1/68; 22/4/70.
252) Cambridge Independent Press, 1/8/68; 22/8/68; 10/10/68.
253) Durham Chronicle, 3/7/68; 10/7/68; 23/10/68;

30/10/68.

Chapter 6 - The Ballot and the Battle for the Right to Vote freely

The ballot perhaps formed the portion of the democratization process which best deserved the label, "reform". Its adoption required the abolition of a centuries-old and much decayed, if indeed it had ever been adequate, system of open voting and nomination, as well as the show of hands once so beloved of Chartist candidates. Contemporary figures, from Roebuck in the 1830s to Goldwin Smith in the 1860s, were well aware that all was not well with the old system,[1] riven as it was with corruption, intimidation and "ruffianism". As a then young Liberal recalled, 'the worst scenes with the Irish and suffrage agitators were mere parlour games to what used to take place in the good old days when voting was free and open, and bribery was carried on as an honourable occasion...How we came back alive I cannot tell.'[2] One does not necessarily need to accept the entire argument of Moore to realize that this was a period when many voters voted as they were told, rather than how they would have wished, a situation which was clearly not democratic![3] The ballot, now so obviously a necessity for representative government, was to prove so controversial in the nineteenth-century because, as Seymour noted, its passing could only produce a revolution in the electoral system.[4]

That century opened with support for the ballot, a traditional Radical Reform demand, still generally restricted to that old ghetto. Indeed, even certain Chartists

were to come to despise it while Bronterre, and no doubt others, realized that short of household suffrage at least, the ballot could serve merely to strip working-men of the little influence which they could exert over the elector.[5] The majority of Chartists may have loyally followed Jones in continued support for secret voting but it is worthy of note that there were large cracks in the edifice.[6]

North-East Chartists were one section of the movement which did remain loyal to the ballot. Even the Northern Reform Union, though it sacrificed three of the "Six Points", firmly retained the ballot.[7] That perhaps reflected a local atmosphere, influenced by a Durhamite heritage,[8] which was powerful enough even to influence at least one local Conservative.[9] Lord Durham's pro-ballot influence continued after his death,[10] perhaps explaining the long line of Liberal candidates for the Northern Boroughs who were ready to endorse it.[11] However, it should be noted that, nationally, the measure had acquired support from among various Radical tendencies, Benthamites, nonconformists, rank-and-filers such as Tancred and Evans, and even such notorious mavericks as Osborne.[12] Certain Radicals, however, were to feel disinclined to take such a "democratic" step as to allow the free exercise of even a limited suffrage, and Whiggish Cabinets proved able to comfortably withstand what pressure could be levied on them by a Radical movement weakened by disunity.[13] Most spectacularly, the Ballot Society's 1859 attempt to persuade Liberal MPs not to accept a leader who opposed the ballot, which excluded both Russell and Palmerston, was to vanish almost without a ripple![14]

The North-East was clearly well ahead of the national scene in its attitude towards the ballot. In one town a meeting of prominent citizens endorsed it as early as August 1837 and one of those citizens, Brockie, later expanded upon his reasons for doing so. He argued that a secret suffrage had been made necessary by the development of artificial distinctions and intricate commercial relations between people.[15] Those processes had clearly increased the number of interfaces at which intimidation could occur.

In fact, in County Durham, only a politician like Harry Vane, sited in his own distinct power-base well away from the Durhamite interest, could afford to consistently oppose the ballot.[16] Only Robert Ingham, standing for South Shields in 1852, attempted to stand up for tradition. In doing so he adopted a common weapon of those opposed to "secret voting", the voluntary ballot. Ingham argued for separate lists of voters, with the second one comprising those who wished to vote in private. As he explained, 'It would be no disgrace to a voter to have his name in the latter [list]. But it would be a disgrace to his employer; and he thought the result would be a determination on the part of all employers never to interfere with the men in electing matters, and that every role in the empire would be left to come to the poll openly and boldly - (Cheers).'[17] Ingham's proposal, like any voluntary ballot, was of course self-defeating for, as George Hardcastle of Sunderland said in 1866 : 'If a person could control a man's vote could he not also control the way in which he would vote.'[18] The evident truth of that argument rapidly forced Ingham into support for a "Local Option" on the ballot

and by 1857 he had joined the majority of Durham Liberals in supporting the measure.[19]

Arguments used nationally on the ballot were to strike deeply into those used in Counties Cambridgeshire and Durham. No doubt many local politicians shared Derby's dread of the ballot as the route to democratization but they, interestingly, did not tend to express themselves with the same clarity![20] Nationally, there was an argument as to the alleged "unenglishness" of the ballot[21] and local Conservatives, whether candidates or at the grass roots, were repeatedly to parrot this allegation.[22] Indeed, it should not be surprising that such a supposedly "loyal" party as the Tories should have made such a claim about a political innovation practised abroad but not in England. Cambridge Conservatives were to the fore. Kenneth Macaulay was not loath to appeal to national pride as a shield against suggestions that the "mother-country" could learn from its own colonies' adoption of the ballot[23] but crassest of all was perhaps Lord Maidstone who, declaring British to be best, reasoned that the fact that the ballot did not exist in Britain was proof in itself of the folly of adopting it![24]

Marten, yet another Cambridge Conservative, introduced another facet of the argument as late as 1872 claiming that, 'Englishmen would [not] endure compulsory secresy (sic) with regard to their votes.'[25] The local Tory press was to echo his sentiments and quote the late Palmerston's support for that position.[26] George Hudson, in Sunderland, perhaps best encapsulated such views : 'I say in God's name don't un-English us...Preserve your national

character for honesty and straightforwardness.'[27] Even in 1873 it is worthy of note that a frustrated Tory heckler at the Rokely meeting of the Union of the Conservative Associations of Durham was to shout : 'It is un-English.'[28]

Liberals, with such an emotive argument raised against them, had little choice but to answer it. They did so generally by noting the extensive use of the ballot among English clubs and societies, including the Carlton Club itself! Voting for Parliament and black-balling a cad were of course entirely incompatible but that fact was irrelevant while the issue was simply the supposed "foreign-ness" of balloting. That argument penetrated into the localities sufficiently for it even to be used by working-class Liberals of both Durham and Cambridge.[29] Politicians were in a position to take it a step further, contrasting the supposedly "unenglish" ballot with the traditional and hence presumably "English" corruption and intimidation which then held sway![30]

At this point, it is worthy of note that Durham City does provide a blatant case of a local politician "borrowing" from his local paper and hence being led by local factors rather than Westminster. In March 1850, the Durham Chronicle declared the ballot to be "unenglish" only in the sense that it had yet to be adopted in England and pointed out that, under the same criteria, both rail-roads and steam-ships had also once been "unenglish"![31] Two years later, on the Durham City hustings, William Atherton, himself a newcomer to the City and a recent convert to the ballot, no doubt motivated by the exigencies of his new role as a North-Eastern Liberal

candidate, was to repeat his local paper's argument, and even the example provided, exactly.[32]

The Cambridge Independent Press preferred to approach the question from the opposite direction. Hence, it cited examples of past "English" pastimes - bull-baiting and prize-fighting - as a refutation of Maidstone's old claim.[33] However, perhaps it was Colonel Scurfield, at the only meeting in the two counties studied to be specifically called for the purpose of demanding the ballot, that of the Darlington Branch of the National Reform Union in 1869, who best punctured all of the patriotic petty-fogery : 'Of course the Ballot was unEnglish - no doubt of it - because it would give the people their rights (laughter and applause).'[34]

Linnæus Banks, one of the more artful of the rank-and-file Durham City Reformers, was to link that issue with another great favourite among opposition politicians, locally as well as nationally, by claiming that he could not believe Englishmen would be so depraved as to use the ballot to hide lies, by telling canvassers that they supported one side but then voting for the other.[35] However, national Liberals such as Russell, Graham, and later Harcourt, as well as the vast majority of Conservatives, found it all too easy to do so![36] Bentinck, the Norfolk Tory, was to graphically describe Berkeley's effort as, 'A Bill to prevent the detection of bribery.'[37] Clearly, Conservatives claimed, the ballot could only introduce deceit into areas where it had previously been impossible. It would provide a smoke-screen behind which corruption could thrive. The Cambridge Chronicle, in following that line, was to quote Peel, Sydney

Smith, an American correspondent and even Russell! The paper's proprietor, C.W.Naylor, left no doubt as to his opinion, scorning the ballot as, 'simply...a machine for the encouragement and production of falsehood and hypocrisy', calculated to conceal the deeds of, 'the poltroon, the cunning sneak, the turncoat, and the perjured Knave.'[38]

If most Tories agreed with Naylor's opinion that did not necessarily mean that they were consistent. Hence, in Cambridgeshire, both Ball and Powell denied that the ballot could cure corruption, but one on the grounds that the mechanism would not be secret, and the other on the basis that it would![39]

Certain genuine Conservatives were to oppose the ballot simply upon the basis of its novelty.[40] In Stockton, as late as 1872, Lord Ernest Vane-Tempest, ignoring all foreign evidence, continued to deny that the ballot could be genuinely secret.[41] Frater, a Durham City man writing in the Advertiser, suspected a more machiavellian scenario. Feeling that the ballot would shift the focus of corrupt activity onto the person of the returning officer, he warned that it would result in the amalgamation, neutralization and even destruction of public opinion as such.[42] The paper itself was happy to follow the line set nationally by The Times, prior to Delane's conversion in America of course, and was finally in 1872 to consider its doubts vindicated by the Liberal Government's post-ballot discovery of the need for a Corrupt Practices Bill.[43] That all formed part of the Conservative fear of the ballot as a cover for personation,[44] and an incitement for the formation of corrupt, American-style,

Party conventions, the latter fear being later particularly fuelled by the rise of the Caucus.[45]

Liberals could brook no doubts that the ballot, by making electoral corruption futile, would thus eliminate it. Also, they were far from unwilling to note the fact that many prominent opponents of the ballot themselves owed their political positions to "influences" which would be invalidated, or at least endangered, by the abolition of open voting. They could thus, like the Durham Chronicle, claim that such opposition to the ballot was actually due to the fact that those politicians feared that it would lead to less corruption and not, as they claimed, more. As the Chronicle noted, the ballot was a practical demand for it would replace the current assembly of place-hunters via the election of honest men.[46] That argument was particularly popular among Northern Radicals such as Douglas and Storey, but it was also adopted, in Cambridge, by the avowedly Palmerstonian W.F.Campbell.[47] It was also well utilized by Radicals nationally and was cited by one prominent Liberal as his motive for changing his mind in order to support the ballot,[48] as well as appearing at meetings among working-class Liberals in County Durham in 1859. As time passed, the ballot as protection against the "screw" was an image which was to sound ever louder, most notably in the meetings of the 1866-1867 Reform campaign which were reported in the Liberal press of Counties Durham and Cambridgeshire.[49]

As early as 1853 Granville Ward, the spokesman of the short-lived Cambridge Liberal Non-Electors Association, had declared that his members preferred no vote at all to one

unprotected by the ballot. As a Liberal, Ward would certainly have preferred "their" votes uncounted, rather than that they should have gone to the opposition, but there is no evidence that he was misrepresenting the views of his members. Indeed, in the North, working-class meetings in Newcastle, Crook, Sunderland and Durham City were also to show considerable scorn for any offer of an unprotected franchise.[50] It would also be wrong to suggest that this was merely a party cry. Hence, Walton, addressing the Stockton Branch of the Northern Reform League in 1868, stressed the need to protect working-class voters against pressure from both the Conservatives and the Liberals.[51] The fear was well-founded for the North-Eastern Railway was probably not alone in its supposed, and implicitly acknowledged, use of intimidation in the Liberal cause.[52]

Some class-feeling also appeared locally. Ward, speaking in 1868, openly declared the ballot's unfortunate necessity to be due to dictation by "capital", while Todd, a Sunderland shipwright, opposed an extended franchise without the ballot as, 'merely putting more power into the hands of large employers of labour.'[53] Similar views were expressed by local Liberals as diverse as Washington Wilks and R.D.Shafto as well as, on the national stage, by John Bright.[54]

The letter to the local press was to be a particular favourite of ballot campaigners. Hence, Rymer, an early official of the Durham Miners' Association (DMA), was to publish one in the Durham Chronicle while a longer and particularly wide-ranging letter appeared in a Cambridge Independent Press of that same year, 1866, from a local

radical, H.T.Hall. Hall stressed the ballot's potential to, 'promote independence of thought and opinion', a point echoed by Colonel Scurfield in his speech at Darlington Central Hall : 'Every man to whom the legislature had entrusted a vote ought to have the power of exercising it according to his conscience.'[55]

The Durham Chronicle was to launch a scathing attack upon intimidation, whether by aristocrats or businessmen, in 1857 and its metropolitan-based "Special Correspondent" had, five years earlier, declared war on such, 'Landocrats...Millocrats...[and] Mobocrats.'[56] Such militancy was, in fact, reasonably common among the Liberal politicians of both Durham and Cambridgeshire.[57] However, one of their number under almost constant pressure from the "left", Henry Fenwick, attempted to maintain a more moderate image for the ballot : 'I cannot look upon it as a Radical measure. It is rather, I think a Conservative measure, and it allows a man to vote according to the dictates of his conscience...and when people have votes they ought to vote conscientiously.'[58]

Unsurprisingly, local experience of corruption also provided a spur for activity in support of the ballot. Durham had well merited Russell's description of it as, 'a hideous picture', but Cambridge also endured a long series of election petitions and Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire land-lords were great exponents of the art of the "screw".[59] The corrupt Durham City election of 1852 was to be cited by both Granger and the Chronicle as evidence of the need for the ballot,[60] with Atherton and Fenwick rapidly following

suit,[61] while Davidson, already a veteran of Durham City Liberal politics when nominated as a candidate in 1868, was to claim the ballot as a protection against intimidation of University workers in the City.[62] Cambridge saw no less inclination among its Liberal candidates to cite local circumstances as an argument for the "secret suffrage".[63] One, Edward Twisleton, was to appear in Cambridge as an opponent of the ballot but leave, sadder and wiser, as a supporter.[64]

The boos which greeted Twisleton's initial declaration for "voting papers" might be regarded as an alternative explanation for his conversion but he was certainly not the sole Liberal, even in only the two counties studied, to follow that route. Most were County Liberals, perhaps because most in the Boroughs supported secret voting anyway. One was Henry Pease, the South Durham Quaker who, though later a strong supporter of the ballot, on the 1857 hustings only declared that he was in the process of being converted into support for it by local electoral corruption.[65] Even Huntingdonshire, a county notorious for its powerful land-lords, could not convert such a die-hard Russellite as Heathote but the latter did make an astonishing comment on the 1859 hustings, threatening that intimidation could only bring on the measure, 'antagonistic to the theory of our Constitution.'[66] In Cambridgeshire, Adeane was similarly unmoved but his successor, Richard Young was, as a dissenter, pushed towards the ballot by the threat of Church "influence" even if he refused to pledge to vote along the lines of his new-found conviction.[67] That refusal may have

played a part in Young's 1868 defeat by Brand who, having withstood the blandishments of his supposedly pro-ballot constituents in Lewes, was swayed by his first experience of Cambridgeshire electioneering![68]

The new Northern Boroughs of Darlington and Stockton saw similar conversions in 1868. Both Edmund Backhouse and Joseph Dodds were initially lukewarm on the ballot, if that! Dodds, though adopted as Liberal candidate via a Northern Reform League meeting enthusiastic for the ballot, chose to express doubts about the true extent of electoral corruption and deferred support for the ballot until the 1868 election had shown him the truth. The Durham Chronicle accurately predicted Dodds' later conversion and excused the candidate's initial position by noting his privileged position![69]

Backhouse, the candidate of the Quaker hierarchy in Darlington, similarly hedged upon the necessity for the ballot, feeling local Liberals to be divided upon the issue, though he finally followed the majority in support for secret voting. However, he did so only by supporting the ballot as a route to his genuine principle, free voting.[70] Ironically, Backhouse had certainly been the Darlington candidate who most benefited from electoral intimidation! His maverick Liberal opponent, Spark, as well as the ironworkers prominent in his campaign, had certainly felt no such hesitation concerning endorsement of the ballot.[71] The development of the Ironworkers' Union, and the ballot's clear potential benefit for the Liberals, may have been the twin causes of Backhouse's late support for secret voting but he was not

alone for David Dale, Chairman of the local Ironmasters' Association, joined his employees at the 1869 meting.[72]

The County seats in Durham, however, also reflected the slow slide in ballot support which was noticed by Atherton in 1860.[73] That was a national phenomena, as division lists show (see Table 1), and as national interest in the subject declined so did the number of MPs bothering to vote on Berkeley's annual motion. From the record figure of 491 MPs in 1858, it slid to 401 in 1860 and to just 133 on first reading in 1862. Despite the presence of 433 voting MPs in 1861, the trend seems clear.

In 1864, Sir Hedworth Williamson, the new MP for the old Durhamite strong-hold of North Durham, declared that his initial support for the ballot had been shaken by his spell as a diplomat in France and that he would brook only an experimentary introduction of the ballot in a small Southern, and hence notoriously corrupt, Borough such as St Albans. Even in 1868, when able to cite a trip to the Londonderry bastion of Seaham, Williamson only declared that he had, 'almost changed his mind on that subject.'[74] Three years later, away from his constituents, he revealed the true cause of his eventual conversion, a belief that it would reduce his huge electoral expenses![75]

South Durham also reflected the national trend as the strongly supportive Henry Pease was replaced, in 1865, by a nephew who firmly opposed the ballot. Despite the opinions of Scurfield and the clear majority of the Liberals at their adoption meeting, J.W.Pease was joined by his colleague, F.E.B.Beaumont, in firm antagonism towards the ballot. At

that meeting, Beaumont claimed that rising public disgust was already diminishing intimidation, while Pease conversely, and to hisses from his audience, expressed doubts that the ballot could really achieve the much needed, 'purity of election.'[76]

Interestingly, the two candidates were to change their views, a fact which may in part be explained by the fact that the County Durham meetings of 1868-1869, as elsewhere, were overwhelmingly supportive of the ballot. Beaumont did not explain his movement into support for the ballot but Pease did confess that his change of mind was owing to events at the 1868 general election. Pease moved far enough to declare, at the Darlington Central Hall meeting, that the nation required, 'not the voice of the employer, nor yet of the employed, but the independent voting of the whole community.'[77]

The late 1860s may have seen movement of public opinion towards the ballot but it is difficult to ascertain precisely what public opinion was. National politicians tended to feel able to claim that public opinion supported their own opinion, whether in favour[78] or against![79] At least one Radical MP, however, had to hold back his activists on the subject and Grote was certainly dispatching dummy ballot boxes to interested Liberal groups nation-wide in the 1830s.[80] The North of England was not alone in witnessing working-class demonstrations which endorsed the ballot[81], and later, of course, both the National Reform Union and the National Reform League were to follow the much smaller, but trades union-organized, Manhood Suffrage and Vote by Ballot

Association in endorsing secret voting.[82]

The support of trades unions for the ballot, of course, connected the issue to the fears of some politicians, including Torrens, that the unions could come to enter the electoral field. Across the party divide in Cambridge a Chronicle editorial also attempted to address the changing times : 'In days when capitalists have the greatest difficulty in protecting themselves against the tyranny of their combined workmen, and when unionism is raising its head and establishing its principles among agricultural labourers; it is idle to harangue against electoral intimidation by the owners of the soil and the great representatives of mechanical industry.'[83]

Nationally, several Liberal constituencies were to prove their devotion to the cause by holding test-ballots in order to select their Parliamentary candidates. Cambridge was among them, using its test-ballot to select two from three prospective candidates to contest the double by-election of 1854. The process worked well but, in 1857 and in similar circumstances, a primary ballot was refused, amidst riotous scenes, since one of the possible candidates was alleged to be a Peelite.[84] That candidate, the Hon. Arthur Gordon, interestingly declared himself to be unambiguously pro-ballot, a far cry from many prominent former Peelites on the national stage.[85] Gordon might be felt to have been unwilling to alienate pro-ballot feeling in Cambridge but in fact Kenneth Macaulay claimed that many prominent local Liberals opposed it,[86] and eight years later the Cambridge Liberals did endorse a candidate, Forsyth, who was an open opponent of

the ballot.[87] The latter may, however, merely be further evidence of the drift in support for the ballot during the early 1860s.

The best single example of that process locally was the Sunderland Herald, which followed Palmerston into opposition to the ballot but had to perform back-flips in order to do so. What was once, 'the most important agent', in combating electoral corruption became, 'labour in vain so long as public opinion does not regard the traffic as a crime.' The paper, which had once printed a National Parliamentary and Financial Reform Association address urging the questioning of all candidates concerning the ballot, was later to scorn secret voting as, 'a subject for that hustings interrogation through which it is the delight of local busybodies and nobodies to put unhappy candidates.'[88] Though the Herald had published an account by W.S.Lindsay, a future MP for Sunderland, revealing the Tory use of corruption against him in a Welsh election it later chose to follow Mill against Lindsay's cure for such events. On one occasion an editorial was even to claim that, 'We have never been believers in the ballot'![89]

If Liberal conversions to the ballot might indicate public support for the measure in Counties Durham and Cambridgeshire, there is clearly also evidence pointing the other way. For example, during his first campaign in Durham City Atherton said, 'I have come to the conclusion, tardily and reluctantly, that without the Ballot, as society is at present constituted, and is likely to exist, the most admirably devised elective machinery will be at fault, and

the Elective Franchise, instead of being as it ought to be, an honour and a boon, will become, as is now often the case, a curse and a degradation.'[90] He was not alone in couching his support for secret voting in such apologetic terms,[91] a trend which even included the Chartist veteran R.G.Gammage.[92] How is that to be explained? Firstly, and not unnaturally, Radicals wished to appear as moderate as possible, but it is surely also possible to suggest that pro-ballot Liberals were striving to soften their divide from those local Liberals who were opposed to secret voting. That the latter existed should be no surprise for they simply followed the line of the two great national leaders of their party.

However, it should not be forgotten that there was a Liberal tendency running contrary to that national line. It certainly played a part in the failure of W.F.Campbell to regain the Liberal nomination for Cambridge in 1854[93] and the candidacy for the 1863 by-election there was quite blatantly restricted to those willing to support the ballot.[94] Outside Cambridge even the effectively moribund, and impeccably moderate, Liberal party in Huntingdon roused itself to raise an 1859 petition for the ballot, including fifty of the tiny electorate.[95] A similar petition, with the majority of Bedford's Liberal voters' signatures attached, was to secure the previously denied support of the two MPs for that Borough.[96]

Tories, unsurprisingly, tended to doubt the supposed popularity of the ballot. That was certainly true of the local Tory press, especially when Liberals such as Amberley provided them with an excuse to dust off their

prejudices.[97] It is worthy of note that the Durham County Advertiser enjoyed, what was to prove mistaken, pleasure upon the passage of an 1867 Act which left only the supposedly infertile ground of the ballot for agitators such as Beales and Potter.[98] While Fowler claimed that the ballot held little public support,[99] it was Tories, rather than his fellow Liberals, who followed his line, including Barrington in North Durham in 1865.[100] However, it was only three years later, and in the same constituency, that George Elliot was to scornfully denounce the pro-ballot declarations of his two Liberal opponents on the grounds that they were merely following public opinion.[101] The apparent contradiction may reflect poorly upon Tory knowledge of local public opinion, or it may indicate a shift in public opinion in favour of secret voting following the passage of the 1867 Act.

Owing to the length of the ballot agitation the Liberal local press in both Durham City and Cambridge was to waver in its support. The Cambridge Independent Press was generally loyal to the ballot and happy to follow the line set by the Ballot Society.[102] In 1858, however, it wisely attempted to take the sting out of the issue by claiming that secret voting would, 'neither produce the benefit to one party, nor the injury to the other, that each anticipates.'[103] However, in 1860, the Independent Press did step out of line, holding an abortive campaign for its own suggestion, the 'Ballot - Without the Ballot Box." The plan merely restricted admission to the polling booth to the voter, an official clerk and an agent for each candidate. The vote would be recorded but not the voter's name, and the

Agents would be forbidden to make any notes at all. Hence, the vote would not be secret but a measure of privacy would be afforded especially in the larger constituencies. Unfortunately, no voter could guarantee that his vote had not been mentally recorded by one of the "wronged" candidates' agents. Those problems caused the Independent Press, when it repeated its idea two months later, to stress that it was merely an half-way house on the road to genuinely secret voting. Soon afterwards, the scheme was quietly dropped.[104] Though only an interlude, that episode perhaps revealed the frustration felt by many campaigners at the ballot's long delay.

The Durham Chronicle proved that the apparent failure of the ballot campaign could push some supporters even further. In 1852, the paper, then run by John Wheeler of Surbiton, felt unable to follow those Radicals who set the ballot as the key-stone for any Reform. It performed a remarkable volte-face, considering its previous repeated calls for a ballot agitation[105] by applauding the Reform Bill's silence on secret voting! The ballot had suddenly become sly, sneaking and under-hand; and the paper did not shudder from repeating the Tory argument that foreign evidence proved that only moral reform could really eliminate electoral corruption.[106] However, shortly afterwards, with Wheeler's replacement by a more locally-based Liberal consortium, the Chronicle rallied to the old cause, a process which had already begun even before Wheeler departed.[107] The paper, however, was not to attempt to force the ballot on other Reform Bills, complaining that the prospects for an

agitation had been scotched by ludicrous, 'Communist theories and Chartist declamations', which had left the electorate apathetic.[108]

In 1857, having reported the rigging, censorship and mass abstentionism of the French General Election, the Cambridge Chronicle crowed : 'What have you to say to this ye members and friends of the Ballot Society? Of course you will have plenty of "ifs" and "buts", and equivocations, but you cannot deny the fact as we have stated it; and the only legitimate inference is that your favourite system would produce similar results here, if you could only persuade the people to curse themselves by adopting it.'[109] This was a striking example of a Conservative tendency to attempt to damn the ballot by its foreign record. Morritt, a North Riding MP, followed the Chronicle in examining the situation in France[110] but others often preferred to look to America or Australia.[111] Even a Cambridgeshire Liberal, Adeane, was to feel similarly.[112] Some Tories chose to go further in order to support their arguments against the secret vote. Hence, Lord Adolphus Vane-Tempest actually claimed that the ballot had increased corruption in the United States, a view echoed by Lord Royston concerning Australia.[113] Andrew Steuart, though not a dogmatic opponent of the ballot, declared that foreign experience meant that it should only be introduced on the basis of Local Option.[114]

Williamson and Delane were not alone in having personal experience of the ballot. Lord Ernest Vane-Tempest felt that his 'lengthened residence' in the United States had proved that the ballot was, 'worse than useless.'[115] James

Hartley's experiences 'upon the Continent...had witnessed one of the most despotic tyrannies of the earth fixed upon a people by its [the ballot's] means', an obvious reference to Louis Napoleon who, like Abraham Lincoln was felt by "Talk of the Week", a Cambridge Chronicle columnist, to have been elected via stuffed ballot-boxes.[116] Such supposed "evidence" lay behind the regular Tory warnings that the ballot could endanger extant English liberties[117] and Conservatives were no doubt unimpressed by Sir Charles Douglas's protest that the ballot had helped France by making it unnecessary for the Emperor to use force in order to take power![118]

In terms of personal experience, one local Cambridge MP, the Liberal Robert Torrens, perhaps stood out in the whole kingdom since he could boast of having been elected, and governed, under the ballot, as well as having voted under its regulations. From Torrens' point of view, the ballot had not only eliminated electoral corruption, intimidation and political ruffianism in Australia but it had also done so sufficiently well to convert him from his prior opposition to it.[119]

Liberals tended to view foreign evidence, as one might expect, rather differently than did Conservatives. Hence, the Cambridge Independent Press blamed France's problems upon the fact that the ballot there was not sufficiently secret, and problems elsewhere on the fact that, unlike in the United Kingdom, countries like America and Australia had not yet established the supremacy of the law over the Government, the mob or whoever.[120] The Durham

Chronicle was not inclined to follow suit from those conceding unfortunate results from foreign experiences with the ballot. It claimed that the United States and Australia, as well as Belgium and Switzerland, proved that the ballot, if not a cure-all, would not lead to 'Anarchy'.[121] If that comprised damning with faint praise, local Radicals were ready to be less equivocating. In Cambridge, H.T.Hall declared that the ballot had proved itself in Italy, America, France and the colonies, while Tait of the City of Durham Reform Association noted, also in 1866 and one suspects with wry amusement, that even Prussia had now preceded Britain to the ballot![122] In doing so, these grass-roots were simply following in the foot-steps of such prominent national political figures as Cobden and Goderich.[123]

The major opposition to the ballot came, of course, upon the ground that since the franchise was a "trust" exercised on behalf of non-electors by electors, the non-electors had the right to see how it was exercised. Whatever the cant and hypocrisy of this argument, especially when delivered by land-lords or manufacturers, it did have some weight under a restricted suffrage. George Hudson perhaps put the argument best - 'I believe that in voting for a representative in Parliament you are called to discharge a great trust; and who ever heard of a trust being performed in secret. - (hear)'[124] - but he had no shortage of echoes among local Conservatives[125]. Even two anti-ballot Liberals, Forsyth and Beaumont, made similar statements.[126] The clear implication was that the ballot could not be permitted short of universal suffrage. Just how "universal" was suggested

when George Hudson claimed that women and families had the right to know how their men voted, and by Elliot's failure to neglect the claim of the peoples of India to know how each of his North Durham constituents had polled![127]

Certain Liberals, including T.C.Thompson at the local level, refuted that argument by simply claiming the vote to be a "right" rather than a "trust".[128] However, less Radical souls, like Shafto Adair in the Cambridge of the 1850s, could be equally facetious. When heckled on the hustings concerning his support for secret voting Adair declared that, 'every man who opposed the Ballot, should in order to prove his consistency, go home, and send for a locksmith and desire him to take all the locks and bolts off their street doors (Cheers).'[129] Many other Liberals, perhaps noting the position of Russell and Palmerston,[130] chose to be more cautious. Hence, the Durham Chronicle noted that a "trust", to be of any use, had to be exercised freely.[131] Certainly, in Cambridgeshire and County Durham, there is no record of a non-elector speaking in support of his supposed right to know how his betters voted. They may have preferred the vision raised by R.D.Shafto when, with one of his very occasional oratorical "hits", he noted that monied men were not required to show that they had spent their cash for the good of the neighbourhood![132]

There undoubtedly were Liberals and Radicals disinclined to face the ballot. Nationally, Sir George Grey and John Stuart Mill were two prominent figures who genuinely seem to have been unable to accept that their fellow-men could be trusted with free exercise of the franchise, even under the

restricted electorate of the 1850s.[133] Some of Mill's closest disciples chose not to follow him down this path[134] but the support of even one "Radical philosopher" could only be a valuable asset for those opposed to the ballot.

That being said it is perhaps surprising how little local Tories made of Mill's declarations. In fact, only Barrington deigned to notice them![135] The Liberals could not afford to remain quiet, perhaps because their supporters were rather more likely to take notice of Mill. Hence, Torrens, a self-acknowledged ex-follower of "John Stewart Mill", talked of his old master's, 'fallacy that the franchise is a trust', while "Metropolitan Gossip", on behalf of the Independent Press, acknowledged that Mill was right in principle though he felt Bright to be right in fact![136] In 1871, however, the Independent Press published an editorial which justified Mill's worst nightmare : 'The voter represents nobody but himself, and the constitution requires that his vote shall be that of his will only.'[137] The Durham Chronicle preferred to turn Mill's cynical view of the electorate back on itself, claiming that Mill would also support the ballot if he had to fund his own electoral corruption, instead of having it paid for him![138]

Some Conservatives adopted more idiosyncratic arguments. Mowbray and the Cambridge Chronicle were to equate what they perceived as the ballot's enforced concealment of voters' opinions with a future threat to free speech. The Chronicle declared, 'Secresy (sic)! forsooth, if secresy is necessary, in the election of members of Parliament, why stop there; why allow a man to openly express

his opinion on any subject in this free country?'[139] Meanwhile, the indefatigable P.B.Smollett chose to oppose the ballot on the less doom-laden grounds that it would, 'make all elections as irksome, lugubrious, and melancholy jobs as they well can be.'[140] As has already been seen, others, including Lansbury, did not see this as a disadvantage of the ballot's introduction!

It seems clear that the period of 1867-1868 was crucial in the adoption of the ballot. The enfranchisement of new hordes of eminently corruptible voters and the experience of a general election, 'more like savage orgies than the deliberate choice of representatives',[141] left, as has been seen, many Liberals moving into support for the ballot from previous opposition. Hence, the eminently moderate J.W.Pease's previously quoted declaration at Darlington Central Hall.[142] The 1868 election also introduced many new MPs into the Commons, mostly Liberals supportive of the ballot.[143] Indeed, after 1868, virtually the whole national Liberal Party, from Lawson to Goschen, seemed wedded to the secret vote.[144] At the head of the party, Whigs such as Bruce and Hartington were also, if reluctantly, swinging into line.[145] Most important of all, Gladstone himself, having firmly declared against the ballot in 1866, was to deny ever having really opposed it![146]

At the Cambridgeshire grass-roots, Alderman Apthorpe noted a similar flood of new recruits to the cause and, by 1872, Torrens felt his Borough party almost unanimously supportive of secret voting.[147] That, of course, rather clashed with Smollett's opinion that the public viewed

the ballot with, 'supreme indifference, if not disgust.'[148] However, the Government's adoption of the ballot, despite the incredulity of "Metropolitan Gossip", sealed Liberal unity behind what Scurfield termed, echoing Cobden, 'the keystone of Liberalism.'[149] That tended to reflect the national situation though Tories continued to protest that the public felt differently.[150]

The last remaining battle was fought over the secrecy of the ballot but Liberals tended to remain firm against the "optional ballot", despite past pledges in its favour by such prominent local figures as J.W.Pease and Alderman Bramwell, the Liberal leader in Durham City.[151] Even the Durham County Advertiser confessed that such a scheme would entail, 'insuperable difficulties.'[152] Those prominent Liberals, including Grey and Childers, who did endorse the "optional ballot" were scorned by the Durham Chronicle for being motivated by, 'personal disappointment', over their lack of high office![153]

On the question of the ballot, local evidence suggests that there had long been chinks in the Tory opposition. Hodgson, the MP for Tynemouth, long supported a "permissive ballot" though, 'he felt certain that, under such a condition, it would not be adopted by one of his constituents.'[154] While a "permissive ballot" was of course useless it remains worthy of note that a Tory was willing to endorse anything called a ballot. Another, Andrew Steuart, declared that he, 'saw nothing in the ballot which could possibly tend to the overthrow of the British Constitution.' As has already been noted, Steuart went further than Hodgson,

offering the secret ballot via "Local Option".[155]

Of Conservatives in the areas studied, before 1868, only Sir Henry Strachey (of East Norfolk, though he received considerable coverage in the Cambridge press) declared himself a 'convert' to the compulsory, secret, ballot, an event unusual enough nationally to secure Strachey nomination to the governing Council of the Ballot Society, an offer he declined, perhaps proving that his adoption of the ballot did not necessarily indicate any dilution of his conservatism. His motive, having just suffered at the hands of the Whiggish "territorial influence", was simply that, 'he was convinced it would do more good than harm to the Conservative cause.'[156] In this he was joined by Farrer, sometime Conservative MP for South Durham, though the latter magnanimously declared that he would not support a measure such as the ballot merely due to personal advantage![157] Nationally, Rose's movement towards the ballot during his psephological studies in 1858 might have also been a realization of the extent of Liberal electoral malpractice.[158] However, he would surely also have known of the widespread Tory use of such tactics! Electoral frustration was most likely behind the temporary inclination of Disraeli and Stanley towards the "optional ballot."[159]

After 1867 a clear distinction was to appear between the attitudes of Conservatives in the two counties studied to the advance of the ballot. Torrens' attempts to mollify the Tories were not accepted at face value by the Cambridge Chronicle, which was to fiercely denounce the national Conservative leadership's supine attitude towards

the approach of secret voting.[160] For C.W.Naylor, primary ballots were, 'Christmas Burlesque', and the 1867 Act had actually lessened the need for secret voting by giving voters safety in numbers. Liberal support was denounced as a, 'great hereditary fetish', while also being supposedly hypocritical![161] The fervently anti-democratic Naylor was, however, certainly not afraid to use arguments which also exposed him to the latter charge : 'we suppose our arrogant minister and his tyrant majority are going to continue again to force this measure on the country...The Ballot was never mentioned as a ministerial measure, but the...grovelling herd will doubtless pass it.' The Chronicle's proprietor was ready to quote both Mill and Palmerston against secret voting[162] but he showed signs of the desperation of a man who knew his side would prove to be the losing one. Hence, the Chronicle struggled to limit the ballot to a "permissive" nature, even as it castigated the Government for its failure to provide a truly secret franchise![163]

Charles Balls, President of the Cambridge Senior Conservative Club, said in 1874 that, 'He was never an advocate of the Ballot. He did not care to reap advantage by such means.'[164] However, Balls, practised his politics in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire where intimidatory power lay with the landed Tory. In the North, especially after 1867, the boot was on the other foot and power lay with the great Liberal manufacturers and coal-masters, men like Durham, Palmer and the Pease clan. Even in Durham City itself, the Liberal influence of the carpet manufacturer Henderson, notwithstanding his Tory brother, and other Liberal

manufacturers was formidable. In the 1868 election just two Conservatives were returned in the thirteen seats of County Durham and the Tories there accordingly began to shift their position on the ballot.

The first to do so was Ralph Ward Jackson, MP for his own company town who, motivated by the belief that the North Eastern Railway had intimidated some of his potential supporters in 1868, a fact apparently disproved by his defeat in 1874, declared in December 1869 that electoral corruption had to be addressed, since nine-tenths of worker-voters could not vote freely. He declared that the ballot held no fears for him and duly voted for it in 1871 (see Table 2)[165] which is clearly significant despite Ward Jackson's back-sliding into party-loyalty in 1872.[166]

If Ward Jackson's references to an "optional ballot" may have harked back to the days of Steuart and Hodgson the Hartlepools MP did trigger a change in the Durham County Advertiser. Though the paper had criticized the ballot as late as 1870 as a consequence of the, 'precipitous rush to democracy',[167] only three years later, after Ward Jackson's second speech for the "optional" ballot, the Advertiser endorsed his sentiment. The ballot remained unfortunate but it had become necessary and an editorial bluntly pointed out that times had changed and the ballot was now necessary to complete Disraeli's unleashing of the working-classes. A further year on the movement in wider Durham Conservative opinion allowed the paper to be less defensive and even to claim credit as, 'perhaps [the] first among Conservative papers to express itself as not altogether unfavourable to

its adoption...The Conservatives do not fear the result of election by ballot, and they openly acknowledge that there are reasons for the exercise of the principle of secret voting which entitle the method to a trial...in heaven's name, let us be rid of this everlasting bone of contention.'[168] Despite temporarily following Ward Jackson's loss of nerve in Spring 1872, perhaps due to the particularly partizan nature of the issue at that time,[169] the Advertiser soon reverted to support for the Ballot Bill.[170] Only after the proprietorship of the paper passed to Salkeld and Moore was criticism of the ballot to resume and even then only after the decidedly messy Durham County and City elections of 1874. Ironically, the same events proved the ballot's usefulness, if not perfection, to the paper's local Liberal rival![171]

There is evidence that the Advertiser's motivation was essentially the local conditions. Its metropolitan correspondent's "London Letter" never endorsed the ballot prior to its passage into law[172] while the Durham-based "Neptune" declared his neutrality on the ballot as early as March 1870, if only in the hope Conservatives might pick up seats in the large Boroughs! Within a month errors in a test-ballot, in of all places Bristol, was to dent "Neptune's" confidence in the ballot and he reverted to a sceptical, though rarely hostile, attitude.[173]

Though it is impossible to concretely establish the depth of the ideological relationship between the Advertiser and its Conservative market, the same process was occurring in the latter. As early as May 1870 a Crook Tory demanded the ballot as protection against the great Liberal

employers such as Pease, Beaumont and Ferens. Similar sentiments rapidly followed from the Tory Reverend Doctor Tristram in Castle Eden and Alderman Tyzack of Sunderland, the latter even claiming that the dastardly Liberal magnates were attempting to keep the ballot from passing![174] Even William Henderson, though he continued his opposition to the ballot, claimed to believe that its passage would help the Tories recapture Durham City. His City colleague, Councillor Robson, was somewhat more enthusiastic, demanding the ballot not only for Parliamentary elections but also for municipal ones![175]

Major Trotter, the prominent Bishop Auckland Conservative, continued to oppose the ballot in principle, though he endorsed it as a route to independent voting, and called it, 'about the most Conservative measure that had of late years been introduced into the House of Commons...If it should deteriorate the moral character of the nation, as he believed it would, that was not their blame.' Thus, while blaming any ill-effects on the Liberals, Trotter hoped to free Tory votes. He was to demonstrate his belief in the Liberal "screw" by later stressing to North Durham Conservatives that, 'they might depend upon it it [the ballot] was secret.'[176] It is ironic, considering such hopes, that the following elections were to buck the national trend by unseating all three incumbent Tories and returning a Liberal sweep of the thirteen seats. Trotter was also not alone in feeling the need to warn his supporters against blackguards who claimed the vote was not secret, Crawford of the DMA did the same for his newly enfranchised pitmen in

1885.[177]

The Durham Chronicle and T.C.Thompson perhaps went too far in cynically comparing the conservative adoption of the ballot with their actions in 1867,[178] and certainly some Tory resistance to secret voting did persist in the North. That of such Peers as Vane and Ravensworth could be written off as the squealing of endangered landed power[179] by Liberals raised on the words of Cobden[180] but they were not the whole story. Powlton, in Bishop Auckland, could still milk loud applause by suggesting, 'that if the ballot were in operation at the next election every Conservative would manfully declare for whom he voted, and leave the Radicals to practise the arts of dissimination (sic) and mystification beneath its mask.'[181]

The North Riding-based leader of the Durham City Tories, John Wharton, proved how shallow some of the conversions to the ballot could be. In 1868, he encapsulated his opinion thus, 'I hate the Ballot', and declared his life-long opposition to secret voting.[182] Indecently soon afterwards, claiming that the "screw" had cost him the 1868 election, Wharton, following the death of Davidson, joined the Advertiser in support for his self-acknowledged, 'old enemy.' Temporarily casting aside his strongly anti-democratic convictions he declared himself ready to swallow his doubts and support the ballot if most people were in favour of it.[183] Once safely ensconced at Westminster, via the by-election for Davidson's old seat, Wharton felt able to ignore the electorate's views once more and to support voting papers against the ballot.[184] Nevertheless, these temporary

declarations by such Tory candidates as Wharton and F.S.Powell may have played a role in persuading Conservatives to limit their resistance to the Government's ballot, and hence deprive the Liberals of a valuable "cry" which might even have formed the basis for the calling of an early general election.[185]

The question of secret voting was not quite settled by the inauguration of the ballot in 1872. The Advertiser, for instance, believed a compulsory ballot would not survive its eight-year probationary period while hoping that it would eliminate its Whig midwives and leave politics a straight fight between Radical and Tory.[186] Some Liberals certainly did fear, in 1880, a Tory plot to remove the ballot in the County constituencies but most Conservatives had followed Liberals like Cambridge's Josiah Chater in recognizing that the ballot worked well in operation.[187] Some chose to magnify minor procedural errors, which certainly did occur,[188] and certain reactionary figures, including Salisbury and Grey on the national stage, still bemoaned the ballot[189] but the clock could not be turned back. When, in 1882, Touchstone criticized the ballot, while lecturing to the Durham Constitutional Association (DCA), he was chided by a local Conservative, and Sackville, expressing his preference for open voting as late as 1894, received a hostile response from his Wisbech audience.[190]

By 1882, opinion had moved so far as to cause Salkeld's Durham County Advertiser to criticize Sunderland's Conservatives for their failure to use a primary-ballot to select their Prospective Parliamentary Candidate.[191] A last

word might be left to the Cambridge Independent Press and its message to the British electorate upon the conclusion of the, 'forty years war' for their right to vote as they wished : 'No influence but his own conscience can in future regulate his votes. For many, enfranchisement would no longer be, "a mockery, a delusion, and a snare".'[192]

Table 1

Parliamentary Divisions on the Ballot -

Year	MPs	Support	EB	EC	EU	WB	WC	SB	SC
1833	111	23.1%	82	20	0	2	2	4	1
1835	107	24.3%	82	14	0	1	1	8	1
1836	67	12.9%	58	6	0	1	1	1	0
1837	127	25.6%	94	21	0	2	1	6	3
1838	152	28.0%	114	14	0	5	2	12	5
1839	168	31.8%	122	15	0	4	3	17	7
1842	131	22.3%	100	7	0	5	0	15	4
1848	78	23.2%	62	8	0	1	0	6	1
1849	79	18.8%	60	9	0	3	0	6	1
1850	106	23.7%	84	9	0	4	0	7	2
1851	79	19.8%	60	6	0	3	0	8	2
1852	113	26.8%	88	10	0	3	0	11	1
1853	139	32.9%	105	10	0	5	2	16	1
1854	120	27.9%	98	8	0	4	1	9	0
1855	138	30.4%	111	6	0	4	2	13	2
1856	98	19.8%	81	3	0	2	1	9	2
1857	154	33.1%	121	6	0	6	3	16	2
1858	166	37.2%	125	12	0	6	3	18	2
1860	128	29.5%	102	5	0	5	2	12	2

KEY : EB - English Boroughs. EC - English Counties.

EU - English Universities. WB - Welsh Boroughs.

WC - Welsh Counties. SB - Scottish Boroughs.

SC - Scottish Counties.

NB. The ballot divisions of 1871 and 1872 are not listed since they were contested after the ballot had become official Government, and hence Liberal party, policy.

Table 2

Votes on the ballot of Durham and Cambridgeshire MPs -

Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Hon. E.T.Yorke	X	A	X	A	A	A	A	A	A	A		
Lord G.Manners	X	A	A	X	A	A					A	A
C.W.Towneley	A	A										
R.A.S.Adair	F				F	F						
Hon. W.F.Campbell	A	X										
J.Peel	X	A	X	A	A	A	A	A	A	A		
T.Baring	X	A	A	X	A	X	A	A	A	X	X	A
E.Fellowes	X	A	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	A	A	A
Viscount Mandeville	X	X	X	A	A							
R.D.Shafto	X	F	F	F	X	X	X	F	X	X		
Viscount Seaham	X	X										
H.Bowes	X	X										
Lord H.Vane	A	X	A	X	X	A	A	A	X			
Spearman	X	X										
T.C.Granger	F	F										
G.Hudson	X	A	X	X	A	X	A	A	A			
Sir H.Williamson Sen.	X	X										
Sir W.Hutt	X	A	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	X	F
R.Ingham	X	X	F	X	X	F	X	F	F	F		
E.Ball			A	A	A	X	A	A	A	A		
W.Atherton			F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F		
J.Farrer			A	X	A	X				A		
W.D.Seymour			F	F								
J.R.Mowbray			X	A	A	A	A	A	A	A		
Lord A.Vane-Tempest				A	X	X	X	X	X	X		
F.Mowatt					F	X	X					
H.Fenwick					F	X	F	F	X	F		
J.Rust						A	X	A	X			
H.J.Adeane							X	X	X	X		
K.Macaulay							A	A	X	A		
A.Steuart							A	A	X	A		
H.Pease							X	F	F	F		
Lord R.Montagu										X	A	A
W.S.Lindsay										F		
Viscount Royston											A	A
J.Henderson											F	F
Sir H.Williamson Jr.											F	F
H.B.W.Brand											F	X
R.R.Torrens											F	F
W.Fowler											F	F
G.Elliot											A	A
J.Candlish											F	F
E.T.Gourley											F	F
J.W.Pease											F	F
F.E.B.Beaumont											X	F
E.Backhouse											F	F
J.L.Wharton											X	X
J.C.Stevenson											F	F
R.Ward Jackson											F	A
J.Dodds											F	F

KEY : F - Voted in Favour.

A - Voted Against.

X - Did not Vote.

▒ - MP was not then in the Commons.

1 - 1851 ballot motion.

2 - 1852 ballot motion.

3 - 1853 ballot motion.

4 - 1854 ballot motion.

5 - 1855 ballot motion.

6 - 1856 ballot motion.

7 - 1857 ballot motion.

8 - 1858 ballot motion.

9 - 1859 ballot motion.

10 - 1860 ballot motion.

11 - 1871 division on the ballot.

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Chapter 7 - Household Suffrage in the Counties : Votes for "Hodge"

If the 1885 Reform Act was nothing more than an extension of the 1867 settlement, by enfranchising two million new voters it was nonetheless a practical, if not an ideological, stride towards democracy. The franchise became sufficiently wide to render any attempt to determine the social order of the newly enfranchised a farce.[1] The nation, if not Parliament, was, 'ready for democracy', even if it was not necessarily true that, 'everyone realized...that eventually universal manhood suffrage would be granted.'[2]

Conservatives left a Liberal Reform Bill unopposed for the first time in 1885 and Elliot, the future City of Durham MP, had no doubts as to the reason why : 'In 1884 the Conservative Party had no intention of burning its boats in a struggle against lowering the franchise. Both parties must in truth recognize the facts of the time. Nowadays we live under a democracy, and no political Party can afford to be directly anti-democratic...It was [in 1884] impossible to justify the continuance unchanged of the existing system. The distinctions between town and country had become arbitrary and unreal.'[3] Gladstone did not believe in Conservative support for County household suffrage and his fears were supported by Tory ones for the "landed interest", as well as later allegations of mass Conservative hypocrisy by the sons of two prominent Tory Democrats.[4] However, there were conservative elements which were supportive of franchise extension[5] and division was perhaps inevitable at a time of

such chaos in the party.[6]

The Conservative Party, after 1868, seems to have overwhelmingly believed that, though County household suffrage was coming, it need not be hurried on![7] Disraeli, scorning Corry's advice[8] despite a flirtation with resistance, rapidly realized that redistribution was the key issue.[9] Many Conservatives may have remained unenthusiastic about democracy but the surviving fragments of ultra-Toryism were capable of producing only manifestly anachronistic schemes.[10]

At the local level, grudging acceptance also seems to have been prominent. Opposition was present, but it declined with the passage of time. George Elliot, as a Member for the miners' district of North Durham, had to face the issue as early as 1868. With both Lowthian Bell and Hedworth Williamson declaring for County household suffrage, Elliot, with an eye to his own political position, had no choice but to oppose that effective disfranchisement of his current voters. Sternly opposing the transfer of power to ,'hand labourers', Elliot stubbornly stood by the representation of views, rather than of 'noses'.[11] Only in 1874 did he submit to franchise assimilation and even then only if it was 'guarded' by by a redistribution of parliamentary seats.[12] Two other County Tories, Barrington and Pemberton, also trusted to the latter as a safeguard.[13]

There can, however, be little doubt that there was considerable Tory resistance to County household suffrage in these years. Hunter Rodwell, the farmers' candidate in Cambridgeshire, drew support from F.S.Powell, the official

Tory candidate, via his refusal to pander to the whims of those, 'extreme democrats', who would, 'swamp all but one class, and throw all the governing power into the hands of one body, many of the people in which were above all others the least fit to exercise it'. His views were echoed locally by Karslake, and by Gainsford Bruce in the North.[14] Indeed, at this time, only Duncan, fresh from his sojourn among the good-humoured pitmen of Morpeth, was ready from a Conservative view-point to term the franchise anomaly, 'ridiculous.'[15]

Even into the eighteen-eighties most Conservatives remained distinctly less convinced. In 1882, curiously while addressing an audience of his local Tory workingmen, R.U.P.Fitzgerald said, 'It was not that he distrusted the workingman, but to extend the franchise without revising the representation would be like taking a cog out of an enormous number of wheels and so making the machine go in jerks.'[16] His then colleague, Gedge, was more blatantly anti-democratic : 'They had the best constitution in the world...He was not in favour of continually tinkering and altering the constitution...for the mere sake of altering it (Hear, hear).' Having endorsed Salisbury's earlier vision of the nation as a "joint-stock company", Gedge declared, 'It was the forces of the country that ought to be represented. Amongst those forces were intelligence, calculation, and property. Surely they had as much right to be represented as mere numbers. If they adopted manhood suffrage...it would be the ruin of the country as it had been the ruin of other countries in the past.' Claiming that the Liberals knew that they could not fool any single set of voters more than once,

Gedge felt certain that universal suffrage would rapidly follow the proposed County household franchise.[17] He was far from alone among local Conservative candidates in holding such hard-line sentiments.[18]

The county Boroughs, as the likely losers in any redistribution, were the natural source of resistance to any extension of the franchise, since the latter would inevitably produce one. Their MPs included such archly anti-democratic figures as Gedge and Wharton,[19] the latter being notable for his failure to adjust to changing times, a trait which left him, even in 1882, urging the 'old Liberals', and specifically J.W.Pease, to rally against a democratic tide which could only result in, 'anarchy, socialism and atheism (loud applause).'[20] Only in 1884 did Wharton even accept that a Reform Bill was a subject worthy of consideration![21]

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the strongest opposition to County household suffrage came from the County Conservatives. Hicks, as well as attacking, 'pure democracy', and the proposed timing of Reform, denounced the 1884 Bill as, 'the thin end of the wedge of the "one man one vote" principle...the most democratic proposal ever made in that House.'[22] Bulwer also fiercely defended the constitution opposing any enfranchisement which, for a mere election-cry, would swamp, 'property and intelligence', by which he clearly meant the farmers![23] Bulwer scorned franchise assimilation unless and until, 'every working man shall be honest, sober, well educated, and respectable', a qualification which was effectively all-embracing![24] Two other local County Tory MPs, Thornhill and Montagu, both

preferred another staple Conservative argument, that the Government should be concentrating on solving social problems rather than expending time on airy-fairy political reform.[25] Liberal obloquy was concentrated upon Sir Robert Peel, the maverick MP for Huntingdon, who had made his own personal position clear in a speech at that town's Corn Exchange in March 1884. For Peel franchise assimilation was, 'a grave step', and he effectively refused to endorse the enfranchisement of anyone who was not a Conservative![26] Once returned to Parliament he described the 1884 Bill as, 'a direct appeal to mob violence', placing them, ' on the eve of a revolutionary epoch.' Social reform went a-begging while the Commons, despite the lack of any agitation, prepared to, 'sign a blank cheque for their future political extinction.'[27] The effects of this speech were clearly daunting since Peel was to return to the Commons four days later with a somewhat ineffectual "explanation" : 'I also said I was prepared to give the electoral power to all those who by their interest, by their intelligence, and their character had a stake in the country.'[28]

At the Tory grass-roots the issue attracted little interest. In Cambridge the only lengthy comments came from visiting National Union lecturers, but those two prominent figures did illustrate the drift in national Tory party policy which occurred between 1880 and 1883. On the earlier date, Waits produced many of the anti-extension arguments mentioned above but, three years later, Stokes, ironically speaking in Huntingdon, delivered a rather different message : 'He was not afraid of the inevitable household suffrage in

the counties, for he believed that the peasants of England were as intelligent and patriotic as the operatives of the Borough (cheers).' Such noble sentiments, however, did not prevent Stokes demanding an increase in the number of plural votes![29] Undoubtedly, Tory opinion had been influenced by the rapid advance of the rural population towards the polling booths.

Both London-based lecturers were well to the "left" of such locally-based figures as the Rev. Canon Tristram. Even in 1883 the latter was in fear that County household suffrage and electoral districts could unite to hand all power to, 'the demagogues who ruled the great trade unions', leading to the ultimate horror of progressive taxation! For such Tories the franchise remained merely, 'a trust for the general good.' Like Wharton, Tristram was eager to warn that Gladstone's Bill would hand every County Durham constituency over to Crawford and his pitmen of the Durham Miners Association (DMA).[30] The reactionary Tory cleric, of which Tristram was an example, was also a common figure in Sedgefield and Durham City.[31] Perhaps most prominent among them was the Rev. Burdon, based in Castle Eden. Perceiving a clear-cut political choice between, 'Conservatism and revolution', Burdon warned that if, 'they fell under a complete democracy it might mean the prostitution of the power of the whole country (applause).' The issue was stark. Democracy equalled, 'the nationalisation of land. This would not mean an attack simply upon land or mineral royalties, but upon all kinds of property (hear, hear).'[32] The Reverend gentleman's opinion may have been encouraged by the fact that

at least one County Durham Reform meeting, in the Deerness Valley, was held under the auspices of the National Land League of Great Britain.[33]

However, not all Tory opinion was so solidly anti-Reform. As early as 1868 Dr. Pyle, a prominent figure among North Durham Conservatives, had endorsed franchise assimilation.[34] However, Conservative support for County household suffrage generally had to wait for the crunch in 1884 since most local Tories, like Britton in Ryton, continued to gladly leave the "Democratic" label to the Liberals.[35] However, in 1884, though certain die-hards continued to stubbornly deny the existence of any popular feeling for Reform,[36] extension of the franchise went unchallenged at the great "counter-agitation" meetings held in Wisbech and Huntingdon.[37]

Nationally, Tory Democracy was not a relevant advance along the road to democracy, even Labouchere and Churchill could agree upon that point![38] Balfour and Forwood seem to have genuinely supported County household suffrage but Churchill showed very little evidence of a genuine view on the subject.[39] Expressions of support were made, but quite possibly only in order to further Churchill's attempts to gain control of the National Union[40] since grass-roots Conservatives in progressive areas such as Lancashire, Birmingham and Edinburgh, supposedly supported franchise assimilation.[41] That certainly was not the case in County Durham. The only real example of "Tory Democracy" in the North-East came from one Major Briggs of Holdon.[42] Despite the opinions of at least two commentators,[43] and a possibly

rash comment in 1873,[44] Tories certainly did not receive a Tory Democratic lead from their national leader in 1884.[45]

On this issue the local press may be particularly useful since the proprietors of the Liberal organs in both Cambridge and Durham City were eager to obtain new readers from amongst the prospective new electorate.[46] The split along party lines was stark in 1868. For the local Tory newspapers, democracy remained a danger to the State, and "Neptune" was not alone in his assertion that the democratic sentiments of such as Dilke and Gladstone could only lead to the "communism" of a Bradlaugh or an Odger.[47] The Liberal Cambridge Independent Press was also to criticize the latter two ogres, but over their alleged willingness to use physical force methods to secure Reform.[48]

It was, ironically, in 1872 that the Durham County Advertiser declared the issue of Reform to be at an end, claiming that even Bright now had all he had asked for.[49] In that same year, Trevelyan's motion for franchise assimilation, making its first appearance in the Commons, found a receptive audience in both local Liberal newspapers.[50] Interestingly, once confronted by Trevelyan's concrete proposals, the local Conservative papers adopted rather distinct positions. The Cambridge Chronicle, though supposedly surrounded by ignorant "Hodges", may have opposed Trevelyan but it was also careful to stress that, 'the faith of the Conservatives in the character of the farm labourer is quite as strong as that of their Radical opponents.' As early as 1875 Naylor was claiming that his opposition to the Bill rested solely upon its failure to include redistribution

proposals.[51] Possibly eager to defuse any National Agricultural Labourers Union (NALU) agitation, the proprietor also scorned any suggestion that the ability to vote could alter one's potential earnings.[52] Up in County Durham, surrounded by pitmen, then forming their DMA just as farm-workers were organizing the NALU elsewhere, the redoubtable Salkeld was far more reactionary. For him, Gladstone remained Faust to the demon democracy, and the role of the Conservative Party was to simply defend the, 'balanced Constitution against Democracy supreme.'[53]

Any differences between the local Liberal papers were rather more predictable. The Durham Chronicle used the same arguments as were to reappear in North-Eastern Reform meetings. When household suffrage had proved safe in the Boroughs the unconvinced were asked what sense there was in leaving unenfranchised, and hence creating frustration among, large and suitably qualified sections of the population.[54] Faint hearts were reassured that Trevelyan's proposals would not enfranchise the genuine residuum of, 'nomadic wanderers.'[55] The franchise anomaly could easily be proved ridiculous via local comparisons. Hence, the Chronicle compared County Durham's pitmen and agricultural labourers with the ironworkers of Tyneside.[56] The Cambridge Independent Press, still keen to distance itself from manhood suffrage, felt unenthusiastic enough about Reform itself to stress that other reforms would necessarily follow upon the extension of the franchise.[57] The paper's attitude might well indicate a certain lack of enthusiasm among Cambridgeshire Liberals generally in the late eighteen-seventies.

A contrary indicator from Durham came a few years earlier when the Advertiser felt driven to claim that the Reform agitation then in full swing was less important than it at first sight appeared! "Dunelm" was even to claim that the democratic pitmen were less and less strongly tied to Liberalism, suggesting that Conservatism was increasing among them![58] The strength of the agitation in the North-East was further suggested when the Durham Chronicle, in 1879, felt sufficiently confident to use the outbreak of the Zulu War as an argument in favour of worker-enfranchisement![59] "Dunelm" was left to plaintively ask : 'Would it be just that the veriest simpleton should have the same voting power as a University professor?'[60]

The Durham County Advertiser, by 1875, opposed franchise assimilation due to its lack of redistribution, rather than on principle,[61] but, as the agitation waned in the mid-Seventies, its proprietor regained his confidence. Salkeld, wrongly taking an 1876 Durham County Miners Franchise Association (DCFA) address as surrender, took the opportunity to parade his arguments against trades unionism itself, and most notably the subscription-hunting Agents who were supposedly hijacking pit-lodges for their own political purposes. However, even given this golden opportunity, the Advertiser did not turn against County household suffrage, continuing to claim it to be the, 'completion of Mr DISRAELI's statesmanlike scheme.'[62] Only one of its correspondents, "Curfew", was inclined to be more cautious, warning Palmer that his, 'Liberal intellectual working men' had, in the North Durham election riots of 1874, proved themselves to be,

'little, if at all, more fitted for the franchise than the rowdies of the slums of Lancashire Boroughs.'[63]

Trevelyan's Parliamentary effort in 1877, ignored by Durham, was given extra spice for the Cambridge press by one of Patrick Smollett's idiosyncratic orations. With his usual balance, Smollett denounced the few active Reform agitators as, 'men who prate about the sacred right of insurrection, men whose political sentiments gravitate towards Republicanism.' Having only recently himself obtained the franchise for the first time he noted that, 'I have not found myself...to be either an abler, a wiser, or a better man.' Then, having, unconsciously, negated some Tories' belief in the electorate as an elite, Smollett was sure of the real issue : 'I am opposed, like the Whigs, to the constant application of drastic purgatives to the British Constitution', but pointed out that while he was prepared to stand by his opinions the cowardly Whigs tended to abstain, even on a measure which could lead to adult suffrage and the Republic![64]

It is ironic that Smollett's charge was made only hours before Hartington and his followers did indeed come off the fence, but on the opposing side! However, while Smollett's timing was unfortunate, the Cambridge Chronicle's coverage of the events of 1877 proved the paper guilty of a rather more serious offence when it spuriously cited Goschen's speech as proof that the Liberals were increasingly divided on the issue.[65] The agitation was scorned as a "busted flush", 'in the name of the agricultural labourers by the adventurers who have grown insolent upon their pence.' The

Cambridge Chronicle, despite its supposed support for franchise assimilation, greeted each Liberal Bill with ever more tales of mass-disfranchisement of Boroughs, attacks on faggot voters, and enfranchisement ahead of education. The same process occurred, if on a less dramatic scale, in Durham.[66]

Liberal victory at the 1880 polls, since it was not immediately followed by Reform, only sparked frustration in the local press.[67] However, the pause did allow a "polemic by proxy" to occur. The Cambridge Independent Press urged Liberals to march to the sound of the drums : 'In the England of to-day there are two principles which are struggling together. On the one side, the aristocratic, the traditional, and the feudal. On the other, the democratic, the modern, and the progressive. Whatever change introduces a large number of the people to the franchise must strengthen the latter principle at the expense of the former.'[68] Nine months later, the Cambridge Chronicle showed the other side of the coin : 'It is well to be occasionally reminded how far Democratic sentiments are opposed to liberty. Too frequently an idea that a Democratic Government necessarily secures perfect freedom for all under its authority is adopted by those who, after a few minutes reflection, would perceive the unsoundness of this opinion...Our form of government is progressively Democratic...but the manifestation of intolerance already displayed by Democratic bodies do not warrant the assumption that aught will be preserved which threatens, or appears likely to threaten, the concerns of the lower orders...All men have not a similar stake in the

country's welfare, nor are all equally able to form a right judgement upon current policies.'[69]

The reference to "Democratic bodies" concerned the Democratic Federation and its campaign against the importation of foreign labour, and especially of "Chinamen", into Britain. Interestingly, the Independent Press was no better disposed towards that particular grouping, even rejoicing in Cowen's withdrawal from that, 'Cave of Adullam, filled with heterogeneous and irreconcilable materials.'[70]

By 1883, the local Liberal press of Cambridge and Durham City was in no doubt that Conservatives were genuinely moving to embrace franchise assimilation, though they were delighted to publicize those too reactionary to do so.[71] Goschen was merely dismissed as the self-interested representative of a small Borough.[72] Such claims were despite an agitation which even the Durham Chronicle could not be impressed by![73] The latter paper, indeed, finally had to claim the 1884 Parliamentary vote on second reading as its proof of "public" support for the measure![74]

Meanwhile, the Cambridge Chronicle continued its somewhat contradictory opposition to the introduction of a measure which it supposedly supported. Sarah Naylor explained the apparent contradiction, while noting that a supposed agitation of miners and farm-workers apparently had its head-quarters in Leeds, thus, 'The English Robespierres, Dantons, and Marats are flying at higher game than the agricultural labourers. They are aiming purposely and determinedly at the vitals of the constitution, and the County Franchise question is...the first shot only...A mere

stalking horse, a blind, a red herring.'[75] A somewhat florid evocation of the Party line, it should be noted that redistribution was not mentioned.

Both Liberal papers were inclined to support one man one vote but both also fell into line behind the 1884 Franchise Bill as the necessary first step.[76] The Independent Press attempted to fore-stall any repetition of 1867 by warning that a Tory passage of franchise assimilation would be followed by a gerrymander. That paper's London correspondent, "Notes of the Week", was as inclined to spot a conspiracy as Sarah Naylor but identified it in another quarter : 'At present the farmers are playing a silly part. They will be "sold" by the Tories, as they have been hundreds of times before, and they will wake up to find that, though they were powerless to prevent a Reform Bill, they have estranged the labourers by their opposition.'[77] There can be little doubt that his words were meant for the stubborn Cambridgeshire Tories.

The County Advertiser, from its Tory perspective, hoped, and as vainly as did Lowther on the national stage, that a redistribution, via new Boroughs and the extension of the older ones' boundaries, could save the Counties as an exclusive preserve of the freeholder, despite Wharton's warnings such a move would turn Durham City into a "pit village".[78] The paper was left in a difficult position by the passage of a Bill which it had previously warned would engender, 'revolution.'[79] However, the Cambridge Chronicle, relieved by the failure of a cloven hoof to appear, could welcome, in words which would have horrified its long line of

departed ultra-Tory editors, 'the first purely democratic House of Commons.'[80]

Less surprisingly, the Liberal papers were both happy to laud, 'the new democracy', which the Durham Chronicle claimed as the DCFA's victory.[81] The Independent Press attempted to place the events of 1884 in perspective : 'From this time, the people of this country have themselves to blame if they are badly governed, either at home or abroad... we are fast approaching a brighter time when all men, irrespective of the accident of birth and the gewgaws of inherited titles, will be perfectly equal before the law, and when arbitrary power and hereditary privilege will be memories of a hateful past.'[82]

The shock of the 1874 election had, nationally, left Liberals virtually unanimous in their support for franchise assimilation. By 1884 just two Liberals were prepared to rebel on the Franchise Bill's second reading.[83] Opposition was either temporary,[84] the work of obvious political dinosaurs,[85] or an effect of the Grey blood![86] Only Goschen's efforts seemed ideologically anti-democratic, fearing that its arrival would doom "political economy", and hence the nation.[87] However, Hartington could ascribe even Goschen's opposition to natural "cussedness"![88]

No Liberal MP in the counties studied followed Goschen's line, or even the hesitancy of the Whig establishment.[89] Even nationally that hesitancy, once so obvious,[90] had melted away by 1884.[91] Whiggish caution was never likely to do more than delay franchise assimilation,[92] not least because Gladstone was supportive of Trevelyan's

efforts by 1875, though he remained an opponent of any greater extension.[93]

Gladstone's hesitancy was in stark contrast to the attitudes of his Northern followers. Many of the latter had immediately realized the democratic deficiencies of the system created by Disraeli in 1867. The reaction generally comprised calls for franchise assimilation, though Arbuthnot, the Gateshead Radical, did declare for manhood suffrage. As early as 1868 County household suffrage had the support of even such renowned Northern moderates as J.W.Pease, W.B.Beaumont, Hedworth Williamson, Lowthian Bell and Edmund Backhouse.[94] The most hesitant of the Durham County Liberals, F.E.B.Beaumont, had been won over as early as 1871.[95]

The manhood suffrage agitation of 1873-1874 in the North was largely kept at arm's length by local MPs. Three of the latter, however, did send letters to their local meetings, one of whom was no doubt embarrassed to have his studiously moderate missive claimed by Pritchard as proof of conversion to manhood suffrage![96] Pease and F.E.B.Beaumont were both as cautious as Henderson and were careful to fan County feelings against the apparent discrimination in favour of Borough populations.[97] Such caution was to result in Beaumont, when he did appear at a Liberal meeting in Barnard Castle, being severely heckled. Only the 1874 election finally cleared Beaumont's mind of his fears, which were quite clearly engendered by his belief that the new voters would be Tory. After the 1874 elections he remained ambiguous but clearly sought to appear a supporter of the

"whole hog", manhood suffrage.[98]

J.W.Pease, despite his sympathies for trade unionism, remained a favourite target of the agitators.[99] An 1873 Bishop Auckland meeting heard Pease twice criticized in person, with one speaker informing the unfortunate MP that, in future, no representative opposed to universal suffrage would be acceptable![100] Even ten years later, John Wilson was to castigate Pease and his then colleague, Lambton, as, 'unfit representatives of the working classes and of the democratic thought of South Durham, and to advocate their replacement by worker-MPs .'[101]

The role of the Northern Reform agitation might be overestimated, however, since Cambridgeshire Liberals were also generally openly supportive of County household suffrage by 1874.[102] Fowler, normally such an ultra-moderate, quite happily endorsed the use of a Franchise Bill to force redistribution, even if his enthusiasm had earlier been dented by the realization of such a reshuffle's likely effect on Cambridge itself. Hugh Shield also cited this leverage argument, which provided some basis for the Tory fears of 1884.[103]

Borough Liberal representatives in the North were not slow to follow their rural counter-parts. From Storey to Havelock-Allen they declared for franchise assimilation.[104] Stevenson endorsed the proposal specifically as a route to land law reform and it should be unsurprising that several other Liberals also chose to sell the end rather than the means. That trait extended even to such Radical figures as T.C.Thompson and Joseph Cowen[105] but did not preclude the

expression of purely democratic sentiment. In Durham City, Middleton-Monck argued that, without franchise assimilation, no Government could be sure of popular support : 'The only way for them to arrive at a correct knowledge of the feeling of the country was to give the franchise to the people.'[106] Similar sentiments were expressed by Palmer and James who, with Cowen and Farrer Herschell, were also supportive of "One Man One Vote".[107]

If, nationally, only 153 Liberal MPs included County household suffrage in their formal 1880 election addresses,[108] that fact only masked clear support for the measure. Even Lord Douglas Gordon, the surprise Whig victor in Tory Huntingdonshire, endorsed franchise assimilation, and he was joined in doing so by all of the other new Liberal candidates in Counties Durham and Cambridgeshire in 1885.[109] James Joicey, the Vice-President of the North Durham Liberals, had no doubt that the 1880 election mandated the later Franchise Bill.[110]

A favourite tactic of that Bill's supporters was the playing off of proposed voters against those already enfranchised. That, of course, touched upon the basis of the arguments about the education, or otherwise, of the proposed new electors. Hence, Herschell and Middleton roundly argued that either the rural population was already not less educated, or that education would follow the franchise.[111] The two arguments were of course contradictory! Fry, exercising rare wit, noted that though farm-labourers were apparently unfit to vote, they were clearly educated sufficiently to work for Lord Salisbury![112] Captain Brand,

the son of the Speaker, both claimed inside knowledge of the agricultural-labourers and, rather revealingly, chose to describe the franchise as a, 'great political educator.'[113]

Human nature made local chauvinism a great source of support for the Reform. Hence, Brand compared Wisbech with Cambridge, and Cowen contrasted the lot of various groups of Newcastle miners.[114] However, the premier exponent of this "art" was Thomas Coote, the Huntingdonshire Liberal who stood for Cambridge in 1882. At various times he compared Royston with Cambridge, St Ives with Huntingdon and Godmanchester, and even Wisbech with King's Lynn![115] Such comparisons were presumably more effective than Coote's more theoretical argument that, 'the right to vote is an unalienable right to those who are asked to pay taxes, and ought to have a voice in the management of the country.'[116]

As was the case locally, national Liberal attention moved onto the more arguable questions of manhood suffrage and one man one vote. Bright was unwilling to add anything to the Franchise Bill, but even most of the other "old Radicals" had moved on.[117] If Samuel Morley still could not regard the suffrage as a right, rising young Radicals tended to be supporters of manhood, or even adult, suffrage.[118] Chamberlain may have supported franchise assimilation more from a desire to attack feudalism than from sympathy with the farm-workers, but the end result was the same.[119]

Nationally, agitation had commenced for franchise assimilation in 1872, and if Trevelyan felt that to be the

result of his own Parliamentary work,[120] both probably came together. The agitation, for Trevelyan, may have begun with the first conference of the Electoral Reform Committee, a coalition of 39 Radical societies and 52 trades unions, but the NALU had spread like wildfire through rural England in Spring 1872.[121] That union was undoubtedly important, organizing, in almost impossible circumstances, 9½% of Britain's farm-workers, raising petitions of 80,000 names and catapulting its leader, Joseph Arch, to prominence within both the Reform and Liberal movements.[122] Arch was capable of delivering effective Reform orations and his personal importance for the campaign was to survive the collapse of his union's membership after its cataclysmic defeat in the Great Lock-Out of 1874.[123]

Samuel Morley and other National Reform League veterans did nationally succeed in uniting Radicals and trade unionists in the London-based Electoral Reform Association (ERA). However, its annual get-togethers, and those of the resuscitated National Reform Union in the North, did not comprise an agitation. For that, before the issue became a partizan one in 1883, Reformers had to look to the localities and the individual organizations of the rural working class.[124]

The NALU was the most prominent trade union in Cambridgeshire. Having rapidly spread through Southern Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire in Spring 1872 it then moved north into the Fenlands around once-radical Littleport.[125] Though the county could not match the level of organization in neighbouring Norfolk, a traditional bastion

of rural Radicalism, almost 5,900 full members were enrolled.[126] Exning, where the Great Lock-Out began, lay close by the Suffolk-Cambridgeshire border.[127] However, Cambridgeshire saw no great political meeting, and hence Reform drew little or no press attention, a state of affairs which led to NALU protests at the local labourers' apathy. Politics was, in fact, only to encroach upon local NALU meetings after the disaster in 1874, a fact which perhaps partly explains the failure of the NALU in its efforts to emulate the Northern miners by supporting a distinct adult suffrage or organization.[128] These events might be seen as the adoption of political methods after the failure of industrial ones, but it should be noted that there was a three-year gap before Arch and his Vice-President appeared in Cambridgeshire.[129]

The latter official, Ball, and the local NALU leader, Challis, spoke at a well-reported political meeting in Sawston. They, perhaps unsurprisingly, delivered simple, almost crude, speeches touching upon the unfair franchise anomaly and the resulting lack of education in rural areas. Typical of the fare on offer was Ball's assertion that, 'When they got the franchise the landlords would be willing to let the labourers have land'![130] Arch's later visits, to Duxford and Waterbeach, taking place as they did after Hartington's "conversion" had made franchise assimilation almost inevitable, seemed largely devoted to ensuring that the new votes, once won, would be exercised in the "correct", Liberal, manner. This tends to endorse one historian's opinion that Arch was courted by Radicals due to future rural

votes which it was felt he would be able to deliver.[131] However, it should be stressed that the vast majority of Independent Press reports on NALU meetings contained no reference to Reform comments, while the few that did suggest there were usually no such references to report.

In such circumstances, it is hardly surprising that, bar one milkman's declaration in favour of manhood suffrage in 1868, Cambridge's working-classes remained silent on the situation of their rural brethren. One prominent Borough Liberal, Dr Robertson, even felt driven to write an "Open Letter to the Working Men" on the subject as late as March 1884.[132] The Borough Reform meeting, held as late as October 1884, was dominated by the issue of the House of Lords, with only a University Liberal deigning to mention the, 'three million', though a voice from the floor did deliver the Independent Press's stirring old battle-cry for the Bill.[133] In the back-woods, Liberal voices did occasionally denounce the anomaly but others remained anxious to counter-balance new voters via an educational franchise![134] Some, like Tebbutt in St Ives, chose to endorse Reform, but only because they realized that a polarized conflict between democracy and high Toryism could only ever result in one winner.[135]

Cambridge's Liberal MPs seem to have been genuinely embarrassed by the taciturnity of their local "Hodges". Dr Robertson, President of the Cambridge Reform Club, stressed the difficulties of bringing farm-workers together, while Digby's Cambridge Junior Liberal Club felt driven to organize a series of meetings for the "political

education" of the prospective voters. Such gatherings were exemplified by one in Great Shelford where Tillyard of St John's College, a Vice-President of the Cambridge Liberal Association, delivered a somewhat authoritarian call for democracy : 'A great country was a law-abiding country, and to make a law-abiding country you must make the people love the law, and...the way to make the people love the law was to give them a voice in the making of that law (cheers).' The speaker went on, rather more earthily, to blame enclosure and the lack of rural education upon the non-representation of worker's interests.[136]

Only in 1884, with the issue entirely partizan, did agitation really progress in Cambridgeshire. Meetings in Cambridge, St Ives, Huntingdon, Royston, New Chesterton and Cherry Hinton, all endorsed the Government's proposals, with only the two relatively weakly-rooted Huntingdonshire Liberal Associations needing to call in external speakers. Leadon, in St Ives on behalf of the London and Counties Liberal Union, made an interesting comment, advising farmers to follow the example of urban manufacturers and encourage the enfranchisement of their employees.[137]

Liberal speakers tended to remain satisfied with household, or a taxpayer, suffrage. Only Nichols, a normally moderate Liberal, suggested manhood suffrage, arguing other franchises would exclude, 'many respectable and highly educated men.'[138] The Cherry Hinton meeting was alone in paying any attention to the interests of the working classes as such. There, one speaker, Miller, called for more working-class MPs while another, Young, had no doubts as to the future

: 'working men composing the greatest part of the community, would, by the possession of a vote, have a vast power in their hands which they would exercise in their own interests', by which he meant of course that they would vote Liberal![139]

Neither Cambridgeshire nor County Durham reveal any evidence of the supposed boost for Reform provided in 1877 by Chamberlain's decision to transform his moribund National Education League into a more wide-ranging National Liberal Federation. However, the rapid affiliation of 151 Liberal organizations to a movement supportive of universal suffrage does perhaps suggest a considerable level of enthusiasm for Reform at the time.[140] The new organization also, of course, simply added to an existing movement which could still draw 2600 delegates, and thirty MPs, to the Exeter Hall conference.[141]

Lack of enthusiasm also cannot necessarily be deduced from the hiatus in Reform agitation in 1880-1884, when the torch was left to small groups such as the Social Democratic Federation.[142] Such groups' effectiveness might be best summed up by a jocular quote concerning a Cambridge man who became involved in one of them while in London : 'He is a member of a Secret Society of socialists - anarchists, poets, painters, and suchlike dangerous persons - who meet in Barnards Inn, and he may often be seen, after dark, gliding thither in a villainous-looking brigand's hat.'[143] None the less, Reform rapidly re-emerged once it had re-entered the Government's list of priorities in 1883. March 1884 saw the impressive Reform conference in Leeds, and 414 meetings were held merely in the supposedly quiet period leading up to March

1884.[144] Tens of thousands attended meetings in urban areas, where of course no personal interest was involved, and in July 1884 approximately 100,000 people in Hyde Park heard speeches from a platform fully reflecting the breadth of the agitation.[145] Labouchere may have boasted that he could produce a full trade union demonstration at any time, but it seems unlikely that he could have manufactured all 1,277 of them![146]

The North-East must be considered separately, since its Reform agitation was almost entirely self-contained. It was the work of the local mining unions and of Joseph Cowen. Indeed, even the NALU there, which did exist despite Dunbabin's dismissal of it, was the child of Cowen's propaganda and the miners' funds.[147] More generally speaking, the DMA formed a solid and cohesive base for agitation which the NALU could never match. The Durham miners, inspired by the victorious efforts of their Morpeth equivalents and the continuing Chartism of Cowen,[148] were also enjoying a booming membership, from 2,000 in 1869 to 45,000 in 1874, and then 60,000 in 1884.[149]

In establishing the Durham County Franchise Association (DCFA), the DMA consciously followed the precedent of its Northumberland equivalent and both franchise organizations rapidly rallied to Cowen's standard of manhood suffrage.[150] The list of meetings held (see Table 4) tends to disprove Nossiter's allegation that DCFA action in North Durham was non-existent prior to the 1874 General Election, the 1873-1874 period being in fact almost unmatched in its intensity.[151] The Reform agitation in the North-East

was certainly sufficient to earn a mention at Westminster, by Trevelyan, in 1873.[152]

County Durham's agitation might be traced back to the National Miners' Union (NMU) conference held in Durham City in November 1872. On that occasion the union declared unanimously for franchise assimilation, with pro-Reform speeches from both Alexander McDonald (sic) and George Howell (for the Trades Union Congress), while Moses called for a Chartist revival and Burt demanded manhood, if not adult, suffrage.[153] Their speeches reflected a division upon the national stage, as well as within the DCFA.[154]

When the DCFA Council chose to demand only County household suffrage it almost immediately, in Chester-le-Street, faced protests from the floor.[155] Its Secretary, Batey, was left in no doubts whatsoever that the rank-and-file would happily drop household for manhood suffrage![156] The DCFA President, Pritchard, responded by following the grass-roots' support for the wider franchise, despite only two months earlier having declared that it could not win either national or Government support![157] The organization itself rapidly swallowed its pride and, in February 1883, joined its Northumberland equivalent in a Manhood Suffrage Committee.[158] Following that union, DCFA meetings passed motions calling for the old suffrage formula suggested by Cowen, the new Committee's chairman, manhood suffrage excluding paupers.[159] Cowen's importance among the Durham pitmen was proven by his invitation to address the "Big Meeting" (or Gala) of 1873.[160]

Cowen was a solid manhood suffrage supporter,

warning moderates of the franchise's necessity if the Constitution was to be placed upon the broadest, and hence safest, possible basis, though that did not necessarily tie in with Cowen's support for one man one vote,[161] or the overtly democratic sentiments he served up to working-class audiences : 'I believe the right of every man to the suffrage is a natural right, that no Government ever gave to him, and that no Government can take it from him (Cheers).'[162] That argument of "natural right", an old standard among Reformers, was widely repeated by miners' leaders and others throughout County Durham.[163]

Cowen's importance was exemplified by the manhood suffrage demonstration which he organized upon the Town Moor of Newcastle in April 1873, a gathering which dwarfed its 1884 equivalent organized by John Morley and the National Liberal Federation (NLF).[164] Cowen, in 1873, secured the attendance of representatives from no fewer than forty Northumberland, and sixty-five Durham, pits.[165] (see Table 5) Cowen was, however, clearly separated from his followers on at least one point. His view of household suffrage was certainly more generous than that of both his editor Adams and many miners, especially those who had had to fight for their rights under it in Morpeth. Hence, Dr James Trotter declared, 'Household suffrage was nothing but a wretched farce - a miserable sham.'[166]

The call for manhood suffrage was undoubtedly more than merely symbolic. Lloyd Jones, Cowen's chief henchman in Durham, as well as the DMA's spokesman during arbitrations, stressed that it was simply the first step towards, 'civil

equality', while Pritchard had no doubt that workers needed votes if they were to lessen their robbery by what he termed, 'an infernal nest of parasites.'[167] The Miners Advocate was unashamedly class-conscious : 'We are of the opinion that the possession of political power will enable them to emancipate themselves from the thraldom of capital.'[168] Councillor Lucas, a regular Liberal fixture at the pitmen's meetings on Shadon's Hill, warned of manhood suffrage's necessity for society's future welfare.[169] Boyes, a Bishop Auckland miner, noted the injustice of a franchise which left only the workers unrepresented in Parliament, and was echoed by Mark Davison, who demanded a system under which the people could finally fight the class legislation imposed upon them.[170] However, some working-class speakers were more careful to avoid scaring the establishment, Pritchard being among those who claimed that franchise extension could only aid national prosperity by increasing the masses' interest in it.[171]

However cautious, Reform agitators faced inevitable obloquy. Dr Rutherford, a leading colleague of Cowen, addressed the most popular Tory allegation : 'They were not revolutionists...except that they wanted to achieve a revolution in men's Happiness, in their habits, and in their modes of life.'[172] Ironically, William Crawford proved the leading iconoclast : 'They had heard a great deal about "the glorious constitution". It might be a glorious constitution for those who held privileges under it, but so far as the masses of the people were concerned he could not see it had been very glorious.'[173] Both Pritchard and Charles Simpson of Lanchester noted that universal suffrage abroad had not led

to revolution, and Gray of Pelaw Main stressed that the genuine danger lay in the continuing frustration of vote-hungry workers![174]

Perhaps the key Tory argument was the alleged ignorance of the prospective new voters. It was a claim which stung the agitators, and which local evidence provides pointers to. In 1884 a Cambridge don noted that his University had been organizing courses among Morpeth's miners, but Durham pitmen had vehemently attacked the Tory claims as long as eleven years earlier.[175] Concrete refutation perhaps came via Pritchard's references to Plato and Pliny, and Wilkinson's exhortation to his audience to emulate Solon![176]

Cowen's support for manhood suffrage had only been adopted by the DCFA Council after grass-roots pressure, pressure exemplified by the declaration for the wider proposal by 110 of County Durham's 115 pits.[177] To their credit both Pritchard and Crawford were ready to perform the embarrassing volte-faces necessary to bring them back into line with the wishes of their membership.[178] However, with a couple of exceptions, Northern Liberal meetings were not inclined to follow them,[179] a fact reflected in the address issued by Crawford during his abortive 1874 candidacy for North Durham.[180] At least one Liberal, Boyes, claimed that the Conservative Government refused to enfranchise the miners not because they were ignorant, but rather because they knew all too well how to vote![181]

After the 1874 general election, the North-Eastern agitation withered and moved rapidly back towards the middle-

ground. Liberals had swept the board in County Durham but the disastrous national result offered no hope even for those, like Forman and Wilkinson, who believed Gladstone to be an enthusiastic supporter of manhood suffrage.[182] Cowen had always attempted to play down the difference between the two franchises, and his friend Lloyd Jones, by November 1874, openly concentrated upon the lesser demand, if only as a first step.[183] Few were convinced by the claim of James Thompson, a regular figure on DCFA and Northern Reform League (NRL) platforms, that an agitation could win manhood suffrage as easily as it could votes for county householders.[184] By June 1874 a NRL meeting was limiting its demand to household suffrage, and a month later a DCFA meeting in Crook, though it passed a manhood suffrage motion, was to accept a comment by James Watson that it had gathered to work for the household franchise.[185] Increasingly, demonstrators seem to have accepted the opinion of a Reverend visitor that manhood suffrage, if it was coming, was still in the, 'far distance.'[186] The retreat of imminent victory as the Tories took power, along with Maehl suggests the recession,[187] killed the agitation. Even Councillor Lucas, a friendly witness, was in no doubt by October 1874 that it was in decline.[188] Though it never ceased entirely, the movement fell away to a scattering of local gatherings, though they were augmented by the "Big Meetings" and the annual gatherings of the pitmen of North Durham on Shadon's Hill. Lodges continued their interest in Reform but it should be noted that, in stark contrast to 1872, the national miners' conference ignored the subject when it returned to Durham

City in 1877.

Democratic feeling in the DMA Lodges was not only evidenced by the appearance of such figures as Paine, Jones and Feargus O'Connor upon their banners.[189] It was also indicated by their election of living democrats to address their Galas. Bradlaugh, in part due to his misadventures at Westminster, was most popular, appearing in 1874, 1875, 1878, 1880, 1881, 1882 and 1884, but he was not alone. O'Connor Power, the aristocracy-baiting Irish MP, made five appearances during the same period, Atherley-Jones, the son of Ernest, three, and even Prince Kropotkin was to make an appearance at Durham Racecourse, possibly at Cowen's suggestion.[190]

Despite its strange "tutors" there was no suggestion of friction between the DMA and local Liberals, at least in the political field! Herschell and Middleton both spoke at the "Big Meeting" though neither chose to emulate Palmer's pledge, unredeemed in 1885, to stand aside for a Burt-like figure should his constituency so desire.[191] The honour paid to the two Durham City MPs was reciprocated in 1882 when Crawford addressed the annual meeting of the North Durham Liberal Registration in.[192] Such mutual good-will was also evident at the grass-roots, as an anti-Liberal speaker discovered at an 1873 Durham City meeting.[193]

While North-Eastern Reform meetings continued to drift towards household suffrage, only Waterhouses sticking by simple manhood suffrage, most also continued to declare the latter to be the only just franchise.[194] In 1875 John Wilson reorganized the DCFA as the Durham County Franchise

and Political Reform Association (DCFPRA). He also attempted to increase links with the smaller, specialized, mining unions,[195] while striving to link the Durham Reform campaign with the Liberal one in Westminster.[196] The DCFPRA's biannual conferences proved perfect opportunities to invite speakers from natural allies, such as the NRU and the Cleveland miners.[197] The DMA, as one might expect, endorsed the DCFPRA but it should be noted that the union was not ready to waive its ban on public meetings in the Durham Miners' Hall in order that the DCFPRA could meet there.[198]

Wilson himself, as Crawford's disciple, explained the need for Reform in a DCFPRA notice of 1878. He wrote of the House of Commons, 'Who sent them there? Supposing this 658 to be an unanimous body, do they give expression to the will of the nation? What part have you had in sending them there?... You are part of the nation, therefore it affects you. There is a work before you...This state of things must have an end. You must tell this power-misusing class that you consider not only a mere price for your labour, but that there is in you a spirit which will not rest short of equal political rights.'[199]

Prior to 1874, "labour" MPs were not mentioned in the North, excepting by Caleb Kidd and the somewhat self-interested Crawford,[200] but the issue was given considerable impetus by guest-speakers at the Gala. Atherley-Jones raised the question, while Bradlaugh argued that the number of working-class MPs should be raised into three figures.[201] William Johnson, the DCFPRA Treasurer, perhaps best expressed the view of the Durham miners on this issue when he

protested over Parliament representing only, 'Capitalists, lawyers, clergymen, and professionals.'[202] Johnson's worth as a spokesman was not entirely negated by the fact that he, until corrected by an Evenwood audience, was thirty-two years late in calling for the abolition of the property qualification![203]

Robert Charlton, from radical Shotley Bridge encapsulated the other result of Johnson's view of Parliament, protesting that he and his fellow-miners were, 'little better than serfs in the country of their birth.'[204] George Tweddle, of St John's Chapel in the lead-mining district, was stark : 'England had been conquered four times - by the Romans, the Saxons, the Danes, and the Normans. It remained for her to be conquered a fifth time - by her own people (cheers).'[205] That fact lay at the heart of the miners' demand for extended "labour" representation.

Crawford wrote in similar, if more polished, terms in his circular to the DMA Lodges in September 1883,[206] and it should not be surprising that such an accessible form of propaganda, augmented by the Durham Miners' Association Monthly Report, which was almost entirely written by Crawford, were shamelessly used in the cause of Reform. Each Reform Conference was preceded by a consultation of the Lodges as to whether the DMA should be represented, hence presenting Crawford with another excuse, if he needed one, to put the case for Reform.[207] One reason for that lay perhaps in the fact that not all DMA Lodges, despite constant urging, cared for either the bother or the expense of the DCFPRA, in whose province the Reform issue supposedly lay.[208]

At the grass-roots there is no doubt that the agitation was partly fired by class-based resentment. Demonstrators were eager to know how the working-classes remained unenfranchised and unrepresented when, as one speaker pointed out in 1873, they were both the world's back-bone and the world's power.[209] Wilkinson, the DMA Treasurer, bluntly asserted that any restricted franchise was an imposition upon a free and independent people.[210] Another speaker pointedly observed that while a nation could survive without nobles it could not do so without workers![211] Perhaps the personal comments were most effective, as when Stewart of Tursdale noted that the politicians who denounced the workers as revolutionary or ignorant seemed perfectly willing to take pensions from them![212]

Despite such sentiments, the pitmen were eager to refute claims that Britain's "hand labourers" were "communistic", and with good cause since all but the most fearless middle-class Liberal would have balked at such a label. Denials came from South Durham and Boyle Colliery, as well as an enraged Johnson who stressed that a College education did not make a man moral, law-abiding or loyal, whereas most miners were all three![213] For all such denials, however, the miners, like Atherley-Jones, sought Reform in order to secure social advance, and not solely for reasons of prestige![214] Ironically, the nearest to socialist comments came from William Crawford, the archetypal "Lib-Lab" politician, when at a Durham City Reform meeting he, while denying that property should be redistributed, stated that miners should equally distribute all new wealth created.[215]

Perhaps most importantly the new claimants for the suffrage could rely on references from Borough MPs, such as Arthur Pease, who were able to report the absence of "communism" in their own constituencies after seventeen years of household suffrage![216]

Another tactic of agitation employed in the North-East, and especially by Wilson, was the letter to the press, utilizing the fact that the Durham Chronicle's proprietor also happened to be the DMA's printer![217] Forced by a weakness in their campaign which had been acknowledged even by the new DCFPRA President in 1876, Wilson's letters between 1877 and 1882 played a part, like the "Big Meetings", in maintaining contact with the North-Eastern pitmen in those areas where meetings were not being organized.[218] 1879 also witnessed the publication of a correspondence between Wilson and Robert Lowe, still an anti-Reform figure of some note. Their debate largely centred upon Liberalism's identity, or otherwise, with equality, while also touching upon the true worth of the two "Labour" MPs. Lowe's letter, even in 1879, was an anachronism with its call upon all men of wisdom to remain in the roles for which they were, 'properly qualified', by experience, and its argument that an issue should be judged according to its merit rather than its popularity.[219]

The strength of the North-Eastern Reform movement was undoubtedly affected during these years by the estrangement of Cowen from the vigorously Gladstonian leaders of the pitmen. In 1877, Cowen could still preside over a NRU meeting in Manchester but his independent Radicalism could not long survive unscathed his election to the Whip-

ridden Commons in 1874, and he was far too much of a democrat ever to obey a Caucus, even one led by such an enlightened figure as Dr Spence Watson. An 1879 comment proved that Cowen's democracy was not diluted by such experiences,[220] but he did not address a "Big Meeting" between 1873 and 1882 and was spurned even by his own Northumberland "children" when they came to chose the speakers for their "Picnic", or Gala, in 1884.[221] The schism certainly reached into the DMA roots, hence the electoral defeat of Lloyd Jones by a Liberal pit-boss in 1885, and it is impossible to quantify what damage was done by this rift with so prominent a past leader.

In truth, the day of the political individual had passed. The climax of the County household suffrage agitation was managed in Newcastle by the Caucus and in County Durham by the DMA. Crawford was prominent, but so was Wilson and his DCFPRA, while local Lodges were always ready to chase along a laggardly Executive.[222] As the pace of agitation accelerated, however, DMA Lodge Secretaries had no need for such vigilance, almost snowed under as they were by Crawford's circulars![223] The DMA's leadership won respect for its generally level-headed attitude, never claiming that victory was just around the corner when it patently was not.[224]

The agitation of the eighteen-eighties, which had begun at the grass-roots by 1881,[225] unlike that of the eighteen-seventies saw the appearance of numerous local Liberal politicians on Reform platforms. That was, in at least part, the result of the campaign's conduct by the moderate DMA, as opposed to the fractious Cowen. By 1884, the

old "miners" meetings had become "Reform" ones and numerous local Liberal Councillors, not to mention such luminaries as Chamberlain and Lord Durham, addressed them.[226] Councillor Lucas and his democratic outlook - 'No Government was a Constitutional Government which was not rightfully and legally a fair reflection of the country'[227] - were no longer unusual and the North-Eastern Liberal leader, Spence Watson, sealed that fact with his own appearance at the DCFPRA Council meeting of October 1883.[228]

Jones' allegation that economic depression left the North-East cold to agitation may have been true of Tyneside but it was certainly not the case in the Durham coalfield.[229] Wilson, if not a disinterested witness, was in no doubt as to his efforts effectiveness : 'The Franchise Association...kept up a close and instructive agitation not only at home, but also outside the country, pressing the demand for an assimilation of county to borough.'[230] There was certainly no shortage of contemporary national recognition of the DCFPRA's role. Hence, Wilson himself was chosen to move the Reform resolution at the 1883 TUC and was also, with Arch of the NALU and Wilkie of the shipwrights, part of the Reform delegation to Gladstone in January 1884.[231] However, there is unfortunately no way of checking Patterson's claim that there were five or six Reform meetings held every week in County Durham during the five or six years prior to 1884.[232]

The DMA was, via Crawford, to accept the 1884 Reform Bill as, 'moderate, but most clear and comprehensive.'[233] The accompanying criticisms of trades

unionism, made by anti-Reformers such as Northcote and aimed at the middle-classes, were merely meat and drink for such an astute propagandist as Crawford. The latter proclaimed that the Tories, not content with excluding the workers from the electorate, now wished even to exclude them from "the people" by branding their organizations as enemies of the same![234] In the North the DMA had certainly grown sufficiently respectable for one of its favourite guest speakers to be the Rev. Bailey, whose invitations to speak included ones from both the "Big Meeting" and the DCFPRA conference. For Bailey the issue of Reform lay within the realm of God-given rights, though he also stressed that, rights apart, the nation fared best when its institutions were closest to equality.[235]

The DCFPRA perhaps enjoyed its finest hour on 4 October 1884 when every pit in County Durham closed in order to allow the pitmen to assemble at meetings organized across the County.[236] Their call to arms came across from the DMA leader himself[237] but it is interesting to note that the later union accounts were to describe the meetings in Durham City, Stanley, Chester-le-Street, Sunderland, Shildon, Crook, Jarrow and South Shields, as 'Liberal Demonstrations.' Apart from that politeness, however, the accounts do reveal the expenditure of £25 of DMA funds upon those meetings![238] Even that small sum did cause one Lodge, New Herrington, to reveal another side of the non-conformist pitmen when it moved that no more DMA funds be expended upon, 'teas, etc' at franchise meetings![239]

Though the movement for Reform was dominated by household suffrage, after 1875, voices continued to be raised

for manhood suffrage even if most, like John Wilson's, declared that they would accept it in instalments, a position already encapsulated in the DCFPRA resolutions prior to 1883.[240] The commitment to the wider franchise, if watered down by the exigencies of the national situation, was far from mechanical for Wilkinson or the leaders of the St John's Chapel miners.[241] Dr Spence Watson also supported manhood suffrage, joining those old Chartists who had always remained loyal to universal suffrage.[242] Despite lone voices at Boyne Colliery and Willington, however, the Spennymoor Lodge of the DMA stood almost alone in its disinclination to accept anything short of manhood suffrage in 1884.[243] One man one vote endured a similar situation. The issue interested prominent characters such as Wilson and Spence Watson but, despite criticism of plural voting as early as a Thornley Colliery meeting of 1873, the grass-roots were far more interested in their fight to secure a first vote for most workers.[244] John Bell might have regarded one man one vote and equal electoral districts as parts of the required franchise[245] but such sentiments were powerless in the face of the national situation.

The passage of the 1884 Reform Act was greeted by Crawford, writing for the Miners National Union, in determined fashion : 'The extension of the franchise has placed in our hands the power to take part in framing the laws ...We are, for the first time, admitted to the rights of citizenship, let us not be laggards in using it, for the fair advancement of our men.'[246] The opposing view came from one of those reactionary clerics who haunted Tory meetings in

Durham's Town Hall : 'The air around us is heavy with anarchy. I for one seem to see beyond anarchy,...beyond democracy,... looming in the near distance the terrible form of the world's last tyranny.'[247]

Both views were perhaps guilty of overestimating the probable effects of the Act's passage. As Seymour wrote, concerning the events of 1884, 'Radical attacks upon the existing barriers to democracy, upon the ancient property franchise, the town freeholder, the university elector, and the plural voter in all his forms - all such attacks failed absolutely.'[248] Those targets were to remain for the sporadic attention of Radicals until well beyond the close of the century.

Table 1

Parliamentary Division on Trevelyan's Motion -

Year	MPs	Support	EB	EC	EU	WB	WC	SB	SC	SU
1874	148	32.6%	87	14	0	11	2	21	12	1

KEY : EB - English Boroughs.

EC - English Counties.

EU - English Universities.

WB - Welsh Boroughs.

WC - Welsh Counties.

SB - Scottish Boroughs.

SC - Scottish Counties.

SU - Scottish Universities

Table 2

Votes on County Household Suffrage of Durham and Cambridgeshire MPs -

MP	1	2	3	4	5	6
Lord G.Manners	A					
Hon. E.C.Yorke	X	X	X	X		
A.G.Marten	A	A	A	A		
P.B.Smollett	A	A	A	A		
E.Fellowes	A	X	A	A		
Sir H.Pelly	A					
Sir J.Karslake	A					
I.L.Bell	F	F	F	X		
C.M.Palmer	F	F	F	F	F	F
E.T.Gourley	F	F	F	F	F	F
Sir H.Havelock-Allen	F	F	F	F		
J.W.Pease	F	F	X	F	X	F
F.E.B.Beaumont	F	F	F	F	X	X
T.C.Thompson	F				F	F
J.Henderson	X					
E.Backhouse	F	F	F	F		
T.Richardson	F				X	F
J.Dodds	F	X	F	F	F	F
Hon. W.H.James	F	F	F	F	F	F
J.C.Stevenson	F	X	F	F	F	F
F.Herschell		X	F	F	F	F
Sir A.Middleton-Monck		F	F	F		
Sir G.Elliot		A	X	A	X	A
B.B.H.Rodwell		A	X	A		
Lord Hinchingbrook		A	A	X		
Lord Mandeville			A	A		
E.Hicks			X	A	A	A
W.Fowler					F	F
H.Shield					F	F
W.H.Fellowes					A	A
Lord D.Gordon					F	F
Hon. F.W.Lambton					F	F
T.Fry					F	F
S.Storey					F	F
J.R.Bulwer					A	A
Sir R.Peel					A	A

KEY : F - Voted in Favour. A - Voted Against.
▒ - Not then in Parliament. X - Did not Vote.
1 - 1874 Division.
2 - 1877 Division.
3 - 1878 Division.
4 - 1879 Division.
5 - Second Reading of the 1884 Franchise Bill.
6 - Second Reading of the 1884 Franchise Bill (Autumn Session).

NB : The 1877 division concerned a motion which also included equal electoral districts.

Table 3

Leading Figures in the Pitmens' Associations-

DMA President	- John Foreman.		
DMA Secretary	- William Crawford.		
DMA Treasurer	- Nicholas Wilkinson	(	- 1882).
DMA Agents	- William Patterson.		
	John Wilson	(1882 -	).
DCFA President	- John Pritchard	(1872 -	1874).
	Henry Todd	(1874 -	1876).
	Coulthard	(1876 -	1880).
	Joseph Hogg	(1880 -	).
DCFA Secretary	- John Batey	(1872 -	1874).
	James Thompson	(1874 -	1875).
	John Wilson	(1875 -	).
DCFA Treasurer	- William Johnson	(	- 1882).
	S.Hill	(1882 -	).
DCMA President	- John Orr.		
DCMA Secretary	- James Trotter.		

KEY : DMA - Durham Miners Association
DCFA - Durham County Franchise Association / Durham County Franchise and Political Reform Association.
DCMA - Durham Colliery Mechanics Association

Table 4

List of Reform Meetings Reported in the Durham Chronicle -

Year	Location	Organizers	Attendance
1873	Towlaw	DCFA	
	Hetton-le-Hole	Miners	
	Willington	DCFA	
	Thornley Colliery	Miners	
	Chester-le-Street	Miners	
	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	NRL	
	Coxhoe	DCFA	
	Shotley Bridge		
	Spennymoor		3200
	Durham City	DCFA	130
	Crook		
	Shadon's Hill	Miners	2500 - 3000
	Brandon		2000
	Crook		5000 - 6000
	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	NRL	90000
	Consett Colliery		
	Houghton-le-Spring		5000
	Tantobie	DMA	
	West Stanley		1000
	Byers Green		
	Dipton	DCFA	2000
	Shincliffe	DMA	
	Annfield Plain		
	Brandon	Co-op	
	Bowden Close	DMA	
	Coxhoe	DCFA	
	Chester-le-Street	PMCFS	2000
	Shotley Bridge	NRL	
	Durham Miners Gala	DMA	
1874	Durham City	DCFA	
	New Durham	Miners	
	Gilesgate Moor	DMA	
	Barnard Castle	R	
	Bishop Auckland	DCFA	9000
	Crook	DCFA	
	Houghton-le-Spring	NRL	
	Burnopfield Colliery		
	Dipton		
	Willington		2000 - 3000
	Shadon's Hill	Miners	2000
	Crook		500
	Bishop Auckland		
	Low Spennymoor		Low
	Hetton-le-Hole	DCFA	
	Chester-le-Street	DCFA	
	Consett	DCFA	19
	Durham Miners Gala	DMA	
1875	Shotley Bridge		
	Boyne Colliery		
	South Shields	MCL	

Year	Location	Organizers	Attendance
1875	St John's Chapel	DCFA	
	Durham Miners Gala	DMA	
1876	DCFA Conference	DCFA	
	Hetton-le-Hole	DCFA	
	Durham Miners Gala	DMA	
1877	Shadon's Hill	DCFA	5000
	Durham Miners Gala	DMA	30000 - 35000
1878	Shadon's Hill	DMA	
	Waterhouses	DCFPRA/DCFA	
	Langley Park		
	Durham Miners Gala	DMA	20000
1879	Old Shildon	DCFA	
	Durham Miners Gala	DMA	20000
1880	Haswell	DCFA	
	Crook	Miners	
	Durham Miners Gala	DMA	30000 - 35000
1881	Etherley	DLPA	
	Evenwood	DCFPRA	Meagre
	Crook	Miners	
	DCFA Conference	DCFA	
	Sleetburn	DMA/DCoA	
	DCFPRA Conference	DCFPRA	
	Boyne Colliery	DCFPRA	
	Deerness Valley	NLLGB	
	Durham Miners Gala	DMA	30000 - 35000
1882	DCFPRA Conference	DCFPRA	
	DCFPRA Conference	DCFPRA	
	Durham Miners Gala	DMA	40000 - 45000
1883	Jarrow	NDLRA	
	Houghton-le-Spring	Miners	
	Wingate	Miners	200
	Bishop Auckland	DCFA	
	DCFPRA Conference	DCFPRA	
	Crook		Negligible
	Byers Green	DMA/DCFPRA	
	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	NLA	30000
	DCFPRA Conference	DCFPRA	
	Waterhouses	DCFA	1000
	Durham Miners Gala	DMA	50000
1884	Gateshead	NDRLA	
	Tursdale	Miners	
	Langley Park		
	Wheatley Hill		
	Spennymoor	SLA	Small
	Easington Lane		
	Boyne	Miners	
	Willington		

Year	Location	Organizers	Attendance
1884	Tudhoe		
	Spennymoor		
	DCFPRA Conference	DCFPRA	
	West Stanley	Miners	Huge
	Spennymoor		
	Chester-le-Street	ClSJLA	12000
	Castle Eden	Miners	
	Darlington	DLA	
	Towlaw	DMA	
	Coxhoe		
	Hetton-le-Hole	Miners	
	Murton	DCFA	5000
	Waterhouses		
	Blaydon		
	Durham City		
	West Stanley	Miners	6000
	DCMA Conference	DCMA	
	Consett	DeLA	
	South Shields		
	Chester-le-Street	L	3000 - 4000
	Old Shildon	DMA	
	Crook		4500
	North Hebburn		7000
	Sunderland		20000 - 30000
	Spennymoor	SLA	3000
	DCFPRA Conference	DCFPRA	
	Durham Miners Gala	DMA	

KEY : DCFA - Durham County Franchise Association.
NRL - Northern Reform League.
DMA - Durham Miners Association (usually the local lodge or lodges).
PMCFS - Pelaw Main Collieries Franchise Society.
R - Radicals.
MCL - Magna Carta League.
DCFPRA - Durham County Franchise and Political Reform Association.
DLPA - Durham Labour and Political Association.
DCoA - Durham Cokemens' Association.
NLLGB - National Land League of Great Britain.
NDLRA - North Durham Liberal Registration Association.
NLA - Newcastle Liberal Association.
SLA - Spennymoor Liberal Association.
ClSJLA - Chester-le-Street Junior Liberal Association.
DLA - Darlington Liberal Association.
DCMA - Durham Colliery Mechanics Association.
DeLA - Derwentside Liberal Association.
L - Liberals.

Table 5

List of County Durham Collieries informing Cowen of their intention to attend the 1873 Newcastle Town Moor Reform Demonstration -

Addison Blaydon.
Boldon New Winning.
Burnopfield.
Chester South Moor.
Chop Hill.
Cornsay.
Dipton.
Edmonsley and Byron.
Felling.
Framwellgate Moor.
Harraton.
Hetton.
Howden Yard.
Kibblesworth.
Lambton.
Marley Hill.
Medomsley.
Milkwell Burn.
Murton.
New Lambton.
New Urpeth.
Ouston.
Pelaw Main.
Penshaw.
Philadelphia.
Quarrington Hill.
Ryhope.
Seaham.
Shiney Row.
Shipcote.
South Derwent.
Tanfield United Collieries.
Wardley.
Wearmouth.
West Pelton.

NB : Of County Durham Lodges, only Oxhill informed Cowen that it would not be attending.

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Chapter 8 - The Distribution of Parliamentary Seats

In the development of a representative democracy it is self-evident that the distribution of representatives among the electorate must be as equal as possible. A Parliament chosen via a system of gerrymandered constituencies, however wide the electorate allowed to participate, cannot be deemed democratically elected. MPs so selected could not be truly representative of the popular will, whether the constituencies were manipulated in the interest of party or class.

That was clearly an issue in Britain since, despite 1832, the political system had inherited a network of constituencies which largely reflected the socio-economic situation of mediæval England. Equal constituencies were not to appear until 1918 but 1885 saw the political establishment recognize the desirability, if not the practicalities, of the old Chartist demand for "equal electoral districts". The need for the latter was acute since, as Seymour wrote, 'No matter how extensive the franchise, the power of the masses could be easily reduced to nil by the manipulation of re-distribution.'[1]

When one-fifth, or less, of a restricted electorate returned the majority of MPs[2] it is perhaps surprising that relatively little contemporary attention was paid to the distribution of parliamentary seats. Even when the latter became a celebrated cause, as in 1866 and 1884, it seems to have been essentially regarded as a useful means of delaying franchise extension when that could not be achieved

via direct opposition. Prior to 1884, with the honourable exception of Bright's effort in 1858, concrete proposals for redistribution were minimal and seemingly motivated by partizan sentiments, whatever their proclaimed intention as anti-corruption measures.

It is perhaps unsurprising that Conservatives were unwilling to end under-representation of the radical-dominated Northern and London Boroughs. Lord Stanley, vulnerable as a King's Lynn MP, was unusual in his, however limited, opposition to the mal-distribution.[3] Indeed, his father was more typical of Tory opinion with his blatant desire to shift seats from the mainly Liberal small Boroughs to the overwhelmingly Conservative Counties, a redistribution which would, almost incidentally, provide slightly better representation of the public.[4] That was an attitude popular at all levels of Conservatism,[5] though it was not universal.[6]

Local Tories certainly took up that convenient anomaly in representation. Disraeli's Newport Pagnell speech in 1857 excited enthusiasm, even if the Cambridge Chronicle did claim that the future Prime Minister had actually taken up its own cry![7] That paper's Durham equivalent, and Tory MPs from both Cambridgeshire and County Durham, were to plead the case for more County MPs, if on the basis of rateable value as well as population,[8] C.S.Read was another who claimed the idea to be a particular crotchet of his own![9]

The cry's popularity could not hide the contradiction which it created in the positions of several MPs. Hence, Montagu, the unpredictable Huntingdonshire

representative, claimed more County seats upon the basis of population even as he alleged that representation according to numbers could only empower the most numerous, and least educated, class![10] The situation was similar for both Steuart and Vane Tempest,[11] and Tory contradictions were not limited to that issue. Mowbray's call for more Northern MPs, to represent the region's population as well as its prosperity, did not mean that he supported proportionate geographical representation.[12] Even General Peel, the ultra-Tory representative of a minuscule constituency, was ready to couch the right to representation in terms of numbers, if only in defence of the family Borough of Tamworth.[13] The Durham County Advertiser, no less guilty, at least recognized its own position. It noticed that the demand for more County MPs comprised a call for, 'more equitably proportional allotment of representatives', though the paper did not cease to oppose the logical end-point of such a principle.[14] Clearly, partizan contradictions were at the heart of such contradictions.

Conservatism nationally, prior to the sticking-point of 1884, remained opposed to equal electoral districts, presumably due to a clear realization that such districts would be fatal to the "territorial influence".[15] 1859 and the 1867 Resolutions both proved that the Tories preferred redistribution kept to a minimum![16] Disraeli knew very well that equal electoral districts effectively conceded the franchise as a right, rather than a privilege.[17] Hence, his opposition survived his realization that they were the only way of distributing seats which could, 'bear the test of

criticism.'[18] "Interests" were to be represented, and an unequal distribution of representatives was a conveniently quiet method of counter-weighting the radicalism of 1867.[19] Grouping did not survive the legislative melting-pot but Disraeli's attitude to the two Laing motions was instructive. The first, weakening the smallest Boroughs, was rendered covert assistance, but the second, granting seats to urban Britain, received as short shrift as Gaselee's more radical disenfranchisement.[20]

It was in the very nature of redistribution that local concerns were prominent. Durham Conservatives tended to belie their designation by stressing the claims to enfranchisement of the three large towns of South Durham - Darlington, Stockton and the Hartlepools.[21] That view was in stark contrast to the failure even of dominant local Liberals, such as the Pease family, to throw their weight behind the Enfranchisement campaigns.[22]

Personal circumstance meant that such Conservative unanimity could not be enjoyed with regard to the existing small Boroughs. General Peel, of course, defended them, claiming that their voters' sense of honour prevented corruption, but was rather contradicted by such Tories as Mowbray's calls for their abolition in order to cut corruption, as well as to lessen Whig influence.[23] It would, however, be unfair to suggest that small Boroughs were defended only by their denizens. Ultra-Tory sentiment in Huntingdonshire repeatedly endorsed them as, 'the means of introducing into Parliament some of the most distinguished Statesmen.'[24] Huntingdonshire was to remain unmoved even by

the events of 1867, but the same was not true of Cambridge's Francis Powell. Having opposed all redistribution twelve months were sufficient to leave him criticizing his own Government for its initial leniency with the small Boroughs and claiming that, 'The active spirit of the country must become very inert if they allowed Arundel...Honiton...and other boroughs similarly circumstanced to continue to be represented in Parliament.'[25]

The local Tory press never opposed disenfranchisement, but often for peculiar reasons. Small Boroughs were often a target of partizan sentiment[26] but the Durham County Advertiser, in 1853, chose to endorse the creation of new seats for larger constituencies via the removal of those Irish Boroughs dominated by 'Romish' influences![27] The Cambridge Chronicle also chose a Borough which it considered, due to its population, deserving of greater representation, but it was Orange Liverpool![28] The Advertiser inevitably proved incapable of resisting the opportunity for partizan blue-prints provided by proposals for "grouping".[29]

Bright's 1858 proposals aroused much interest among local politicians but, as sometimes occurred, national events moved too fast to allow local politicians to express their opinions, this being a period when, bar at election times, constituents were fortunate if their representatives delivered an annual speech in their constituency. Only Mowbray enjoyed the opportunity to speak at this time, and used it to denounce, almost inevitably since he was standing on the Durham City hustings, the proposed semi-

disenfranchisement of that constituency.[30] For the local Tory press Bright's, 'gigantic fraud', was merely, 'class representation, naked and not ashamed.'[31] The Advertiser perhaps freed itself from allegations of mere local interest by, while denouncing Bright's threat to one of the Durham City seats, looking with more favour upon The Times proposals despite the fact that the latter would have had the same effect upon the City.[32]

For Conservatives Bright's danger lay in the fact that he knew, all too well, the vital importance of redistribution for any attempt to popularize the British representative system.[33] His 1858 proposals reflected that knowledge, despite Bright's vain attempt to court moderate Liberal opinion by retaining a slight under-representation of the most populous Boroughs.[34] Such concessions were not difficult for "the People's Tribune"since his aim was the empowerment of the middle-classes, rather than democracy.[35] Bright's "moderation" certainly did not impress the local Liberal press in the Counties studied. The reaction of the cautious Cambridge Independent Press was perhaps inevitable, but the Durham Chronicle was no less emphatic : 'Mr Bright cannot get beyond the eternal nonsense of mere numbers. Property, learning, and what not, occupy no place in his thoughts. Industry's representation should be increased, but the character, as well as the extent, of population should be considered.'[36] The papers assumption that "interests", such as industry, were the focus of representation should be noted.

The Whiggish Sunderland Herald, as was so often

true, followed its own eccentric line. Equal electoral districts were anathema, since they would be under the control of the mob, but the paper chose to oppose Bright's 1858 proposals only on the basis of the suggested franchises, preferring, on the mooted redistribution, merely to state that while it would be a calamity the same could be said of any redistribution! A week later, perhaps prompted by the concern of local Fenwickites, the Herald did however find the space and the energy to term Bright's schedules, 'barefaced proposals.'[37]

There had been a long tradition, nationally, of radical support for equal electoral districts, a fact reflected by their adoption as one of the six points of the People's Charter. Ernest Jones was quite certain of their necessity, 'since any inequality of representation must place important national measures at the mercy of individual or contracted interests',[38] and he spoke in a tradition of support from numerous previous Radical Reform organizations, not to mention such worthies as Pitt and "Radical Jack" Durham.[39] However, such support did not necessarily transfer to Radical parliamentarians, some of whom inevitably had peculiarly "personal" interest in the issue! Even those Radicals who normally sympathized with the Chartists would not necessarily follow them on this issue,[40] and it is worthy of note that equal electoral districts were not to enjoy the status provided to other issues, such as the ballot or the £10 County franchise, by the existence of a "champion" ready to regularly bring it to the notice of the Commons.

At the start of the eighteen-fifties, upon this

issue, as in much else, the shade of Lord Durham hovered over the Northern Liberal press. The Durham Chronicle was quite blatant[41] and even the Sunderland Herald pleaded for a general redistribution thus, 'It is better to have to defend ourselves against our enemies, than to let our soi-distant friends cut our throats, on the plea that if we don't let them manage the business quietly, the enemy will come and do it for us.'[42]

Redistribution did, however, also have Radical support outside of the North-East. Cobden, overcoming initial hesitancy, joined MPs such as T.B.Potter and Samuel Morley in support of equal districts,[43] while Roebuck, in 1859, set a larger than usual redistribution as the price of his support for the ailing Derby Ministry.[44] It should be noted that one of Roebuck's key lieutenants during that episode was W.S.Lindsay, the newly-elected Sunderland MP, and these events may suggest something of the grass-roots Liberal support for redistribution. Lindsay's vote to prop up the Tory Ministry was, unsurprisingly, unpopular among Sunderland Liberals but his explanation of his efforts as an attempt to purge the thirty tiniest Boroughs was sufficient to at least secure sympathy for his motives. Lindsay had declared support for Bright's 1858 proposal but still was not ready to accept population as the sole criterion for the distribution of Parliamentary seats.[45]

Only one local Liberal candidate, Sir Charles Douglas, was to follow the Durham Chronicle's support for equal districts. However, his position was distinctly compromised by his 1853 opposition to the necessary semi-

disenfranchisement of Durham City, where he was then a candidate.[46] Even Radicals such as Walter and Seymour were deeply reluctant to utter the fell phrase, "equal electoral districts", though they did support a wide redistribution of seats.[47] While Mowatt could flatly demand abolition of the seventy-six Boroughs with fewer than 500 electors most other Liberals preferred the nebulous form of demand at which Lord Harry Vane and Duncombe Shafto were the masters.[48] Vane, like other South Durham MPs, tended to be most interested in the enfranchisement of the large unrepresented towns which lay within his constituency.[49] The Durham Chronicle endorsed their campaign and was also not averse to attempting to bend the later movement for "grouping" (of small Boroughs) in their favour.[50]

Grass-roots Liberalism in the localities did reveal some support for equal districts. Brockie, the South Shields Humeite wrote, 'men of sense can hardly be satisfied with a system...which enables a minority of the electors of cities and boroughs to return eight times as many members as the majority return.'[51] The NPFRA meeting in Cambridge in 1850 also heard denunciations of such "minority rule".[52] However, though Hall, a prominent Cambridge Liberal, did support equal electoral districts in 1857, the general emphasis remained upon disenfranchisement as a weapon against corruption, even for such a Radical figure as Alderman Harris.[53] Indeed, during a debate at Cambridge's prestigious Philo-Union Society the Borough's Liberal agent, Cockerell, was to claim Bright's 1858 redistribution proposals as proof that the Quaker politician was no

statesman![54]

Such prominent Durham Liberals as Aldermen Story and Bramwell, no doubt influenced by the need to defend their City's second seat, were no less moderate.[55] An ambiguous motion was passed at Durham City's 1859 Reform meeting, ambiguity forced by the distance between Bramwell and Linnæus Banks' call for, 'an equitable apportionment of members to population.' The expression's Chartist overtones perhaps lay behind the inability of another speaker, the Rev. Goodall, to endorse "equal electoral districts" despite his declaration that, 'Not places, but people, ought to be represented.'[56] A contemporary Reform meeting in Sunderland passed a similarly woolly resolution, while certain local Liberals continued to stress the need for distribution of parliamentary seats according to property, as well as population.[57]

The grass-roots in South Durham, like that area's politicians, were principally concerned with the need to enfranchise Darlington, Stockton and the Hartlepools. The three Boroughs were to stake their own claims but also had the support of the local Liberal chairman, Scurfield.[58] After their battle for separate representation was won, in 1868, other County Durham claimants appeared - Jarrow in 1881, the Aucklands in 1883 and Spennymoor in 1884.[59] Cambridgeshire's only serious claimant, Wisbech, made its vain bid in 1858.[60] The 1860 meeting for the enfranchisement of the Hartlepools was particularly interesting in that it illustrated Tory redistribution arguments, the meeting being inspired by the exclusion of the Hartlepools from the planned Liberal redistribution of that year. Councillor Groves was ready to

mention population but also cited property and the general Parliamentary under-representation of the "Shipping Interest". Another speaker, G.J.Brown, took a similar stance, wryly noting that, 'He would like to know what trading interests Durham [City] possessed, that it should have two members?'[61] It should be noted that, nationally, both Bright and Cobden initially held similar beliefs in the dual, property and population, claims to Parliamentary representation.[62]

Wider Tory attitudes to redistribution were revealed by the mixed local response to their party's proposals of 1859. While the Durham County Advertiser was unimpressed by the number of small Boroughs left intact, that minimalism was the scheme's greatest recommendation so far as the Cambridge Chronicle was concerned. The Chronicle stressed the need for a, 'fair and honest representation of the various interests in this kingdom', hence repudiating, 'giving a practical monopoly of electoral power to places where swamps of people are huddled together.'[63]

The local Tory press did not abandon principle for local advantage, but local cases did of course interest them. Only scorn greeted Lewis's Apportionment of Seats Bill in 1861 with the Chronicle wishing that the seats were instead going to the "learned bodies", and the County Advertiser rediscovering its opposition to the rule of "numbers" : 'The electoral principle of mere population is one of the most vicious conceivable.'[64]

As regards redistribution the Conservatives were to take 1866-1867 almost in their stride though a few,

including F.S.Powell, had to reform their prejudices. Strangely, it was to be the Tories who least approved of their Government's radicalism on the franchise that most queried the moderation of Disraeli's redistribution proposals. In this they echoed the Whiggish Sunderland Herald. The latter paper's editorials despairingly noted that if household suffrage was the principled franchise, as Disraeli claimed, then equal electoral districts were its equivalent in the distribution of parliamentary constituencies. If that was the case, the Herald noted, then the 1867 schedules could not last and agitation would soon commence for a redistribution. The remainder of the local Liberal press also felt Disraeli's efforts merely a makeshift.[65]

At least two local Conservatives fully agreed. Gorst, then still on the right of his party, calmly reasoned further redistribution to be inevitable[66] but General Peel was more emotive : 'I should be prepared to go much further than you do with respect to the re-distribution of seats, for there was not a single argument brought forward in support of the franchise that would not apply with equal force to the formation of electoral districts.'[67] The 1867 distribution, like the franchise anomaly between Boroughs and Counties, could not long last, but for every cynic there was later to be a Conservative, like Pemberton in Sunderland, who would genuinely look forward to the final removal of the, mainly Liberal, small boroughs.[68]

As with so many other topics the requirement on the local press to comment on politics weekly perhaps made it a better guide to Conservative opinion at this time than the

irregular declarations of the local politicians. A study of the editorials, not unusually, shows careful manoeuvring to remain close to Disraeli's position. Such efforts could, as in this complex situation, send two local Tory papers off at tangents! In 1866 the Durham County Advertiser urged protection of the small Boroughs as strongholds for talented, but not wealthy, MPs and repeated the old cry for greater County representation even as it denounced Liberal schedules as numerically-based.[69] The Cambridge Chronicle felt similarly, while paradoxically claiming that the schedules created new anomalies according to population.[70] By 1867, in contrast to the Herald, the Cambridge Chronicle considered Disraeli's redistribution proposals, 'most comprehensive', perhaps even too comprehensive judging by the paper's regret concerning the passage of Laing's amendment.[71] The Advertiser, though in pursuit of the same end, supported Laing, even if it still denied that the principle of popular representation could reflect, 'the various interests, tastes and opinions which make up a national representation.' The flaws in the final redistribution, so far as the paper was concerned, were only those inevitable in any party compromise![72] It should be noted that, on the national stage, those Tories facing the abolition of their own seats were rather more inclined to dispute the wisdom of the schedules passed in 1867![73]

Local Liberals, prior to 1867, showed as little inclination to make concrete suggestions as their Tory equivalents. Indeed, that phenomenon was so universal that it is tempting to assume that no principled positions were held

on the issue, a suggestion which could explain the Commons' torpor in 1885.[74] Campbell, the self-confessed Palmerstonian, professed ultra-moderate views on possible redistribution but was the last to express the same in either Cambridgeshire or County Durham, though men like Fawcett and Beaumont continued to term equal electoral districts 'fancy' or 'impracticable'.[75] Atherton's opposition to Bright's proposals in 1858 rather invalidated his efforts to distance himself from that sort of opposition.[76]

Certain Liberals, including Hutt, while not supporters of equal districts were capable of ringing declarations : 'In my opinion, the Parliament of England ought to be the representative of the minds, of the interests, of the entire feeling of the country, and whilst this abuse in the distribution of seats continues, I do not believe the people will be of the opinion that the conditions of Parliamentary Reform have been satisfactorily fulfilled (Applause).'[77] By 1859 the Durham Chronicle had declared support for the distribution of seats according to population, and even the Sunderland Herald could not regard the 1866 schedule as sufficient.[78]

The few local Liberals caring to express a preference seem to have been more advanced than their national equivalents. Certainly, no Liberal bar Campbell dared declare faith in the small Boroughs, as did Russell and Gladstone,[79] or for the minimum possible redistribution, as did Palmerston and Wood.[80] The most that could be said is that silent MPs followed Lowe and Lewis in support for redistribution, if conducted according to other criteria

than population.[81] There lies a possible explanation for the unenthusiastic reception afforded to the 1866 schedules, a patent and undemocratic Whig defence of the traditional weighting of Parliamentary representation in favour of the "landed interest".[82]

Partizan requirements were to loosen Liberal tongues in 1867 when a Conservative Government's schedules appeared vulnerable to attack. Several local MPs and candidates declared Disraeli's efforts to be insufficient[83] but only two were prepared to be more specific. The radical Candlish demanded disenfranchisement of all Boroughs with populations below 5,000 but was trumped by Torrens who demanded the threshold be set at 7,000![84] However, even Candlish did not feel genuine equality possible, to the disappointment of at least one grass-roots Sunderland radical, and Torrens was perhaps typical of mainstream Liberal opinion when he said, 'He did not say that they must have everything equal and as level as a chess-board, but they must not have those great extremes.'[85]

The "rotten Boroughs" were the most contentious issue in 1867. Equal electoral districts might have continued to seem distant but there was a Liberal feeling that the tiniest Boroughs had to go.[86] That sentiment also extended to those psephologically-minded Tories, such as the proprietor of the Durham County Advertiser, who realized the services such constituencies rendered to the Liberal cause![87] It is interesting that the rurally-situated Cambridge Independent Press took a rather different view, regarding the small Boroughs as a means of double representation of the Peers.[88]

Certainly, grass-roots Huntingdonshire Liberals continuing to assault the small Boroughs as late as 1884.[89]

The motivation of the latter group was perhaps the continuing survival of the "United Boroughs of Huntingdon and Godmanchester". Local Liberals made their opinion clear when, in 1873, they fielded Arthur Arnold, a prominent supporter of equal electoral districts![90] Patricians from the "United Boroughs", including Lords Sandwich and Hinchingbrook, were to fight a stubborn rear-guard action for the small Boroughs, a defence which continued even beyond the Arlington Street Compact.[91] However, outside of such directly interested circles, locally only P.B.Smollett defended the small Boroughs since for him equal districts remained an old scheme of 'Fergus(sic) O'Connor'[92] W.H.Fellowes, meanwhile, revealed the possible complexity of individual opinions on redistribution. He accepted equal districts as inevitable, but did so only in order to prevent any grouping of the "United Boroughs" with the Liberal towns of North Bedfordshire.[93]

County Conservatives, once so eager to claim more fellows upon the basis of population, proved dogged opponents of equal electoral districts. What was at stake, in the view of both Thornhill and Bulwer, was the preservation of the "agricultural interest", and Hicks' resistance to the dismemberment of the Counties continued well beyond the 1884 Compact - 'Did not the electors in the counties desire to be retained as county voters, instead of having the counties cut up into wards with extraordinary names.'[94]

Such local concerns were not entirely limited to

Conservatives, as was proved by the case of Fowler, the Cambridge Liberal. Though he despised the distribution of constituencies as it stood in 1872 he was also to insist that Cambridge was too great a town to be semi-disenfranchised! Fowler was also finally to accept the principle of centrifugal representation, which so infuriated later Tories.[95]

Tories on the national stage were, in the years prior to 1884, to labour in search of a "convenient" redistribution scheme, presumably having recognized the entirely temporary nature of the 1867 settlement. There remained some ultra-Tories, and Disraeli was stubbornly unmovable on this issue,[96] but Conservatives were effectively forced to question the existing distribution of constituencies by the imminence of franchise assimilation, shifting populations and, perhaps most importantly, their disastrous electoral performance in 1880. If most Tories continued to hope for a moderate redistribution, or like Hicks-Beach were attempting to draw one up,[97] they were finally left with no real choice but to endorse the Arlington House Compact.[98]

Inventive prominent Conservatives, and most notably Randolph Churchill, perhaps turned to equal electoral districts as a hare to set running but even Hardy had to admit that the idea rapidly hit a chord.[99] Among those Conservatives changing their positions at this time was Salisbury, never a man to stand against an established historical trend. By 1873 he had seen the future, and the opportunities available for a party if it could obtain a hand

in the redistribution process.[100] Salisbury, however, managed to retain, until the very last moment, his Tory support as a principled opponent of the representation of "numbers".[101]

The contrast between Salisbury's public position and his inner musings was necessitated by the situation at the Tory grass-roots. Fearing permanent Radical rule, or even a drift into syndicalism,[102] Tories remained stubbornly opposed to equal districts. That was evident in a Swavesey speech delivered by Charles Balls, the Cambridge Conservative leader. When Balls warned that Gladstone plotted equal electoral districts his audience erupted into jeers and cries of, 'Let him try it', and, 'We will cut him up'![103]

Certain local Conservative politicians were equally strident. That was especially true concerning the Boroughs where, in the case of constituencies like Cambridge and Durham City, at least one of the two seats faced removal. Sydney Gedge and Barrington both mentioned the fact but it was Wharton, the leading Durham City Tory, who went further. Having regarded the 1867 redistribution as one of, 'great extent', he could only oppose equal districts which he considered would leave the miners, 'masters of the whole county of Durham.'[105] By 1874 Wharton had commenced a veritable career in apocalyptic prediction of the City's future. First the constituency, via extended borders, was to be swamped by pitmen. Then, the City was to be reduced to, 'a mere pit village', by semi-disenfranchisement. Finally, Wharton warned of the prospect of merger with Bishop

Auckland.[106] Such efforts enraged the Durham Chronicle which regarded Wharton as a, 'Tory monopolist', who seemed to place miners, 'almost beyond the pale of humanity.'[107]

With such supporters it cannot be surprising that Salisbury attempted to hide his support for equal districts behind the ancient cry of "representation of interests", a fact which has caused certain historians to feel that the 1884 settlement was pressed on Salisbury by Churchill and others.[108] Salisbury was certainly motivated more by partizan than by democratic sentiment[109] but it is perfectly clear that he did support equality of electoral districts in 1884, whether on "Tory Democratic" grounds or, more probably, in order to accentuate local political influences.[111]

To a limited extent the Durham County Advertiser had foreshadowed the events of late 1884 when, in 1875, its correspondent "Dunelm" reacted to Stevenson's call for equal districts with rather less rage than was usual : 'Well, if electoral districts are to be made, it will be a nice question indeed to define the boundary.'[112] From 1879 the paper largely ignored principle on this issue, instead speculating upon the possible local effects of a national redistribution. It is interesting that Salkeld claimed that the single extra seat he expected for the county should go to the tiny university rather than to the main claimant, Palmer's Jarrow, which was deemed too inevitably Liberal to be granted its admitted, 'right to be heard.' Another correspondent, "Curfew", suggested that the town be grouped with the already radical South Shields but that was, unsurprisingly, insufficient to assuage the Durham Chronicle's rage.[113]

The Cambridge Chronicle, which was never quite to drop its misgivings even in 1884,[114] had better reflected Tory opinion. It stood firm, 'on grounds broad enough to insure(sic) the representation of the diversified interests whose claim to consideration is even greater than that of mere numbers.'[115] The paper undoubtedly attempted to use redistribution to turn moderates against County household suffrage claiming that franchise assimilation would have to be accompanied by the disenfranchisement of all Boroughs with populations below 45,000, twice the final figure![116] The paper's view of Radicals in 1884 was stark : 'the intention is to deprive wealth and intelligence of all direct political influence by swamping them in a huge mass of ignorance...and by these means it is sought to bring about a state of affairs in which the real voice of the country - the voice of intelligence, the voice of patriotism shall be completely stifled.' The Caucus would rule so that, 'all classes except one shall be disfranchised, and...all schools of political thought except one shall be suppressed.' It would be a real revolution : 'All that is great and noble, all that is wise and good, all that is sensible and prudent in our electoral system will be sacrificed, and the nation will be compelled to confine the expression of all its wants and aspirations to one single channel, of which the Radicals will hold both ends![117]

The Durham Chronicle, perhaps owing to the relative moderation of its competitor, rather lived out Jones' scathing comments on the provincial press during the years between 1868 and 1884.[118] The Cambridge Independent

Press, however, revelled in the prospective removal from the Commons of men such as the Fitzwilliams, the ultra-Whiggish "bosses" of Peterborough. Their counter-weighting of the Parliamentary representatives of the largest Boroughs was a matter of outrage to the Independent Press, though it also remained opposed to the full representation of London's population, since metropolitan seats were supposedly vulnerable to demagoguery and thus unable to represent, 'a great variety of interests.' For the Cambridge Liberal newspaper, seats had to be distributed according to taxes paid, as well as numbers resident since, 'it is obviously important that so far as it is consistent with justice, as many boroughs as possible with a corporate life and a distinct character should be directly represented in the House of Commons without being tacked on to some other place, or merged in a county or in one of those speculative abominations known as equal electoral districts.'[119]

Such an attitude basically reflected national Liberal opinion. Hamilton considered that most Liberal MPs remained opposed to equal districts'[120] and that opinion was certainly shared by Goschen, the Whig Ministers and Gladstone himself.[121] The Premier's conservatism was clearly demonstrated by the Government's redistribution proposals of 1884 which, unaffected as they were even by Hicks-Beach's "radicalism", so disgusted their drafter.[122] It should not be forgotten that Gladstone was finally to imbue the Compact with his own partizan, and non-democratic, theory of "centrifugal representation."[123]

The political heights, on the issue of

redistribution, held considerable freedom of movement for, despite the Reform agitation which was under way in 1884, they faced little pressure from below. Agitation, naturally, centred upon the franchise and the Lords rather than the minutiæ of seat distribution, and only the agitation's leaders were to speak distinctly in 1884.[124] However, among Durham's agitators, if nowhere else, the argument for equal electoral districts had long been won. Though it was not among the Charter points appropriated by Cowen's Northern Reform Union (NRU) in 1858, men like the NRU's President, and Cowen himself, were strong supporters.[125] The later resuscitated Northern Reform League (NoRL) was to include in its programme an explicit call for the, 'better apportionment of representatives to population', while the great 1874 Town Moor demonstration clearly endorsed equal electoral districts themselves.[126] A similar declaration had been made by the Miners' National Union at its Durham City conference of 1872 and equal districts became an omnipresent second resolution at miners' Reform meetings between 1874 and 1885. The pitmen's leaders were unanimous on the matter and speakers like George Ashworth of Crook were certain that franchise assimilation would be of little use without what he, and at least one local Radical, felt essential, the exclusive representation of population.[127]

Such pressure, however, could not even convince the Durham Chronicle. There, the proprietor Welch remained disinclined, 'to get rid of historical continuity in order to set up equal electoral districts', even if it also acknowledged the, 'obvious truth that there should be a

direct relation between numerical strength and political influence.'[128] Ironically, the Cambridge Independent Press, under little or no pressure from agitation, chose to take the more radical line. Arguing that, 'The aim of the Liberals is to get a fair representation of the whole people', it ringingly endorsed Forster's declaration for representation of numbers, as opposed to "interests".[129]

Pressure was so slight that even Cowen felt the need to appear moderate : 'I like to cherish old associations. I have no wish to destroy anything that can be utilized (applause). We have in this country counties and boroughs, and I could not support, at the present time, an attempt to destroy them.'[130] He, like Dilke, had to face a Commons in which 400 MPs represented unviably small constituencies.[131] Though Chamberlain had declared for equal representation in 1872 he was motivated entirely by partizan, rather than democratic, motives, then as in 1883.[132] Peter Rylands, though obviously later committed to equal districts, also arrived at that opinion due to clearly partizan motives.[133] However, he did make the seemingly obvious point that the "interests" which had formed the basis of representation for so long were in fact "class interests".[134]

Though Bright also needed to be convinced of the wisdom of equal electoral districts[135] there were Radicals, including Forster and Trevelyan, who were far more enthusiastic.[136] The National Liberal Federation thoroughly endorsed the districts, as did its most prominent figure in the North, Spence Watson,[137] while Radical MPs, though regretting the dismemberment of their own Boroughs, were

ready to accept the inevitable.[138] Only "old Radicals", like Bright and Leatham, were less malleable,[139] at a time when even such moderate figures as Rosebery were able to face up to the necessity for more accurate representation of the people, which required equal districts.[140]

The meetings which actually adopted the Arlington Street Compact, and hence equal districts, took place owing to Salisbury's resistance to the moderate, but partizan, Government measures of 1884, a "gerrymander" so blatant that it had succeeded even in uniting Hartington and Chamberlain behind it![141] With the old scheme's rejection Dilke was left to play his hand and, with the active assistance of Salisbury, to secure the final radical change.[142] The victory for Britain's leading Radical was perhaps made even sweeter by the fact that he secured a larger re-distribution from the Tories than he could ever have wrung out of Gladstone![143]

If Dilke expected stiff backwoods resistance to the Compact, it did not materialize.[144] Hayes feels that the agitation killed off any idea of resistance, but that neither tallies with the local situation nor with Jones' observations on the MPs' total acquiescence.[145] In fact, Liberal MPs in Cambridgeshire and County Durham stubbornly continued to leave their statements as vague as possible.[146] Only Colonel Joicey openly spoke for equal, or even nearly equal, districts but, on the other hand, only Shield chose to restrict his support to the plan published in the Standard.[147] Perhaps Radical views were most strikingly encapsulated by Atherley Jones who, speaking at the Durham Miners Gala, advocated the representation of his audience

rather than the collection of mediæval buildings known as the "City of Durham".[148]

The local press was to provide four distinctive reactions to the Compact. The Durham Chronicle smelled Conservative surrender and claimed that Salisbury had accepted the final redistribution in order to head off manhood suffrage. The normally radical Welch was left using Goschenesque terms as he worried that the new parochialised constituencies would be dominated by single classes.[149] The Durham County Advertiser proved capable of accepting the Compact with far fewer qualms.[150] The Cambridge Independent Press, while unimpressed by centrifugal representation, accepted the final scheme as a good compromise, even if only because, as it admitted, Salisbury's proposals had been even more radical! The paper's columnist, "Notes", was even to wish Salisbury's wider disenfranchisement had become law.[151]

The Cambridge Chronicle, as was so often the case, was left isolated in its stubborn resistance. For Sarah Naylor the Compact threatened the future of the entire Parliamentary system, a claim not even endorsed by her own London correspondent, "Notes of the Week". The latter writer did oppose any increased parochialisation of the representative system but also ruminated, 'We are quite aware of the unlovely features of the single-member scheme, but it seems more than likely that it will be found the only practicable remedy for a...greater evil.'[152]

If no MPs spoke for equal electoral districts in 1867 they seldom touched upon principle at all in 1884,

perhaps as much out of embarrassment as powerlessness .[153] In effect, the representation of numbers had been overwhelmingly accepted, however reticent politicians were in admitting the fact! A new era had opened, even if the old chimera of "finality" was to mean periodic redistribution was not conceded until 1917, and that the University seats, with their implicit separate representation of "education", survived even beyond that date.[154]

Table 1

Parliamentary Division on Dilke's Motion for Equal Electoral Districts -

Year	MPs	Support	EB	EC	EU	WB	WC	SB	SC	SU
1869	156	37.4%	93	24	1	5	3	20	10	0

EB - English Boroughs

EC - English Counties

EU - English Universities

WB - Welsh Boroughs

WC - Welsh Counties

SB - Scottish Boroughs

SC - Scottish Counties

SU - Scottish Universities

Table 2

Size of Parliamentary Constituencies in Cambridgeshire and County Durham (1881) -

Constituency	Electorate	Number of Electors per MP
Cambridgeshire	144716	48239
Cambridge	40878	20439
Huntingdonshire	no	information
Huntingdon	6417	6417
Peterborough	22394	11197
North Durham	298079	149040
South Durham	181208	90604
City of Durham	15372	7686
Gateshead	65803	65803
South Shields	56875	56875
Sunderland	124841	62421
Darlington	33421	33421
The Hartlepools	46990	46990
Stockton-on-Tees	55460	55460

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146) Durham County Advertiser, 6/2/74; Durham Chronicle, 30/7/75; 24/9/75; 28/9/83; 12/10/83; 10/10/84.

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148) Durham Chronicle, 7/7/76.

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150) Durham County Advertiser, 28/11/84; 5/12/84.

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Chapter 9 - "The Senior House" : Coping with the House of Lords

The presence of an entirely unrepresentative legislative chamber, with at the very least theoretically equal powers to those of the elected one, could only ever have been a major potential check upon the democratization of British political structures. Indeed, the very existence of such a chamber was the negation of any suggestion that Britain enjoyed a representative government. For Democrats and Radical Reformers the situation could only be remedied via the total reform of the "Upper House", or its effective neutering.

That knowledge was to inspire isolated figures such as Roebuck and O'Connell to kick against their lordly traces in the 1830s[1] but it is perhaps unsurprising that, save for the events of 1831-1832, public and political attention during the earlier part of the period under study tended to concentrate upon the House of Commons. Chartists were notably silent concerning the Lords, perhaps due to an assumption that the reformed Commons would know how to deal with them! Jones and Linton were unusual in openly calling for the abolition of the Upper House[2] but it is surely beyond belief, in spite of Cooper's suggestion,[3] that a Chartist Government would have left it in place. In public, only such maverick Radicals as Buckingham were ready to stand against the Lords, even men such as Sturge preferring to call only for Reform.[4] That, however, formed only half of the picture since even so"establishment" a figure as Lord Aberdeen ruminated that

his own legislative chamber, 'ought not to exist.'[5]

Public moderation upon this issue of the 1830s-1850s was perhaps unsurprising when Sir George Grey could feel it worth his while to claim that Hume stood for an elected upper chamber.[6] Many of the few calls for Reform of the House of Lords seemed solely designed to improve the strength of the peers' position[7] and Graham may have fulminated over Bright's speeches but in fact that renowned peer-baiter's comments largely fitted Cowen's dictum that denunciation of the peers tended to be merely declamation![8] Most politicians of the period instead seem to have shared Lowe's supportive view of the Lords, with even Cobden seemingly incapable of thinking beyond a carbon-copy of the United States Senate as a replacement for the Lords.[9]

Even controversy concerning the proposed abolition of the Paper Duties in 1860, which temporarily elevated the status of the Lords to a public issue, could not lift debate above the strictly constitutional question of whether the Paper Duties was a financial matter, even for men like Stansfeld.[10] The Constitutional Defence Association (CDA) failed to excite support outside of the Radical ghetto,[11] even if such surprisingly moderate figures as Russell and Argyll did urge Lordly caution.[12] Conservative opinion had already fitted into the lines which it was to follow for the remainder of the century as Cranborne claimed that the peers represented a "deeper" public opinion than mere MPs![13]

These were years of complacent acceptance of the Upper House as constituted, with even Liberal newspapers and local politicians ready to compliment the Lords.[14] The events

of 1860 were too short to shake that lethargy and even the Cambridge Independent Press scorned the CDA activists as, 'the extreme democratic section of politicians', while the Sunderland Herald denounced their, 'fervid orations stuffed with turgid claptrap.'[15] The passing criticism of the Lords' rejection of the Paper Duties abolition by both the Durham Chronicle and the Independent Press, though minor,[16] were to stand out during the following years of basic apathy.

During that period Tory propagandists were not inactive, perhaps encouraged by the fact that their wildest claims effectively went unanswered. While the County Advertiser included the inevitable abolition of the Upper House in its list of the iniquities of democracy, the House of Lords was declared, by Mowbray, to be the nation's debt to the nobility for their role in securing the Magna Carta. General Peel was more level-headed and perhaps revealed the core of the long Tory defence of the peers : 'The House of Lords has often rescued the country from an ill-considered or tyrannical vote of the House of Commons, which had been probably carried through some such gentle pressure as that spoken of as coming from the multitude assembled between Charing Cross and the venerable Abbey.'[17]

While the Durham Chronicle supported Russell's Life Peerages Bill, which was effectively supportive of the Upper House,[18] the 1867 Reform Act, by making the Commons more representative, nationally increased Liberal interest in the activities of the Lords. On the local level, in 1869, Candlish was firm : 'The future would not allow the House of Lords to trample on the people, and frustrate the working of

the House of Commons.'[19] At the other end of the Liberal spectrum, though under no local pressure, Beaumont was no more inclined to accept the House of Lords' obstinacy should the two legislative chambers clash. Most importantly of all, the latter's motivation was his wish to preserve the position of the Commons and hence of, 'the expressed opinion of the country.'[20]

Events between 1868 and 1874, with the Liberal Ministry repeatedly frustrated by the Tory-dominated upper chamber, lay behind the movement in Liberal Party feeling revealed by the two above quotes. The same process was at work in the national Liberal leadership,[21] and also made its mark upon editorials in the Gladstonian press. Not only was the Lords felt to be infringing upon the corner-stone of the constitution, direct personal representation, it was also, as moderates were warned, a perfect "aunt Sally" for the professional agitator and the Republican![22]

The Liberal difficulty perhaps lay in drawing the appropriate conclusion from these universal frustrations. To the "Left", as well as the more prominent of the younger Radicals,[23] abolition was the obvious solution, but that seems to have been a minority position. Even the less stark alternatives of a new representative second chamber[24] or limitation of the Lords' veto on legislation[25] were far from universally accepted. Many Liberals either restricted themselves to vaguely anti-hereditary comments, as was the case with J.W.Pease, or flatly opposed any action against the Lords, the position adopted by both William Fowler and his namesake in Wolverhampton. The former Fowler merely wanted

the Lords left, 'less powerful but more squeezable than it was now (Laughter and cheers)', even while he opposed their abolition and scorned their reform.[26] The cause of such caution may well have lain in the need to reassure more moderate Liberals, that certainly seems to have been behind Joseph Cowen's extraordinarily gentle attitude towards the Upper House during his 1873-1874 Newcastle by-election campaign.[27] Those addressing a different constituency, and most notably John Wilson, the Secretary of the Durham Miners Association (DMA) Franchise Committee, could be more adventurous. Wilson proposed an entirely new second chamber comprising the most experienced MPs and Ministers, a scheme which would of course have purged the Commons of all of the most prominent politicians![28]

Tories remained unmoved. As the beneficiaries of the Lords' efforts all Conservatives, bar such ultra-mavericks as Gorst,[29] shared the view of David Veasey, a Huntingdonshire Tory leader : 'The country day by day rejoiced to witness the noble displays of talent exhibited by that illustrious body of men (hear, hear). The refinements of education, the strict and sterling integrity, the untiring energy and zeal for the nation's welfare they exhibited, made them unite in deep thankfulness that they had a House of Lords (Loud Cheers).'[30] Two of the indefatigable County Durham Reverend gentlemen, Burdon and Ashwell, placed flesh upon the bones by stressing the importance of the peers in keeping the nation, 'above Democratic influence', and hence safe from both 'republicanism' and 'communism'.[31]

With the temperature raised by the return of

Liberal Government in 1880, local Tory press editorials became ever more defensive. The Cambridge Chronicle and the Durham County Advertiser both disingenuously claimed that the Upper House was not hereditary, with the former even citing the tiny Democratic Federation as a threat against which the House of Lords was a necessary safeguard![32] The papers' attitude was explained by the increasingly critical attitude towards the upper chamber which was manifesting itself in editorials in the local Liberal press. The Independent Press, once so cautious, scornfully dismissed the Lords as an assembly of failed politicians and 'Lord Smoothfaces', all lacking the popular mandate![33] By 1882, the paper went so far as to claim any second chamber better than the current one of, 'landlords', and to demand the latter's abolition.[34]

It is, however, worthy of recall that such radicalism was still not an unanimous opinion among Liberals. Palmer, in North Durham, opposed abolition at this time, merely claiming that the peers were doing their best! Cowen remained cautious : 'A hereditary House of legislation in the nineteenth century is logically indefensible...But, if we substitute a Senate for the existing Chamber, we may exacerbate the evil we want to cure. Practically, the House of Commons is now supreme. The Lords may delay, but they dare not defeat, a measure demanded by it...A Senate would be more self-assertive, and the House of Commons, like the American House of Representatives, might be overshadowed. We have now got an anachronism - we might get a master.'[35] Cowen's failure to provide any real alternative policy, however, caused most

of his old friends, including Robert Elliot, once of the Northern Reform League Executive, to take the tougher line of abolition.[36]

Likewise, the miners were stubborn. Their Durham Lodges were repeatedly to nominate speakers, most notably Bradlaugh and O'Connor Power, who used the Gala platforms to denounce the peers, a role shadowed by John Morley in Northumberland.[37] John Bell, of the Durham Labour and Political Association, advocated replacement of the Lords with MPs elected by their fellows[38] but most grass-roots speakers preferred to concentrate upon the more immediate issue of the franchise. They were however pledged, via their delegates at the conferences of the Durham County Franchise and Political Reform Association (DCFPRA), to the replacement of the hereditary upper chamber by a, 'truly representative' one, as early as 1882.[39]

Prior to the excitements of 1884, however, Liberal activists showed little interest, except for the Cambridge Junior Liberal Club which invited the Rev. Alford of the National Reform Association to lecture on "the House of Lords; What Shall be done with it"! Even that speaker's argument against the hereditary principle appeared restricted to the possibility that an idiot might inherit a seat and hence come to stand equal with John Bright![40] The Durham Chronicle, and less surprisingly Lord Durham, took the opposing view, indicating how reluctant moderate Liberals were to take a hard line against the existing Constitution.[41]

Events proved that this attitude was remarkably

difficult to shake, even during the excitements of 1884-1885. Cowen moved into line behind the miners' policy of abolition but his was an almost lone voice among the middle-class Liberals of County Durham.[42] Peculiarly, his only echoes came from those dissenting ministers active in the Reform agitation, with the exception of Cameron of the Sunderland School Board, one of the local Liberal politicians most closely associated with the pitmen. Local nonconformist ministers were, similarly, regular speakers at miners' meetings, and were often amongst the most virulent. The Rev. Baile spoke of, 'conceited drunken aristocrats', while the Rev. Thomas Guttery, at Hetton-le-Hole, referred to, 'titled ragamuffins, fresh from their gaming tables', and the Rev. Welford of Castle Eden, though a Gladstonian, saw the issue in class terms - 'Peers took a large share of the wealth of the nation created by working-men, whom they denied the rights of manhood.'[43] A Liberal meeting at the Durham Race-course, outside of the sway of the DMA, did witness a call for the abolition of the House of Lords, but from the nonconformist Rev. William Greenwell.[44]

Far more typical of Liberal meetings, even in 1884, was the crushing of an abolitionist amendment at South Shields.[45] Meetings in Darlington, Crook and Spennymoor were all similarly moderation incarnate,[46] though Waterhouses Liberals did endorse a motion demanding the abolition of the Lords' veto.[47] William Brodie, in Consett, used unusually strong language in merely suggesting that the peers deserved, 'the strongest censure.'[48]

The Durham Chronicle was similarly moderate,

perhaps merely following the opinion of local prominent Liberals. Welch was certainly in no doubt as to the necessity for a second chamber in order to separate the monarchy from the people and, for both the editor and his London correspondent, abolition of the Lords was not to be contemplated.[49] Their Chronicle was, however, to endorse the equally democratic, but less symbolic, abolition of the Lords' veto, as well as possibly the removal of the Upper House's hereditary members.[50] Even Welch could not condone the situation in 1884 : 'Democracy is steadily growing in power; and how the government of the empire is to be satisfactorily carried on with a Hereditary Chamber ready, on all great occasions, to arrest the advance of the proletariat, is a serious question.'[51]

If North-Eastern Liberal opinion was moderate on the issue of the Lords, North-Eastern public opinion was not. John Morley wrote thus to Gladstone : 'Northumberland and Durham people are red-hot', while Chamberlain, presumably in jest, suggested that the Durham miners march on London![52] County Durham's politicians, in certain cases, had to face that heat, but did not feel driven to follow it. Hence, in the City, T.C.Thompson opposed either abolition, as a threat to the, 'magnificent fabric of the British constitution', or reform, which could strengthen the Upper House. Other Liberal MPs in County Durham remained stubbornly silent[53] or suggested only non-democratic reform even where, as was the case with Paulton in Spennymoor, they faced a crowd calling, 'Do away with the House of Lords.'[54] The only Liberal MP to switch to abolition in 1884 was, ironically, the Hon.

F.W.Lambton. It is possible, however, that that noble scion had merely recognized his most sensible course of action in front of a fiercely anti-peer crowd in Sunderland, the home base of Samuel Storey, a future Vice-President of the People's League for the Abolition of the House of Lords![55]

If Chester-le-Street Tories could find a miner ready to endorse the House of Lords,[56] the agitation of 1884-1885 allowed many more to express the contrary opinion. In Chester-le-Street itself, even with Lord Durham in the Chair, a Liberal meeting had to grant space on the platform to a pitman, Robert Cramond, who sought the abolition of the House of Lords.[57] His attitude united the prominent miners of County Durham, from the future politicians - Wilson, Trotter, and Crawford - and the DMA Agents, Galbraith and House, both also future MPs, to local leaders such as William Pigford of Pelton Fell and William Bulmer of West Stanley.[58] The delegates of the pitmen, gathered in the DCFPRA Conference, endorsed abolition of the Upper House by 120 - 50 in November 1884 and their action had been preceded by local meetings it had already organized at locations such as Old Shildon and Murton, which had endorsed motions to abolish the Lords since they were, in Murton's words, 'dangerous to the liberties of the commonwealth.'[59]

Crawford had made his position clear via the DMA circulars which he used to maintain contact with his local Lodges. The DMA leader had no doubt that the Lords' time had been and gone. Hence, 'That the Lords will shew their usual unwillingness to grant any reform is certain, but if popular feeling be displayed, and the people's wish to have reform be

made apparent, they will conveniently pocket their opposition, and let the measure pass.'[60] Once the Lords had actually taken their stand against the people, however, Crawford adopted a more determined tone : 'No more important national crisis has arisen during the last fifty years. The question now is, has a body of irresponsible men...the power to thwart the will of the nation?'[61] Appropriating Morley's rallying cry, Crawford was enraged by the irresponsibility of Salisbury in provoking the 1884 "crisis" : 'All this has been done to sustain the prerogative of the House of Lords - an effete and worn-out body, but who have so long enjoyed special privileges that they now regard their retentions as an absolute right.' Crawford's belief that the existing Upper House was, 'unsound in principle, and pernicious in practice', was at the centre of the miners' hard-line attitude towards the Lords.[62]

Cambridgeshire Liberals, perhaps owing to their closer proximity to the feudal aristocracy and their lack of any noble figure-head like Lord Durham, seem for once to have been more radical on this issue than their County Durham equivalents. Even respectable figures such as Dr Matthew Robertson spoke of, 'tyrant oligarchy', and urged abolition of the Upper House, with the removal of its veto only a second best.[63] Abolitionist sentiment ran from the members of the Cambridge Working Mens' Liberal Club to C.P.Tebbutt in St Ives and was even to receive lip-service from University Liberals such as Professor Stuart.[64] Only in the back-water of Huntingdon did Liberals consider settling for reform of the Upper House, though they did so on the same lines as were

later to be proposed by Salisbury himself.[65] More typical were Liberal meetings in Cambridge, Linton and Haverhill, all of which passed resolutions against the hereditary principle.[66]

The Independent Press similarly outgunned its Durham equivalent on this issue by endorsing, even in 1883, Bright's plan to limit the Lords' veto, and then only as a first step towards the, 'abolition of hereditary authority.'[67] By July 1884 the paper's support for abolition was more explicit. The, 'hereditary chamber of land-lords' was, 'bad in its construction and monstrous in its results', with a past record, 'disgraceful to civilisation', and a membership the, 'vast majority of whom would never be selected for the work of legislation by any constituency out of Bedlam'![68] One of the paper's columnists, "Reformer", encapsulated the issue quite simply : 'which is to be the governing body in the country - the representative Commons or the hereditary Lords.'[69]

Cambridgeshire did, however, echo the more Northern county in the manner in which its elected Liberal representatives lagged behind grass-roots opposition to the peers' legislative role. Hugh Shield conceded only that the Upper House required more, 'popular fibre', scorning attacks upon the House of Lords in his eagerness to stress the fact that the Conservative Party were the real villains of the piece.[70] William Fowler remained generally opposed to reform of the Lords, and especially to the creation of an elected Senate, feeling that such developments could only lead to yet more intractable inter-House disputes.[71] Only at an April

1884 meeting in the Cambridge Guildhall, before a vocally anti-peer audience, did the MP finally declare his support for democratic reform of the Lords, and it was an endorsement which he withdrew shortly afterwards.[72]

Such moderation among MPs representing the local areas studied only reflected the situation in the nation as a whole. The Democratic Committee for the Abolition of the House of Lords remained restricted to prominent Radicals such as Labouchere, Lawson and Bradlaugh,[73] and while a wider abolitionist sentiment did exist within the Liberal party, uniting characters as diverse as Dilke and Harcourt, even the very essence of the Lords, as explained by Labouchere - 'They were ex necessitate a Tory House and a House of partisans' - proved unable to motivate the majority of Liberal MPs into supporting the removal of the Lords as such.[74]

Even the fervently anti-feudal Bright, to his constituents' annoyance, preferred to merely restrict the Lords' veto to a delay of just one year.[75] Samuel Morley held similar effectively, if not theoretically, democratic views[76] but much Whiggish sentiment remained tied to notions of Lords reform which, while attempting to breach Tory domination of the Upper House, owed little to any notion of representative government.[77] Gladstone was unwilling to go even that far, instead continuing to endorse both the Lords' veto and its hereditary principle. Gladstone's opinion, along with the Whig grip opinion on the Cabinet, effectively ham-strung the Liberal Party's attitude to the upper chamber.[78]

If Liberal opinion was split, Tories were not.

Though certain national figures left their support for the Lords dependent upon its proving its usefulness by blocking the 1884 Franchise Bill, the grass-roots needed no such proof of the hereditary assembly's worth.[79] Some, including the Rev. Browne of Cambridge, based their support upon such specious grounds as the House of Lords supposed direct descent from the "Witenagemote" while others held the more practical view that the peers were a guarantor of the rights of property.[80] The Conservative associations of Cambridge, Wisbech and Huntingdon, all declared the Lords to be the more representative of the two legislative chambers since, as A.W.Marshall said, its role was increasingly vital in view of, 'the growing effort which was being made in some constituencies to check the free action of the people's rights, and degrade the honourable position of parliamentary representative into that of a delegate.'[81]

The Durham County Advertiser was particularly stark concerning the dangers which lay behind abolition of the House of Lords. It would, 'entrust the Government of the country to a chamber elected practically by universal suffrage, and without any check or counterpoise. No civilised country in the world has found such a government practicable.' Its words were virtually echoed by the Cambridge Chronicle,[82] which also cited the Lords as the nation's safeguard against unscrupulous political parties![83] Few Conservatives were ready to follow even Salisbury's reform proposals and those doing so, including Wood, Fitzgerald and three other 1885 Tory candidates, clearly intended to strengthen, rather than democratize, the

hereditary chamber.[84]

Nationally, Goschen's opposition to the Franchise Bill left him in the embarrassing position of supporting the Lords' right to force a dissolution,[85] but his view was as isolated as that of those ultra-Radicals who vainly laboured to transform the victorious franchise agitation into one against the Lords in 1885.[86] Despite an enthusiastic start at St James Hall in the heady days of July 1884, enthusiasm waned with the passage of the Franchise Act, and hence the end of the primary grievance against the peers. Just seventy-one MPs turned out to support the first of Labouchere's motions to curtail the power of the Lords,[87] and even Chamberlain, for whom the Lords had once seemed such a valuable cry, was forced to accept Gladstone's view that the Lords importance as a political issue could not long survive the passage of franchise assimilation. By 1885, Chamberlain's Radical Programme merely echoed the words of Cowen before 1884![88]

The decline of the Lords as a political issue did not by-pass the North. The original franchise agitation of 1873-1874 had not revealed any innate feeling against the Upper House in County Durham's pit villages and, beyond the speeches of the three "Labour" candidates themselves, the election campaign of 1885 did not reveal the creation of any such lasting sentiment. The words of a bitter Cowen, in the midst of his 1885 struggle, are perhaps instructive. Scorning any claims that the Liberals actually opposed the Lords, he noted that they had created 150 new peerages, to the Tories' fifty-three, since 1830. As Cowen quipped, 'Making Peers may be a clandestine method of destroying them, but it is too

subtle for my comprehension (Much laughter and cheers).'[89]

During the last years of the nineteenth century the Conservatives, led of course by a Marquis, remained fiercely loyal to the Upper House. The very survival of the House of Lords was cited as proof that it had never, 'in any real sense resisted the will of the people', while Salisbury and many others, including the Queen, continued to believe that only the Lords could ensure that, 'the opinion of the nation was properly consulted.'[90] The undemocratic world of Conservative opinion perhaps reached a pinnacle in Manners' readiness to restore the Royal Veto should the House of Lords face dissolution![91] Manners' biographer, even in 1925, was to denounce the spinelessness of peers of his own day, when compared to those in his subject's![92] Even Tories, however, had to confess to 'glaring demerits' among the peers,[93] a fact which caused schemes for reform of the Lords, all of which owed little or nothing to democracy, to continue to circulate in the highest circles of the Conservative Party.[94]

Local Tories tended to be both less squeamish and less forward-looking. Durham candidates fiercely defended the peers in 1885 while the Hon. Adolphus Vane Tempest went further by claiming that all abolitionists were, 'Social Democrats', bent on, 'rebellion and anarchy (applause).'[95] Penrose Fitzgerald clearly felt in no doubt as to the strength of his position : 'if they could take a plebiscite of the country to-morrow the majority of people in nine-tenths of the constituencies would say that the House of Lords had saved England from thraldom (cheers). He did not know that the House of Lords any more than any other great body was perfect; but

this he knew,...they might better it, possibly, but he doubted it,...it was much more likely they would make it worse. (Hear, hear).'[96] Captain Selwyn, citing obstructionism, claimed that if any House had to go it should be the Commons, even though the supportive Cambridgeshire Conservatives could still find only the Magna Carta as proof of a positive role by the Lords![97]

By 1894 one Huntingdonshire Tory MP, Smith-Barry, felt sufficiently confident of the popularity of the Lords to suggest a general election on their role but it should be noted that he, like his fellow Irishman before him, never had to prove the truth of his claim.[98] Even Giffard and Greene, the two local Conservatives who did support reform of the Lords, needless to say along Salisbury's proposed lines, were not immune from such hyperbole. Giffard's support for reform was purely that of the "good party man" for he had earlier denied that the Upper House was either hereditary or exclusive owing to the large number of new creations. Giffard was also unashamed to claim that the military tyranny of the Common Wealth had been the result of its abolition of the House of Lords![99] Greene refused to countenance the abolition of the Lords until the Radicals produced their alternative, hence making the rather interesting assumption that they wanted one! For Greene the Lords remained, 'the only safeguard they had of enjoying liberty and English freedom against the suppressing tyranny of modern Radicalism (Cheers).'[100]

Conservative activists tended to follow the line set by their local, as opposed to national, politicians on

this issue. Even those, like Wilkinson in Bottisham, who described the House of Lords as an, 'anomaly', were not willing to call for Salisbury-style reform.[101] Tory opinion tended to be somewhat simplistic, as was exemplified by Balls, the President of the Cambridge Conservative Club, who simply declared the Lords to be, 'the bulwark of the Church and State, and...the true defenders of the liberty of the people.'[102] Local Liberal Unionists, perfectly willing to appear on the platforms of Conservative meetings by 1894-1895, were not to hold a markedly different position to that of their hosts. Indeed, by 1899, even such a prestigious Liberal Unionist figure as Professor Jevons, Principal of Hatfield Hall, could defend the House of Lords upon the grounds that it had saved Europe from Napoleon![103]

Such Liberal Unionists comments merely reflected the drift to Toryism of their party nationally.[104] Liberal Unionist intellectuals had only ever proposed non-democratic reform of the Lords, though they had struck at the hereditary principle,[105] but the situation was rather more difficult for Radicals who were also Unionists, as opposed to Radical Unionists. Trevelyan, who of course soon returned to the Liberals, never accepted the Lords, but other unlikely characters, such as Harney and W.E.Adams, were ready to endorse the Lords' role against Irish Home Rule, even if they would not have done so on any other issue.[106]

The local Tory press had no such crises of confidence. Though the Cambridge Chronicle accepted Salisbury's 1888 reform proposals, since it felt that they followed public opinion, the House of Lords had to remain, 'a

salutary check to presipitant (sic) legislation and a breakwater against the flood of revolution threatening to sweep away every vestige of the British Constitution.'[107] In 1894 the paper was certainly not afraid to set the Lords against democracy : 'Everything shows that we cannot do without a Second Chamber, and we contend it is far better that that Chamber should be independent of the electors, as it now is, that those who compose it, should not always have before their eyes the possible effect of their actions upon their constituents.'[108] "Notes of the Week", writing for the same paper, agreed that, 'The House of Lords is superior to considerations of the polling booths, and consequently acts with greater freedom and more breadth of thought.'[109]

Salkeld's Durham County Advertiser was, if anything, even more blunt. It declared that National Liberal Federation (NLF) opposition to the Lords smacked of, 'the frothy demagogue and the unscrupulous party bully', which reinforced its proprietor's view of unicameral government as a ruse to allow a, 'tyrannical majority', to force through Irish Home Rule against the majority in Britain. In case of confusion, the paper made its view clear during these years : 'THANK GOD WE HAVE A HOUSE OF LORDS'![110]

The Durham Chronicle, as a Liberal paper, was hardening its position at the other extreme. Though it continued only to oppose, 'hereditary legislation', by 1894 the Lords' blocking of Irish Home Rule had left them liable to abolition, or at the very least to reform beyond recognition![111] That firming of the paper's position reflected the situation at the head of the national Liberal

Party. Numerous prominent figures, including Lady Russell, were fired by the controversy of 1894-1895 to declare for the removal of the Upper House, while others, more concerned with the practical than the symbolic, preferred simply to abolish the peers' veto.[112] Previously minority positions had been forced out into the Liberal mainstream. Even Hamilton, himself opposed to such measures, had to confess that the majority of the Liberal leadership had become "Single Chamber men".[113] Gladstone certainly believed that similar sentiments also reigned on the benches behind him during his last Premiership.[114]

However, that opinion should not go unquestioned. The Durham Chronicle's proprietor, W.E.Welch, felt the Lords to be, 'an ever-pressing incubus', but could never really feel comfortable about the possibility of an unicameral assembly,[115] and many Liberal back-benchers seem to have felt similarly. Hence, while 147 voted to abolish the Lords' veto in 1894, just thirty-seven felt sufficiently strongly to denounce the Cabinet's mishandling of the issue only a few months later.[116] The numbers of MPs bothering to vote in divisions concerning the future of the Upper House seem to reveal that interest peaked in 1888, with 385 MPs present, but dropped to 292 in 1894 and then just 180 in 1903. If Liberals outside Parliament were itching for a crack at the Lords, Labouchere's cynicism concerning his Parliamentary colleagues seems to have been well placed.[117]

Cambridge's tradition of moderate Liberal candidates continued during these years. In 1890, Rudolph Lehmann, despite his claims that he held, 'advanced', views,

appeared to take issue only with the hereditary principle, though he did on one occasion suggest the abolition of the peers' veto.[118] After 1892, with Liberals representing all three divisions of Cambridgeshire, divisions became apparent. Arthur Brand was very much his father's son, but his two colleagues were more radical. Hugh Hoare, representing the West, was verbally Radical by 1890 : 'Unless the House of Lords could satisfy them that they existed for the sake of the people, it would be a very bad day indeed for the House of Lords (Cheers). There was nothing sacred in institutions.' By 1893 his radicalism had been converted into practical terms and Hoare was expressing support for abolition, though within two years he again restricted his aspirations to the removal of the peers' veto. Hoare continued to follow that moderate line when he addressed the Cambridge and County Liberal Club in 1899 : 'He took it that they did not want to abolish the House of Lords utterly and entirely, but to abolish utterly and entirely their power for mischief (Applause).'[119]

It seems likely that Hoare's temporary attachment to abolition owed much to the Lords' blocking of Irish Home Rule, and the resulting agitation against them. There were certainly firm foundations for any such campaign. The NLF Chairman at this time was Dr Spence Watson of Gateshead and, via the Rev. Barton of Crook, the Durham County Liberal Federation, including all of the local Liberal MPs, had passed motions for the abolition of the hereditary principle at least twice.[120] Meanwhile, in the South, the Cambridge and County Liberal Club had already shown its mettle by adopting John Morley as its President in 1891.[121]

However, the anti-Lords agitation of 1894-1895 was, perhaps above all other issues, to reveal the political differences between Cambridgeshire and County Durham. The former county's Liberals were far less active and even where meetings did take place, as in Cottenham and Soham, motions were passed which failed to include any detailed future proposals. However, it is perhaps worthy of note that the Soham Liberals did invite T.P.O'Connor as their guest speaker. O'Connor restricted his demands to the NLF policy of veto abolition but expressed himself in class terms, including a proposal that the nation's stately homes become, 'free museums for the people.'[122] Open abolitionist sentiment in the more southerly county was restricted to Cambridge itself, though there it did permeate the various Liberal Associations from top to bottom. Typical of speakers was the nonconformist Rev. Fleming in Sturton Town : 'was it not time to sweep the House of Lords for ever away? (Loud cheers).'[123]

Outside of the Borough the contrast was stark for Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Tories ran an impressive counter-agitation via the network of village clubs which had been developed since 1885. Cambridge, Chesterton, St Ives, Ely, Huntingdon, Newmarket and a host of smaller locations, all held meetings in support of an upper chamber and of the House of Lords as then constituted. Arguments used, as among the Soham Tories, often gloried in the Lords' undemocratic nature.[124] The Liberals' failures to prevail in Cambridgeshire may have been best exemplified by an 1895 election meeting held at New Chesterton. There, from the

Chair, Logan denounced the Lords as, 'a standing committee of the Tory party', and declared himself, 'no Second Chamber man (Cheers)', but still clearly felt himself restricted to suggesting the abolition of only the Lords' veto, while another speaker, Fordham, though he did suggest abolition of the House of Lords in toto, felt obliged at the same time to suggest referenda as an alternative popular safeguard against an electoral dictatorship based in the Commons.[125]

The national Liberal leadership, including both Gladstone and Rosebery, undoubtedly hoped to use the Lords as an election cry in 1894-1895,[126] but they were sorely disappointed! As Hoare suggests, however, MPs and candidates had tried their best to co-operate. Hence, in 1894, A.J.David declared in Cambridge that, 'Any institution, party or body that resisted the will of the people was an institution, a party or a body guilty of an act of rebellion - (loud cheers)', but limited his concrete demands to the "party line" of abolition of the Lords' veto.[127] For that reason, David's oratory should be taken with a pinch of salt but he certainly stressed the importance of the issue using democratic terms : 'They had to determine...whether the verdict should be in favour of democratic or autocratic Government of the worst kind, because it would not be Government by an independent person, but by a man avowedly at the head of a great party in the realm.' Almost identical words, and a similar support for the abolition of the Lords' veto, were expressed by Matthew Fowler, the Liberal MP for Durham City.[128]

George Newnes, the publisher and MP for Eastern Cambridgeshire, had already voted for the abolition of the

hereditary principle, and expressed that view at Isleham during the 1895 campaign - 'The masters must be the men who were elected by the people, and not an irresponsible assembly like the House of Lords (Hear, hear and cheers)...If they allowed the House of Lords to believe that they could ride rough-shod over the House of Commons it would be a very disastrous thing.'[129] Direct abolition of the Lords remained very much a minority position among parliamentary politicians from the areas studied but support for that position was no longer merely restricted to such ultra-Radicals as Storey and Wilson. MPs such as Joicey and Paulton became regular voters for the abolition of both the hereditary principle and the Lords' veto (see Table 1). In the North such Liberals as Captain Henry Fenwick left no doubt as to their support for the abolition of any non-elected Second Chamber and even Sir Joseph Pease, to the scorn of the Durham County Advertiser, was losing patience with the Lords.[130]

That more advanced attitude among certain Northern MPs and candidates perhaps reflected the relative success of the anti-Lords agitation there. In County Durham the Tory effort was on a much smaller scale than in Cambridgeshire, though meetings were held in Durham City, Medomsley and Sedgefield.[131] At those meetings just one speaker, Lord Durham at a Unionist meeting in Sunderland's Victoria Hall, broke the national silence on Lords' reform, and he did so for the very reason which so scared Dilke : 'He wanted to see the House of Lords more representative, more equally balanced, and a more popular Chamber than it was at present (hear, hear).' The fact that Durham felt the need to be so blatant

might be taken as indicative of the anti-reform timbre of the Conservative meeting at which he spoke.[132]

By contrast, the Liberal effort in County Durhamn was much more impressive than its equivalent in Cambridgeshire. The County Advertiser was inevitably to claim that Wilson had failed to whip up anti-Lords feeling in the pit-villages which were his political base,[133] but the DCFPRA left no doubt, in both 1894 and 1895, of its continuing support for the total abolition of the House of Lords. Their guest speaker at their 1894 conference, Councillor Threlfall of Leicester, was blunt : 'One of the first things in the path of labour representation was to make up their minds, not only to send working men members to the House of Commons in large numbers, but at the same time to join for smashing up the House of Lords (applause).'[134]

One result of the events of 1885 was certainly the fact that the meetings of the 1894-1895 campaign were not divisible into "miners" and "Liberal" meetings. All of the meetings, even when the venue was the local Miners Hall and the audience and platform were exclusively pitmen, were organized under the auspices of the local Liberal Associations. Radicalism was omnipresent, with abolition preached not only at meetings in the mining areas of Murton, Hetton-le-Hole and Spennymoor, but also in Pease-dominated Darlington and among the Pease-voting miners of Stanley.[135] Calls for democratic reform of the House of Lords also came from such previously unlikely corners as William Lisle, the Chairman of the eminently respectable Durham Liberal Association.[136] Meetings in New Lambton, Waterhouses and

Bishop Auckland, as well as a gathering of the Thornley pitmen, all called for the abolition of the Lords' veto.[137]

One of the most prominent meetings took place in Chester-le-Street, where local men had already lobbied Joicey for more active opposition to the peers.[138] This gathering lured up a famous speaker, Joseph Arch, and duly declared for democratic reform, though not before those present had thrilled to the virulence of Dr Tanner, an Irish visitor who declared the Lords to be, 'cads', ninety-nine per cent of whom came from 'filth'. The meeting's mood was summed up by its Chairman, Robert Clark, who declared that, 'Democratic principle in its logical condition meant the absolute extinction of all hereditary forms of government, of every form and of every character...in his humble opinion, even the monarchy was a political fraud in a nineteenth-century democracy. He would advise the working men to make up their minds to destroy all hereditary forms of government, and especially the House of Lords, because it was most menacing and injurious and insulting to the goodwill and the expressed opinions of the democracy of the country (applause).'[139]

Such sentiments were to survive the rout of the Liberals in 1895, nationally as well as locally. Movements such as the Independent Labour Party and the National Democratic League, radical figures such as Burns, Brunner, and Birrell, and - perhaps most importantly - several rising political stars, were all to express them.[140] Durham Liberals were, however unsuccessfully, to run two candidates, Hugh

Boyd, a supporter of an elected second chamber, and Frederick Temple, an opponent of the Lords' veto, who were prepared to grasp this particular nettle.[141] In rural Cambridgeshire, the Liberals of Bassingbourn, Histon, Great Shelford and Sawston, all discussed the Lords while, in the County Durham town of Stanley, Dr Rutherford was blunt : 'They did not want two parliaments. They did not wish to be troubled by lords who had inherited wealth and many things.'[142] In such ways was the issue kept alive through the long periods of Tory government which preceded the next occasion upon which the Lords became a prominent political issue.

A snapshot of opinion in the political classes of Durham City in the last years of the century was perhaps provided by the deliberations of the Durham Parliamentary Debating Society (DPDS). The DPDS twice discussed the abolition of the Lords in 1896, on the second occasion in company with their fraternal organization from Tyneside. The final divisions both recommended the abolition of the Lords, by 27-16 and 33-30 respectively.[143]

In general, however, with the exception of small bursts of activity linked to other more mainstream causes, public interest in the status, and composition, of the Lords was at a comparatively low level. Attention tended to concentrate upon more immediate social issues or, when the constitution was prominent on the political agenda, on the avowedly representative "lower house" which remained far from democratic in 1900. Even amongst those interested in the status of the Lords many seem to have taken the sort of functional attitude expressed by Beatrice Webb.[144] At

opposite ends of the nineteenth century such contrasting figures as the Duke of Wellington and Keir Hardie were to acknowledge the fact that, when the political system was under discussion, the House of Commons would always be the primary centre of attention.[145]

Table 1

Votes on the House of Lords of Durham and Cambridgeshire MPs -

MP	1	2	3	4	5	6
A.J.Thornhill	X					
J.R.Bulwer	X					
E.Hicks	A					
W.Fowler	X					
H.Shield	X					
W.H.Fellowes	X	X				
Lord D.Gordon	X					
Sir R.Peel	A					
Sir G.Elliot	X					
Sir C.Palmer	X	X	X	X	X	X
E.T.Gourley	F	F	X	X	X	
S.Storey	F	X	X			
Sir J.Pease	X	A	X	X	X	
Hon. F.W.Lambton	X					X
T.C.Thompson	X					
F.Herschell	A					
Sir T.Fry	X	X	X			
T.Richardson	A	A	A			
J.Dodds	X	X	X			
Hon. W.H.James	X	F	X			
J.C.Stevenson	X	X	X			
J.Rigby		F				
Sir C.Hall		X	A			
G.Newnes		X	F			
R.U.P.Fitzgerald		A	A	X	X	A
T.Coote		X				
J.Wilson		X		X	X	X
J.Joicey		X	F	F	X	X
L.A.Atherley-Jones		X	X	A	F	X
W.Crawford		X	X			
T.Milvain		X	X			
Sir H.Havelock-Allen		F	X			
J.M.Paulton		X	F	F	X	F
C.W.Selwyn			A			
A.H.Smith-Barry			A	X	X	
A.E.Fellowes			X	X	X	A
N.Wood			A			
C.T.Giles				X	X	
W.R.Greene				X	X	X
H.L.B.McCalmont				A	A	X
W.Allan				F	F	X
W.S.Robson				F	F	F
R.Cameron				X	X	F
W.T.Doxford				X	X	A
Hon. A.R.D.Elliott				A	A	A
J.Richardson				F	X	
H.P.Pease				A	A	X
J.Samuel				F	F	

KEY :

F - Voted in Favour. A - Voted Against.

X - Abstained.

▒▒ - MP was not then in the House of Commons.

1 - 1884 division on abolition of the Lord's Veto.

2 - 1886 division on abolition of the hereditary principle.

3 - 1888 division on abolition of the hereditary principle.

4 - 1899 division on an enquiry into the House of Lords.

5 - 1899 division on abolition of the Lords' Veto.

6 - 1903 division on abolition of the Lords' Veto.

Table 2

Analysis of Parliamentary Divisions on the House of Lords-

Division	MPs	Support	EB	EC	EU	WB	WC	SB	SC	SU
1884V	56	15.9%	35	2	0	5	1	7	6	0
1899V	71	13.0%	24	20	0	4	7	8	8	0
1903V	59	10.4%	15	23	0	2	10	1	8	0
1886H	112	21.5%	46	41	0	4	7	10	4	0
1888H	125	23.2%	43	40	0	1	9	19	13	0
1899E	91	16.1%	24	26	0	4	13	11	13	0
1899T	119	21.3%	34	37	0	5	15	12	16	0

KEY : V - Division on abolition of the Lords' Veto.

H - Division on abolition of the Hereditary principle.

E - Division on an enquiry into the House of Lords.

T - Combined figure for the two divisions held during this year.

EB - English Boroughs. EC - English Counties.

EU - English Universities. WB - Welsh Boroughs.

WC - Welsh Counties. SB - Scottish Boroughs.

SC - Scottish Counties. SU - Scottish Universities.

Note to Tables 1 and 2

The two divisions in 1899 reveal a split among MPs opposed to the Lords. While Labouchere again proposed the removal of the House of Lords veto on legislation, an amendment, supported by the more moderate Liberal leadership, merely proposed an enquiry into the role of the Upper House. Forty-eight MPs voted for the enquiry, but did not vote against the veto. They might be seen as a moderate group, of MPs unwilling to follow Labouchere. Forty-three MPs were desperate enough in their opposition to the Lords to vote for both suggestions, since either would apparently be better than the status quo. However, Labouchere's "Party", twenty-four MPs in all, including Atherley-Jones, were ready to vote against an enquiry in order to preserve their attempt to abolish the peers' veto. Four other supporters of Labouchere's motion abstained in the earlier division.

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Chapter 10 - Different Spheres : Women and the Vote

Perhaps the longest running example of a Victorian agitation in the Reform field was that for women's suffrage. That effort, despite earlier localized women's groups associated with the Levellers, Union Societies and Chartists,[1] truly commenced with John Stuart Mill's efforts at Westminster in 1865 - 1868.[2] After Mill had initiated discussion of the issue in 1868, informal committees were to appear in many of the larger cities which, if on a small scale, often enjoyed the presence of a leading Radical or female activist.[3] Originally, their movement was, though for "women's rights", far from being a female one. Men, usually Radicals, played a leading role at the meetings of 1868 -1869, often comprising the vast majority of the speakers. Only when women came to the fore, women resolute enough to face the social stigma attached to their speaking in public, did women actually come to play a prominent role in the fight for their own emancipation. Even then, the earliest female speakers were almost all related to Radical politicians![4]

Under the tutelage of Lydia Becker the fight for women's suffrage was entirely focused upon Parliament, as the seat of power and the only hope of success for a cause which could not hope to excite much sympathy from the existing electorate and which had sprung from a small section of the community - politically-aware, middle-class, females. Miss Becker and her parliamentary henchmen, among them Mill and Jacob Bright, were not to aid their situation by their

determination to appear moderate, and specifically by demanding for women the suffrage on exactly the same terms as were applied to men, despite the special legal status of married women. That left the cause of direct interest only to relatively affluent spinsters and widows, far too small a constituency to be able to influence the body politic. Though co-ordinated by the Women's Suffrage Journal the movement remained small, with only 1000 members even in Becker's home base of Manchester.[5] Intelligent enough to see that mass-agitation was impossible, Becker was instead to build a formidable lobbying system, beginning as early as the 1868 election.[6]

The problem inherent in such a parliamentary campaign was its lack of extra-parliamentary leverage, which left it reliant upon the "good-will" of MPs. The ability, and the inclination, to manage an orthodox "agitation" had to await the appearance of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), as late as 1903.[7] Public marches were not held and, though "missionaries" were sent out, even the most prominent, including Millicent Fawcett, often relied upon other sources for their oratorical training.[8] With all of their eggs in the constitutional basket, suffragists proved prone to disillusionment when MPs tired of their subject or proved stubbornly unwilling to pass through the correct lobby. That was especially true of 1884, when a long-awaited Reform measure not only ignored womenfolk but did so via a supposed friend. Those events were dispiriting proof that women's suffrage could not pass the Commons even with the support of the National Liberal Federation (NLF), a large

number of MPs and, if a poll of Hyde householders was to be believed, of large sections of the population.[9] Women's sections of the political parties appeared and generally adopted suffragism, but all with little effect. The spectacular failure of the Women's Franchise League in 1889 - 1898, since that small group followed a womanhood suffrage line, also appeared to prove that a mere change of emphasis would not help.[10] Even the later unification of the suffragist movement, via the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), though it replaced the old inefficient localized structures with Branches based upon the parliamentary constituencies, achieved little.[11] The generally grim prognosis for suffragism was entrenched by its organizational shallowness, as evidenced by the crumbling of the movement's parliamentary lobby upon the death of its founder.

Ironically, salvation was always available for the campaign. Women-only suffrage petitions were to garner approximately 250,000 signatures in both 1877 and 1893, and more than 350,000 in 1872,[12] revealing a pool of support outside of the 42% of women who were spinsters.[13] The suffragist campaign had been focused upon the latter, who were very unlikely to provide the necessary second, extra-parliamentary, front for the campaign. That process required female working class activity but the recruitment of female workers had barely seriously commenced at the turn of the century. Ordinary working women had shown interest, not least via the Women's Trade Union movement and the Women's Co-operative Guild, but enjoyed sparse encouragement before

Esther Roper began her work in the North-West in 1893.[14]

In general, it is probably impossible to establish the popularity, or otherwise, of suffragism among women, or the people as a whole. Either way, the existence of prominent anti-suffragist women was of importance, if only in providing an excuse for male opponents, hence Lord James' efforts to raise a Women's Association against women's suffrage.[15] Queen Victoria's vituperative opposition was covert but the same could not be said of the efforts of Mrs Ward, Beatrice Webb or Eliza Linton![16] Possibly more importantly, it seems unlikely that Arthur Russell was the only MP to find himself in the position where he could say, 'I have no desire to oppose factiously the Women's Suffrage Bill, but there are questions on which one must vote as one's wife bids one.'[17]

Unsurprisingly, the visits of "missionaries" were to prove the outstanding events for provincial suffragism. The most important event in Counties Cambridgeshire and Durham was undoubtedly Mrs Fawcett's invitation to speak at the Cambridge Reform Club in February 1873. Her speech may have been little different from those she had made elsewhere, but it clearly made an impact. Apart from a long press report, it was also later to be published among a selection of the Reform Club's highlights.[18]

Having denied that her subject was a gender matter, and having chanted the mantra of "No Taxation without Representation", Mrs Fawcett stressed that women faced equal liability before the law and complained that, 'no Radical who looks upon the suffrage as a protection necessary to the maintenance of the rights of the citizen, can consistently

oppose the extension of the suffrage to women.'[19] Mrs Fawcett went on to place the concept of "full household suffrage" in perspective, scorning any "property franchise" which could exclude Baroness Burdett-Coutts. Women's household suffrage was necessary in the interest of pure equality and to free women from their enforced association with, 'minors, paupers, felons, and lunatics.'[20] The oft-cited "problem" of women's conservatism was ascribed to the Liberal failure to "educate" womenfolk and declared to be irrelevant to the issue at hand. It could only be relevant if Toryism was a crime, and Mrs Fawcett could not recall that male Tories had been disfranchised or Tory MPs expelled from the House! As was forcefully stressed, 'Liberals who oppose women's suffrage because they think women are conservative, give up every principle which constitutes the raison d'etre of their party, and do all that lies in their power to degrade politics into a paltry struggle for place and power. Surely all liberalism, which is worthy of the name, would be ashamed to withhold support from a demand based on reason and justice, because the result might be the loss of a few votes to the Liberal party.' If Tory publicans had votes, why not Conservative women?[21] Mrs Fawcett concluded with the then formulaic appeal to destiny and the future : 'women's suffrage would only be a further carrying out of the traditions of progress, and a wide diffusion of liberty, which are the most precious bequests we have inherited from the past.'[22] The speech contained elements which had appeared in similar orations since Chartist days, and thus illustrated an element of continuity in the democratic movement.

The case for direct representation of women was made as early as 1838 and on the same classically utilitarian argument that also inspired Mill.[23] Since Parliament had conceded the necessity of direct representation of a class's interests in 1867 Mrs Fawcett was eager, in her Cambridge speech, to consider the motives of suffragism's opponents. Noting her cause's strong support among the party leaderships, a fact which disgusted Hardy,[24] she knew that the problem lay on the back-benches. While Liberals merely feared new Tory votes, the speaker claimed that Conservatives, 'hate and suspect every new thing, even when it is only a new development of their own principles.'[25]

Her speech made Mrs Fawcett's name in Cambridge and, even twenty-one years later, a local newspaper was to publish in full her article, 'The Electoral Rights of Women'.[26] The interest was reciprocated, hence Mrs Fawcett's letter to Emma Miller in April 1891. In that letter the Borough's Conservative MP, Penrose Fitzgerald, was claimed as, 'one of our staunch friends', though the three County members were not so certain allies. A Cambridge Women's Suffrage Society is mentioned in the letter and it was later to play its part in the formation of the NUWSS.[27]

Fitzgerald was one of the suffragist MPs from the "unprogressive" wing of the Conservative Party. Despite his status as the whip of the reactionary "Irish Loyalist" faction, Fitzgerald's first Cambridge electoral address, published in 1885, left his suffragist credentials in no doubt. Noting that the recent Franchise Act had 'intensified' the anomaly, he endorsed the enfranchisement of, 'Women who

are householders and in other respects duly qualified', since, 'representation and taxation must go together, and...in the numerous social questions which are pressing for attention the nation cannot afford to lose women's experience, women's sympathy, or women's work.'[28] Fitzgerald was to do his duty in the lobbies (see Table 1) but was not to speak again on the matter for five years. His 1890 utterance was to say more about Cambridge Conservatism than about women's suffrage. Though speaking at a "ladies concert" in the Beaconsfield Club, Fitzgerald confessed that he was, 'possibly in a minority', and added on suffragism that, 'It was not a popular principle, but he thought it right and he would stick to it (Applause).' His professed motive was the need to give women equal rights but that did not prevent him fervently opposing the idea of female MPs![29]

As a suffragist Conservative MP for Cambridge, Fitzgerald followed in the foot-steps of William Forsyth, but he was himself a convert. At his 1882 adoption meeting in Sturton Town, Fitzgerald had refused to endorse such a difficult question, feeling that women's votes could only lead to injustice.[30] Forsyth, though his period as a suffragist leader in Parliament came only after his enforced departure from Cambridge, was symbolic of certain suffragist feeling among Cambridge Borough Conservatives, who were later to be represented by yet a third Tory suffragist MP, Marten. However, Fitzgerald's doubts about Cambridge Tory sentiment were probably accurate since both Forsyth and Marten were paired with vocally anti-suffragist partners.

Fitzgerald's co-candidate, had Cambridge remained

a double-member Borough in 1885, was to have been a well-known anti-suffragist, Sydney Gedge.[31] While in Cambridge, Gedge's attitude was quite clear, if more muted than during his later career in the East End. At Sturton Town he emphasized the issue's supposed lack of ripeness, claiming that he could not even consider women's suffrage until, 'they should become very desirous for it.'[32]

Marten's colleague was the entertaining Patrick Smollett. A bluff Highland barrister, wonderfully encapsulated in the Bailie of the 26 June 1878, he was, like Lowe and Beresford Hope, one of the, 'harder-headed and more masculine members of the House...stemming the tide of mawkish and unwholesome sentiment which threatens the stouter and more manly of our national institutions', and especially, 'the arguments of the men-women.' The Bailie luxuriated in Smollett's gratuitously facetious style and aptly summed up the MP's general attitude to suffragism : 'It is all the world to a china orange in favour of things as they are.'[33] Punch, from its suffragist view-point, saw matters rather differently : 'We understand Mr Smollett is descended from the novelist. We hope he will not descend any lower.'[34]

The fuel for these contradictory statements came from the notorious speeches made by Smollett in the successive women's suffrage parliamentary debates of 1875, 1876 and 1878. Scorning Bright's Bill as a tiny and puny measure he nevertheless feared that it could, 'disturb the entire structure of society', and comprise another step towards universal suffrage. Though far from alone in noting the Bill's supposed stigmatization of marriage via its

enfranchisement only of, 'elderly virgins, widows, [and] a large class of the demi-monde and kept women', he was not so reactionary as at first sight for he also declared himself to be in favour of what he claimed to be the true solution for any oppression of womankind, equality of opportunity.[35]

In 1876, presumably taking notice of the "warm" reception which his previous effort had solicited, Smollett turned his attention to the suffragists themselves, claiming that, 'societies employ persons to itinerate the Provinces, and as women lecturers attract better than men, attractive women are generally employed. They have been visiting the town of Cambridge recently, and some of my constituents tell me that there have been very fascinating women there lately, some of them uncommonly enticing.' He also scorned Forsyth's claim that the suffrage was a great privilege, claiming that most voters would not pay two shillings a year for it.[36] After such strong comments, Smollett's 1878 attempt to deny that he was anti-suffragist was somewhat surprising! He fiercely denied that women were unfit to vote, or that they were priest-ridden, or that he had ever alleged the same. Instead, he set the standard which Gedge was to follow, reserving judgement on women's suffrage until a "real" Bill appeared, which was to say one also involving married women, and allowing the appearance of both peeresses and female MPs.[37]

That curious display of moderation is difficult to explain. Smollett was a confirmed bachelor, and hence did not face domestic pressure. He was also a man to rise to the outrage created by his previous two speeches rather than to

bow the knee to it. Constituency pressure is also unlikely to have been responsible. The Cambridge Independent Press felt Smollett's speeches to be, 'time-wasting' and 'peculiar', and denounced the MP's 'indiscriminate base' attacks on female agitators, but that would hardly have come as a surprise to Smollett![38] The opinion which would have mattered to a Tory MP for Cambridge, that of C.W.Naylor and his Cambridge Chronicle, firmly backed Smollett's orations and even claimed that the majority of women agreed with his, 'unequivocal language as the proper guerdon of a vexatious advocacy of an uncalled-for measure and the next-to-worthless discussion of a generally tabooed subject.'[39] Constituents' pressure may have been behind the non-appearance of the suffragist issue in Smollett's 1880 Address but Marten also studiously ignored it and it is perhaps more likely that both candidates had chosen to minimize the risk of "plumping" by playing down those policy differences which separated them. Both were to lose.[40]

Smollett's speeches were notable for their flippancy, an attribute in which Labouchere was perhaps the Cambridge MP's only master.[41] Smollett's opinions were, however, commonly held, in private. Tories like Whibley and Manners, supporters of women's suffragism as a, 'reasonable demand', were well aware that many of their colleagues felt their opinion, 'half scandalous, half comic.'[42] At the local level, in 1876, Dr Parker, a prominent Hetton-le-Hole Tory, was to cite Bright's warning that women's suffrage would split families, while expressing mock regret that his opposition to suffragism would deprive him of the chance to

find a wife! Arbuthnot, the Radical candidate for Gateshead in 1868, proved that such foolishness was not restricted to Tories when he declared for the enfranchisement of, 'unmarried women above thirty years of age (laughter). He considered women should not get votes before they reached thirty for fear they should thus receive masculine proclivities (renewed laughter and applause).'[43]

The silence in Parliament of such as Marten and Fitzgerald was not universal among pro-suffrage Conservatives. George Elliot, the Durham ex-miner, was happy to endorse women's household suffrage, and repeatedly to claim that he had always done so, even if his Northern colleague, Wharton, was distinctly more grudging![44] If urban Conservative attitudes to suffragism were mixed, Mrs Fawcett's earlier-cited comment suggests that rural Tories were firmly against.[45] Fellowes and the Liberal Brand certainly had very little sympathy for women's suffrage. However, a later County member, Selwyn, did declare himself to be in favour, if while under pressure from the Cambridge Women's Suffrage Association. Another, Raymond Greene, when under questioning, preferred permanent abstentionism, at least until a different suffragist Bill appeared.[46]

Finally, even the figure-head of Huntingdonshire ultra-Toryism, the Earl of Sandwich, was to declare that, should there be another franchise extension, it should be women's suffrage since, 'he did hot see why a woman who is a householder and pays rates and taxes should not have the same privilege extended to her as was extended to men (hear, hear).'[47] Whether his Lordship wanted any extension at all is

doubtful but it is unsurprising that he preferred enfranchisement of the most Conservative of the possible new voters. Sandwich also did not impose any suffragist view upon the South Huntingdonshire MP, Smith-Barry, an Irish Loyalist compatriot of Fitzgerald.

In County Durham rural Conservatism was largely restricted to the Southern division but Lord Sandwich's equivalent, Colonel Surtees, also declared for women's suffrage, in 1872, and felt no qualms about admitting his partizan motives![48] County Durham Tories though, like almost every other group of society, were divided upon this subject. In their hesitancy, self-interest and probable majority opposition, they merely reflected their party nationally. Bulwer, Fellowes and Peel were among the many Conservatives whose commitment to suffragism was restricted to a single, almost certainly partizan, vote in 1884. Fellowes had voted against it in 1871 and 1876, and was again to do so in 1897, so the depth of his conversion in 1884 must be doubted! (see Table 1).

Such principled parliamentarians as Fellowes were to lend weight to the cynicism of Gladstone and Goldwin Smith concerning Tory support for women's suffrage in 1884.[49] Successive Tory leaders were to endorse suffragism, but all did so only verbally. Since, on at least one occasion, Disraeli was, 'Kept away [from a women's suffrage debate] by his party', it may be reasonable to assume that the leaders' inactivity rested upon fear of splitting their followers.[50] Despite the general feeling that women formed a vast reservoir of potential Conservative votes the party was not

willing to repeat the experiment of 1867.

If some Conservative back-benchers were long-standing and enthusiastic supporters of suffragism,[51] other more substantial figures, including Churchill and Northcote, declared for it only in 1884, and only when all other means of preventing franchise assimilation had failed.[52] The statistics appear damning. Conservative MPs endorsed suffragism by 98-27 in 1884, but even in their most enthusiastic year, 1892, the endorsement was only to be by 92-84.[53] On the Tory back-benches it seems clear that the majority followed Lord Percy in opposing suffragism as pernicious 'equality', or even endorsed the peculiar notion shared by Newdegate and Bright that it was a "front" for the forces of Papal despotism.[54]

The Liberal politicians of Cambridgeshire and County Durham were something of a median. They did not produce a Forsyth, but nor did they produce a Smollett. The hesitant, or even confused, attitude of several of them is perhaps best exemplified by William Fowler, the Cambridge MP who had shared the Reform Club platform with Mrs Fawcett on the occasion of her Cambridge speech. Rising immediately after the stirring words of the "missionary" he declared his own hesitancy to endorse her campaign, and flatly refused to support Jacob Bright's Bill since it ignored married women who, Fowler claimed, were often more intelligent than, and of different opinions to, their husbands.[55]

Despite such comments, the same MP was later to provide the most assertive rejection of suffragism to emanate from the local Liberals. Despite his Quaker beliefs, once in

Parliament and hence freed of Mrs Fawcett's strong presence, Fowler roundly declared that a woman's place was in the home, opposed women's suffrage as likely to lead to female MPs, and was even to regret that local votes had ever been granted to women! Fowler cited the large number of still unenfranchised men as, rather unconvincing, proof that he was not being discriminatory. Women, he felt, had their own indirect representation, via influence over male relatives, and Fowler urged them to set to it! He concluded, 'I am not prepared to say that the time may not come when we may extend the franchise further; but...we have not had a conclusive argument to show that women must be in the number of the inclusion', brushing-off one of the oldest Liberal maxims by claiming that much greater principles were involved than the mere payment of taxes! Fowler, though a Liberal, preferred to stand by the old Tory maxim of "safety first" declaring, 'It is quite right that...[women]...should have their opinions, and that they should state their opinions and act upon them, but I do not desire to see a constant succession of women lecturers going about the country.'[56]

The position of suffragism in the North was as split as it was nationally. Two Gateshead MPs, James and Allan, were active anti-suffragists at Parliament, but other similarly moderate Liberal MPs, including Fenwick and Matthew Fowler, backed the campaign, as did the Quaker Theodore Fry, whose wife was to be a more important figure in this field.[57] J.W.Pease, the fellow-Quaker and associate of Fry, went the other way, speaking against Woodall's Amendment, 'I believe I have always consistently opposed the

conferring of the franchise upon women, and I have done so upon principle.' For Pease, women's suffrage was simply not worth the candle. It was the route to, 'petticoat government', and hence disastrous for the, 'prosperity and strength of the country.' Having raised the stock objection, one might almost call it an excuse, that the enfranchisement would not include virtuous women, he let slip his true, and far from unique, fear that the measure would turn women into men.[58] However, if the MP was strongly against suffragism, his last agent, and successor, in Barnard Castle, Arthur Henderson, supported full adult suffrage.[59]

In general, women's suffrage seems to have been a most personal of political issues. How else can one explain the fact that, as early as 1868, the totally unremarkable Joseph Dodds, an ordinary local Liberal leader raised to the Commons by the "accident" of his town's enfranchisement, said, 'Respecting female suffrage, he did not see why those women who were allowed to vote for the election of guardians should not be allowed to vote for a member of Parliament', even if his audience's response was laughter.[60] The issue was extremely complex, influenced by each politician's background, family pressures, principles and views of human nature!

Nationally, Liberal politicians, and others on the "left", were hopelessly divided. Among Benthamites, Brougham and Buckingham may have endorsed women's suffrage,[61] but James Mill certainly did not, and Grote's token support seems to have been engendered by domestic pressures alone.[62] Many old-fashioned Radicals were ready to appear at meetings in

support of the cause but others like Berkeley, the hero of the campaign for the ballot, opposed it.[63] The latter was left allied with Russell and Hartington, not to mention the cheerfully acknowledged prejudice of Harcourt,[64] while Lord Acton and Edward Pleydell-Bouverie, so divided in their attitudes to the Grand Old Man, could both support his opposition to the suffragists.[65] The Radical Peter Rylands found himself allied with the Whiggish Knatchbull-Huguesson but separated from natural allies such as John Bright and Goldwin Smith![66]

The arrival of new "generations" of local and national Liberal politicians, after 1868 and 1885, was not to remove that confusion. New Radicals such as Fawcett, Dilke and Courtney, worked long and hard for suffragism but the same could not be said for Brunner, Chamberlain or Maxse.[67] Among dissenting Radicals, Caine and Rowntree supported the cause, and were joined in doing so by John Burns,[68] but that did not prevent Broadhurst, despite his endorsement of women's household suffrage, proclaiming the, in his view over-persistent, female agitators to be either idlers or Tory bigots![69] The tradition of strange political bed-fellows on this issue survived the turn of the century for the "new Liberal" leaders were no less divided.[70]

Faced by such contradictory signals it is perhaps unsurprising that Liberal leaders tended to remain as publicly impartial as possible, presumably in the interests of party unity. Gladstone, though he felt himself to be impartial, was unsympathetic and described even Jacob Bright's studiously moderate 1871 proposal as one of the,

'revolutionary measures', of an 'extreme' politician.[71] In effect, if not formally, Gladstone, the lynch-pin of the Liberal Party, opposed women's suffrage on the grounds of either female unsuitability or the lack of a "mandate".[72] In 1884 he proved the shallowness of 104 of Becker's "known friends", motivated by worried signals from his Chief Whip and fear of a Tory plot to block the Franchise Bill,[73] but Gladstone was not to openly oppose suffragism prior to his retirement and even then only did so via a letter to the virulently anti-suffragist Samuel Smith.[74]

Gladstone's successors pursued a similarly cautious line. Though easy for the Lords-based Rosebery,[75] Campbell-Bannerman had to tread particularly carefully, especially as the WSPU rose. Initially unpledged, and an unenthusiastic supporter in 1903, Campbell-Bannerman thenceforward used his position as an excuse for abstention. Having declared that suffragism had, 'a conclusive and irrefutable case', he counselled patience, even after thirty-nine years of waiting! Only in 1907, with effectively a new parliamentary party behind him, did the Premier finally feel able to declare his support for women's suffrage.[76] Asquith, however, perhaps owing to the distaste engendered by suffragette activism, did not trouble to conceal his opposition, and only in 1908 was he even to deign to allow the subject to be discussed as an open question when, according to Lloyd George, two-thirds of the Cabinet supported women's suffrage.[77]

Conversions on the subject, outside of the maelstrom of 1884, or early support delivered out of respect

for Mill, were rare. Perhaps the most prominent was that of John Morley. As a disciple of Mill, Morley began as a suffragist, as evidenced by his publication, in the Fortnightly Review, of Pankhurst's legal case. His later conversion, in around 1884, might be ascribed to his having fallen under the sway of a new mentor, Gladstone.[78] Morley may also have been influenced by the opportunity, which he was to exploit to the full, to use his opponent Joseph Cowen's more democratic sentiments against him in the fierce Newcastle campaign of 1885.[79]

Less prominently, two County Durham Liberals also crossed the lines. One was Atherley-Jones, son of the Chartist leader Ernest Jones. In 1892, Atherley-Jones firmly declared his refusal to vote for, even if he also would not vote against, women's suffrage.[80] Strangely, within five years, Atherley-Jones was to be found speaking for the Bill in the Commons and making the point that the issue could no longer be ridiculed. He proceeded to address the traditional contrary arguments, then pointing out that women could not be "indirectly represented" by their menfolk any more than farm-workers could be via their employers. With his deeper concern for the workers' lot, Atherley-Jones declared that women's suffrage was necessary for the protection of working women, since the trades unions did little for them. The Bill he supported was an effort, 'to upraise, morally, intellectually, and politically the condition of women, and to make women what to a large extent she was not at present - a more fitting companion, comrade, and partner to man (Cheers).'[81]

The role of working women, so slow to appear nationally, was introduced to the North by a provincial missionary, Mrs Low of London, at an 1874 meeting in Low Spennymoor's Good Templars Hall. On that occasion, and presumably influenced by her audience, she vigorously called for worker-enfranchisement, as the route to full representation of all mankind and womankind in the Commons.[82] Sadly for her cause, Mrs Low's interest in the workers was very little reciprocated.

Though John Wilson was a supporter of suffragism, despite the scorn of at least one local Unionist,[83] and Crawford, from his feminist position as Vice-President of the Ladies' Land League, wished for women, 'the same political privileges as...men (applause)', they were relatively rare, if very important, voices.[84] Their colleague in the leadership of the Durham Miners' Association (DMA), Patterson, was to prove his support for suffragism to be only skin-deep when push came to shove in 1884.[85] Lloyd Jones, the DMA's indefatigable lawyer, was to openly reject suffragism owing to the prospective local female voters being overwhelmingly Tory, an attitude also expressed, to Bradlaugh's disgust, at the national level by W.R.Cremer and Love Jones-Parry.[86]

At the DMA grass-roots the women's suffrage issue was not to feature in a single report of the hundreds printed in the Durham Chronicle during the long fight for franchise assimilation. That is unlikely, as we shall see, to have been due to censorship. Rather, the Durham pitmen were simply uninterested. That opinion is strengthened by the fact that,

despite the Durham County Franchise and Political Reform Association (DCFPRA) Council's passage of Cavanagh's 1887 motion in favour of adult suffrage, the DMA Lodges were never, in their ballot, to elect to invite a suffragist leader to address them at their annual Gala, though Bradlaugh did mention the subject at the "Big Meeting" of 1880.[87]

That was merely another example of the locality reflecting the national situation. The "left" had held a somewhat dim flame for women's suffrage for many years prior to Mill's efforts, via such men as Lilburne, Thompson, Hunt and the Christian Socialist Gerald Massey.[88] Chartists such as Lovett and Richardson also stood loyal to the cause, as well as local figures such as John Graves, the Norwich Paineite and Chartist who founded a local Female Democratic Association in 1839.[90] Their movement was, however, to drop its "seventh point", and it seems logical to suggest that they did so due to lack of support rather than to moderate their already ultra-Radical programme. Later Chartists, such as Holyoake, were to forcefully support the female claim, joined by converts such as Bronterre.[91] The cause was obvious, and perhaps best captured by Linton in his English Republic of 1852-1853 : 'We recognize differences between the sexes, but no inequality...The rights...which we claim for men, we claim for women also...woman will take her equal place as the free sister of free men...it is at no half-revolution that we would stay our hope.'[92]

"Labour" politicians, like the rank-and-file of the Durham coal-field, were generally uninterested by the prospect of women's household suffrage. Almost all supported

adult suffrage, but there were other issues to pursue which were both more obtainable and more relevant to their followers. Hence, Snowden and Glazier placed class injustice before sexual discrimination.[93] Relatively few Socialists, like Hardie, Carpenter and Pankhurst, held an interest in women's suffrage as such.[94] A few Labourites even went the other way. Ruskin openly opposed votes for women,[95] but most were more subtle. Hence, the Fabians were slow to openly endorse adult suffrage, which Edward Pease scorned as, 'a question of democracy rather than socialism,'[96] a view shared by most Social Democratic Federation (SDF) politicians despite their party's official policy. An honourable exception to the latter was Harry Quelch, the editor of Justice. He declared himself unwilling to support any, 'anti-democratic' group, by which he meant those willing to accept less than full adult suffrage, groups up to and including the WSPU.[97]

The local press is particularly interesting on this issue. With the demise of C.W.Naylor his daughter, Sarah, became co-proprietor of the Cambridge Chronicle, soon rising, upon the death of Charles Smith, to the position of sole owner.[98] Old Mr Naylor had chortled at Mill's first expression of support for women's suffrage, rather like his Liberal equivalent in Cambridge,[99] and poured scorn upon the 1867 amendment : 'we, no doubt always shall express the opinion that the conferring of the franchise upon women would be the greatest absurdity ever perpetrated by Act of Parliament, and that is saying a good deal.' Naylor feared that women would be diverted from domestic duties, for which

nature had supposedly intended them, and into political and official posts, hence doing women, and everybody else, no good at all![100]

Naylor's female successor, though she, for whatever reason, ignored the events of 1884, was soon after to prove her father wrong by writing : 'In England who are more fitted to govern the domestic policy - who more capable to assist in "home" affairs of the state than the women of England who are owners of "house and home" and take part in the payment of the "sinews of war"?' It should be noted, however, that that ringing declaration was produced only as part of a longer endorsement of Fitzgerald's election address.[101] Later, in a more spontaneous editorial, the Chronicle was to declare women the most moral and religious part of the community, as well as claiming that tens of thousands of female householders were more intelligent than thousands of the current male electors. Even then, however, possibly reflecting local fears, the Cambridge Chronicle went on to declare that women's suffrage specifically did not mean female MPs.[102]

The Cambridge Independent Press, like the local Liberal leadership, was split on the issue of women's suffrage. An 1867 editorial agreed that Mill's arguments held, 'great moral force', but the paper's London columnist, "Metropolitan Gossip", was far from convinced, wryly noting that Disraeli was yet to concede the point![103] A week later the columnist fell into line sufficiently to at least acknowledge Mill's skilful argument, if supposedly for a policy which only lunatics would have proposed a mere six

months before![104] The Independent Press went on to endorse Bright's Bill, though it regretted an exclusion of married women which would leave the subject a, 'nice stalking horse', for years to come. Even "Metropolitan Gossip" confessed that the Bill's 124 votes in 1870 proved, 'the great change which the inroad of democracy has made in our Parliamentary action.'[105] Later columnists proved able to support suffragism with rather better grace.[106]

County Durham's newspapers proved overwhelmingly supportive. The Sunderland Herald might not have discerned, 'any serious wish',[107] for women's suffrage but the four great figures of North-Eastern journalism felt differently. The editors, Stead and Adams, vied with the two great Radical pressmen-politicians, Storey and Cowen, in their support for suffragism. Both Storey and Cowen spoke in the 1884 Commons debate. Storey stressed the democratic, as opposed to the feminist, side of the issue, wisely when you consider the nature of his audience : 'I have been in favour for many years of admitting to the franchise as much flesh and blood as it might be possible to obtain.' Women's suffrage would extend the merits of self-education among womenfolk, and thus aid all Radicals in the fight for, 'peace, soberness, and education.'[108]

Joseph Cowen had a long relationship with the suffragist issue. His old Northern Reform Union (NRU) had ignored women's suffrage, believing that men had first to be enfranchised, but Cowen joined the Radicals who rallied to the new agitation in the late 1860s. No doubt influenced by Holyoake's arguments, Cowen's National Republican

Brotherhood, established in 1872, had adult suffrage among its objects. Indeed, by 1884, it was the Caucus who sabotaged Cowen's efforts to include suffragism among the aims of the 1884-1885 reform agitation in the North.[109]

In his own parliamentary speech in 1884 Cowen stressed that, far from scuppering the Franchise Bill as Gladstone feared, Woodall's amendment was essential to the principle of it, household suffrage. Cowen continued, asking, 'If we exact no personal qualification for men, why should we do so for women?...The onus of proving their disqualification is thrown on the exclusionists. Let them produce it. They have not done so yet.' Women's alleged intellectual inferiority was irrelevant, for was not "Hodge" inferior to Herbert Spencer! Scorning all talk of "sexual spheres", Cowen pointed out the absurdity of enfranchising farm-workers and ex-convicts but not lady-farmers! He concluded by echoing Mill : 'Let facts, not theories, settle women's capacity, and, therefore, her sphere. I take my stand on the ground of justice and expediency, on the self-evident and indisputable principle that every class should be endowed with the power to protect itself.'[110]

It should not be surprising that the Durham City newspapers were rather less certain than their famous neighbours. The Durham Chronicle first mentioned women's suffrage only in 1870, but supported it from then on. It claimed that fears of a sexual revolution could only worry, 'the most single-minded alarmists', but also felt, in stark contrast to the Cambridge Independent Press, that married women, deferring as they supposedly did to their husbands,

should not be included in any enfranchisement. Here also there was stress upon the fact that women's suffrage did not inevitably mean female MPs.[111] However, Durham Chronicle columnists had none of the scepticism of their Cambridge equivalents. "Our London Correspondent" joined his editor in entirely ascribing the defeat of Woodall's amendment to prejudice while vainly hoping that the Lords would demand it as their price for passing the Franchise bill![112] Meanwhile, "Random Jottings" was probably correct in his hard-nosed assertion that Labouchere would endorse the enfranchisement of women, if only they weren't Conservatives, and his message to his female readers seemed obvious![113] In 1896 the paper passed to Mrs Welch, widow of a previous proprietor and niece of another, and a feminine angle was added to the editorials : 'Masculine prejudice is not yet elastic enough to yield to the promotion of such a state of things [women's suffrage].' However, and no doubt to suffragists' despair, Mrs Welch urged women to work for social advance by more attainable means, notably trades unions and Prohibition Societies.[114]

The Durham County Advertiser, having scorned Mill's amendment as, 'a joke', was two years later to explicitly blame democracy for moving votes for women, along with the ballot and universal suffrage, in from the fanatical fringe to a political position where it could lead to an increase in domestic disputes.[115] However, 1871 saw a remarkable change. The Advertiser actually criticized Wharton, the Tory MP for Durham City, for voting against Bright's Bill, suddenly having decided that propertied widows and spinsters could not logically be excluded under a

property franchise! Three years later, with Salkeld as proprietor, the reason for that turn-about was revealed. Citing the role of Forsyth in the suffragist movement, Salkeld was to quite blatantly point out that experience in local elections proved that women would vote Tory. Salkeld's correspondents, "London Letter" and "Dunelm", were to endorse the, 'complete, though silent, constitutional revolution', even if the writer of "Notes of the Week" remained flippant as late as 1897.[116]

Women's organizations had a long history in the North, dating back to Chartist days,[117] and Cowen certainly learned the opinion of three women in 1858. Prominent was Caroline Bell, who enquired as to the position of the NRU on votes for women and, when told, wrote again : 'I deeply regret that it limits its desires of obtaining political rights (which necessarily include social ones) to men alone...At present I do not feel inclined to become a member of any society which as a society is purely selfish in its object, & does not recognise the principle of justice & rights for all mankind.'[118]

Durham's ladies were less sure of themselves, but Tory ladies did hold a meeting in honour of the unpredictable Lord Adolphus Vane-Tempest as early as 1853. There is no evidence that they were displeased when their guest, and his fellow Conservative MP Mowbray, used the occasion to ridicule the entire idea of women's suffrage, Lord Adolphus claiming that wives already controlled their husbands' votes.[119] Forty years later, the descendants of those City of Durham women, gathered as the Queen Phillipa and Dunelm Habitation

of the Primrose League, were to be told by as establishment a figure as the Rev. Canon Tristram that their very existence was the cause of the Newcastle Programme's failure to include, 'the political emancipation of women.'[120]

As might be expected in a Quaker stronghold, the North saw considerable Women's Liberal Federation (WLF) activity, under the proud gaze of Lady Fry, the wife of Sir Theodore, MP for Darlington. Though Lady Fry opposed public endorsement of suffragism, either as an individual or by the WLF, she did feel that the organization could aid the cause via political education.[121] There were, of course, Women's Liberal associations in Cambridge and Durham City but they also sprang up in less central locations, such as Ebchester, Hetton-le-Hole and Swavesey. Those more autonomous groups of women tended, perhaps unsurprisingly, to endorse women's suffrage. The strongest words came from Mrs Tamar, addressing the Hamsterley and Westwood WLA : 'They would never get the Bill passed till they made a bold fight and let the leaders of the Commons see that political aptitude is a question of individual capacity and not of sex (applause).' Durham's Liberal females did manage to secure suffragist pledges from both John Wilson and the local Caucus supremo, Spence Watson, if only in an election year.[122] The appearance of such important figures at WLA meetings acknowledged the importance of women as electoral auxiliaries. The Cambridge WLA was to thrill to the speeches of Miss Florence Balgarnie, who urged women to seek, 'that weapon which men found so much to their advantage - the Parliamentary vote (loud cheers)', before finally advocating a "mutiny" by Liberal women![123]

Suffragism also garnered some support at Cambridge University. Liberals like Professor Stuart and Trinity College's Llewellyn Davies were guests of the Cambridge WLA and took the opportunity to express the democratic sentiments typical of them.[124] More surprisingly, Professor Clarke attended Cambridge's large 1884 women's suffrage demonstration and Forsyth was to make use of a suffragist petition signed by Professors and Fellows of the Cambridge Colleges, not groups known for their progressive attitudes, as early as 1876.[125] Bateson, a Liberal from St John's, used the occasion of the foundation banquet of the Cambridge Junior Liberal Organization to declare that, 'he could not believe that a Liberal Government would be so unjust as to omit half a million of tax-paying women, who were at present unrepresented (hear, hear).' Liberalism, he insisted, meant that those who paid should also vote. 'It was a false and perverted Liberalism that withheld the suffrage because it feared the majority of women would vote for the Tories.' With 1867 no doubt in mind he warned that, should Liberals not "educate" the ladies, they would have to watch the Tories follow Beaconsfield and Marten into support for suffragism, and out of craft rather than principle![126] Bateson did not feel it necessary to mention the fact that his wife was a WLA leader who had herself also raised the issues of taxation and legal responsibilities![127]

Mrs Bateson was one part of the crucial link between the Cambridge WLA and the Town and County Liberal Club. However, local Liberal support for suffragism could never be relied upon. Mrs Bateson's co-speaker in 1894,

David, then the prospective Liberal candidate, claimed to be among a great majority lined up against suffragism : 'in face of that ...he was bound to say that he was not in favour of giving the Parliamentary franchise to women (Cheers).'[128] That illustrated a clear problem for male supporters of suffragism among Cambridge Liberals. Bar Mrs Fawcett's visit, women's suffrage was only to result in a meeting in the Guild-hall in 1884. That occasion saw the Mayor, Alderman Redfarn, Piggott of the Cambridge Junior Conservative Club, and Professor Charge, all declare for women's household suffrage, if for nothing more.[129] Despite that, one meeting in thirty-two years was never likely to prove sufficient to ensure overwhelming Cambridge support!

Cambridge never displayed the public interest in suffragism which was to inspire a debate in the Durham Parliamentary Debating Society. It is perhaps interesting that, on that occasion, Conservative and Liberal speakers both endorsed women's suffrage though opposition came from an Independent "MP" who was sorely vexed by the possibility of female MPs.[130] Suffragists had been far more active in the North since, while there was evidence of activity during elections in both areas studied,[131] Mrs Fawcett's visit to the Cambridge Liberals was matched, and exceeded, by a high-powered 1876 meeting in Durham Town Hall.

That meeting drew an audience of six local Councillors and Aldermen while Recorder Bramwell, the respected local Liberal leader, took the Chair. The latter left convinced that opposition to suffragism was fuelled by jealousy of the, 'charms' and 'powers of elocution', of the

movement's missionaries, just as the Rev. Mitchell preferred to cite the fact that there was a female Queen! Their sentiments, if not the logic behind them, must have pleased their guests, a three-woman delegation from the National Society : Mesdames Becker, Ashworth, and Scatcherd. Lydia Becker scorned women's supposed inferiority to even drunk men, while noting that legislation had intruded ever further into women's lives. Under a female sovereign, she claimed that the supposedly minor Bright Bill was the only route to women's education. Lillian Ashworth looked to history and raised the banner of "No Taxation without Representation", but stressed that she requested only genuine household suffrage. Ashworth was also not beyond deploying an "atrocity" story - claiming that innocent women had been evicted from their homes or farms in marginal constituencies, presumably in order to prevent them tying up potential votes. Mrs Scatcherd merely noted that all proposed extensions of the franchise had engendered fear, and that not all men used their votes![132]

Mrs Scatcherd was later to return to the North in order to speak at a Pease-backed suffragist meeting in Darlington. That assembly was interesting in that it was women-only, and created sufficient interest for the relevant Darlington and Stockton Times report to be published as a pamphlet.[133] Similar local meetings perhaps played a part in the conversion of one local MP, T.C.Thompson. In 1867, in his Chartist father's old base of Sunderland, Thompson declared that a woman's true place was in the home, and that their sole political role should be as, 'delighted spectators.'

However, by 1885, as the radical Liberal candidate for Durham City, his opinion had changed sufficiently for him to demand the enfranchisement of married women, as well as single ones.[134]

Despite such individual changes of heart, women's suffrage was not a great electoral issue. One local politician who did attempt to use it was Carpenter, a Durham City Unionist. Facing two candidates split upon the issue, he appeared at a celebration banquet held for the anti-suffragist Elliot and declared that, 'every woman should have a vote (hear, hear)...At the head of State we had a woman, one who had reigned for over sixty years, whose administrative qualities had been admired by everybody, and yet they refused to the humble representatives of her sex the simple privilege of voting for Members of Parliament (applause).'[135] What Tory dared disagree!

John Morley's about-turn in the other direction, however, did not cost him his seat as a Liberal MP for Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Like so many Liberals, he allowed his principles to be overridden by his fear of creating Tory voters, and hence voters dangerous to other, dearer, causes.[136] The comparison with prior Tory opposition to male opposition is obvious. Some Liberals, including Hoare in Cambridgeshire, would respond to WLA petitions for enfranchisement[137] but in general women, unenfranchised and non-revolutionary, lacked any "leverage". Hence, Sir Francis Powell, who had raised a cheap laugh in the Cambridge of 1865 by mentioning women's suffrage was, as an ancient incumbent, to hold Wigan in 1906 against Thornley Smith's single-issue

suffragist candidacy.[138] Ahmed Kenealey, the eccentric son of an eccentric father, was alone, among candidates in Counties Durham and Cambridgeshire, in having a women's committee for his campaign, one founded in the Hartlepools by a local suffragist during the 1875 by-election there.[139] Clearly, the essential problem of the movement was reflected in that fact. Few men, and hence few voters, would ascribe to women's suffrage the priority which it needed if it was to influence their votes.

Women's suffrage won endorsement by both the NLF and the Conservative national conference but the formal party hierarchies, like the Primrose League in 1889, chose to hold, 'no opinion on the question of women's suffrage', as such.[140] For the public, suffragism remained a somewhat shady demand, supported by Punch but not by The Times![141] On the Radical fringe the National Democratic League did not repeat the apathy of the old National Reform League[142] but it could exercise little or no influence upon the seat of power, Westminster.

The same was true of those emerging Labour politicians whose day, at the turn of the century, was yet to come. For all the suffragist declarations of the Scottish Labour Party, Independent Labour Party, Social Democratic Federation and Trades Union Congress,[143] Hannah Mitchell could still write, in Hardie's Labour Leader that, 'if women do not bestir themselves the Socialists would be quite content to accept Manhood Suffrage in spite of all their talk about equality.'[144] In short, words and policies were cheap and Socialist campaigning strength was being reserved for

matters of greater interest to those supporters with votes! Keighley may have considered running a symbolic female candidate in 1895[145] but many more Branches preferred to save their strength for work upon issues concerning the aims of the working classes, rather than those of propertied womenfolk.

MPs support for, and interest in, suffragism was to fluctuate, as might be expected. Bar the 406 votes roused by the Whips in 1884 the largest division comprised 391 MPs in 1876, up from the original, and novelty inflated, figure of 269 in 1867. However, just 215 turned out in 1870. Support, in terms of the proportion of the electorate represented, ranged from just 14.1% in 1867 to 34.1% in 1897, though the second lowest figure, 20.8% in 1884, was caused by the loss of the big city Liberals.

Suffragist MPs also had a tendency to shy away from formal organization, which clearly lessened their effectiveness. MPs classified as "friends" of the campaign rose in numbers from 218 in 1874 to 343 in 1886[146] but when Woodall and Maclure founded their Committee for Women's Suffrage in June 1887 only 71 joined, despite its success in securing Maclaren and Heathcote as its Joint-Secretaries.[147] Of divisions on the suffragist issue in 1867-1904, Liberals voted in favour in only ten of seventeen, and the Conservatives did so in just five! The parliamentary road to women's suffrage had been long and apparently fruitless so, at the turn of the century, the more radical suffragists were to turn their attention to working women, and to direct action.

Table 1

Votes on Women's Suffrage of Durham and Cambridgeshire MPs-

MP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Lord G.Manners	X	X	X	X							
Viscount Royston	X	X	A	X							
R.Young	F										
F.S.Powell	A										
J.E.Gorst	F										
E.Fellowes	X	X	A	X	X	A	X	X			
Lord R.Montagu	X	X	X	X							
J.Peel	X										
T.Baring	X	X	A	A							
R.D.Shafto	X										
Sir H.Williamson	A	A	A	X							
J.Hartley	A										
J.Candlish	A	A	X	A							
Sir J.Pease	A	A	A	A	X	A	X	X	X	A	A
C.F.Surtees	X										
J.Henderson	X	X	F	X							
J.R.Mowbray	A										
Sir W.Hutt	X	X	X	X							
R.Ingham	A										
H.B.W.Brand		X	A	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
R.R.Torrens		X	F	A							
W.Fowler (i)		A	X	A							
Sir G.Elliot		X	F	F	F	F	X	X	X	F	
Sir E.Gourley		X	F	F	X	F	F	F	X	F	F
F.E.B.Beaumont		X	X	X	F	F	X	X			
E.Backhouse		X	X	X	F	F	X	X			
J.R.Davison		X									
J.C.Stevenson		X	X	X	X	A	A	A	A	A	
R.Ward Jackson		X	X	X							
J.Dodds		X	F	X	X	F	F	X	X	A	
J.L.Wharton			A	X							
Sir J.Karslake					X	X					
Hon. E.C.Yorke					A	A					
A.G.Marten					F	F	F	F			
P.B.Smollett					A	A	A	A			
Sir H.Pelly					X	X					
I.L.Bell						A	X	X			
Sir C.Palmer					F	X	X	X	X	A	X
Sir H.Havelock-Allen					X	A	A	A			
T.C.Thompson									X	A	
Sir T.Richardson					F				F	X	
Hon. W.H.James					A	A	A	A	X	A	
F.Herschell					X	A	A	A	X	A	
Sir A.Middleton-Monck					X	X	X	X			
B.B.H.Rodwell					X	X	X	X			
Lord Hinchingbrook						A	X	X			
Lord Mandeville							X	X			
E.Hicks							X	A	X	X	
H.Shield									X	A	

MP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
W.H.Fellowes									X	F	
Lord D.Gordon									X	X	
W.Fowler (ii)									X	A	
Hon. F.W.Lambton									X	X	
Sir T.Fry									F	A	
S.Storey									X	F	
J.R.Bulmer									A	A	
Sir R.Peel										F	
A.J.Thornhill										X	
C.T.Giles											X
W.R.Greene											X
H.L.B.McCalmont											X
R.U.P.Fitzgerald											F
A.H.Smith-Barry											A
Hon.A.E.Fellowes											A
W.Allan											F
W.S.Robson											X
R.Cameron											F
Sir J.Joicey											A
L.A.Atherley-Jones											F
J.Wilson											F
Sir W.Doxford											X
M.A.Fowler											F
J.M.Paulton											A
A.Pease											X
T.Richardson											X
J.Samuel											F
J.Richardson											X

KEY :

F - Voted in Favour. A - Voted Against.
X - Abstained.
▒ - MP was not then in the House of Commons.
1 - 1867 division on women's suffrage.
2 - 1870 division on women's suffrage.
3 - 1871 division on women's suffrage.
4 - 1872 division on women's suffrage.
5 - 1875 division on women's suffrage.
6 - 1876 division on women's suffrage.
7 - 1878 division on women's suffrage.
8 - 1879 division on women's suffrage.
9 - 1883 division on women's suffrage.
10 - 1884 division on women's suffrage.
11 - 1897 division on women's suffrage.

Table 2

Analysis of Parliamentary Divisions on Women's Suffrage -

Year	MPs	Support	EB	EC	EU	WB	WC	SB	SC	SU
1867	62	14.1%	44	13	0	0	2	2	1	0
1871	134	32.5%	85	20	0	1	4	13	10	1
1872	124	29.1%	78	18	0	1	2	15	9	1
1875	136	30.9%	94	18	0	2	0	15	5	2
1876	135	33.6%	93	19	0	4	0	14	3	2
1878	115	27.9%	80	8	0	4	1	14	7	1
1879	88	22.8%	63	4	0	4	2	13	2	0
1883	98	25.0%	64	15	0	7	3	7	2	0
1884	114	20.8%	58	42	0	4	3	2	5	0
1897	172	34.1%	70	55	3	5	11	11	17	0
1904	153	27.0%	62	57	2	3	4	11	14	0

KEY :

EB - English Boroughs.

EC - English Counties.

EU - English Universities.

WB - Welsh Boroughs.

WC - Welsh Counties.

SB - Scottish Boroughs.

SC - Scottish Counties.

SU - Scottish Universities.

Notes to Chapter 10

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11) Hune, NUWSS, p.11; p.16.

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Chapter 11 - The Details of Democracy

The most obvious of the democratic issues left unsettled by 1885 was manhood suffrage. There remained a property franchise, though wider than previous ones. Forty per-cent of adult males, 2,500,000 men, remained voteless, a figure which included whole occupational groups. The result was clear, with just ninety-five of the 670 MPs being returned by working-class constituencies.[1] In 1852, Ernest Jones had known the importance of manhood suffrage from a class perspective but middle-class Humeites such as Brockie in South Shields, even if they endorsed the Charter, might not specifically endorse manhood suffrage.[2] The franchise had enjoyed minority support throughout the years leading up to 1885 but, as Fulford noted, 'universal suffrage throughout the nineteenth century was an ill-defined dream of a handful of Radicals.'[3] It remained controversial even amongst the firmest of Radicals. Hence, Digby Seymour, in 1858 an ultra-Radical, while addressing a meeting of the Political Reform League was to oppose the enfranchisement of illiterates, drunks and criminals. The response to his words proved that neither Ernest Jones nor his Finsbury audience were so squeamish.[4]

After 1885 Radical groups proved virtually united in support of manhood, if not adult, suffrage. That was true of Socialist groups, those nostalgic for the Charter, parliamentary Radicals, and those trades unionists organized in the Labour Representation League.[5] Liberals within the Durham Parliamentary Debating Society (DPDS) were to adopt

manhood suffrage in their mock Queen's Speech of 1897, fifteen years before the genuine Cabinet followed suit, but one should not be surprised that even the DPDS was eleven years behind the local pitmen.[6] To place that delay in perspective, Conservative and Unionist women remained vigorously opposed to, 'Manhood Suffrage in any form', as late as 1912.[7]

Nationally, the twin Radical leaders had entered 1885 pledged to manhood suffrage[8] and they were later joined by W.S.Churchill, following his own interpretation of Tory Democracy,[9] but such a position remained distasteful to men like Hamilton, and even Liberals such as Storey and Harcourt chose to leave the suffrage as a secondary issue to the demand for one man one vote.[10] In Durham only two other Liberals joined Storey in explicitly endorsing manhood suffrage, Captain Fenwick and the notoriously eccentric T.C.Thompson.[11] The issue's relative unimportance was proved by the fact that, among Conservatives in the local areas studied, only Milvain bothered to oppose it.[12] In 1891, however, William Welch, proprietor of the Durham Chronicle, devoted an editorial to manhood suffrage writing that, 'It is remarkable that all the cautious bug-bear with which a man is hindered from obtaining his voting rights as a citizen disappears as if by magic, when he is called upon to pay for the rights of citizenship.'[13] By 1897 as the National Liberal Federation (NLF), in its Derby Programme, declared for manhood suffrage and the lowering of the residence qualification from twelve to three months, the Chronicle under Welch's widow was, like most Liberal politicians, to

concentrate upon the latter issue.[14]

The problem with the franchise, from a democratic perspective, essentially lay with the over-complex voter registration system, and a twelve-month residence qualification which blatantly discriminated against the, more mobile, working-classes. Dilke knew that fact well, and both Stansfeld and the Liberal Government had previously acquainted Parliament with that fact.[15] Their motivation was simple, and demonstrated by Joseph Richardson's complaint that the residence qualification cost 200 miners their votes in his marginal South-East Durham constituency.[16] The Durham miners may have been less peripatetic than their fellows elsewhere, but the career of John Wilson himself proved that not all Northern pitmen were so immovable.[17] Captain Fenwick estimated, approximately correctly, that registration reform could have increased the electorate by twenty-five per-cent (2,000,000), and was joined locally in supporting the Residence Bill by Davey, James Joicey and Matthew Fowler.[18]

Few miners shared Roper's view that, 'more men had votes at the present time than really knew what to do with them (disapprobation)', or supported, 'intellectual tests', but the 1895 conference of the Durham County Franchise and Political Reform Association (DCFPRA) did, prompted by Ryhope Lodge, restrict itself to a call for a shorter residence requirement. Cavanagh, speaking as was Roper at the 1887 conference of the DCFPRA, had declared that, 'Notwithstanding the extension of the franchise, it was considered...that they would not have perfect representation

until every man had the right to vote.'[19] At the grass-roots, however, there was little interest in a shorter residence qualification as such. Only a Barnard Castle Liberal and an Etherley miner bothered to mention it.[20]

Grass-roots activists seem to have been much more interested in manhood suffrage, a feeling which influenced the official Durham County Liberal Association, though all was perhaps not so clear-cut as H.G.Fordham, a Cambridgeshire Liberal, suggested in 1897 : 'They, as Liberals, believed that when a man attained the age of twenty one years he should have the right to speak and be heard by those who vote in the affairs of the nation.'[21] Manhood suffrage had, however, a strong foot-hold among the middle-class Liberals of County Durham by the 1880s - 1890s, with declarations of support from individuals in Durham City, Gateshead, West Hartlepool and Sunderland.[22] The issue had even penetrated the aristocratic classes, as the Hon. Hedworth Lambton revealed in Consett in 1885 : 'He was of opinion that every man who lived and worked - equally with those who only lived and spent money - (hear, hear) - whatever his status or avocation, had a right to have a vote (cheers). In fact, he hoped someday to see manhood suffrage the law of the land (loud cheers).'[23]

A much more easily achieved point of the Charter was the abolition of the property qualification for parliamentary representatives. Jones had advocated it in terms redolent of the franchise debates : 'we do not find that a man's brains increase or decrease in proportion to his wealth; nor that amassing riches is in itself any sign of virtue, temperance, or honesty'; but despite such arguments

Brockie's 1850 view that the property qualification was condemned by common consent was over-optimistic.[24] Groups of Radical MPs offered formulaic declarations, and may even have been joined in them by such moderates as Robert Ingham, but the Conservative Durham County Advertiser sternly opposed abolition, as a concession to Chartism and the route to, 'paid representatives.'[25]

In fact, the removal of the formal, and almost atrophied, property qualification in 1858 left in place the plutocracy's stronger second line of defence, the requirement that each candidate pay his share of the official electoral expenses. The scale of that "qualification" was revealed by Henry Pease's lament that £3,000 was not an unusual expense in his South Durham constituency, and by the fact that such prominent figures as Lords Amberley and Blandford, as well as working-class politicians like Elijah Copland in Newcastle, could be forced out of parliamentary elections by the sums involved. The hurdle was only raised by the consequences of the 1867 franchise extension.[26] Cowen placed the situation in perspective : 'Representative workmen might probably be got to sit in Parliament without salary but they cannot defray the large, increasing, and demoralising expenditure of contests.' If Cowen's words were predictable it should be noted that the moderate Sir Hedworth Williamson also denounced the impact of the electoral expenses upon, 'comparatively poor people.'[27]

Cowen and Williamson's comments were justified by the high expenses of the 1874 election, which saw candidates effectively picked for their purse rather than their

principles.[28] Fordham, in Cambridgeshire, continued to bemoan that state of affairs as late 1897.[29] Smith, in his study of 1867, feels that Conservatives regarded such expenses as, 'trifling', and an useful hedge against mischievous candidates, but even the Durham County Advertiser had opposed the increased electoral expenses which it felt to be inherent in the 1866 Reform Bill, since it argued that they could only further pack the Commons with rich businessmen more suited to be town Councillors than MPs![30] That opinion may have been manufactured in order to oppose the Liberal measure but, if so, the paper was perfectly ready to recycle it as a concession against the wider point of the payment of MPs a few years later. At least one local grass-roots Tory, John Todd of Hetton-le-Hole, was to firmly press for a cut in electoral expenses in order that all of the nation's best men could come forward, hence citing an argument deployed by Salisbury himself fifteen years before.[31] Their suggestion of limiting official expenses made as little impact, however, as it had when Russell had proposed it.[32]

Salisbury could not support the throwing of the official expenses upon the rate- or taxpayers, but that was the proposal made in 1867 by Fawcett, who thus followed in the footsteps of Bright, Mill and the National Complete Suffrage Union.[33] The public payment of electoral expenses became the cry of all attempting to grant the electorate a free choice of candidates, for as Engels noted the existing situation left working-class candidates excluded from at least three-quarters of the parliamentary constituencies.[34] That

opinion, and conclusion, was shared by the Trades Union Congress (TUC), Northern Reform League, Independent Labour Party (ILP), National Democratic League (NDL) and NLF.[35]

Unlike such organizations, Liberals and Radicals were far from united. Dilke and John O'Conner Power both endorsed Fawcett's efforts but the same was not true of Samuel Laing and McCullagh Torrens.[36] Liberal opponents were far from balanced out by the few "Conservative Democrats", like M.M.Barry, who were prepared to support both public payment of electoral expenses and the payment of MPs.[37] While no Durham Liberals opposed Fawcett, Young of Cambridgeshire did, and the two Cambridge Borough Liberals were hesitant, stressing that they could pay their own way even while expressing no objection to a "Local Option" scheme on Fawcett's plan.[38]

McCullagh Torrens' opposition to the proposal, on the grounds of the, 'burthen (sic)', which it would impose upon ratepayers,[39] was to be repeated ad nauseum by local Conservatives. In turn, the Durham County Advertiser was to call the attention of the supposedly hard pressed Durham City ratepayers to the declared support for Fawcett's proposal of Henderson, Fowler and Boyd, successive local Liberal candidates.[40] One correspondent, "Neptune", denied that high electoral expenses prevented worker-candidates, citing the repeated efforts of Odger,[41] and the County Advertiser was particularly scathing in 1872, claiming that Henderson planned to, 'enter Parliament upon the shoulders of the over-taxed ratepayers, upon whom he and others floated in the same current would saddle the entire burden without the least

compunction.'[42]

The local Liberal press felt rather differently. The Durham Chronicle endorsed Fawcett's proposal and even the Sunderland Herald had earlier commended its principle.[43] The sole area of doubt may have been the Cambridge Independent Press under Weston Hatfield who was ready to abandon public payment of electoral expenses when he feared that it might endanger the passage of the Ballot Bill in 1870.[44] The difference between the papers' views, however, merely reflected the situation among local politicians.

Wharton and Karslake both merely opposed the public payment of expenses, but Milvain went further by labelling it a bribe for demagogues.[45] Marten preferred simple logic : 'Why charge these expenses up on the rates when there are plenty of persons ready to bear them? (Cheers)', while Smollett was again more vocal : 'I stick to the old-fashioned notion that it is a honor (sic) to be elected by an independent constituency, to be their mouthpiece in Parliament; and so thinking I should never be disposed to throw the expenses of the Ballot upon the local rates (cheers).'[46] Both also considered the question of working-class candidates and while Marten doubted the expenses would daunt any candidate with, 'sufficient support', Smollett was inevitably flippant : 'Really and truly, it is not a very great sum; and I think such a trifling matter is of no consequence whatever to any candidate who is worth his salt (cheers).'[47] By contrast the prominent Liberal Unionist Professor Jevons felt the issue to be subtly dangerous, warning that public payment of the expenses would weaken the

two-party system, reduce Parliament to a mass of factions, and leave Britain with the unstable governments endured by France![48]

Such dire warnings did not divert the support of such Liberals as Storey, Atherley Jones and James Joicey, while Temple repeated Cowen's plea of sixteen years earlier that Parliament should be as open to the trades unionist as to the Duke's son.[49] Cowen himself remained affronted by the status quo : 'It is a gross injustice to compel the men who give their services gratuitously to the State to bear the cost of the...electoral paraphernalia...It imposes a monetary qualification on members (Hear, hear)...It is indefensible under any circumstances, and it is entirely inconsistent with an extended suffrage.'[50] The Liberal leadership was finally to include Fawcett's proposal in its Plural Voting Bill of 1893, though not in that of the following year.[51] By contrast, the DCFPRA had been committed to the public payment of official electoral expenses from at least 1885, Pritchard having spoken in favour as early as 1873.[52]

Though well discussed the issue of electoral expenses was never more than an adjunct to the greater issue of the payment of MPs. If the first MP to mention that subject in the Counties studied was a Conservative he was a far from usual one. Edward Ball was proud of his role as the MP for Cambridgeshire's dissenting tenant-farmers and was a man without a great noble sponsor. There lay his route to support for the payment of MPs, or in other words their elevation to the same position as that enjoyed by the Speaker and Ministers of the Crown. Ball suggested that wages be funded via a

registration fee levied from all voters, a plan very similar to that suggested by the notoriously radical Samuel Storey a few years later.[53] Curiously, Ball's cogent point on the contradictory positions of the Ministers and MPs was only sporadically taken up. At the local level, only the Durham Chronicle, Cowen and Robson did so, while Councillor Galbraith, the pitmen's leader and future MP, preferred to compare the position of parliamentary representatives with that of the royal family![54]

Payment of MPs had been a controversial element of the People's Charter, even amongst generally supportive Radicals. T.P.Thompson and Wakley were both opposed, while even Linton felt his romantic idealism offended by it![55] However, Jones, William Newton and Peter Taylor, were all well aware that only payment could open parliamentary contests to all sections of society.[56] Support came almost automatically from workers' organizations, no doubt owing to anger, shared by Engels, at the deliberate maintenance of Parliament as a, 'club of the rich.'[57] Keir Hardie, being personally involved, clearly felt some embarrassment at calling for his own payment and stressed, even to an audience of University Fabians that, 'they were more concerned in getting the living wage paid to the workers of England (Hear, hear).'[58] Motions in favour of the payment of MPs were passed by the Miners National Union at its Durham City conference of 1872, and regularly by the annual conferences of the DCFPRA.[59]

MPs' voluntary status was all too obviously problematic for some would-be candidates. Thomas Burt, a

notoriously competent "Lib-Lab" MP, was forced to endorse the efficacy of "Dr. White's Composition Essence", even before the Northumberland miners voted to avoid a political fund and leave their two MPs to rely upon voluntary subscriptions.[60] That left Burt in the same position as the exalted John Burns, but markedly better off than Lancelot Trotter, the Colliery Mechanic, whose 1885 electoral campaign in Bishop Auckland crumbled when the local Mechanics Institute refused to provide a campaign contribution.[61] Nor was the problem restricted to working men for Sir Donald Macalister, an eminently middle-class figure, had twice to decline Liberal nomination since, 'Such a step...would at the time have been beyond his means, for in those days there was no assured income for a Member of Parliament.'[62]

That limitation of electoral choice was to greatly concern many Liberals. As Labouchere wrote in 1884, 'To refuse payment to members is to limit the choice of electorates to those very men who are not likely to see things with the same eyes as the majority of the men who constitute the electorates.'[63] Harcourt relied upon a more theoretical opposition to aristocracy while Cowen, more practically, pointed out that Britain needed the brains of all of her classes if she was to compete in world markets.[64] He knew that payment was required if there was to, 'be a Government freely assented to by all, and acting for all.'[65] Similar sentiments came from national politicians such as Dilke, Chamberlain and the young John Stuart Mill,[66] as well as locally from Hoare, Joicey, Captain Fenwick and the Durham Chronicle.[67] Henry Duke, writing to the Chronicle to comment on the Unionist

candidate's address for the City's 1898 by-election, approached the issue in class terms : 'Can Mr Elliot explain how the proletariat is going to get its interests served if he (sic) does not send to Westminster a man conversant with the interests and wants of his class if he does not pay him for doing so?'[68]

The Tory response ironically echoed Hamilton's scorn for leading Conservatives' acceptance of political pensions : 'Politicians ought to be independent in means in order to be thoroughly independent in politics.'[69] That view, that a man who depended upon his parliamentary seat for his livelihood would be unduly receptive to the desires of his Party and constituents, was to prove a common one among Tory politicians, both nationally and locally. Giffard was typical when he declared that, 'All paid politicians should be distrusted, as they would represent not the people, but their paymasters (Hear, hear).'[70] Similar sentiments were expressed by Milvain and Nicholas Wood, as well as nationally by Goschen. On a more personal level, Hunter was to cite his opponent in Mid-Durham in 1892 as an example of the dangers of payment since John Wilson supposedly served the interests of his paymasters, the Durham Miners' Association (DMA), rather than those of his electors.[71] Hunter's fellow Liberal Unionist, Elliot, rather contradicted him by hoping that "labour" candidates would continue to be supported, informally and by their "friends", a view also rather at odds with the Cambridge Chronicle's opinions that such support funds could not last long![72] The practical result of such a system of informal support was that a token number of "labour"

MPs could survive but their numbers failed to multiply.

Liberal opposition to the payment of MPs was much more diverse. The moderate Samuel Laing feared demagoguery, the free-marketeer John Stuart Mill feared "big government", and the moralist Samuel Smith feared an increase in graft and corruption, while the idiosyncratic Henry Fowler acted upon pure prejudice.[73] In short, middle-class Liberals were motivated by their dread of the working-classes, channelled via their own particular fears for the future. Locally, three Liberal candidates opposed payment. Lindsay's concern for representatives' independence was merely par for the course in 1859 but the other two cases are rather more interesting.[74]

T.C.Thompson was also motivated by a fear of MPs becoming delegates, especially criticizing the majority of "labour" candidates, who appeared to him to be professional politicians.[75] It is curious that his fellow local opponent of payment should have been the other County Durham MP of Chartist stock, Llewellyn Atherley Jones. Noticeably cagey in 1885, he openly opposed payment, to the obvious distress of several of his supporters, in 1893.[76] Atherley Jones argued that the few "Labour" MPs who had gained funding were proof that this particular point of the Charter was no longer a precondition for democracy. In Parliament he expanded his argument, claiming that payment in the past had existed before the post of MP had acquired either honour or importance. Payment abroad was, he claimed, often nominal, and where not it was a mere mediæval survival. The position of working-class candidates was supposedly irrelevant, since

they were not popular with the electorate, only one ever having been elected against a Liberal. What was more, France and Germany provided evidence that payment did not necessarily lead to a great increase in the number of working-class MPs. As Atherley Jones accurately predicted, payment would only fill the Commons with, 'briefless barristers, peripatetic lecturers, the secretaries of a thousand and one societies, and journalists.' Such MPs, dependent upon their salaries, would lack the independence necessary for one in their position.[77] Welch's Durham Chronicle initially also balked at payment, due to the level of corruption in the United States, but the proprietor was a convert by 1892![78]

Conservatives were happy to employ their ancient theme of change only when necessary and, as Hunter and numerous others, both locally and nationally, pointed out, it was a simple waste of money to pay MPs when there were volunteers aplenty![79] Warnings as to the expense, boosted by the predicted salaries for literally thousands of local officials, came from Elliot, Milvain, Sir William Marriott and the Queen herself.[80] However, the primary concern of Conservative politicians lay in the possible creation of an American-style class of professional politicians which would end the comfortably amateur status quo. Local Tories with experience of the USA, most notably Professor Darwin in Cambridge, were regularly produced in order to testify as to the dire implications of professional politics.[81] Few Conservatives chose, like the Churchills and Wrightson, to stand against that tide,[82] but the relative lack of importance to some Tories of this issue may have been

revealed by the fact that the Cambridge Chronicle was willing to publish a long non-partizan speech in favour of the payment of MPs in 1894.[83]

Liberals steadily swung towards payment after 1869. Its inclusion in the Newcastle Programme of the NLF, in 1891, merely followed a lead already set by such as Dilke and Chamberlain.[84] In South Shields, Brockie had supported payment as early as 1850 and had looked even further back for his motivation - 'What Andrew Marvel accepted, our modern patriots need not be ashamed to take - payment for what they do.'[85] That appeal to tradition was picked up by Cowen, Wilson and Dilke,[86] but they were trumped by Jones, H.G.Fordham and Cowen again, who quoted Christ : 'the labourer is worthy of his hire.'[87] Bradlaugh, Wilson and several Durham pitmen, all made a similar point, but without divine assistance![88] Reference to foreign practice, and the overwhelming prevalence of payment overseas, was picked up by Dilke, Cowen, Wilson, Spence Watson and the Durham Chronicle.[89]

Conservative fears of American-style graft under payment were matched by, perhaps more reasonable, Liberal warnings that bribes were particularly attractive to the non-remunerated. As Cyril Dodd, an Essex candidate pointed out, 'it was better that a man should take his payment honestly and straight out of the country's money than be the hanger-on of dukes, or paid for by the great people (Cheers).'[90] Cowen, though he disliked the idea of professional politicians, mused that, 'It was infinitely better to pay a man well than to allow him to pay himself (hear, hear, and loud laughter).'[91] The same point had been made by the young John Stuart Mill,

Jones, and Pritchard and Stewart of the Durham miners.[92] Nationally, Dilke was in no doubt that the lack of payment both engendered political corruption and tied at least one party, the Irish, to the whims of their leadership.[93] If Tories feared the expense of paying MPs, Pritchard, though he vouchsafed no supporting evidence, claimed that the paid MPs would be more careful of expenditure.[94]

At both ends of the period concerning this thesis individual politicians were to face head-on the suggestion that payment would turn MPs into delegates. Jones, in Halifax, happily acknowledged the fact while Temple, in Durham City, argued that, 'The citizens should have the first call upon the service of the member. In order that they should have the first call they should pay the member. They would then have him under their control, which you cannot have if you leave him to get, in another way, his remuneration.'[95] The democratic implications of that were obvious, and this later period saw similar comments from local Liberals such as Newnes and David, in Cambridgeshire, as well as Hargrove and Captain Fenwick in County Durham. Dr. Gammage and Councillor Lucas were also Northern supporters of the payment of MPs, despite the fact that neither was a potential MP.[96]

Though Cowen, in both 1879 and 1883, admitted that payment was not popular, only ten years later it had the support of much of the Liberal leadership.[97] Payment of MPs was passed by Parliament in 1911 and the payment of official electoral expenses became the responsibility of the Government in 1918,[98] but the effect of those reforms was to be diluted by the imposition of a new property qualification,

the deposit, which had itself earlier been proposed by such Radicals as Hare, John Stuart Mill and Fawcett.[99]

Whatever the fiscal aspects of candidacy, they were academic if elected MPs were not allowed to take their seats in the Commons. The controversy over Jewish MPs trundled to a conclusion in 1858, but had split local sources along Party lines, as was exemplified by the situation on the South Durham hustings in 1857. There, the strong-men of both local Parties, the Colonels Stobart and Scurfield, proposed their respective candidates precisely because they would vote for, or against, the "Jew Bill".[100] Only in May 1858, shortly before its own leader pushed that Bill through, did the Durham County Advertiser switch its opinion to support for the right of elected Jews to sit in Parliament and even then only upon the grounds that it was necessary to end a tiresome inter-House stalemate![101] The question of the admittance to the Commons of those elected was of obvious importance and dated back at least to the Wilkes case. Bright skilfully encapsulated the issue at stake in 1849, but almost twenty years later William Lovett, the Chartist and Democrat, was to support the restriction of parliamentary candidates to competency lists compiled via public examinations.[102]

The wider issue of the parliamentary Oath was then left to await the election of a candidate so radical, and controversial, that his exclusion was felt to be worth the inevitable obloquy. It was Charles Bradlaugh's taste for the splendid gesture which left him open to exclusion, via the opportunistic activities of the "Fourth Party", masters of that same art. Churchill and Wolff could not ignore the

opportunity afforded by Bradlaugh's initial reluctance to take the Oath, especially in the light of the public feeling which had clearly blown up in Tory circles against the secularist republican.[103] Northcote, though he had previously endorsed the abolition of the Oath, had little choice but to follow the majority of his parliamentary Party in opposing Bradlaugh.[104] MPs like Sir Hardinge Giffard were also to pedantically argue that a constituency, by re-electing a Bradlaugh and hence flouting the law, did not change it. Hicks Beach was only finally to cut the last Tory fire from the issue in 1885.[105]

Durham Conservatives were lacking in vehemence, if not in solidarity, in their opposition to Bradlaugh taking his seat. That was evident in the Durham County Advertiser's editorial columns, and also in the fact that Salkeld only bothered to mention the issue twice in five years![106] Among County Durham's Tory politicians only Wharton, along with two outside visitors, spoke against Bradlaugh, and all three chose to adopt a purely legalistic attitude.[107] That fact was perhaps owing to the generally radical and free-thinking atmosphere of the North during this period.

Cambridgeshire Tories showed no such restraint. The Cambridge Chronicle, rather confusingly, mentioned an, 'anti-religious crusade', while one of its correspondents, "Notes of the Week", provided a contrast with the Durham Tories' legalism : 'Whether Mr Bradlaugh be legally competent to take his seat or not, there are many who question his moral right to do so, having regard to the profession of allegiance to the Queen and her heirs required of every member...There

are more who deplore that in Christian England a constituency should have been found to return to Parliament one who professes to disbelieve in the existence of the Almighty.'[108] The Chronicle would brook no doubts that the real issue lay beyond the remit of the courts since it was, 'whether a professed Atheist should be allowed in the presence of the representatives of a Christian people, and in the performance of a solemn obligation, to take God's name in vain.'[109]

That view, that the issue inherent in the Affirmation Bill was the dishonouring of religion, had permeated Cambridgeshire Conservatism. Hence,few Tories could stand aside from the matter! Thornhill placed atheism outside of the pale of religious liberty while Rodwell, himself a Wesleyan, claimed that Northampton had brought its problems upon itself by choosing to flout both public and parliamentary opinion.[110] Hicks was, as usual, blunt : 'The constituencies are bound to return fit and proper men. They had no right to return Bradlaugh.'[111] Similar sentiments, often as emotively delivered, came from seven other Cambridgeshire Tory MPs or candidates[112] but Gedge adopted a fresh angle, candidly admitting that he could contemplate Bradlaugh's admission even as he rhetorically asked, 'Were they to let anyone sit in Parliament, who though he respected and paid allegiance to the Queen, had no reverence, and did not believe in a God? He thought that that alone entirely justified this Christian country in excluding Mr Bradlaugh from Parliament.'[113]

Grass-roots Tory feeling, at least in Cambridgeshire, stood firmly against what W.P.Spalding

termed, 'that bad irreligious and monstrous man Mr Bradlaugh.'[114] However, at Westminster, the Tory effort was to end with a whimper in 1886 as the new speaker, A.W.Peel, showed a constitutional propriety which his predecessor, Henry Brand, had lacked. The hollowness of national Tory resistance to Northampton's choice, once the "Fourth Party" had self-destructed, was graphically indicated by Hick Beach's languid postscript, but it should be noted that Penrose Fitzgerald, the Cambridge MP, was among the few Tories who attempted to resist the fait accompli.[115]

Liberals, while attempting to defend Bradlaugh, unsurprisingly strove to continue to appear respectable. Their most obvious means of doing so was, as Palmer suggested, to studiously separate the wider principle from the man at the heart of the specific events.[116] Hence, Bradlaugh as an individual was often attacked even as his right to take his seat was being supported! Cowen merely questioned Bradlaugh's tactics[117] but Blandford, Hamilton and Shield, all declared themselves shocked by his contempt for Commons traditions.[118] Other Liberals, including Henry Fowler, Bateman Brown from Huntingdon, and even Labouchere, signalled out Bradlaugh's atheism for their contempt.[119] Rylands, and more locally Coote and Henry Brand junior, fell into line behind Bradlaugh's cause but stressed that they personally would not have cast Northampton ballots in his favour![120] Bradlaugh might have had, 'intense egoism and love for notoriety', as the Cambridge Independent Press claimed and Hugh Shield suggested, but he was none-the-less the elected member for Northampton and as such had to be

defended.[121] The Liberal press was even to denounce Conservatives for providing atheism with the "oxygen of publicity"![122] Few Liberals dared attempt to turn the Tories' ammunition against them but Coote was characteristically pompous : 'Our religion should be like our monarch, placed on a pedestal far above the atmosphere and strife of faction.'[123] Herschell chose to question the importance of the Oath in maintaining the nation's religious faith, while J.W.Pease, who had himself affirmed on six occasions, was perhaps the most persuasive : 'The House had no right to ask a man what his religious belief was - whether he believed in a God or whether he did not believe in a God...They had no right to ask such questions.'[124]

Bradlaugh seems to have embraced that process of distancing the Liberals from himself, a fact which perhaps confounds some of the allegations of egotism levelled against him. His campaign, if based upon the National Secular Society, attempted to broaden its support by organizing as the "League for the Defence of Constitutional Rights." It proved capable of raising a creditable agitation, if one devoid of the revolutionary sentiment which Labouchere professed to expect.[125] Four hundred Radical organizations affiliated, 263,674 signatures were garnered within a year, and tens of thousands attended rallies in Bradlaugh's support.[126] Bradlaugh himself toured extensively, including a visit to Cambridge, and whatever his effect upon by-elections held under the old franchise, Schnadhorst and the Cambridge Independent Press accurately predicted the Whig "Cave"s fate at the hands of the expanded electorate in

1885.[127]

Bradlaugh's efforts to switch attention from his atheist beliefs was only sensible since many of his strongest opponents, like Samuel Morley, were prominent nonconformist Liberals.[128] A different situation, however, pertained in the North. Crawford, Burt and Wilson, despite all being devout Primitive Methodists, were to provide loyal backing for their old confederate, support channelled via the miners' organizations.[129] Arch and his farm-workers proved equally dependable.[130] However, while J.W.Pease supported Bradlaugh throughout, his fellow Quaker, Fowler, initially hesitated before declaring Bradlaugh's victory, like Wilkes', to be inevitable.[131] That was hardly a ringing endorsement!

The Cambridge Independent Press, facing a divided post-bag, did not moderate its views - 'is it just to deprive an atheist of any or all of his civil rights? Its a slippery slope to full-scale persecution, and an English Inquisition.' The paper also mused on the reasons for the Tory provision of such an unnecessary boost for atheism : 'Simply because they are so stupid that they do not understand that the day for religious persecution has passed away.'[132] Local Liberal views were summed up by Dale in Sawston : 'the principles asserted so often must be asserted once again, that no creed, and no lack of creed, must exclude a representative duly elected by the suffrage of a constituency (applause).'[133] Similar views were expressed on the national stage,[134] while Herschell also noted the lessons of history : 'It was a very dangerous thing to rely on the religious instincts of the House in dealing with a question of

Constitutional right...there was hardly any act of intolerance which had not been defended at some time or other under the plea of religious instincts.'[135]

The essential Liberal argument was also the essential democratic one, a constituency's right to elect who it chose. It was the argument of national Liberal leaders, but also of local figures such as Coote, Herschell and Shield.[136] Even so Whiggish a figure as Bateman Brown opposed the, 'unconstitutional' and 'dangerous', actions of the Tories, claiming that they had breached the constitutional role of the constituencies, an allegation echoed by the Cambridge Independent Press.[137]

Allegiance to Gladstone's policy of replacing the Oath with affirmation spread rapidly through the national non-Tory political spectrum, from Holyoake to Argyll,[138] a phenomena repeated in County Durham where Lancelot Trotter, still free of the pretensions of politicians, simply noted that Oaths did not guarantee that people told the truth![139] The Durham Chronicle, noting the Tory attachment to the Oath, merely wryly suggested that neither Bradlaugh, the Jews, nor any other affirming members, were likely to scheme for the restoration of the Stuarts, a tactic which avoided the vitriol inherent in the statement of "Reformer", an Independent Press columnist, that certain "Papists" and "Hebrews" were distastefully attempting to pull the ladder up behind them by voting against affirmation.[140] Of all Liberal observations on the Bradlaugh issue perhaps Coote tried hardest to place it in perspective : 'Mr Bradlaugh is a mere fly on the political wheel of the Constitution, and if

Northampton wants him to represent them, and he is not a criminal, nor a pauper, but a person duly qualified to represent them, they have a right to insist upon his taking his seat (loud cheers).'[141]

A few Liberals went so far as to suggest that Bradlaugh's exclusion really was not the issue. "Reformer" suspected a plot to obstruct the Irish Land Bill, while two other Cambridgeshire Liberals, surrounded by anti-Bradlaugh feeling, attempted to gather support by warning that next time it could be a Cambridge MP excluded, or the members of the Farmers Alliance.[142] Certain cynical Liberals felt that the problem lay with Bradlaugh's ability, rather than his atheism, and Nichols even specifically isolated the cause of the controversy as Bradlaugh's declared intention to attack the system of hereditary pensions![143]

Even had the right of elected representatives to take their seats in the Commons been uncontested, there remained considerable argument as to how long their "lease" should be. If Brockie chose to reserve comment on the question of shorter Parliaments,[144] the first sixty years of the nineteenth-century did witness much Radical support for the re-introduction of triennial Parliaments, expressed in the programmes of organizations ranging from the National Financial and Political Reform Association to the National Reform League.[145] While the musings of Cobden on the subject were largely theoretical, Ernest Jones was sternly practical - 'we find that sound measures are always more readily carried at the close of a Parliament'![146] If John Stuart Mill was apathetic, support for shorter Parliaments did come from a

veritable roll-call of contemporary Radicals.[147] Support also came, at various times, from as unlikely quarters as Macaulay, Disraeli and Russell,[148] though the Liberal and Peelite establishment generally remained opposed.[149]

Despite their status as a traditional Radical demand, triennial parliaments were still to be discounted by the Cambridge Chronicle as, 'visionary', as late as 1861. Both it and the Durham County Advertiser opposed that vision.[150] The Liberal local press largely remained silent, though the Durham Chronicle did endorse the "Little Charter", which included triennial parliaments.[151] Once more the shade of "Radical Jack" Durham long hung over the North. W.D.Seymour was convinced : 'we are living in an advancing age, and do not want men who will go...and deliver a prepared oration, and forget their constituents, and only turn into the House of Commons as it may suit their high mightiness to do so. By shortening the duration of Parliaments you would bring these men to their senses; you would attach a responsibility to them, and compel them to observe the allegiance which they owe to the men who sent them (applause).'[152] Seymour's Whiggish opponent, despite later claims, was to be found with Harry Vane in the opposing lobby.[153] Other local Liberals, including Alderman Bramwell, were also unenthusiastic,[154] but Hutt, Henry Pease, Douglas, Granger, Mowatt and Walters, all endorsed triennial parliaments.[155] Their feeling was quite definitely for triennial, as opposed to annual, parliaments, at a time when politicians knew well that more frequent elections entailed more frequent expense![156]

The issue rapidly lost its fire in the 1860s, a fact

noted by both the local press and Lady Amberley.[157] Gladstone, Dilke, Arnold Morley and Labouchere, all supported shorter parliaments, which also featured in the programmes of Chamberlain, the NLF, ILP and Social Democratic Federation (SDF),[158] but it is perhaps symbolic that the parliamentary management of the issue devolved to the notorious Dr. Kenealey.[159] Perhaps unsurprisingly, little or no ground was being gained among Conservatives, despite a temporary weakening of the Cambridge Chronicle.[160] Wood and Gedge both registered their opposition while Milvain did not bother to hide the fact that expense was his primary consideration.[161] Perhaps most interestingly, Giffard clearly inherited an argument used by Goschen upon his visit to Cambridge in 1891, including the allegation that shorter Parliaments were part of a Liberal effort to impose, 'iron discipline', upon their MPs.[162]

Locally, while both Lyons and Wilkinson supported annual parliaments, along with David in Cambridge, even sentiment among the Durham pitmen tended to prefer triennial ones.[163] Atherley Jones and Hoare both agreed with them,[164] while T.C.Thompson was, within five years, to move from the most radical position to support for the status quo![165] Fenwick, Hargrove and Lehmann, all expressed opposition to the septennial system,[166] which Radicals ascribed to their favourite historical villains, be they Charles I or the House of Brunswick![167] Cowen, always one with a wily eye on the past, noted that the Jacobite threat had now passed! Cowen's Chartist past perhaps explained his unwillingness, unique among Cambridgeshire and County Durham politicians, to

discuss the length of Parliaments in depth. Constitutional precedence and foreign examples were both cited, but a more personal motive for supporting triennial parliaments was also in evidence : 'The best antidote to excessive organisation is to bring the representatives and the represented into closer and more direct contact with each other. Shorter Parliaments would help to accomplish this.'[168]

Cowen, as one of the last of the old free-booting Radicals, had good reason to fear the Caucus and seek protection from it. Ironically, his parliamentary career was to be ended by his personal embarrassment at the Tory sympathy which his resistance to Spence Watson's party machine solicited![169] In an issue non-existent in Cambridgeshire, the Durham County Advertiser was to sternly denounce the Caucus as, 'wire-pullers', though its motivation undoubtedly arose from Conservative defeats at the polls.[170] Undoubtedly, the harshest denunciation of the caucus came from Thomas Hodgkin, a Liberal Unionist victim of the attentions of the Tyneside Caucus, which he felt had constituted itself, 'a Committee of Public Safety, censuring or applauding each important speech or vote of the member.'[171] However, as Patterson and the Durham Chronicle accurately predicted, the Conservatives were soon to have Caucuses of their own![172]

A connected issue was the long debate as to whether MPs were delegates or representatives. The first signs of members showing responsibility to their constituents came via contacts outside of electoral campaigns. In the 1830s,

T.P.Thompson was notable for bothering to write his Hull constituents a weekly public letter,[173] but a more orthodox point of contact was the "Annual Report", delivered to a public meeting by the member. By 1865 John Stuart Mill noted a fashion for such events,[174] but such politicians as Brotherton, Tancred, Jones and Forster, were ahead of their times,[175] even if Hankey in Peterborough was clearly behind his : 'he was inclined to think that it was not desirable, as a matter of course, that members should invite their constituents to discuss piece-meal and in detail matters of high policy.'[176] MPs like Robert Ingham were unwilling to be questioned about issues before Parliament,[177] and the often eccentric nature of the "Annual Report" was perhaps best exemplified by the fact that Harcourt delivered his for 1868 via the Ancient Order of Druids![178]

Durham City, belying its sleepy image, was early into the field. Though no City elections were contested between 1853 and 1868, both local political parties were to hold "Annual Report" meetings from 1853. To illustrate the magnitude of that fact Cambridge Borough MPs were not to appear locally, outside election campaigns, until 1860, and not with regularity until 1869. Palmer, the first North Durham MP to follow suit, did so only in 1876, closely followed by his Conservative "colleague", seven years after the South Durham Liberals. Huntingdonshire, as an archetypal back-water, did not follow suit until as late as 1883. Behind all of those dates, however, progress was being made. While Cobden had encouraged "Reports", but not practised what he preached, forty-odd years later Bryce was ready to travel to

Aberdeen twice a year, and even hold a "surgery" on each occasion.[179]

The relationship between a MP and his constituents was deeply controversial. One, T.S.Duncombe, a fore-runner of Cowen, was perfectly ready to address an, admittedly obnoxious, group of petitioners thus, 'Will you hold your tongue? You instruct me! I am the independent representative of an independent constituency. I know far more about it than you can tell me. You will have my opinion when the subject comes before Parliament.'[180] As time passed MPs could no longer afford to be quite so cavalier, even with Urquhartites.

The attitude of intellectual Liberalism proved a rather more refined version of Slingsby Duncombe's outburst. John Stuart Mill was most explicit in his support for parliamentary elitism, but he had the full support of Lowe, Bagehot and Tom Hughes.[181] Indeed, there can be little doubt that they represented 1850s electoral opinion better than Jones' view that, 'members of Parliament should be the servants and not the masters of the people.'[182]

Tancred was perhaps unusual in his willingness to bow to a section of his constituents' wishes, but that was, as County Durham proved, a developing tendency. W.S.Lindsay learned that fact to his cost when a public storm followed his lieutenancy of Roebuck's effort to support Derby's Ministry after the 1859 elections. As a new member, Lindsay went North to explain his actions, if with some distaste : 'The superiority of the House of Commons as a deliberative assembly, over all the deliberative assemblies in the world,

was this - that the members of that house are, or are presumed to be, independent representatives of the people.' When elected, 'he trusted, that they would allow him to think for them when he went to the Senate of the people, and, he trusted, they would allow him to exercise his judgement...as long as he did not deviate from those principles upon which he received their suffrages.'[183] The Sunderland meeting accepted Lindsay's explanation but the Sunderland Herald was more sceptical : 'So far as we are able to follow the logic it simply amounts to this, that in Mr Lindsay's eyes a delegate is bound to adhere to his pledges, and a representative may drop them whenever he pleases.'[184] Unsurprisingly, both Tory papers, as well as Gorst and George Elliot, scorned those MPs who were willing to take note of their constituents' opinions.[185] Ironically, however, one of the first County Durham MPs to thus, 'swallow his own compunctions', on an issue was the archly Tory John Wharton, preceding by a year Salisbury's interest in the "mandate".[186]

While Liberals protested at Salisbury's efforts, characters such as Dr. Kenealey were to openly call for the "squeezing" of MPs and some of those figures were to attempt to place their position's responsibility above its prestige.[187] That was true, locally, of both T.C.Thompson and Candlish - 'He [Candlish] took it that the best representation or delegation, was when the mind and will of those represented were expressed in the acts of their representative.'[188]

As Viscount Bury said, MPs felt, 'the hot-blooded voice of the people straight behind them', and they perhaps

unsurprisingly struggled for autonomy of action.[189] Locally, David and Atherley Jones openly opposed delegation while Cowen declared it impracticable and Sir Joseph Pease felt inclined to leave such matters to the polls.[190] Burt addressed the issue in rather more detail. He quoted Burke and, though ready himself to be called a delegate, was not amenable to the requirements of that description : 'Above everything, he should be true to himself, and should never advocate anything in which he does not wholly believe. Therefore, when I go to the House of Commons, you may depend on it I shall always speak and act in accordance with my own honest convictions. They may be mistaken, but, so long as they are mine, I shall assert them.'[191]

Despite such brave words the question of "mandates" was still to arise in the local press.[192] The Cambridge Independent Press, reflecting Liberal confusion, denounced both representatives, as a denial of popular rule, and delegates, as mere 'voting-machines'. The Independent Press's long editorial on this occasion concluded, 'Members of Parliament would do well...not to consider themselves as in any sense the depositaries of power, but rather as the agents for carrying out the wishes of the people.'[193]

Conservatives stood firm on the issue, with the London Standard denouncing, 'incessant talk about obeying the orders and seeking the permission of his [a MP's] constituents.'[194] In Cambridge, Fitzgerald was also forthright : 'On one thing they might be certain : if by going one inch either to the right or to the left he would secure a hundred votes in Cambridge he would decline to go that inch

(cheers)',[195] a sentiment endorsed by Milvain, Wood and Gedge.[196] Montagu spoke in the Commons in defence of the MP as representative, rather than delegate,[197] and even among Liberals at least one MP was to learn that his differences with the Government were to be left at Westminster, and not to be aired in public in his constituency.[198]

MPs tended to show less concern for their freedom when it was threatened by their party, rather than by the people. While Cowen made a regular feature of his opposition to the cloture,[199] other Liberal MPs experienced no difficulty in supporting that imported limitation of parliamentary free speech.[200] Cowen's colleague, William Crawford, however, kept the Durham pitmen abreast of the need to oppose, 'this piece of continental despotism', warning that, 'for an exercise of equity and fair play, Governments are the least reliable, and ought to be the most strictly watched, and the people's interests most jealously guarded round.'[201] Confidential treaties with France were also to rouse the suspicions of at least one Liberal who knew the power which general political ignorance could give to the executive.[202]

Referenda, as a means of avoiding the whole issue of delegation or representation, and as a return to the principles of direct democracy, were to win some advocates. However, support lay largely on the extremes among groups wishing to by-pass a Parliament in which they enjoyed little or no representation, including the SDF, the pre-fascist extreme right and the ILP, despite MacDonald's personal endorsement of elected dictatorship.[203] Balfour, Salisbury,

Dilke and Chamberlain, all endorsed referenda, but generally only while in opposition![204] Unfortunately for such adherents, A.V.Dicey was to prove rather over-optimistic when he wrote, 'to the referendum we shall come at last I am certain. It is the only scheme for giving the constitution any permanence, which is at once effectual and unmistakably democratic.'[205]

If voters were not to be allowed to consider legislation themselves, the method of election of those chosen to do so on their behalf became crucial. Many politicians came to believe that the ancient electoral system in Britain provided far from the most accurate possible reflection of those it was supposed to represent. That was true even if the misnomer of the "House of Commons" was discarded and the lower house merely regarded as the proxies of the limited electorate. The answer in some eyes lay in what they termed "minority representation", now better known as proportional representation (PR).

The first formal appearance of such a scheme came as part of the 1854 Reform Bill and though that measure rapidly vanished its inclusion of minority representation was to be recalled, pleasurably, by the Sunderland Herald in 1860, and by Wharton as late as 1884![206] The concept gained little Radical support[207] but that was perhaps inevitable given the motivation of some of its earlier champions. Prince Albert, for example, regarded it as, 'compensation for the extension of the franchise.'[208] In short, if the working-classes had to be enfranchised then their MPs needed to be supervised by others representing the better educated and

more prosperous "minority" classes. Classes, rather than political Parties, were to be the guide to the proportionality of representation and that view of the principle was to survive until at least 1885, tainting it irremediably. Hence, instead of being presented as a democratic measure, which would allow the fair representation of all political factions, "minority representation" lost the opportunity to slip into operation on the coat-tails of one of the many other successive Reform proposals by appearing to be just another "safe-guard", in which role it could only earn the contempt of most Radicals. That could proved disastrous for a proposal which, in 1854, Argyll had already considered to be particularly ill-starred : 'The English people are too practical and unideological ever to understand that sort of thing.'[209]

In 1867 "minority representation" was proposed by Lowe, re-affirming its position as a safe-guard and hence dooming it to defeat. Lowe knew that well but he could only have gained the support of those, like John Russell and the Sunderland Herald, who were petrified by the onrush of household suffrage.[210] The undemocratic nature of their support was exemplified by Gorst, who endorsed Lowe's proposal as, 'a way in which...it might be possible for people who were unable to make themselves popular to the masses to find their way into Parliament.'[211] Liberals, from Storey to Beaumont, were predictably outraged[212] and only the Conservative Durham County Advertiser lamented the defeat of Lowe's proposal : 'Faction and prejudice have prevailed over reason and justice.'[213]

If cumulatives failed in 1867, the so-called minority clause did not. The scheme had enjoyed some support among South Durham Tories as early as 1857 but national leaders such as Salisbury remained unconvinced as late as 1864.[214] Despite opposition ranging from T.B.Potter to Disraeli via Gladstone the clause passed none the less, courtesy of those Peers and lesser-known MPs who felt, 'interests, and not numbers alone, is (sic) to be considered.'[215] The County Advertiser supported what it confessed to be an, 'innovation', and astonishingly even quoted John Stuart Mill's endorsement of the minority clause as necessary, 'to the principles of democracy.'[216] Support also came from the Whiggish Sunderland Herald, which clung to it as a necessary counter-weight, a fact which made it all the more surprising that the Durham Chronicle should also have supported the clause, if only as a means of neutralizing the new County seats.[217] The paper was soon to reverse its opinion once it noted the situation which the clause created in the largest Boroughs.[218] The Cambridge Independent Press had always been firmly opposed, citing Bright's point that the clause effectively reduced the largest constituencies to mere single-member seats.[219] Bright's argument, of course, relied upon the issue of "Parties", a term with no constitutional basis at the time. Under the existing constitution these large seats simply returned three individuals and it was of no consequence that two of those members routinely cancelled out each other's votes!

The establishment of the "minority clause" did not free it from controversy. Its supporters realized all too

clearly that its future was far from secure.[220] Unsurprisingly, the fiercest criticism came from Liberal representatives of the triangular boroughs, who included such able propagandists as Bright and Chamberlain, and a determined Cameron, who facetiously advocated, 'majority representation.'[221] More importantly, unaffected groups, including the Cambridge Liberal Working Men, were to rally against the clause and the Independent Press used the loss of the Liberal seat in the triangular County of Cambridgeshire, in an 1884 by-election, to scorn the clause.[222]

However, Radical criticism was not the clause's chief weakness. Established as a safe-guard against those men newly enfranchised in 1867, experience had shown, to all bar the likes of Goschen,[223] that it simply was not necessary. Worse, it had inspired, and strengthened, the dreaded Caucus.[224] That fact caused the Tory leadership to grow increasingly lukewarm towards the clause,[225] while more loyal back-benchers, including Manners and Gedge, were too isolated to effectively defend it.[226]

PR, however, was a much wider issue than the mere minority clause. If isolated from the realm of the safe-guard it could secure considerable Radical support, notably from the National Reform League and the Labour Representation League, as well as from individuals.[227] The latter included certain politicians, including Holyoake and Acland, who had opposed the old minority clause which, as the Pall Mall Gazette had declared, had made PR, 'stink in the nostrils of keen politicians on both sides of the House.'[228] That view was confirmed by the fact that the leaders of the campaign against

the clause, most notably Bright and Chamberlain, were among those who raged hardest against all or any PR proposals.[229] Chamberlain clearly feared that PR remained a reactionary safe-guard, and suspected it to be directly aimed against himself and his supporters.[230] He also raised a warning which many others were to make over the succeeding years, that PR could preclude strong government : 'even if the little rills of political thought are represented, the main current will be broken up and effaced.'[231] That view was endorsed by the NLF and, whatever the view of the Glasgow miners, the Durham pitmen were certainly sceptical concerning PR.[232] Dilke, once a supporter of the second, run-off, ballot was to abandon PR owing to its lack of mass support.[233] Randolph Churchill also saw no profit in joining such an isolated campaign, and PR received no support from traditionally-minded Liberal leaders such as Gladstone, Granville and Harcourt.[234] William Fowler, speaking in Parliament, merely echoed Chamberlain by declaring that, 'the adoption of...any... scheme of minority representation, would give minorities a power which would tend to produce a stagnant Parliament, an undecided Parliament, and one that did not know its own mind as well as it ought to do.'[235] He, like numerous other politicians, and the Pall Mall Gazette, considered equal electoral districts a much preferable means of securing a Parliament which represented all shades of opinion.[236]

Locally, the Cambridge Independent Press made its opposition to PR clear, though its reports of Grey's speeches revealed its proprietor's fundamental ignorance of the subject![237] It also, however, reminded Conservatives in

support of such safe-guards of Disraeli's dictum that, 'it is the business of a minority to convert itself into a majority'![238] The Independent Press's Durham City equivalent, which had once regarded minority representation as too complex to attempt, remained strictly neutral upon the matter, only noting the strong race of public opinion against PR.[239] However, one of the Chronicle's writers, "Our London Correspondent", was permitted both to declare his support for second ballots and to express his frustration at the weakness of the PR campaign.[240] The normally forthright Cambridge Chronicle was perhaps the least dogmatic of the local newspapers studied on this issue, merely warning that PR in, 'operation would probably produce anomalies quite as great as those it is designed to cure.'[241] Its correspondent, "Notes of the Week", having previously endorsed PR, was to swing behind single-member districts in 1884.[242]

Sarah Naylor, as proprietor of the Cambridge Chronicle, adopted a common attitude : 'The arguments in favour of proportional representation are very attractive, and if any simple and practicable scheme could be devised they would be irresistable (sic).' Unfortunately, Hare's scheme was felt to be far too complex to fit the bill.[243] Such protests against complexity were a regular feature of opposition to PR,[244] while other politicians, including Cowen and Ripon, seem to have been genuinely frustrated by the lack of a PR system in which they could place their faith![245] As Cowen said, 'Any person who devises machinery that will protect the machinery against the arbitrariness of the majority, and will guarantee the majority against its own

errors, will be counted a benefactor of his species.'[246] Revealingly, while the Sunderland Herald denied that Hare's proposals were really complex, it did admit that their seeming to be so was sufficient to doom them.[247]

PR was generally known in Victorian political circles as "minority representation", but several "minorities" were involved. For Hartington and Lord Spencer it meant simply the Southern Irish Unionists[248] but Begbie and Albert Grey were particularly concerned by the need to avoid a Party, on the basis of a minority of votes, acquiring despotic powers. Grey, for all of his talk of, 'pure democracy', was chiefly in fear of single-class, by which he of course meant working-class, domination.[249] Sydney Gedge, himself a member of the PR Society (PRS), had no doubt as to the minorities which he wished to see represented : 'wealth, education, intelligence, [and] landed property.'[250] Tories like Stokes were motivated by class concerns, and PR's potential role as a safe-guard against the new rural electors of 1885 was perhaps the only argument which could have drawn inveterate Tories like Lowther into support for such a constitutional innovation.[251]

Goschen's support was likewise an attempt to bolster party against public opinion, rather than an attempt to rationalize party representation.[252] It was to be the doom of PR that, while Tories and Whigs sympathized with the concept of a counter-weight against the working classes, the ultimately safe extension of the franchise in 1868 had left the issue shorn of the urgency which it had enjoyed in the past.[253]

County Durham was unusual in that its Conservatives, under Liberal domination since 1857, did consider PR in party terms. The background to that fact was reasonably clear. Gainsford Bruce, considering the 1880 election, noted that, while Conservatives had secured a third of the vote in County Durham's Boroughs, the Liberals had still taken all nine parliamentary seats.[254] The Durham County Advertiser had declared for, 'equitable minority representation', in 1881 but ultimately bowed to the Compact signed at the national level in 1885.[255] Interest was, however, revived among County Durham Tories when the 1885 poll returned just one Conservative among the County's sixteen constituencies, and he the first returned at a general election for seventeen years![256] After relative success in 1886 the 1892 return to normal failure proved sufficient to concern the County Advertiser. Having garnered over 40% of the vote, but again just one of the sixteen seats, "Notes of the Week" complained that, 'This is a somewhat startling state of things.'[257]

By 1893 the Advertiser and other Tory voices had joined Mill in bewailing the, 'tyranny of majorities', majorities which the latter, despite his consideration of PR in Party terms, clearly expected to be working-class ones.[258] Later Radicals rallied to the cause nationally, but unsurprisingly for other reasons. Bradlaugh was a supporter from 1863 and if he was unlikely to have feared the working-classes that was definitely not the motivation of the Northumberland miners reputably won over by Albert Grey in 1884![259] When Professor Hare organized his Representative

Reform Association (RRA) it included intellectual Radicals, such as Fawcett and Courtney, but also Edmond Beales and two leading "labour" politicians, Odger and Howell.[260] However, when the PRS replaced the RRA in 1884 the campaign once more came firmly under the control of intellectuals, whose radicalism was counter-balanced by their desire to retain a "learned" Parliament, hence their sometimes equivocal attitude towards "uneducated" working-class members![261]

As a result, less cerebral Radicals tended to look to Chamberlain and Bright for leadership, rather than to the PRS, and while the latter group could claim the support of 190 MPs at its height, just seventy-three of them were Liberals, and only seventeen were Irish.[262] With the Compact signed in 1885, and a Party politics developing which did not touch upon PR, support collapsed, especially among Whigs and Tories, leaving just thirty-one MPs to follow Lubbock through his lobby.[263] When the organization was later resuscitated it is revealing that that process was led by that most interested of parties, the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union.[264]

If most Radicals could not support PR, due to its reactionary overtones, some could consider French-style second ballots, a crude form of the Alternative Transferable Vote. That proposal particularly appealed to the "left" since it allowed their vote to be temporarily split along Whig/Radical or Liberal/Labour lines without handing the constituency involved over to the Conservatives. Hence, the second ballot received the endorsement of Engels, the Scottish Labour Party and the NDL, while most importantly, despite its leaders' opposition of only three years earlier,

they also appeared in the NLF's Derby Programme of 1897.[265]

If certain MPs looked to PR to represent "educated opinion" there were other irons already in the fire. While Fawcett's late advocacy of an educational fancy franchise made little impact in 1867,[266] MPs found it much easier to support the extant University seats. Their survival, representing an intellectual "elite" rather than the common herd, was of course an affront to democrats and, for the same reasons, attractive to many Tories and Whigs. When, in 1884, the University seats were seriously threatened for the first time, Salisbury defended them precisely because they were undemocratic, a defence lauded by Hardy as a stand against, 'pure mob rule.'[267] Salisbury was aided, and the University constituencies saved, by Gladstone's, later regretted, innate Conservatism.[268] The split in Liberal opinion upon this subject, which divided Bright and Ripon in 1858, was not to continue beyond 1885 as the Liberal Party followed Bryce and Dilke into fierce opposition to the representation of the Universities.[269]

This particular subject was, naturally, of great interest to both Durham City and Cambridge. In Durham City the issue was the representation of Durham University, after 1868 the sole British University remaining outside of the electoral pale. The Durham County Advertiser, supporting both Mowbray and Vane Tempest, declared for the University's enfranchisement as early as 1853 and roused its academics into petitioning both Houses of Parliament.[270] The "campaign", however, was not to reappear until 1860, and even

then only via anonymous letters to the County Advertiser.[271] Great excitement only returned in 1866 - 1868, when the University almost succeeded in being "grouped" with London University and Durham MPs were effectively forced to show their allegiance to enfranchisement proposals! Mowbray, of course, supported the University but he was joined by such Liberals as Ingham and Williamson, the latter presumably fired by regional passion.[272] Davison, as a Durham City MP and Durham University graduate, was pressured into openly endorsing enfranchisement by the County Advertiser's claim that he did not![273] If that did not necessarily prove that local feeling was in favour of the University's enfranchisement, that situation was proved by the Durham Chronicle's assertion that, if the University was not yet ready for a MP, it would be by the time of the next Reform Bill.[274] With supreme irony, the County Advertiser ascribed the defeat of efforts to enfranchise Durham University to Lowe's "reactionary" party![275]

When the issue reappeared, in 1879, it was shorn of its previous apparent all-party support. The Durham University Association's efforts were to gain the support of only the County Advertiser and one of its columnists, "Curfew".[276] The Durham Chronicle never opposed University representation as such, but its opinion was perhaps revealed by its wry comment upon the proposed enfranchisement of undergraduates in 1885 : 'There is no reason why he should not be educated up to the political ideals with which the agricultural labourer is already familiar.'[277]

Edward Ball would undoubtedly have endorsed the

enfranchisement of Durham University. In 1854 he declared that, 'the representation of the country could not be better advanced than by conferring the franchise upon the educational portion of the community.'[278] That was, in general, to remain the attitude of Cambridgeshire Conservatives. The Cambridge Chronicle spoke for them : 'It is important to insist, in presence of the democratizing tendencies of the age, that our seats of learning and the men of culture sent from them but not severing every tie which unites them should be directly represented in Parliament.'[279] Giffard was scornful of the Newcastle Programme of the NLF and his comments touched upon the issue of University representation : 'First they [the Liberals] must disenfranchise their Universities, their learned professions, and then those who had property in more places than one, and so on, and then they must enfranchise them in the order of their vagrancy and nomadic habits.'[280]

Cambridgeshire Liberals, who had long suffered from University pressure, were unforgiving and it is only surprising that they did not condemn the continuation of University representation prior to 1883. Once it did so, however, the Independent Press was blunt, calling the University seats, 'a vehicle for the expression of the narrowest bigotry and the most retrograde notions which the present generation can produce.'[281] The paper's section for varsity readers, the "University Herald", printed in 1884 a series of articles written by some of the few prominent University figures who were also declared Liberals. The first, anonymously, defended the University seats, though it

urged their semi-disenfranchisement where two MPs were being returned. The writer felt that, 'the Universities ought to be able to supply the elements of culture and broadness of view that would be needed to temper the vigorous indication and decision of purpose we may look for from the representatives of the householders.'[282] The two articles which followed, by A.J.Tillyard and Oscar Browning, both flatly demanded the total abolition of the University seats, Tillyard claiming that academia, since it governed itself, had no need for MPs and that, since it also returned inferior representatives to those elected via household suffrage, it did not deserve them either![283] Browning merely pointed out that University members were effectively members for the clergy, a fact which left them, as representative government strengthened, 'anomalous and indefensible.'[284]

J.A.B.Bruce, the Secretary of the Eighty Club, visiting the Cambridge area, appealed to local pride in 1892 declaring that, 'He did not think that his audience would consider the University voters were so vastly superior to the voters of Royston, the town of Cambridge, or any other place.'[285] The visiting T.P.O'Connor, and the resident Hoare, both agreed,[286] but the University seats were to survive beyond the Second World War and, writing in 1930, one ex-politician was to sternly endorse the University seats, since they returned outstanding MPs, and scorned, 'those who would sacrifice what is really important for the sake of something so utterly useless as what they would call 'democratic consistency''.[287]

University votes were, of course, merely one of the

means whereby an individual could cast several ballots during the course of a general election. That plurality of votes for certain individuals became a major democratic issue after 1885. The status quo was essentially anti-democratic, since it deliberately afforded undue weight to the opinions of the propertied classes. However, the probable cause of attacks upon the plural vote lay in its obvious tendency to inflate the Tory vote. Once the household franchise had been extended throughout Britain Liberal attention had little choice but to attempt to purge it of plural votes. The issue was important, as was illustrated by the fact that there was a total of 500,000 plural votes in 1911, out of a total of only 8,000,000 registered overall.[288]

John Stuart Mill, in his steady movement away from pure democracy, came to adopt plural voting in 1859 and via an argument blatant in its elitism. Within the year, having no doubt received feed-back upon his article, "Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform", Mill qualified his position by warning that plurals should never be allowed to outweigh the opinions of the rest of the community.[289] If Mill thus retained a measure of democratic feeling, other politicians were rather less squeamish.

Such uncompromising support, unsurprisingly, came overwhelmingly from Tories. Symbolic was the comment of Sir Frederick Bunbury in 1913 : 'plural voting is a very good thing, and has only one fault - there is not enough of it.'[290] Salisbury's vision of the nation as a "joint-stock company" provided an ideological basis for plurals, since a shareholder's voice in such a company was weighted according

to his investment in it. Strangely, only one local Conservative, Herbert in Huntingdonshire, was to pick up upon that point, though the Durham County Advertiser, while preferring to quote Mill, did note the use of plural voting in the running of Co-operative Societies.[291]

Other Conservatives preferred to utilize different arguments. Montagu twice spoke in defence of plurals in the Commons and defended his opinion thus, 'By a plurality of votes adequate representation could be given to all social influences, to all the weights and elements of power in society.' By contrast, all other, 'theories of representation', were, 'inadequate and indefensible.'[292] The earlier part of the period under study was however perhaps more notable for the uncertainty which it revealed among the local Tory press on this issue. The Durham County Advertiser was happy to claim Tory credit for the abandonment of the proposed dual vote in 1867 while, more importantly, the Cambridge Chronicle, expecting plural votes to form part of a Liberal Reform Bill, claimed that they, 'of course, would make the extension of the suffrage to the poor a farce.'[293] That opinion was, almost needless to say, not to survive the inclusion of dual votes in the Conservative effort of 1867!

By 1885 such Conservatives as Edward Hicks had no doubts. He based his opposition to the then proposed single-member Boroughs chiefly upon their status as a step along the road to "one man one vote", which the Cambridgeshire MP chastised as, 'the most democratic proposal ever made in that House. It had been contended that every man had a right to a

share in the representation of the country; but there was a great differance (sic) between an equal right to a share and a right to an equal share.' Hicks was so devoted to plural voting that he was even, in an attempt to prove that his sentiments were not Tory, to quote Horne Tooke in their support![294]

Despite such certainty, it is perfectly clear that local Tory opinion shifted in, or around, 1892. Prior to that date Hicks was far from being an isolated figure. Giffard, in 1891, had asked, 'whether one man's vote was as good as the other. Was the vote of an illiterate person, a man who, with hundreds of others, was led by the priests of Ireland, to be twice as good as the vote of the most educated, the most enlightened, and the most experienced man in the City of London?'[295] Other Tories chose to return to the commonest theme in their anti-democratic rhetoric, as Hunter alleged that one man one vote entailed taxation without representation and the Durham County Advertiser termed it, 'a revolutionary effort to annihilate the right of property', a view also expressed by the paper's Cambridge equivalent.[296]

In Gamlingay, rural Cambridgeshire, W.P.Spalding doubted that the agricultural population had much interest in the question of one man one vote, but Smith-Barry feared that his Huntingdonshire constituents would be unable to distinguish between it and universal suffrage.[297] His fear revealed the popularity of the latter even in the back-water which he represented at the Commons, but it also indicated the perspicacity of Smith-Barry, since even several of his fellow

Conservative politicians were to confuse the two issues![298] Perhaps most revealing of the general Tory attitude to one man one vote was the fact that James Lowther, who visited Durham in 1889, was to call the mere suggestion, 'monstrous', four times within very short order![299]

While certain Liberal Unionists held similar views, local examples being Havelock-Allen and Dr. Cooper,[300] most Unionists shifted from that bleakly negative position into support for the alternative nostrum of "one vote one value". They were, of course, hoping to end the numerical representation of their Irish enemies and the numerical under-representation of their suburban strongholds, a situation which had been exacerbated by Gladstone's so-called principle of "centrifugal representation". Milvain, Lord Londonderry and the local Tory press remained supportive of plural voting, but they were out-numbered.[301] Corbett represented the Unionist politicians of Cambridgeshire and County Durham when he said, 'each voter should have one vote (applause) and...they should carry it a little further, and make the constituencies a little more equal.'[302] Wilkinson, Lambton and Toulson, the Liberal Unionist agent for the Northern part of County Durham, all endorsed one man one vote, so long as it was accompanied by one vote one value,[303] and that tactic was not limited to the North. In Cambridgeshire, Carbery Evans declared that, 'the vote of a rich man in West Cambridgeshire ought to have no more weight than a poor man's vote', and that democratic view was echoed by the grass-roots Unionists of Haslingfield, as well as by another local Conservative MP, Raymond Greene.[304]

That change in Unionist tactics may have reflected an increase in democratic sentiment in the nation, but other factors were also involved. Firstly, of course, there were partizan ones. Apart from the advantages to the Unionist cause of a more equitable registration, the new policy could also attract moderate Liberals, such as Hamilton,[305] who could not have supported the increasingly anachronistic plural votes. It also allowed Radical Unionists, and especially their leader, to maintain a consistent and democratic policy on the issue, though it might be noted that the bounds of consistency did not prove strong enough to hold Chamberlain on the issue of the House of Lords! In 1885, Chamberlain had allowed no doubt as to his fundamental opposition to plural votes, and in 1891 he could still claim not to have shifted from that position, and indeed to have augmented it in a thoroughly democratic manner![306]

Nationally, Radical interest in the abolition of plural voting had to wait until County household suffrage had been won in 1884. Unsurprisingly, the efforts of Dilke and Chamberlain in Cabinet were in 1884 to be thwarted by Gladstone's residual conservatism, and then doomed by Liberal back-benchers' disinclination to stand against the will of their leader.[307] By the time that McLaren's motion, to introduce one man one vote, came to a division in 1884 only forty-three MPs were prepared to endorse it.[308]

Whatever was the cause of such apathy nationally, local Liberals had shown signs of opposition to plural voting prior to 1883. Though the Sunderland Herald had strongly supported the existence of plural votes,[309] the Liberal press

in both Cambridge and Durham City felt motivated to critically consider the situation by Disraeli's attempt to secure dual voting in 1867.[310] One Cambridge Liberal, Swann Hurrell, felt motivated to write to both of his town's newspapers in order to urge the removal of all fancy franchises but it was left to J.W.Pease, surely the least likely of the Durham Liberal MPs, to first propose the abolition of all plural votes, in 1868.[311] While such indications were few and far between, they did suggest the potential of Liberal support for one man one vote long before the Radical spotlight was turned upon the issue.

In 1884-1885, however, Liberal attention, nationally as well as locally, was quite definitely elsewhere. Franchise assimilation, and then the struggle against the Lords, took clear precedence. Liberal references to one man one vote were few and far between and the local papers' editorial columns remained silent upon the issue. However, while only one of the many Durham miners' meetings in 1873-1874 was to mention the issue, their leaders, including Wilson and Jonathan Bell, were strongly in favour of one man one vote.[312] The same was true of their favourite spokesmen, Cowen and Bradlaugh,[313] but indicative of the need for a national lead was the fact that only two local MPs declared for the abolition of plural votes prior to 1886.[314]

After 1885, and especially after 1886, Liberal opinion moved in a landslide in favour of the proposal. Gladstone included it in his Limehouse Programme of 1888 while, on a less exalted plain, MPs such as Fowler moved from mere support in principle to more concrete endorsement.[315] A

roll-call of the Liberal leadership came to align itself behind one man one vote, which the NLF endorsed in its Newcastle Programme and the Liberal Ministry was to include in its Queen's Speech of 1894.[316]

Locally, the story was similar. Once the principle of plural voting came under inspection MPs flocked to declare their opposition to it, and they were joined in doing so by the DCFPRA, the Durham Chronicle and Dr. Spence Watson.[317] Certain Liberals chose to look to the past, and while Wilson might have been expected to recall the "Six Points", an extraordinary comment of Hoare is worthy of note : 'The Liberals claimed to be the descendants of the old Chartists, and one of the principles of the Chartist programme was equal electoral districts.'[318] His words illustrated just how far opinion had moved since the Chartists had themselves strode the political stage. Wilson also attempted to lay the ghost of Mill's support for plural votes by pointing out that the latter's plurals would have been intellectually, rather than property, based. Wilson also, probably unconsciously, echoed his old enemy Wharton's warning that one man one vote would lead to Durham City's incorporation into his own constituency of Mid-Durham![319]

Fowler, in Durham City, was not thus inclined to look backwards. Instead he revelled in the confidence which the dawning of a democratic age gave him. He bluntly stated, in 1895, that support for plurals was, 'at this time of the day perfectly out of the question.'[320] Newnes appealed to local sentiment against the influence of "outsiders" with plural votes,[321] but more usually expressed sentiments were

partizan ones, fuelled by the belief that either the local, or the national, polls would have turned another way had every man's views carried equal weight.[322] Perhaps strangely the most powerful argument came from an American visitor, Stuyvesant Chandler, speaking in Stapleford : 'As long as flesh and blood were elected to represent flesh and blood, so long flesh and blood, not bricks and mortar, land or wealth, should be the qualification for voting.'[323]

Issues such as one man one vote were relatively minor, in comparison with the other political controversies which arose during the second half of the nineteenth century. However, each was essential to the establishment of a genuinely democratic political system. The very fact that such relatively minor matters were being addressed by the end of the century was clear evidence of the progress made upon larger constitutional issues during the preceding years.

Table 1

Parliamentary Divisions on Minor Reform Issues -

Subject	Year	MPs Voting in Support	Total Number of Votes Cast
Triennial Parliaments	1858	57	311
	1875	11	79
Quinquennial Parliaments	1880	60	170
Payment of Electoral Expenses	1867	142	370
	1871	160	416
	1872	169	430
	1882	107	143
	1885	98	165
	1894	166	205
Limitation of Election Expenses	1872	82	431
Payment of MPs	1870	24	235
	1888	135	327
	1892	162	389
	1893	276	505
	1895	176	334
	1906	363	473
Cumulative Voting	1867	173	487
Minority Clause	1867	253	457
Single Transferable Vote	1872	26	180
	1881	40	142
	1882	137	329
	1884	31	165
Abolish University Representation	1884	79	339
Oppose the Barring of Bradlaugh	1880	289	503
	1881	175	383
	1882	228	514
	1883	165	436
	1884	167	447
Allow Bradlaugh to Affirm	1882	242	499
	1888	172	338

Subject	Year	MPs Voting in Support	Total Number of Votes Cast
Affirmation	1883	292	581
	1884	219	482
	1888	250	400
One Man One Vote	1884	43	278
	1891	291	480
	1892	196	439
	1899	88	276
	1905	120	311
	1906	403	498
One Man One Value	1892	237	426
	1906	95	498

Table 2

Votes on Minor Reform Issues of Cambridgeshire and County Durham MPs -

MP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
R.Young	A	A	A										
H.B.W.Brand				X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Lord G.Manners	F	X	F										
Viscount Royston	F	A	F										
F.S.Powell	X	A	A										
W.Fowler				F	F	F	F	F	F				
E.Fellowes	F	X	F										
Lord R.Montagu	F	A	F										
J.E.Gorst	F	F	F										
T.Baring	X	X	F										
J.Peel	X	F	F										
Sir H.Williamson	X	F	A										
R.D.Shafto	X	A	X										
J.Hartley	F	A	F										
J.Candlish	F	A	A										
Sir J.Pease	F	A	A	F	F	X	F	A	X	X	F	X	X
C.F.Surtees	F	A	F										
J.Henderson	F	A	A										
J.R.Mowbray	F	A	F										
Sir W.Hutt	X	F	A										
R.Ingham	F	X	X										
B.B.H.Rodwell				A	A								
E.Hicks				A	A	A	A	A	A	F			
H.Shield				F	F	F	F	F	F	X			
W.H.Fellowes				A	A	A	A	A	A	X			
Lord D.Gordon				X	X	F	F	X	X	X			
Lord Hinchingbrook				A	X	A	A	A	A	X			
John Joicey				F	X								
Sir C.Palmer				F	X	F	F	F	X	X	F	X	X
Sir E.Gourley				F	F	F	F	F	F	A	F	A	F
Sir H.Havelock-Allen				F	X								
Hon. F.W.Lambton				F	F	X	F	F	X	X			
T.C.Thompson				F	F	F	F	X	F	A			
F.Herschell				F	F	F	F	F	F	X			
Sir T.Fry				F	F	F	F	X	F	X	X	A	
T.Richardson (i)				F	F	F	F	F	F	X	F	A	
J.Dodds				F	X	F	F	F	X	X	F	X	
W.H.James				F	F	F	F	F	F	X	F	X	
J.C.Stevenson				F	X	F	F	F	F	X	X	X	
S.Storey						X	F	F	F	X	X	X	
J.R.Bulwer						A	A	A	X	X			
Sir G.Elliot						X	A	A	X	X			
C.W.Selwyn											F	X	
C.Hall											A	X	
G.Newnes											F	X	
R.U.P.Fitzgerald											A	A	A
A.H.Smith-Barry											X	X	A
N.Wood											F	A	

MP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
James Joicey											X	F	F
L.A.Atherley-Jones											X	X	X
W.Crawford											F	A	
T.Milvain											X	X	
J.M.Paulton											F	X	X
A.E.Fellowes											X	X	X
C.T.Giles													A
W.R.Greene													X
H.L.B.McCalmont													X
W.Allan													F
W.S.Robson													X
R.Cameron													F
J.Wilson													F
W.T.Doxford													X
A.Pease													X
T.Richardson (ii)													X
J.Samuel													X
Hon. A.R.D.Elliot													X
J.Richardson													X

KEY : F - Voted in Favour. A - Voted Against
X - Abstained.
▒ - MP was not then in Parliament for a local seat.

1 - Division on the Enfranchisement of Durham University (1867).
2 - Division on Cumulative Voting (1867).
3 - Division on the Minority Clause (1867).
4 - Division on whether to allow Bradlaugh to take the Oath (1880).
5 - Division on whether to allow Bradlaugh to take the Oath (1881).
6 - Division on whether to allow Bradlaugh to take the Oath (1882).
7 - Division on Affirmation (1883).
8 - Division on whether to allow Bradlaugh to take the Oath (1883).
9 - Division on whether to allow Bradlaugh to take the Oath (1884).
10 - Division on the Single Transferable Vote (1884).
11 - Division on Affirmation (1888).
12 - Division on whether to allow atheists to affirm (1888).
13 - Division on "one man one vote" (1899).

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Chapter 12 - Conclusion

The development of democracy as a political ideal during the latter part of the nineteenth century was clearly an immensely complex process spanning a variety of inter-connected, but distinct, issues, each of which had their own regional and class implications. However, perhaps the Counties studied during the course of this thesis can provide certain indications as to the nature of these events.

Perhaps most important is the relationship between the political parties concerned. Clearly, there was a considerable overlap in opinion concerning democracy. Neither the Liberal Goschen nor the Positivist Radicals ever displayed the faith in a democratic parliamentary system which Gorst did during the latter part of his career. However, despite such complexities, the local press, on every issue, suggests a clear distinction between local Liberal and Conservative opinion with the former in the more progressive position. The distinction was perhaps more stark than at Westminster where, on an occasion such as 1867, the Conservatives could leave the Liberal leadership occupying embarrassingly moderate positions.

Radicals were usually, almost by definition, ahead of Liberals concerning this issue but the influence which they could exert upon the centres of power was questionable. At Westminster, despite their repeated attempts to organize, Radical MPs essentially operated as a collection of individuals. As such, they could play a key role by either

maintaining the political profile of a minority-interest issue, as with Berkeley and the ballot or Trevelyan and county household suffrage, or, as was the case with Hodgkinson, they could play a vital role in larger and more complex circumstances though whether consciously or not would be a matter of dispute.

Outside of Saint Stephens Radicals operated in the Reform field via pressure groups but the latter organizations required vast support merely to survive, let alone to influence the national political agenda. Individual groups could increase knowledge of a Reform proposal, like the Ballot Society, or perform more concrete work, an example being the battle of the North-Eastern miners in support of their Morpeth brethren's efforts to secure the votes which they considered they had been granted by the 1867 Act.[1] However, to add any weight to the cause of Reform Radicals required national organization and demonstrations of hundreds of thousands. Even the best organized of local groups, as the Northern Reform Union showed, could do little to influence the London leadership. Only the excitement and frustration of such periods as 1866-1867 and 1884 could produce sufficient crowds to do that.

The growth in democratic sentiment, like most other political developments, had its basis in events at Westminster. 1867 was perhaps the best example of Reform being kick-started by events in the Commons with little input from local political figures. However, the process of democratization was clearly too extended, complicated and atomized to have been specifically, or centrally, organized.

Indeed, in the localities studied there were no examples of the exercise of discipline by national political leaderships against either local parliamentarians or local party organizations. The local press tended to follow the lead of their party's national leadership, a fact ascribable to both partizan sentiment and the necessity of almost immediately responding to the course of events, but was not beyond floating its own schemes. That was shown by the Cambridge Independent Press's ballotless ballot and the pre-1867 franchise suggestions of the Sunderland Herald.

Individual local MPs increasingly, during the period studied, tended to follow the party line in the lobbies of the Commons. However, they continued to express a wide variety of views when left to comment for themselves and most were ever anxious to declare their independence of thought and action. Indeed that was the situation generally, though localities steadily increased their pressure upon their supposed representatives. From Lindsay in 1859 to the gradual spread of the annual report meeting, and against the constant unfolding of elections, MPs were steadily forced to take better account of the opinions of their local party committees, and even of those of their constituents! Indeed it might be said that in the process of the development of democracy as a political ideal the electorate were the only coercive, as opposed to persuasive, force. Beaumont was certainly one MP who was felt to have suffered the vengeance of the Reform-minded Durham voters.

Generally the Boroughs proved more progressive than the Counties, possibly due to their concentration of

population and better development of political parties and institutions. Cambridge Borough, though perhaps moderate by any national standard, clearly shone like a beacon of radicalism against its Tory hinterland of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire! The situation further North was initially similar, with democratic sentiment concentrated in the Boroughs of Northern County Durham, but was always complicated by the existence of the Durham pitmen. Initially courtesy of Cowen's efforts, and later via their own organizations, the miners of County Durham were to form a consistent radical back-bone in the County seats of Durham.

The northern county was certainly more radical than Cambridgeshire, presumably due to its more industrial nature and its relatively remote location from London, a fact which was reflected in the relative positions of both the Liberal and Conservative parties in the two counties. County Durham expressed its radicalism via a succession of means. First was the general Northern Liberal support for Lord Durham, then the efforts of Cowen among the working-class, and finally the political activities of the Durham Miners' Association which were ever more closely meshed with those of the local Liberals. The result of this constant radical presence was, especially after 1868, a political atmosphere in the North-East which even the local Conservatives, let alone the Liberals, could not afford to ignore.

Whatever the local factors at work and the complications of the various issues involved there can be little doubt that the democratic ideal made clear progress

between 1850 and 1900. However, that was far from an uniform movement as was shown by the, admittedly nostalgia-laden, complaints of Chartist leaders after 1850.[2] Frost may have believed that 1856 Chartism was more, 'calm, thoughtful [and] reasoning', than its 1839 equivalent[3] but most other witnesses merely considered it weaker and smaller! Radical MPs were also uncertain democrats, with various among their number moving in different directions over the period. Roebuck, whose description of himself as a "democrat" in 1837 had alienated even his fellow Radicals, was driven against his initial inclination by the American Civil War[4] but, conversely, Cobden who had opposed universal suffrage through fear of his fellow-citizens came to support democracy as a social cement.[5] Sturge may have been propelled into democracy by his Christian beliefs but the same was not true of his equally religious and Radical biographer of twenty years later.[6] Democratic feeling was also clearly not to be assumed at the grass-roots since, from T.P.Thompson at Hull in 1836 to an American Ambassador in Birmingham fifty years later, democratic speakers remained well aware of the need to justify their beliefs.[7]

Even among Liberal politicians, until at least the eighteen-nineties, the tendency remained to follow Burke's nostrum that property should rule,[8] to fear working-class power,[9] and to vigorously inspect all Reform proposals for democratic tendencies.[10] Talk was of 'wild democracy'[11] and, if Aberdeen did not fear it,[12] most Liberal and Whig figures agreed with Palmerston that, 'Power in the Hands of the Masses throws the Scum of the Community to the Surface'![13] Men like

Palmerston, knowing that direct democracy was impossible, reasoned that the, 'Selected few', should vote for the rest[14] and the, 'English Constitution of mixed elements', became the defence of the English middle-classes against both, 'the heel of the military despot...[and] the brutality of the mob.' Hence, Pemberton, the Sunderland Conservative, described Parliament in January 1867 as the, 'palladium of our liberties'.[15] Even some, like Mill, who endorsed democracy in principle could not do so in fact.[16]

Goderich was willing to term himself a, 'Democrat' but the same was not true of older Radicals such as Mrs Grote.[17] That fact was perhaps unsurprising considering the attitude of one eighteen-fifties Whiggish Northumberland lady to her local democratic gentleman : 'the lessons in democracy he...learnt at his father's knee made an ineffaceable impression, for he was leading the life of a day labourer wearing workman's clothes, with seldom a hat on his head, and altogether as odd an object to set eyes on as could well be seen. He had all clocks put on an hour to ensure that the household was really up at four, even though they thought it five. Like to himself, his children wore neither shoes nor stockings, and he also hardened them by taking them out on the lake in a boat, chucking them into the water one by one, and leaving them to swim to shore.'[18]

As late as 1867 Whigs, via their organ the Edinburgh Review, could not conceive of Liberals supporting a democratic doctrine.[19] However, progress was being made. Gladstone's old cautious stance was replaced even before the 1867 Act by a willingness to at least consider democracy,

though the 'ultra-democracy' of Disraeli's proposed referenda remained beyond the pale.[20]

Local Liberals were, initially, no more enthusiastic. Hutt felt democracy dangerous in, 'periods of Excitement', while the Cambridge Independent Press was far from alone in 1866 in urging that education precede enfranchisement among the working classes.[21] Democrats were scorned as knowing, 'much of books, but little about the ways of men, and less about the ways of women,' a fear of abstract theory which was to recur in the mind of as prominent a Liberal as Bryce as late as 1892.[22] The Sunderland Herald and Goschen joined their hero Lowe in fearing that the workers would endanger Political Economy.[23] 'Vox diaboli' was the nearest Lowe could come to describing the democratic process.[24] The Sunderland Herald, serving a local Whiggish community which tended to bracket democrats with anarchists, was perfectly placed to denounce democracy, which was to say working-class rule, as the route to Protectionism, war, direct taxation and regulation of labour.[25]

Disraeli had spoken in similar terms in 1859, and if one ultra-Tory's fear of manhood suffrage was eased by the election of Napoleon III in France[26] the same was not true of his party's leaders.[27] Each prominent Tory's denunciation of democracy only seemed to be "trumped" by the next. Hence, while George Smyth declared democracy the route to tyranny,[28] Cranborne repeatedly declared that he positively preferred the latter![29] Ellenborough feared a new electorate inferior in both property and education, fore-shadowing Lindsay's frustration concerning the "fads" of the working-class

voters he came across in the North-West in 1892.[30] Stanley feared "big government" as a consequence of, 'modern democracy', while Salisbury, who considered Government's role merely to be the preservation of order, felt that foreign experience proved that democracy, especially in the British conditions of permanent class war, could only destroy the rule of law. Either way, what Conservatives feared was the threat of redistribution of property.[31]

Local Tories were no different. The Cambridge Chronicle, ironically in 1867, warned of their being crushed by democracy while the Durham County Advertiser warned it would abolish public freedom, as well as the Monarchy and the House of Lords.[32] The latter paper's proprietors considered that democracy comprised, 'replacing gentlemen in Government with their inferiors', and warned that by undermining the stability of national institutions it would destroy national prosperity, as well as instituting both, 'universal anarchy' and 'intolerable despotism'![33] Among locally based Tory MPs, Fellowes spoke of a, 'violent democratic tendency',[34] and Montagu of, 'the wild theories of visionary enthusiasts',[35] while Powell accepted foreign evidence that democracy was the route to despotism and war.[36] As late as 1868 both Lord Royston and the proprietor of the Cambridge Chronicle continued to refer to the Liberals as, 'the party of democracy', hence stressing their own opposition to that creed.[37]

Holyoake, speaking in Birmingham, knew the ground which democracy had to make up in the mainstream parties - 'A Democracy is a great trouble. The Conservative is enraged to

have this necessity put upon him, the Whigs never meant it to come to this; and I am not sure that many of the Radicals like it.'[38] - In these days, in Counties Durham and Cambridgeshire, only the members of the Northern Reform Union were inclined to call themselves democrats and even twenty seven years after the hey-day of his group Cowen knew well the problems involved : 'Whenever a man proclaims himself a democrat, the phantom of 1798 rises before Englishmen. Their conception of democracy has not got beyond the guillotine, surmounted with the red cap (laughter).'[39]

Smith suggests that the passage of the 1867 Act, and hence the first step towards democracy, was eased by the development among the ruling classes of a fundamental faith in the strength and stability of the British class system. The fears of Salisbury that such a process might be under way are not the least tangible evidence that such a prognosis is correct.[40] However, belief in the stability of the social structure and the malleability of the working classes seem to have been somewhat restricted prior to the passage of the 1867 Act. Local sources certainly show little evidence of it. The only local declarations of faith in the strength of the social structure came from men like Henderson, and Gregson of the City of Durham Reform Association, both of whom were already advocates of considerable Reform.[41] Among local Conservatives, prior to the complacent words of the national leadership,[42] only Lord Royston expressed any degree of faith in the people.[43]

Only after the passage of the 1867 Act did local Tories discover their faith in the essential conservatism of

the masses, presumably doing so in order to excuse the unexpectedly radical nature of their Party's Reform concession. It is perhaps telling that while the Durham County Advertiser and "Talk of the Week", writing in the Cambridge Chronicle, expressed such optimism they did so on only one occasion![44]

Queen Victoria may have become convinced that the greatest threat to the established order came from the 'Higher Classes' but there is plenty of evidence to suggest that her opinion was not unanimously shared.[45] Three authors, of wildly varying politics, were not impressed. Ruskin came to feel enfranchisement had gone too far, Carlyle felt it the route to the, 'bottomless pit', and Trollope argued democracy was an insane concept linked to 'communism' and 'ruin'.[46] Disraeli's sterling 1867 efforts to claim that his Bill contained, 'no spice of democracy', revealed his estimate of the opinion of the average MP. Certainly, Hardy and Lord Eustace Cecil would have no truck with democracy[47] and the word "Democrat" remained an insult in political circles until at least as late as 1880.[48] Rosebery's attempt to equate democracy with Christianity was to arouse much ire among his 1884 listeners, as well as his 1906 biographer![49]

From a local viewpoint the Rev. Burdon, of Castle Eden, shared with Lord Pembroke a fear of a democratic assault on property spear-headed by the nationalization of land.[50] Montagu shared Mill's belief in the representation of all classes but also his fear of electoral dictatorship by any one class and despite Montagu's claims to oppose Mill's, 'principle of democracy', the similarity of their thinking

on this issue was obvious.[51] The sentiment was not restricted to Conservatives. Among local Liberals, Torrens remained quite determined that he should not be felt to be supporting universal suffrage and, as late as 1884, a local Spennymoor Liberal Committee was to laud Gladstone as the man who kept back the, 'surging wave of democracy.'[52]

The end of the nineteenth-century did not also see an end to the flow of Conservative writers ready to bemoan the onset of democracy. The J.M.Dent series of Prime Ministerial biographies, published in 1905-1906, provided an excellent opportunity for three of them to comment. Traill regretted the passage of the nation's destiny into, 'the hands of ignorance and caprice', and denounced the Conservative part in establishing, 'the doctrine that right and wrong should be what the constituencies upon consultation shall declare them to be; that the path of duties lies only and always in the direction in which 'the cat jumps', that the sole canon of justice is the 'length of the foot' on Demos.'[53] Froude and Saintsbury both wrote in a similar spirit.[54]

Such sentiments were not restricted to J.M.Dent's biographers. Holland, the biographer of Hartington, claimed in 1911 that franchise extension had, 'diminished the influence of finer reasoning.'[55] In 1916 Disraeli's biographer, Buckle, continued to believe that household suffrage was 'permanent' while Bleackley, in 1917, astonishingly claimed Germany and Japan as proof that representative government was not necessarily the best form of government.[56] Sir Arthur Hardinge, writing fifty-eight years after the events of 1867, continued to regret that, 'the

opportunity of providing safeguards...was thrown away by impetuous and careless leaders', while, 'democratic consistency', remained, 'utterly useless', in the opinion of Hopkinson in 1930.[57] As late as 1984 John Doxat was to declare, with all the ire of a paid-up member of the intelligentsia : 'Its only in recent times that democracy became a respectable word. Has not some of the rot in democracy set in with universal suffrage? At eighteen, any half-baked yob has the same vote as I have.'[58]

Perhaps more relevant than any faith in the masses was the fatalism which was the response of much of the establishment to the advance of democracy. It had dated back to Radicals such as John Stuart Mill in the eighteen-thirties while Roebuck, in 1848, asserted that it was, 'useless to kick against the pricks.'[59] The re-emergence of Reform in the eighteen-fifties caused a belief in the inevitable rise of democracy to spread even among such mainstream political figures as Graham and Derby, though the latter continued to pledge to fight it to the bitter end.[60] Later, Gladstone and Rosebery were to become similarly convinced of democracy's inevitability.[61] At the 1868 election in Gateshead the Radical Arbuthnot encapsulated a sentiment which may have echoed in many establishment quarters : 'He was the wisest statesman who endeavoured to guide rather than restrain the tendency towards democracy.'[62] Harriet Beecher Stowe, in 1870, said much the same from a more mainstream, and hence regretful, position.[63]

After the passage of the 1867 Act, and especially after the distinctly unrevolutionary general election of

1868, the issue must have seemed somewhat superfluous. Moreover, the election did, inevitably, allow the entrance into the Commons of a number of new young Radicals who shared a lack of fear of the working-classes and hence also of democracy.[64] However, perhaps more important than their efforts was the prevailing sentiment among the political classes which caused Bagehot to reason that British politics had become the play-thing of public opinion.[65] Whigs like Harcourt may have continued to dread democracy[66] but they ceased to attempt the impossible task of blocking it.

Only in 1885, when Reform again required to be eased through, did democracy cease to be merely academic.[67] The issue's lack of political sting by 1885 was illustrated by the Durham Chronicle's comment upon the proposed enfranchisement of undergraduates : 'There is no reason why he should not be educated up to the political ideas with which the agricultural labourer is already familiar.'[68]

Despite the contrary opinions expressed above, the argument for the democratic ideal seems to have essentially been won prior to such comments. In 1884 Labouchere was quite open in his democratic sentiment[69] and for once the maverick Radical was not entirely isolated. H.H.Fowler turned to democracy and upon much the same grounds as had Cobden thirty years earlier - that a nation had to be allowed to make its own mistakes.[70] In 1882 Albert Grey, the scion of the notorious Whiggish clan, was taking his stand upon, 'the principles of a pure democracy.'[71] While in 1872 Bruce had scornfully denounced, 'Bradlaugh and his immediate friends', as, 'the English democrats', in 1872, within thirteen years

the ideologically similar Lord Acton was looking to Gladstone to smooth the transition to democracy, rather than to oppose it.[72] After 1877 Chamberlain ceased to use "democracy" in its old sense, as synonymous with "the people", though in County Durham John Wilson, undoubtedly a true democrat, continued to do so.[73]

Conservatives were also far from immune. Salisbury, who had once so fiercely denounced the populous, came to accept the sovereignty of the people by 1880[74] so it is unsurprising that such as Randolph Churchill also did so![75] Most Unionists may not have perfected their democratic feelings to the degree of Gorst, or even Balfour, but by 1892 the Durham Liberal Unionist Lambton denied any idea that the 'democracy' was, 'void of honour and of common sense'.[76] One assumes that the cause of such a generous estimation was his agreement with Harcourt that, 'each extension of popular right has only strengthened the Monarchy and increased the confidence of the people (Cheers).'[77] Far-sighted political figures had realized that the potentially unpredictable "lower orders"
were safer inside the constitutional system than outside of it.[78] Crossley was almost certainly not alone in his belief that a non-political worker would be an industrially militant one.[79]

Bradlaugh and Parnell were ready to become Vice-Presidents of an organization entitled the Democratic League of Great Britain and Ireland but they, like the supportive Northampton Liberals, remained the ultra-Radical wing of United Kingdom parliamentary politics.[80] Edinburgh

Liberalism was to tear itself apart over the issue of democracy in 1885, an event which proved that a minority anti-democratic faction remained in the Liberal Party, at least in the old Whig capital.[81]

County Durham was perhaps richer than most parts of the country in men and women ready to call themselves democrats throughout the period under study. By 1890, among the pitmen of Mid-Durham, Burt and Atherley-Jones both felt it sufficient as a recommendation of Wilson that they should call him, 'a radical and a democrat', and the electorate did not disappoint them![82] Wilson, himself, continued to speak for a, 'democratic nation', in the process advocating a reduction in the constitutional powers of the monarchy.[83] His words were not alone as a straw in the wind for the supporters of independent labour representation in Newcastle-upon-Tyne organized as a "Democratic Club" in 1885 and the regional journal of the Independent Labour Party, founded in 1906, was entitled The Northern Democrat.[84]

Local press attitudes to the old Chartists were symbolic. Once the favourite bogey-men of the English middle classes the Durham Chronicle was perhaps to reveal how far attitudes had changed by 1888 when its columnist "Young Durham" wrote, as a part of his obituary for Dr Gammage, 'I never met him, but I have known several of the old Chartists, and never met one who was not mentally inches above his fellows, and, as a rule, good for any two of his ordinary opponents.'[85] These might have been kind comments concerning a safely historical phenomena but, twenty-one years earlier, the then very much alive Ernest Jones had attracted much

interest via his Edinburgh debate on the subject of democracy with Professor Blackie. While the Tory Cambridge Chronicle unsurprisingly claimed a clear victory for Blackie, the Durham Chronicle not only reprinted the entire event but also wrote of Jones', 'splendid defence of democracy', in the debate.[86]

It would be wrong, however, to suggest that local sentiment entirely rallied to the cause of democracy. Many local Unionists remained far from convinced. Hence, in 1895 the Durham Tory Councillor Harris denounced the outgoing Liberal Ministry as a 'Radical democratic Government', and as late as 1898 Professor Darwin of Cambridge University continued to hope that Britain might yet not fall into the, 'political slough of despond', which he claimed to have witnessed on a visit to the United States.[87] Dr Hodgkin, as a prominent member of the Durham County Liberal Unionist Association, provided a different slant by warning that the, 'advent to power of the democracy', would create, 'a hostile Irish Republic', on Britain's flank.[88] Interestingly, however, a Peterborough Liberal Unionist, Purvis, visiting the North, approached the issue from the opposite direction when he claimed that he had split from the Gladstonians since he believed that the Union was essential for the foundation of a strong and united democracy![89]

Such conservative fears would no doubt not have been assuaged had the speakers known of Engels' 1842 belief that, 'In England's present condition, "legal progress" and universal suffrage would inevitably result in a revolution.'[90] However, the passage of the same events which

had reassured moderate opinion only served to frustrate Socialists. Hence, while the emerging pre-fascist extreme right adapted itself to the Parliamentary system[91] Socialists often chose not to do so. The Socialist League, anarchists and Socialist Labour Party all boycotted elections and not merely as a tactic since they implicitly rejected the Parliamentary model, believing democracy better achieved via other methods.[92]

Among post-1868 Radicals the Comtists (or Positivists) were unusual in that they positively refuted democracy by espousing an elitism which was identical to that of Lowe, bar the fact that they intended, as an unfortunate necessity, that it should govern via proletarian public opinion.[93] Frederic Harrison, a prominent Comtist, pulled no punches in 1871 : 'Legitimacy of the National Representatives : I deny it all. I refuse to be bound by suffrages. The whole thing is a protest against the lying sham called universal suffrage. The whole theory of the suffrage is only one of the tricks of the bougre...The best men have a right to serve the nation in a crisis...take away the bauble of the ballot box...election or not I deny that suffrage is a test, I deny parliamentary government, I deny the suffrage is the source of right altogether. I fall back on force.'[94]

The initially Comtist-influenced Fabian Society inherited such views of democracy as a, 'pitiful myth'.[95] For the early Fabians, as with the Comtists, elections were merely a means of legitimizing meritocratic government, after which the, 'representatives of the people', would ignore the popular will.[96] The Fabians were only to

unequivocably endorse the parliamentary system in 1886, after their realization that the workers' love of "bourgeois freedom" made it imperative that their Socialism should be based on democracy.[97]

George Bernard Shaw, as parliamentary democracy failed to produce socialism, stressed the necessity for the control of, 'the industrial organisation', if capitalist slavery was not merely to intensify despite all, 'pretensions of freedom and equality...In short, unless the government controls industry, it is useless for the people to control the government.'[98] Syndicalists enjoyed a burst of popularity prior to the First World War but that support was never to effectively transfer to its party political wing, the Socialist Labour Party.[99] Guild Socialists yearned for "functional" Parliaments, while the genuine Soviet system was to acquire some support during the first World War.[100]

Such complaints were not, however, as in the case of the ultra-Tories, indicating opposition to the democratic principle. Instead, they were attempts to discover a more democratic system that that provided by an orthodox electoral system. Linton had denied, in his English Republic, that even a model representative system could be truly democratic and had instead demanded, 'Direct Sovereignty of the People : the whole People making its own laws and governing itself. There is no other Republic : all else is Monarchy of some sort.'[101] His support for direct democracy was ever an unusual position but John Stuart Mill was also dubious of the vote's worth to the British workman : 'They may be able to decide whether a Whig or a Tory shall be elected, they may be masters of so

small a situation as that.'[102] Salisbury was similarly contemptuous as to the importance of the individual within a democratic system while, at the other end of the political spectrum, Holyoake noted that the people had won the right to be consulted but nothing more.[103]

At least one later Conservative leader was to smugly declare that the British Government was not, and would never be, democratic since Reform had merely served to, 'broaden the basis of oligarchy.'[104] At least one Victorian reactionary agreed that all was not lost to democracy[105] and certain radicals felt similarly. In 1984 Shinwell starkly commented that, 'Democracy has never really existed', but in doing so he only echoed much the same opinion as had been expressed by Tom Bowran of Gateshead in a Durham Chronicle article of 1895 : 'While it is true that the people are the governing force, we are repeatedly being brought face to face with anomalies tending in quite the opposite direction. The people rule, but the ruling is minimised, because their voice and power is minimised.'[106]

In the light of such comments it is worthy of note that general political opinion considered the passage of the 1885 Act to be the coming of democracy. The Durham Chronicle and the Cambridge Daily News both believed that a, 'new democracy', had been established in 1885[107] and even Tom Bowran was inclined to agree that the long battle against privilege had secured a system which was, 'to a large extent, democratic.' Atherley-Jones similarly recognized that a sea-change had occurred, even if much continued to be done.[108]

In 1900 the United Kingdom, which by remaining short of manhood suffrage had drifted to the rear of the world's representative nations in terms of its democratic credentials, even sifted its restricted electorate via manifestly unequal constituencies.[109] As Blewett rightly wrote, 'the will of the people expresses itself [only] through the intricate mesh of this system.'[110]

Despite such limitations to democracy, limitations which even Keir Hardie seems to have regarded as merely theoretical difficulties,[111] a young politician of 1888 could regard himself as operating in, 'a democratic age',[112] and local Tories could, with regret, declare a similar opinion.[113] The Durham Chronicle may have continued to stress, with a healthy cynicism, that all Government was, 'naturally opposed to the rise of democracy',[114] but there could be no doubt that times had changed since 1850. If there was not yet a flawlessly democratic system, and there was not, the principle of a government representing, and being responsible to, the people, rather than merely a class had taken root. Politicians, however undemocratic in fact concerning such matters as womens' suffrage, had either become democrats in principle or were forced to appear as such.

We might conclude with two quotes, one from a distinguished visitor to Cambridgeshire, the other from a rejected County Durham politician, which together defined the rise of democracy by the time of the turn of the century. Firstly, R.B.Haldane, lecturing at Sawston in 1898 as a prominent Liberal-Imperialist and hence hardly a

representative of the radical wing in the party's leadership, illustrates the positive side of democracy's advance. The very clumsiness of his argument might be taken as proof of his sincerity : 'They believed in democracy because they said it was a thing perfect in itself, a thing that would not make many mistakes. They held that on the whole it was better for the people to be ruled by a democratic Government, and that it was a right which could not be withheld from them with justice (Cheers).'[115] By contrast Elliot the deposed Unionist MP for Durham City, who had become yet another political biographer, recorded what was the stern truth for many of his former colleagues by 1911 : 'Nowadays we live under a democracy, and no political Party can afford to be directly anti-democratic.'[116] The mere fact that such statements could be made was illustrative of how great a change had come over the nation, both constitutionally and ideologically, during the second half of the nineteenth-century.

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Appendix 1 - Elections Held Within the Counties of Durham and Cambridgeshire Between 1850 and 1900

1850 General Election -

Cam : K.Macaulay(C) 821. J.Astell(C) 803.*S.Adair (L) 803 F.Mowatt (L) 673.*

Hunt : J.Peel(C) and T.Baring(C) unopposed.

Cambs : E.Ball(C), Lord G.Manners(C) and Hon. E.Yorke(C) unopposed.

Hunts : E.Fellowes(C) and Lord Mandeville(C) unopposed.

City : T.Granger(L) 571. W.Atherton(L) 510. *Lord A. Vane(C) 506.*

Gate : W.Hutt(L) 270. *Hon. A.Liddell(C) 190. R.Walters(R) 136.*

SS : R.Ingham(L) 430. *Hon. H.Liddell(C) 249.*

Sund : G.Hudson(C) 868. D.Seymour(R) 814. *H.Fenwick(L) 654.*

ND : D.Shafto(L) and Lord Seaham(C) unopposed.

SD : J.Farrer(C) and Lord H.Vane(L) unopposed.

1852 By-election -

City : Lord A.Vane(C) 545. *H.Fenwick(L) 496.*

1853 By-election -

City : J.Mowbray(C) 529. *Sir C.Douglas(L) 444.*

1854 By-elections -

ND : Lord A.Vane(later Vane-Tempest)(C) unopposed.

Cam : S.Adair(L) 758. F.Mowatt(L) 733. *Lord Maidstone (C) 708. Slade(C) 696.*

1855 By-elections -

Sund : H.Fenwick(L) 956. *D.Seymour(R) 646.*

Hunts : J.Rust(C) unopposed.

1857 General Election -

Cam : K.Macaulay(C) 770. A.Steuart(C) 735. *S.Adair(L) 729. J.Hibbert(L) 702.*

Hunt : J.Peel(C) and T.Baring(C) unopposed.

Cambs : E.Ball(C) 2780. H.Adeane(L) 2616. Hon. E.Yorke(C) 2483. *Lord G.Manners(C) 2127.*

Hunts : J.Rust(C) 1191. E.Fellowes(C) 1105. J.Heathcote(L) 1104.

(N.B. Initially a triple-return, Heathcote was later unseated via petition and scrutiny).

City : W.Atherton(L) and J.Mowbray(C) unopposed.

Gate : W.Hutt(L) unopposed.

SS : R.Ingham(L) unopposed.

Sund : H.Fenwick(L) 1123. G.Hudson(C) 1081. *R.Walters(R) 863.*

ND : D.Shafto(L) and Lord A.Vane-Tempest(C) unopposed.

SD : H.Pease(L) 2570. Lord H.Vane(L) 2542. *J.Farrer(C) 2091.*

1858 By-elections -

Hunt : J.Peel(C) unopposed.

City : J.Mowbray(C) unopposed.

1859 General Election -

Cam : K.Macaulay(C) 753. A.Steuart(C) 750. *E.Twisleton (L) 683. F.Mowatt(L) 669.*

Hunt : J.Peel(C) and T.Baring(C) unopposed.

Cambs : E.Ball(C), H.Adeane(L) and Hon. E.Yorke(C) unopposed.

Hunts : E.Fellowes(C) 1404. Lord R.Montagu(C) 1314. *J.Heathcote(L) 1068.*

City : W.Atherton(L) and J.Mowbray(C) unopposed.

Gate : W.Hutt(L) unopposed.

SS : R.Ingham(L) 506. *J.Wawn(R) 300.*

Sund : H.Fenwick(L) 1527. W.Lindsay(L) 1292. *G.Hudson(C) 790.*

1859 General Election (continued) -

ND : D.Shafto(L) and Lord A.Vane-Tempest(C) unopposed.
SD : H.Pease(L) and J.Farrer(C) unopposed.

1860 By-elections -

City : W.Atherton(L) unopposed.
Gate : W.Hutt(L) unopposed.

1861 By-election -

City : Sir W.Atherton(L) unopposed.

1863 By-election -

Cam : F.Powell(C) 708. *H.Fawcett(L) 627.*
Cambs : Lord G.Manners(C) unopposed.

1864 By-elections -

City : J.Henderson(L) unopposed.
ND : Sir H.Williamson(L) unopposed.

1865 General Election -

Cam : W.Forsyth(C) 762. F.Powell(C) 760. *R.Torrens(L) 726. W.Christie(L) 725.*
Hunt : J.Peel(C) and T.Baring(C) unopposed.
Cambs : Lord G.Manners(C), R.Young(L) and Lord Royston(C) unopposed.
Hunts : E.Fellowes(C) and Lord R.Montagu(C) unopposed.
City : J.Mowbray(C) and J.Henderson(L) unopposed.
Gate : W.Hutt(L) unopposed.
SS : R.Ingham(L) unopposed.
Sund : H.Fenwick(L) 1826. J.Hartley(C) 1355. *R.Candlish (R) 1307.*
ND : Sir H.Williamson(L) 2888. D.Shafto(L) 2689. *Hon. G.Barrington(C) 2201.*

1865 General Election (continued) -

SD : J.W.Pease(L) 3401. C.Surtees(C) 3211.*F.Beaumont(C) 2925.*

1866 By-elections -

Sund : R.Candlish(R) 1430. *H.Fenwick(L) 1294.*
Cam : J.Gorst(C) 774. *R.Torrens(L) 755.*
City : J.Mowbray(C) unopposed.
Hunt : J.Peel(C) unopposed.
Cambs : Lord Royston(C) unopposed.

1867 By-election -

Hunts : Lord R.Montagu(C) unopposed.

1868 General Election -

Cam : R.Torrens(L) 1879. W.Fowler(L) 1857. *F.Powell(C) 1436. J.Gorst(C) 1389.*
Hunt : T.Baring(C) unopposed.
Cambs : Lord G.Manners(C) 3998. Lord Royston(C) 3874. H.Brand(L) 3300. *R.Young(L) 3290.*
Hunts : E.Fellowes(C) and Lord R.Montagu(C) unopposed.
City : J.Henderson(L) 823. J.Davison(L) 784. *J.Wharton(C)* 732.
Darl : E.Backhouse(L) 1789. *H.Spark(IL) 875.*
Gate : W.Hutt(L) 2442. *W.Arbuthnot(R) 1406.*
Harts : R.Ward-Jackson(C) 1550. *T.Richardson(L) 1547.*
SS : J.Stevenson(R) 2582. *C.Palmer(L) 2277.*
SoT : J.Dodds(L) 2476. *Lord E.Vane-Tempest(C) 867.*
Sund : R.Candlish(L) 6237. E.T.Gourley(IL) 4901. *T.C.Thompson(IL) 3596.*
ND : G.Elliot(C) 4649. Sir H.Williamson(L) 4011. *I.L.Bell(L) 3822.*
SD : J.W.Pease(L) 4319. F.E.B.Beaumont(L) 4024. *C.Surtees(C) 3714. Hon. G.Hamilton-Russell(L-C) 3206.*

1871 By-elections -

City : J.Davison(L) unopposed.
City : J.Wharton(L) 814. *T.C.Thompson(L) 776.*

1873 By-election -

Hunt : Sir J.Karslake(C) 499. *A.Arnold(L) 341.*

1874 By-election -

Cambs : Hon. E.C.Yorke(C) unopposed.

1874 General Election -

Cam : A.Marten(C) 1856. P.B.Smollett(C) 1794. *W.Fowler (L) 1774. Sir R.Torrens(L) 1738.*
Hunt : Sir J.Karslake(C) unopposed.
Cambs : Lord G.Manners(C), H.Brand(TS) and Hon. E.C.Yorke (C) unopposed.
Hunts : E.Fellowes(C) 1648. Sir H.Pelly(C) 1482. *Lord D. Gordon(L) 1192.*
City : T.C.Thompson(L) 924. J.Henderson(L) 879. *J.Wharton (C) 846.*
Darl : E.Backhouse(L) 1625. *H.Spark(IL) 1607. T.Bowles(C) 305.*
Gate : W.James(L) 4250. *R.Forster(C) 1396. W.Arbuthnot (ret L) 12.*
Harts : T.Richardson(L) 2308. *R.Ward-Jackson(C) 1390.*
SS : J.Stevenson(L) unopposed.
SoT : J.Dodds(L) 3223. *F.Barrington(C) 1425.*
Sund : E.T.Gourley(L) 6172. Sir H.Havelock (later Havelock-Allen)(L) 5920. *C.Bailey(C) 3781.*
ND : I.L.Bell(L) 4364. C.Palmer(L) 4327. *G.Elliot(C) 4011. R.Pemberton(C) 3501.*
SD : J.W.Pease(L) 4792. F.E.B.Beaumont(L) 4461. *Lord Castlereagh(C) 3887.*

1874 By-elections -

City : F.Herschell(L) 930. Sir A.Monck (later Middleton) (L) 918. *F.Duncan(C) 752. F.Barrington(C) 747.*

ND : C.Palmer(L) 4256. Sir G.Elliot(C) 4254. *I.L.Bell (L) 4104.*

Cambs : H.Rodwell(IC and F) unopposed.

1875 By-election -

Harts : I.L.Bell(L) 1982. *W.Young(C) 1464. A.Kenealey(MCL) 259.*

1876 By-election -

Hunt : Lord Hinchingbrooke(C) unopposed.

1877 By-election -

Hunts : Lord Mandeville(C) 1468. *Hon. H.Fitzwilliam(L) 1410.*

1879 By-election -

Cambs : E.Hicks(C) unopposed.

1880 General Election -

Cam : W.Fowler(L) 2386. H.Shield(L) 2326. *A.Marten(C) 2003. P.B.Smollett(C) 1902.*

Hunt : Lord Hinchingbrooke(C) unopposed.

Cambs : Sir H.Brand(TS), H.Rodwell(C) and E.Hicks(C) unopposed.

Hunts : W.Fellowes(C) 1786. Lord D.Gordon(L) 1617. *Lord Mandeville(C) 1596.*

City : T.C.Thompson(L) 1237. F.Herschell(L) 1152. *J.Wharton(C) 1058.*

Darl : T.Fry(L) 2772. *H.Spark(IL) 1331.*

Gate : W.James(L) 5749. *G.Bruce(C) 1570.*

1880 General Election (continued) -

Harts : T.Richardson(IL) 1965. *I.L.Bell(L) 1717. T.Tristram(C) 1597.*
SS : J.Stevenson(L) 4435. *H.Hamilton(C) 1486.*
SoT : J.Dodds(L) 2772. *D.Seymour(IL) 1452.*
ND : J.Joicey(L) 6233. C.Palmer(L) 5901. *Sir G.Elliot (C) 5092.*
SD : J.W.Pease(L) 5930. Hon. F.W.Lambton(L) 5912. *C.Surtees(C) 4044.*

1880 By-election -

City : Sir F.Herschell(L) unopposed.

1881 By-elections -

Cambs : J.Bulwer(C) unopposed.
Sund : S.Storey(L) unopposed.
ND : Sir G.Elliot(C) 5548. *J.Laing(L) 4896.*

1884 By-elections -

Cambs : A.Thornhill(C) 3915. *T.Coote(L) 2812.*
Hunt : Sir R.Peel(C) 455. *C.Veasey(L) 446.*

1885 General Election -

Cam : R.U.P.Fitzgerald(C) 2846. *W.Fowler(L) 2739.*
Chest : C.Hall(C) 4246. *N.Goodman(L) 4161.*
Hunt : T.Coote(L) 2354. *Hon. O.Montagu(C) 2208.*
Newm : G.Newnes(L) 3931. *E.Hicks(C) 2960.*
Ram : W.Fellowes(C) 2775. *Lord E.Gordon (L) 2410.*
Wis : J.Rigby(L) 3919. *C.Selwyn(C) 3596.*
City : T.Milvain(C) 1114. *T.C.Thompson(L) 993.*
Darl : T.Fry(L) 3302. *W.Wilson-Todd(C) 2096.*
Gate : Hon. W.James(L) 5756. *J.H.Bottomley(C-Lab) 3024.*
Harts : T.Richardson(L) 3669. *Dr. T.Tristram(C) 2629.*
SS : J.Stevenson(L) 4064. *D.Seymour(C) 3128.*

1885 General Election (continued) -

SoT : J.Dodds(L) 4237. *T.Wrightson(C) 3133.*
Sund : S.Storey(L) 8295. E.T.Gourley(L) 7759. *S.P.Austin (C) 6703.*
BC : Sir J.Pease(L) 5962. *Hon. P.Bowes-Lyon(C) 2457.*
BA : J.Paulton(L) 5907. *D'arcy Wyvill(C) 2280.*
ClS : J.Joicey(L) 4409. *Lloyd Jones(NR) 3606. W.Ashworth (C-Lab) 2018.*
HlS : J.Wilson(Lab) 6511. *N.Wood(C) 4767.*
Jar : C.Palmer(L) 5702. *J.Johnston(R-Lab) 1731.*
MD : W.Crawford(Lab) 5799. *A.Vane-Tempest(C) 3245.*
NWD : L.Atherley-Jones(L) 5081. *A.B.Wilbraham(C) 3085.*
SED : Sir H.Havelock-Allen(L) 5603. *Sir G.Elliot(C) 4854*

1886 General Election -

Cam : R.U.P.Fitzgerald(C) 2937. *C.Dodd(L) 2479.*
Chest : C.Hall(C) 4248. *C.Smith(L) 3272.*
Hunt : A.Smith-Barry(C) 2302. *T.Coote(L) 2141.*
Newm : G.Newnes(L) 3405. *Lord Carmarthen(C) 3105. W.Hall (LU) 298.*
Ram : W.Fellowes(C) unopposed.
Wis : C.Selwyn(C) 4169. *J.Rigby(L) 3082.*
City : T.Milvain(C) 1129. *Rev. G.Brooks(L) 855.*
Darl : T.Fry(L) 2620. *H.Arnold-Forster(C) 2563.*
Gate : Hon. W.James(L) unopposed.
Harts : T.Richardson(LU) 3381. *M.L.Hawkes(L) 2469.*
SS : J.Stevenson(L) unopposed.
SoT : J.Dodds(L) 3822. *T.Wrightson(C) 2820.*
Sund : S.Storey(L) 6971. E.T.Gourley(L) 6840. *W.M.Stobart (LU) 6027.*
BC : Sir J.Pease(L) unopposed.
BA : J.Paulton(L) unopposed.
ClS : J.Joicey(L) unopposed.
HlS : N.Wood(C) 5870. *J.Wilson(Lab) 5059.*
Jar : C.Palmer(L) unopposed.
MD : W.Crawford(Lab) unopposed.
NWD : L.Atherley-Jones(L) unopposed.

1886 General Election (continued) -

SED : Sir H.Havelock-Allen(LU) 4984. *H.Boyd(L) 4045.*

1887 By-election -

Ram : Hon. A.Fellowes(C) 2700. *H.Sanders(C) 2414.*

1888 By-election -

SoT : Sir H.Davey(L) 3889. *T.Wrightson(C) 3494.*

1890 By-elections -

MD : J.Wilson(Lab) 5469. *A.Vane Tempest(C) 3375.*
Harts : C.Furness(L) 4603. *Sir W.Gray(LU) 4305.*

1891 By-election -

Wis : Hon. A.Brand(L) 3979. *S.Duncan(C) 3719.*

1892 General Election -

Cam : R.U.P.Fitzgerald(C) 3299. *R.Lehmann(L) 3044.*
Chest : H.Hoare(L) 4350. *Sir C.Hall(C) 3952.*
Hunt : A.Smith-Barry(C) 2251. *S.Whitbread(L) 2229*
Newm : G.Newnes(L) 4391. *H.Giffard(C) 3168.*
Ram : Hon. A.Fellowes(C) 2842. *Prof. J.P.Sheldon(L) 2445*
Wis : Hon. A.Brand(L) 4311. *S.Duncan(C) 4189.*
City : M.Fowler(L) 1075. *T.Milvain(C) 1000.*
Darl : T.Fry(L) 2866. *A.Pease(LU) 2810.*
Gate : Hon. W.James(L) 5336. *P.Ralli(LU) 5043.*
Harts : C.Furness(L) 4626. *T.Richardson #2(LU) 4550.*
SS : J.Stevenson(L) 4965. *H.H.Wainwright(C) 3958.*
SoT : T.Wrightson(C) 4788. *Sir H.Davey(L) 4477.*
Sund : S.Storey(L) 9711. E.T.Gourley(L) 9554. *Hon. F.W. Lambton(LU) 8394. J.Pemberton(C) 8002.*
BC : Sir J.Pease(L) 5337. *W.M.Rolley(Lab and U) 2924.*
BA : J.Paulton(L) 5784. *E.Waddington(C and Lab) 2607.*

1892 General Election (continued) -

ClS : J.Joicey(L) 6453. *Sir E.Sullivan(LU) 4066.*
HlS : H.T.Fenwick(L) 6256. *N.Wood(C) 4823. J.Hargrove(IL and DV) 814.*
Jar : Sir C.Palmer(L) 7343. *E.D.Lewis(Pro-Lab Ind) 2416.*
MD : J.Wilson(Lab) 5661. *C.Hunter(LU) 3669.*
NWD : L.Atherley-Jones(L) 5121. *J.D.Dunville(LU) 2891.*
SED : J.Richardson(L) 5560. *Sir H.Havelock-Allen(LU) 5396.*

1893 By-election -

Gate : W.Allan(L) 6434. *P.Ralli(LU) 5566.*

1894 By-election -

Wis : Hon. A.Brand(L) 4363. *S.Stopford-Sackville(C) 4227*

1895 General Election -

Cam : R.U.P.Fitzgerald(C) 3574. *A.J.David(L) 2920.*
Chest : R.Greene(C) 4432. *H.Hoare(L) 4012.*
Hunt : A.Smith-Barry(C) 2419. *J.J.Wilks(L) 2068.*
Newm : H.McCalmont(C) 4210. *Sir G.Newnes(L) 3867.*
Ram : Hon. A.Fellowes(C) 3012. *H.Heldmann(L) 2063.*
Wis : C.Giles(C) 4368. *Hon. A.Brand(L) 4145.*
City : M.Fowler(L) 1110. *Hon. A.R.D.Elliot(LU) 1107.*
Darl : A.Pease(LU) 3354. *Sir T.Fry(L) 2697.*
Gate : W.Allan(L) 6137. *J.Lucas(LU) 5654.*
Harts : T.Richardson #2(LU) 4853. *Sir C.Furness(L) 4772.*
SS : W.Robson(L) 5057. *H.H.Wainwright(C) 4924.*
SoT : J.Samuel(L) 4786. *T.Wrightson(C) 4314.*
Sund : W.Doxford(C) 9833. Sir E.Gourley(L) 8232. *S.Storey (L) 8185.*
BC : Sir J.Pease(L) 4924. *Hon. W.L.Vane(C) 3848.*
BA : J.Paulton(L) 5032. *G.E.Markham(C) 3735.*
ClS : Sir J.Joicey(L) 7370. *Lord Morpeth(LU) 4113.*
HlS : R.Cameron(L) 6592. *V.Corbett(C) 5711.*

1895 General Election (continued) -

Jar : Sir C.Palmer(L) unopposed.
MD : J.Wilson(Lab) 5937. *A.Wilkinson(C) 4295.*
NWD : L.Atherley-Jones(L) 5428. *J.Joicey(LU) 3869.*
SED : Sir H.Havelock-Allen(LU) 5978. *J.Richardson(L) 5864.*

1898 By-Elections -

SED : J.Richardson(L) 6286. *Hon. F.W.Lambton(LU) 6011.*
City : Hon. A.R.D.Elliot(LU) 1167. *H.Boyd(L) 1102.*
Darl : H.P.Pease(LU) 3497. *O.Philipps(L) 2809.*

KEY : Cam - Cambridge. Cambs - Cambridgeshire.
Hunt - Huntingdon. Hunts - Huntingdonshire.
City - City of Durham. Gate - Gateshead.
SS - South Shields. Sund - Sunderland.
ND - North Durham. SD - South Durham.
Darl - Darlington. Harts - The Hartlepools.
SoT - Stockton-on-Tees. Chest - Chesterton.
Newm - Newmarket. Ram - Ramsey.
Wis - Wisbech. BC - Barnardcastle.
BA - Bishop Auckland. ClS - Chester-le-Street.
Jar - Jarrow. HlS - Houghton-le-Spring.
MD - Mid Durham. NWD - North West Durham.
SED - South East Durham

L - Liberal.
C - Conservative.
R - the more Radical of rival Liberals.
IL - Independent Liberal.
L-C - Liberal-Conservative.
TS - The Speaker.
ret L - Liberal Candidate who retired between the nomination and the poll.
MCL - Magna Charta League.

IC and F - Independent Conservative and Farmers' candidate.
C-Lab - Conservative-Labour.
NR - National Radical (i.e.Cowenite).
Lab - Labour (all with Liberal support).
R-Lab - Radical-Labour.
LU - Liberal Unionist.
Lab and U - Labour and Unionist.
C and Lab - Conservative and Labour.
IL and DV - Independent Liberal and Direct Veto (i.e. temperance).
Pro-Lab Ind - Pro-Labour Independent.

NB : Constituencies are listed by County (i.e. Cambridgeshire then Durham), then by category (i.e. Boroughs then Counties) and finally alphabetically. By-elections are listed chronologically.

Losing candidates are shown in italics.

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