VICTORIAN REPUBLICANISM

REPUBLICANISM IN VICTORIAN BRITAIN

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ABSTRACT

In 1873, there were in Great Britain over ninety republican clubs, together with another fifty societies that were republican in sentiment if not in name. Since there is no published book or article containing that information, these are significant historical facts of which very few people are aware. The following dissertation constitutes the very first synthesis of Victorian republicanism at both the metropolitan and provincial levels, and is an attempt to fill a gaping hole in British historical scholarship.

The Victorian republicans had a sound native intellectual tradition on which to draw, and they were inspired further by foreign examples. Some British republicans would have been happy to duplicate the American system, but by 1870, an increasing number were becoming disillusioned with the United States. It was startlingly evident to republicans that simple political republicanism had done little to better the lot of the American working man. An oppressor was still an oppressor whether he be a capitalist or a landed aristocrat. Thus, the men who looked forward to a truly egalitarian society turned to France. But, the French opportunity of 1870 was squandered by selfish politicians, and the resolute Parisian workmen established their own commune. The result was a civil war between the republicans themselves: hardly a shining example for the rest of the world.

As if trying to emulate their French bretheren, the British

republicans were constantly quarrelling amongst themselves. London republicanism, being the most diverse, inevitably experienced the greatest difficulties. By the end of 1872, a working relationship had been painfully achieved, only to be immediately offset by a feud with the republicans of Sheffield. British republicanism was therefore hampered not only by ideological but also regional rivalry. For the most part, republicanism in the provinces developed independently of the capital, but on a national level, the movement would certainly have been stronger had London provided strong unified leadership. Three national conferences took place between December 1872 and September 1873, but they were organised by two different groups and only a few clubs sent delegates to each event.

Disappointment with foreign experiments, disunity within the movement itself, and the failure to win over substantial numbers of the middle classes, all contributed to the decline of British republicanism in the mid-1870's. But equally important was the return of a Conservative government in 1874 and the establishment of a propaganda campaign which linked the Monarchy with a strong nation and empire. This ideology was reinforced, moreover, by the longevity of Queen Victoria.

By the late 'seventies, most social republicans had turned to socialism. But, political republicanism, spearheaded by die-hard individualists and secularists, persisted well into the 'eighties. The reason for this was that socialism could not win over a majority of workers until the generation that had been socialised with the middle class values of self-help and independence, which socialism seemed to

deny, was replaced. Once that process was complete, the way was clear for a socialist victory. Republicanism had become an outmoded demonology belonging to a bygone era. Yet, republican ideals did not die out. Rather, they became dormant, waiting for those opportune moments to temporarily re-emerge.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
CHAPTER 1:	Introduction	1
CHAPTER 2:	The British Republican Tradition	11
CHAPTER 3:	The Charter and Something More: 1837-1867	53
CHAPTER 4:	The Radical Climate 1867-1874: Republicanism and Class Relationships	97
CHAPTER 5:	Metropolitan Republicanism	139
CHAPTER 6:	Republicanism in the Regions	177
CHAPTER 7:	Theoretical Republicans and Sympathisers	265
CHAPTER 8:	The Practical Republicans	310
CHAPTER 9:	The Impact of the Paris Commune	353
CHAPTER 10:	The Monarchy	376
CHAPTER 11:	The Decline of Victorian Republicanism (1874-1900)	422
CHAPTER 12:	Conclusions	453
ILLUSTRATIONS		464
APPENDICES		474
BIBLIOGRAPHY		531

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

We've Royalists with ample store,
Who crave, or fight, or pray for more;
Who waste the very meat they carve
While merit's children weep and starve;
And have we not a loyal band
Who rob for sport our fertile land?[1]

The main purpose of this thesis is to show that republicanism, particularly in the period from 1870 to 1874, was a major force in Victorian radicalism. Moreover, it will be argued that in the years between the fall of Chartism and the rise of organized socialism, republicanism was the dominant political creed among radical working men and intellectuals. The republican movement was at least as well organized as Chartism and unsurpassed by socialism until the establishment of the Independent Labour Party. In the late seventies and early eighties republicanism provided an important bridge from Liberalism and radicalism to socialism. The socialists initially assumed that republicanism would naturally accompany the socialist state, but political expediency ultimately persuaded them to steer clear of the issue, at least on an official level.

With one or two notable exceptions,[2] historians have either ig-

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[1] "An Old Author" (pseud.), Reformation Or Revolution - The Coming Question (London, 1872), 16.

[2] Royden Harrison, Before the Socialists (London, 1965), chapter 5. David Tribe, President Charles Bradlaugh M.P. (London, 1971), chapter 6.

nored Victorian republicanism completely or dismissed it as nothing more than a weak parody of foreign experiments, devoid of any substantial intellectual foundation of its own. The most recent scholar to take this view is E.W. Sager,[3] and a renowned example would be H.A.L. Fisher.[4] In the late Victorian and Edwardian periods republicanism was virtually written out of history. Biographies of leading theoretical republicans such as Joseph Cowen Jr.[5] and Henry Fawcett[6] played down the republicanism of these men so as not to tarnish their reputation in a society where such views had become unfashionable. The most remarkable example of this trend is a short biography of Charles Bradlaugh, by fellow republican George Standring, which omits all mention of Bradlaugh's republican activities.[7] And Bradlaugh was undoubtedly the single most important figure in the Victorian republican movement.

The intellectual origins of that movement are not to be found in France, Switzerland or the United States but in Cromwellian England. Political theorists such as James Harrington and Henry Stubbe took as their models the classical republics of Rome and Venice, but adapted them to the English situation of the 1650's. The ideas of the "Common-

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3 E.W. Sager, "The Working Class Peace Movement in Victorian England", Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association (London, Ontario, 1978).

4 H.A.L. Fisher, The Republican Tradition in Europe (London, 1911).

5 W. Duncan, Life of Joseph Cowen (London and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1904).

6 Leslie Stephen, Life of Henry Fawcett (London, 1886).

7 George Standring, Biography of C. Bradlaugh M.P. (London, 1888).

wealthmen" were preserved and embroidered upon by small groups of disciples, very often freethinkers, through the Restoration to the Hanoverian period. But it was not until after the American War of Independence that republican principles began to be something more than the private preserve of an intellectual clique. Especially important in this popularization process was Major John Cartwright and his friends, and their Society for Constitutional Information. In addition, the French philosophers of the Enlightenment began to return, with interest, the ideas they had culled from seventeenth-century English republicans.[8] Then came the French Revolution and Thomas Paine, and British republicanism received at one and the same time an example, a bible[9] and a messiah. Paine was revered as a prophet by republicans throughout the nineteenth century, and his popularity only began to wane after republicanism was eclipsed by the rising socialist movement.

The period of reaction in Britain during and after the French wars made life abominably difficult for republicans and freethinkers. Yet men like Richard Carlile, James Watson, William Sherwin, Henry Hetherington and J.B. Lorymer fought resolutely for the right to propagate their opinions. These men and their aides all spent long periods in gaol for disseminating sedition and blasphemy among the populace. Their struggles were profoundly important in keeping republican principles alive during the dark days from the end of the French Revolution to the

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[8] See below, 25-6.

[9] Thomas Paine, The Rights of Man, intro. by G.J. Holyoake (London, 1954).

accession of Queen Victoria.

The most significant factor in popular politics during the first decade of Victoria's reign was the Chartist movement: the first attempt in history to organize a working class on a national basis. After 1848 the Chartists split into two groups. There were those who followed Feargus O'Connor in continuing to agitate for the original People's Charter. The second group consisted of men such as G.J. Harney, Ernest Jones, Bronterre O'Brien and W.J. Linton, who broadened their demands to include a republic and varying degrees of social reform which each believed would make that republic truly egalitarian. Although W.J. Linton did not go as far as the others in his social policies, he was by far the most important organizer and made a genuine, if unsuccessful, attempt to replace Chartism with a national republican movement based on a chain of local societies.

It was in the fifties and sixties that the link between secularism[10] and republicanism was really consolidated. G.J. Holyoake was primarily responsible for putting the secular movement on a sound national footing, but he was not particularly interested in republican organization. By the mid 1860's Holyoake was forced to concede his pivotal position to the turbulent enthusiasm of Charles Bradlaugh and

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10 Secularism in this period was generally understood to mean the doctrine that the basis of morality should be non-religious. In addition, there should be complete separation of Church and State, and especially the exclusion of religious teaching from all schools to be brought under State control. See Susan Budd, Varieties of Unbelief, Atheists and Agnostics in English Society 1850-1960 (London, 1977). Unfortunately, Miss Budd must be added to the list of historians whose work fails to recognize the importance of republicanism in the Victorian radical movement.

his followers. It is ironic that the latter included Holyoake's younger brother Austin. It was this group that really forged the alliance between republicanism and the national secular movement.

The spread of republican principles was enhanced, in the late sixties, by a number of factors. The Queen's retirement from public life and neglect of her duties, after the death of her husband in December 1861, seriously weakened the prestige of the Monarchy and reinforced many people's opinion that it should be made redundant, and the money for its upkeep put to better use. Unlike the Queen, the Prince of Wales remained constantly in the public eye, repeatedly offending the more righteous citizens with his hedonistic excesses. Secondly, a number of working men were led by Professor E.S. Beesly to regard the victory of the North in the American Civil War as a triumph for republicanism, and urged their fellows to agitate for a system of government in Britain which would provide the political advantages enjoyed by working-class Americans. When the 1867 Reform Act failed to turn Britain into an authentic democracy, many of those who were disappointed were confirmed in their belief that the system of aristocratic privilege must be broken down before any real progress could be made. It was thought that if the Monarchy was overthrown the rest of the hierarchy would simply collapse. One can only speculate as to the truth of such an assumption.

British republicans were to be found in all classes of society but most particularly among upper and middle class intellectuals and the better educated working men. The latter are something of an enigma in mid-Victorian labour history but there is no doubt that among those

workers who valued education and concerned themselves with politics and religion, secularism and republicanism were prevalent. The nature, and indeed the very existence, of the labour aristocracy has been a bone of contention among historians for many years. For the purposes of this thesis, the labour aristocracy will be referred to as a cultural rather than an economic entity.[11]

Two distinct types of republican were in evidence in Britain by 1869. Political republicans believed that a change in the form of government would point the way to a new society based on equality of opportunity. Social republicans, on the other hand, taught that if society was to be genuinely transformed then comprehensive social reform must follow the political change. This group identified the enemy as the commercial, rather than landed, aristocracy. For the social republican the Monarchy was objectionable "not merely because it exalted aristocratic privilege, but because it consecrated the principle of the unworthiness of labour".[12] Social republicanism was encouraged by poor economic conditions in the East End of London and certain provincial towns and its first society, the International Republican Association, was founded as early as July 1869. Conversely, political republicanism really began to thrive early in 1871; most particularly in areas starting to benefit from the mid-Victorian boom. The British republican movement of the 1870's was not merely a by-product of the Third French Republic or the Paris Commune, it simply drew strength from the

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[11] See below, 96, 99.

[12] Harrison, Before the Socialists, 213.

struggles of the French, and later Spanish, republicans.

The impact of events in Europe on the British republicanism of the early seventies was not insignificant but has been exaggerated in the past. This is particularly true of the Paris Commune. The notion that the Commune caused irreparable damage to the British movement, by dividing its adherents ideologically, has absolutely no foundation.[13] There were two recognizable republican schools in Britain at least eighteen months prior to the Commune. Yet the crucial split in the movement did not come until 1873, and in this division the Commune was not a factor.

Just as the roots of the movement as a whole were domestic rather than foreign, the republicanism of the English provinces was indigenous rather than a straightforward emulation of events in the capital. Except for one or two references by David Tribe[14] and Norbert Gossman,[15] provincial republicanism in Victorian Britain has remained uninvestigated. However, a regional study constitutes the backbone of this thesis and should go some way towards filling an enormous gap in the history of British radicalism.

It would be a mistake to tell this story purely from the side of the republicans, and in order to provide a somewhat broader perspective on the issues involved it is important to view them also from the

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13 Ibid., 232, and Dona Torr, Tom Mann and His Times, 2 vols. (London, 1956), 1:313.

14 Tribe, President Charles Bradlaugh M.P., chapter 6.

15 Norbert Gossman, "Republicanism in Nineteenth Century England", International Review of Social History, 7 (April, 1962), 47-60.

standpoint of the Royal Family. The Queen was not seriously concerned about the republican movement while it remained proletarian and intellectual, for neither of those sectors did she understand or regard as important. But when persons of rank such as Sir Charles Dilke and Auberon Herbert became involved, she immediately joined in the Conservative cry for repression. Yet she could not be persuaded to appear in public more often, or to diminish her frequent request for grants of money to members of the Royal Family. To have done this would have gone a long way towards stifling the movement. But whatever her faults the Queen did nothing that could be positively identified as being unconstitutional. She was an honest woman and if at times she lost the affection of some of her subjects, she always commanded their respect. This was never true of the Prince of Wales who was always the most popular target for republican invective. It is ironical that the Prince's politics were actually far more flexible than his mother's, and he was much more willing to compromise on issues such as Royal grants. In the winter of 1871-2 the Prince was seized with a serious bout of typhoid fever. Several commentators have maintained that republicanism drowned in a tidal wave of "typhoid loyalty".[16] The falsity of this argument

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16 Many contemporary right-wing journalists made this mistake as did The Annual Register, 1871, 122. See also: Philip Magnus, King Edward The Seventh (London, 1964), 151. Magnus states that: "an elemental upsurge of loyal emotions destroyed republicanism overnight as a significant factor in British Politics." Sir Sydney Lee, King Edward VII, 3 vols. (London, 1925), 1:329. Lee maintained that "the Prince's illness and the popular sense of loyalty which it intensified beyond recent precedent dealt the republican agitation a blow from which it never recovered."

is confirmed, though, by the fact that at least fifty new republican clubs were formed, and three national republican conferences held, in the two years following the Prince's recovery.[17]

A more important influence on the decline of the movement was the sustained Conservative opposition, particularly after Disraeli's Crystal Palace speech in 1872, and the ensuing right-wing reaction once they were returned to office two years later. The Tory ascendancy, with its exaltation of the cult of Monarchy and Empire, combined with numerous problems inside the movement itself to initiate a dramatic decline. Although there were several attempts to revive organized republicanism, the last arising out of the opposition to Jubilee extravagance in 1887, none were ultimately successful. It is significant too, that the five dominant politicians of the Victorian era, whether Whig, Liberal or Conservative, were all staunch supporters of the Monarchy. Peel, Disraeli and Salisbury actively encouraged the concept of Monarchy and were on good terms with the Queen. Palmerston and Gladstone were disliked by Victoria but their loyalty was never in question.

The longer the Queen lived, the more respect she commanded and republicanism became downright unfashionable, even in left-wing circles. As a result, most republicans were forced to divert their attention to more respectable causes, or join one of the new socialist groups. In fact, republicans were very much involved in the beginnings of organized socialism and in many cases the transition is quite clear. Most social

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[17] See appendices 19, 20.

republicans transferred their allegiance at some time between 1874 and 1880; many political republicans following, especially after Bradlaugh's death in 1891. Socialists realized that current political trends dictated the necessity of omitting republicanism from their official programmes. However, there is no doubt that many socialists quietly retained their republicanism, preserving the legacy for later generations. Thus, the light of republicanism flickers in the left-wing of the Labour Party even today.

CHAPTER 2

THE BRITISH REPUBLICAN TRADITION

> England ... shall henceforth be governed as a Commonwealth and Free State by the supreme authority of this nation the representatives of the people in Parliament and by such as they shall appoint and constitute officers and ministers under them, for the good of the people, and that without any King or House of Lords.[1]

Thus decreed the House of Commons on 19 May 1649. The vast majority of British republicans in the Victorian era looked upon the Interregnum as a golden age, and many of those who occupied the political stage in the 1640's and '50s were prominent in nineteenth century republican hagiography. Yet had the men of 1870 inquired more closely into the political thought of Cromwell, Ireton and Eliot they would have been forced to admit that their heroes were not bona fide republicans at all. Professor Zagorin draws attention to the fact that "most of the chief men on the Parliamentary side, both Presbyterian and Independent, regarded their struggle as being waged against Charles I, not monarchy".[2] In actuality, the revolutionary leaders felt the institution of monarchy to be a necessary symbol of order, and head of a system of social hierarchy and privilege which they might see fit to

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[1] Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum 1642-60 2:122 in Tribe, President Charles Bradlaugh, M.P., 310.

[2] Perez Zagorin, A History of Political Thought in The English Revolution (London, 1965), 147.

rearrange, but had no intention of abolishing. Cromwell and Ireton agreed that the link between property and political citizenship should not be broken. The continuation of the monarchy would prevent political and social change from escalating beyond what men of substance considered reasonable limits. This was why considerable efforts were made to reach an agreement with Charles I long after his armies had been defeated.

There was, however, a small minority in the Long Parliament who advocated a republic at an early date. Algernon Sydney was one of these men together with Henry Marten, the member for Berkshire, who in 1643 was temporarily expelled from the House for remarks he made against the King. Another member of the group, Edmund Ludlow, christened them the "Commonwealth men". In 1647, they failed to persuade the Commons to pass a vote of no addresses by which it was proposed to break off all negotiations with the king. According to Ludlow they maintained that "monarchy is neither good in itself, nor for us", and proposed that Stuart rule be replaced by an "equal commonwealth founded upon consent of the people, and providing for the rights and liberties of all men ..."[3] They participated in the government of 1649 with reservations, but Cromwell's expulsion of the Long Parliament in 1653 alienated them completely. Zagorin maintains that:

> Even when the commonwealth had been established, republican thought remained undeveloped and the republicans themselves a minority. The men who created the revolutionary government

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3 Ibid., 148.

> were not, for the most part, republicans. They put Charles I to death, not out of any antagonism to kingship, but because they had concluded that no other alternative was left them.[4]

Cromwell justified the King's trial on the grounds of the right of resistance to tyrannical rulers but "at no time was he addicted to republican doctrines".[5] Although the new state was called a commonwealth it was not set up according to systematic republican principles but was "an ad hoc creation, the offspring of expediency".[6]

However, those who genuinely anticipated the different shades of republicanism of the 1870's were not to be found close to the centres of real political power, but were more in the nature of pressure groups. There were two major strains of Victorian republicanism: political and social. The former was anticipated by many Levellers and the latter by radical sectarians such as the Diggers. Zagorin states that the Levellers were "among the first to call for the abolition of kingship" and since their programme also involved the granting of manhood suffrage and an end to the House of Lords "they may be considered republicans".[7] By 1646 John Lilburne was urging that "the monarchy be dispensed with, and supremacy recognised in a free and popularly elected Commons acknowledging its subjection to law and effecting broad reforms".[8] The Levellers stopped short of the abolition of private property: most being, themselves, small proprietors with some sort of stake in the country. C.B. Macpherson talks about the Levellers' belief in the right to individual property and freedom as a function of proprietorship.[9] Macpherson

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[4] Ibid. [5] Ibid. [6] Ibid. [7] Ibid., 147 [8] Ibid., 11.

[9] C.B. Macpherson, The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism (Oxford, 1962), 137-159.

also argues that the Levellers' apparent demand for unqualified manhood suffrage before and during the Putney Debates was always intended to be qualified by the exclusion of servants and alms takers, the latter being considered in a "wholly different class" from small independent enterprisers.[10] Most Levellers therefore were essentially political individuals as might, in fact, be said of the moderate republicans, especially the secularist group, in the 1870's. If the differences between the majority of Levellers and the government were of degree rather than of kind, the reverse may be said of the Diggers. Gerard Winstanley, the most articulate member of this almost exclusively proletarian group, pronounced Jesus Christ to be the "Head Leveller" and extended Leveller ideas of political democracy to economic democracy. The revolution was not complete, he said, just because the King had been deposed.

> That top bough is lopped off the tree of tyranny, and the kingly power in that one particular is cast out. But alas, oppression is a great tree still, and keeps off the sun of freedom from the poor commons still.[11]

The Diggers gained their name from their fundamental belief in free access to the soil. The following pronouncement by Winstanley constitutes a summation of the essence of their creed: "True freedom lies where man receives his nourishment and preservation, and that is in the use of the earth".[12] Such sentiments might well have been echoed by

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10 Ibid., 107-159.

11 Christopher Hill, The World Turned Upside Down (Harmondsworth, 1975), 133.

12 G. Winstanley, Selected Writings, ed. L.D. Hamilton, 67 in Torr, Tom Mann, 1:115.

members of the Land and Labour League and other social republicans of the 1870's.

Most contemporary writings in defence of the Commonwealth were not written from a republican standpoint. Some works praised it as a parliamentary republic and superior to monarchy "but as theory", says Zagorin "these were quite insignificant".[13] It was during the Protectorate that republican thought really surfaced. When the Long Parliament was expelled by force in the spring of 1653 most republicans felt they could no longer support the government and the last straw was when the office of Lord Protector was made hereditary.

The violence of the republican reaction to the Protectorate can be judged from the indictment drawn up by John Wildman, a former Leveller. He prepared and distributed a broadsheet which aimed to incite opposition to the government. Cromwell was condemned as a usurper whose pride and ambition had sold England into slavery.[14] Sir Henry Vane the younger broke with Cromwell at the end of 1653. Zagorin contends that "strictly speaking, he ought not, perhaps, to be called a republican, though that is how he is usually characterised".[15] His guiding political principle was the supremacy of Parliament, although he did not think that was necessarily incompatible with some

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13 Zagorin, A History of Political Thought, 149.

14 John Wildman, A Declaration of the Free-born People of England now in Arms against the Tyrannie ... of Oliver Cromwell, 1885. Quoted in Ibid., 149.

15 Ibid., 152.

kind of limited monarchy. After 1853 Vane's goal was to restore parliament's supremacy and to try and unite the opponents of the Protectorate and the Monarchy if an appropriate basis could be found. To this end he produced A Healing Question which appeared in May 1856.[16] But the most inflammatory republican attack on the government was a pamphlet entitled Killing noe Murder published by Edward Sexby, a former Leveller, and Silius Titus, a Presbyterian, in 1657.[17] The work called for the assassination of Cromwell as a glorious act of tyrannicide. The text had a pronounced classical influence and glorified stern republicans like Brutus and Cato who preferred "liberty" before life. This brings us to the classical republicans of the late 1650's.

John Milton fought constantly throughout the late 1650's to protect the "Republic" against the encroachment of "burdensome, expensive, useless, and dangerous" kingship.[18] Milton wanted the government to be composed of a permanent council of the ablest men in the country, chosen by the people.[19] Milton was much revered by all the later republicans, as, in fact, were all the important figures involved in the Commonwealth. This is reflected in innumerable poems and articles in the radical press throughout the nineteenth century. For example, "Bandiera"

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16 Sir Henry Vane, A Healing Question, 1656. Quoted in Ibid.

17 Edward Sexby and Silius Titus, Killing noe Murder, 1657. Quoted in Ibid., 151.

18 J. Milton, The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth, and the Excellence thereof, compar'd with the inconveneinces and dangers of readmitting kingship in this Nation (London, 1915; 1st edition 1659), 1.

19 Ibid., 2.

wrote the following lines in his "Poetry to be lived" column in the Red Republican, endowing his heroes with an almost divine aura:

> See Milton's eyes no longer dim
> See seraphs walk with slandered Pym.[20]

The trend did not diminish over the next thirty years. In September 1875 the National Reformer printed the English Marseillaise composed by "Ajax", who was actually Annie Besant. The song consisted of three verses and a chorus and leant heavily on the legacy of the Commonwealth: verse three reads as follows:

> By the flaming words by Milton spoken -
> By the shades of the mighty dead -
> By the chains which twice have been broken -
> By the blood for liberty shed -
> Oh let not the task once begun
> Remain thus forever half done: -
> Let us finish what Cromwell essayed;
> Let Milton's Republic be made.[21]

Unfortunately, the Republicans of the nineteenth century all made the mistake of portraying the likes of Hampden, Pym, Milton and Cromwell as democrats which they most certainly were not. Milton for example, was no more in favour of democracy than he was of monarchy. Similarly the later republicans tended to read their own opinions of the established Church back into history. With the exception of the extremists

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20 J. Saville, ed., The Red Republican and Friend of the People (London, 1966), 6 July 1850, 24.

21 A. Besant (Ajax), "The English Marseillaise", National Reformer, 26 September 1875.

plus a few people like William Walwyn who wanted a secular republic, most of the Commonwealth men were perfectly happy with an established Church so long as it approximately reflected their point of view and was reasonably tolerant of its competitors.[22]

Despite the legend surrounding Milton, the most important republican theorist of the period was undoubtedly James Harrington. Zagorin states that:

> Because of the scientific foundation upon which Harrington's thought seemed to rest, he exercised immeasurably greater influence upon the republicans than did any other writer. It is, indeed, no exaggeration to say that he was the creator of republican theory. The smaller number of important republican writings of the year 1659 all stand within the circle of his ideas.[23]

Heavily influenced by the old Venetian republic, Harrington advocated government by a senate and a popular assembly. The senate would give the assembly wisdom, and the assembly would keep the senate honest, or so he hoped. The assembly could never be too large, and the senate could never be too small as far as Harrington was concerned. One third of each group must retire every year, their replacements to be chosen by the people in a secret ballot.[24]

The year 1659 also produced A Modest Plea for an Equal Commonwealth Against Monarchy by William Sprigge, a fellow of Lincoln College

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[22] Tribe, President Charles Bradlaugh, M.P., 311.

[23] Zagorin, A History of Political Thought, 155.

[24] James Harrington, The Commonwealth of Oceana, introduction by H. Morley (London, 1887; 1st edition, 1656.)

Oxford. He believed that monarchy was intolerable in England because it helped perpetuate the unequal distribution of property. But he warned that the institutions which traditionally supported monarchy must also be uprooted if a true free state was to be established. Sprigge dealt with many social problems that Harrington neglected.[25] Hot on the heels of Sprigge's work came an anonymous pamphlet entitled Chaos: Or a Discourse, Wherein Is presented ... a Frame of Government by way of a Republique. The author combined borrowings from Harrison and Sprigge with some original ideas of his own.[26]

The major problem for the republicans, according to Zagorin, was to "reconcile their allegiance to a free commonwealth with the generally accepted fact that in any open election, men would be returned who favoured a Stuart restoration".[27] Harrington, though, refused to concede that there was any danger of a restoration and this precipitated a disagreement with his ablest disciple Henry Stubbe. Stubbe stressed the necessity of guarding the state against subversion and suggested that all trusted republicans should be listed in county registers as liberators of their country. Only these men would be permitted to bear arms. Stubbe had no fear of the labouring classes and was willing to

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25 William Sprigge, A Modest Plea for an Equal Commonwealth Against Monarchy, 1659, quoted in Zagorin, History of Political Thought, 155-6.

26 Anon., Chaos: Or A Discourse, Wherein Is presented ... A Frame of Government by way of a Republique, 1659, quoted in Ibid., 157.

27 Ibid., 158.

arm them and grant them full political citizenship provided they were loyal republicans. Gentlemen, on the other hand, were not to be admitted to political citizenship until they had proved their loyalty to the Commonwealth.

The militia was to elect a number of deputies who would in turn choose from their ranks a senate of conservators of the liberties of England. The senators would sit for life but would be subject to a biennial investigation by a commission, also elected by the militia. Both senate and commission, said Stubbe, would be composed only of proven republicans. The senate was to have no executive or legislative function, its prime concern being that of securing the republic in its constitution, together with supervising the militia, the ministry and the universities. Once these preliminaries had been dealt with, a parliament could be elected by the entire nation. Short of infringing upon the fundamental constitution and the senate's authority, parliament was to have full law making authority. However, for extra security the senators would also sit in parliament. Zagorin maintains that this was the most practical scheme for a republic to emerge in 1659 since it "attempted to combine some of the good features Harrington's republic was acknowledged to possess, with measures designed to reduce the danger of a restoration".[28]

The Restoration removed any chance of the system being put into practice, but its importance lies in the fact that it was a bold al-

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28 Ibid., 162.

ternative and promised a more egalitarian if authoritarian political system for the future. Once given an airing, a new theory is rarely completely forgotten and may be resurrected at any moment in time when the political climate is favourable. The doctrines which nourished the republicans of the 1860's and 1870's were then, spawned in the era of the English Commonwealth and it was, therefore essential to begin our story there.

Charles II did not make any systematic attempt to exterminate the republicans, and punishments were moderate. Harrington and Wildman were imprisoned, Henry Nevill "sought safety in inconspicuous retirement",[29] Edward Ludlow and Algernon Sydney moved to the continent. But Z.S. Fink points out that although the republicans were scattered and silenced, "they remained alive ... and were ready to teach old doctrines should new opportunities occur".[30] Fink also states that the Restoration failed to produce "a really effective attack on the political reputation either of the classical states to which republicans looked, or of their supposed modern counterparts".[31] The royalists simply maintained that republican glories were the creation of biased historians.

Despite this, classical republicanism retained a prominent position in Restoration political thought. A blueprint for the constitution of Carolina drawn up in 1669, probably by Shaftesbury, included many features of the Venetian Republic, as did the plan for the government of New Jersey, prepared in 1676 by William Penn. Also influenced by Venice, as well as Rome, was Henry Nevill's Plato Redivivus published in 1681. Nevill's views did not in any way constitute the programme of the Whig party although they were

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29 Z.S. Fink, The Classical Republicans, 2nd ed. (Evanston, 1962), 123.

30 Ibid. 31 Ibid.

"representative of a certain amount of republicanism which was present in Whig circles".[32]

In 1677 Algernon Sydney secured a pardon from the King and returned to England. Around 1680-1 he wrote the Discourses Concerning Government which argued that because of the hereditary principle, monarchies prevent the most able man becoming head of state with the result that the nation could be ruled by "a child, a fool, a supernatural dotard, or a madman".[33] Moreover, monarchy tended to degenerate into tyranny because it was lacking in "those adequate restraints on the defects of human nature which all the classical republicans saw as an essential of any well contrived government".[34] Sydney admired many aspects of the Venetian and Roman republics but for the most part harked back to Saxon times when, he maintained, titles were conferred on those who could best guide the people in time of war, give counsel to the king, administer justice and perform other public duties. The nobility of England "as thus defined in Saxon times was an 'infinite multitude' ... resting solidly on worth, valor and landed wealth."[35] All power rested with the "nobility-people". Saxon kings, like the Kings of Ancient Briton, were but temporary magistrates chosen in time of war said Sydney. Like Harrington, he believed that the English system of government had progressively

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32 Ibid., 136-7.

33 Algernon Sydney, Discourses Concerning Government, 1680-1, 2, 21, 186, quoted in Ibid., 152.

34 Ibid., 153.

35 Ibid., 160.

deteriorated since those early times. Among Sydney's other republican contributions was the preparation of a democratic constitution for the state of Pennsylvania.

However, on 7 December 1683 Algernon Sydney was executed for high treason. He was implicated in the Rye House Plot against the King organised by a group of disaffected Whigs known as the Council of Six. Besides Sydney the group included Lord William Russell, who was also executed, Hampden the younger, the Earl of Essex, Lord Howard and Monmouth. These men were accused of planning an armed uprising to prevent a Popish and despotic regime being imposed on the nation. Fink believes that Russell and Sydney died for supposed, but unproven, connections with the violent intentions admitted by some of the lesser men arrested at the same time. But more than this, Fink holds that classical republicanism as an actively advocated programme for the reform of the government "perished on the scaffold with Sydney in 1683".[36] Yet Sydney's memory lived on and he was held in high esteem by later generations of English republicans. In January 1878, Annie Besant described him as "one of the purest and greatest of our English Republicans".[37]

Apart from those disgruntled Whigs and a few lone wolves such as the wit Rochester, who may or may not have been serious in his professed republicanism, most republicans of the period were to be found among the nonconformists. But the Cavalier Parliament had enacted the

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36 Ibid., 170.

37 Besant in the National Reformer, 20 January 1878.

Clarendon Code against the sectaries rendering them politically impotent. There were some who wanted a republic in 1689 "and all the old schemes were discussed at the time",[38] but the republican lobby was weak and not supported by any great names. In the face of a clear indication that William of Orange had not come to England to set up a republic, "they made a small enough showing".[39] Yet although no practical republicans were forthcoming there were theoreticians who endeavoured to perpetuate the spirit for future generations. The existence of such men served to "maintain a revolutionary tradition and to link the histories of English struggles against tyranny in one century with those of American efforts for independence in another".[40]

The leading classical republican of the 1690's was Robert Molesworth. The third Earl of Shaftesbury was "a self declared disciple of his",[41] John Toland, William Molyneux and Henry Maxwell were "pensioner and friends respectively",[42] and Walter Moyle, John Trenchard and Andrew Fletcher were acquaintances and associates. These men advocated a federal system for Britain; a reorganisation of Parliament, a diminution of ministerial prerogative, increased toleration and some modification of mercantile regulations. However they never received support from any Whig office holders. In fact their only real achievement lay in the bringing

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38 Fink, Classical Republicans, 170.

39 Ibid.

40 Caroline Robbins, The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthmen (Cambridge, Mass., 1961), 4.

41 Ibid., 6. 42 Ibid.

up of a second generation of eighteenth century republicans. These men were also divines and teachers rather than practical politicians, and included Henry Grove, Francis Hutcheson, James Foster, Isaac Watts, Marchemont Needham, Thomas Hollis and Edmund Law. They all produced works which maintained and developed Harringtonian principles. But Robbins states that "the most radical speculation of this middle period may be found in the sermons of Robert Wallace and his Various Prospects".[43] The third generation consisted of pro-Americans such as Joseph Priestly, Richard Price, Brand Hollis, Horne Tooke and John Cartwright who, through the Society for Constitutional Information, tried unsuccessfully to influence parliamentary affairs.[44]

Many of the aforementioned individuals tended to deviate from orthodox religion toward freethought. John Toland, for example, was not only an ardent republican who published biographies of Harrington and Milton, but also an influential writer against orthodox Christianity. Freethought in religion and republicanism in politics have been closely linked since the Civil War.[45] By no means all republicans were free thinkers but most of the latter were republicans. Edward Royle has expressed the opinion that many French philosophers of the Enlightenment, including Voltaire and d'Holbach, took a large proportion of their ideas from English thinkers of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Voltaire, he says, learned his deism from Newton, while d'Holbach translated Toland's Letters to Serena of 1704 and republished them in 1768

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43 Ibid., 7. 44 See below, 33. 45 See above, 18.

as Lettres Philosophiques. Royle maintains that the Frenchmen

> ... developed the theory of reason and repaid their debt to England towards the end of the eighteenth century when English translations of their works began to appear. Republicans in France, England and America were then able to draw on a common fund of freethinking literature.[46]

It is hardly surprising therefore, that the authorities assumed freethought and republicanism to be essentially one and the same thing. The principal by which they acted was outlined by Chief Justice Raymond at the trial of one Thomas Woolston (1699-1733) for publishing Six Discourses on the Miracles of our Saviour (1727-1729). He said that "whatever strikes at the root of Christianity tends manifestly to the dissolution of Civil Government". Edward Royle commented that "this statement was generally true, for republicanism and infidelity were often two sides of the same coin."[47] The case of Peter Annet, a freethinking schoolteacher and member of London's Robin Hood Society is a good example. In 1761 Annet published England's first freethought journal the Free Inquirer. For his pains he was accused of ridiculing the Holy Scriptures, fined, pilloried and sentenced to one year's hard labour.

Republican murmurings could be heard at the scene of the Middlesex Election of 1768 when 6,000 voteless Spitalfields workers took possession of Piccadilly and the Oxford Road and allowed no one to pass without a paper in his hat inscribed "No. 45, Wilkes and Liberty". There were

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46 Edward Royle, Radical Politics 1790-1900 Religion and Unbelief, Seminar Studies in History (London, 1971), 17.

47 Ibid., 18.

further demonstrations outside the gaol where John Wilkes had been imprisoned for publishing obscenity and treason in the North Briton. Ironically he later "became a very reactionary City Chamberlain and Lord Mayor of London".[48] But if their hero was never as radical as they liked to believe, Wilkes' plebian supporters learnt much from their initiation into politics. A new class was being formed which grew rapidly with the advance of industry, and from this time on there was always a militant wing of the working classes, however small, in all reform and radical movements; a wing which grew steadily in weight and sagacity until it became a force to be reckoned with in the form of Chartism.

As early as 1776 this radicalism, though not organised as such, was endowed with a programme which recalled that of the Commonwealth radicals and anticipated that of certain Chartists and the republicans of the 1870's. Major John Cartwright's pamphlet Take Your Choice demanded annual parliaments, manhood suffrage, vote by ballot, equal representation, payment of members and a republic.[49] Mainstream working class radicalism never seriously shifted from this programme.

Cartwright followed Take Your Choice with several other pamphlets. In 1780 he published The People's Barrier Against Undue Influence and Corruption: or the Commons House of Parliament According to the Constitution which basically expanded on the theme of his earlier

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48 Tribe, President Charles Bradlaugh M.P., 312.

49 Major John Cartwright, Take Your Choice, (London, 1776).

work.[50] J.W. Osborne discusses the views expressed in the pamphlet in his biography of Cartwright:

> Liberal in his reading of history, uncritical of his sources [sic] Cartwright could assert that Alfred the Great was a republican prince, at one time annual elections were held and that during this period England was prosperous and serene while art, commerce and charity flourished.[51]

He went on to state that "Cartwright had little veneration for monarchy and noted that the word 'Republic' was used in former times to describe England's government".[52] Like many reformers of his time Cartwright considered it expedient to appear as reclaiming for the people ancient rights of which they had been deprived, rather than demanding something totally novel as was really the case.

The vague references to a republic contained in the People's Barrier were made definitive in The Commonwealth in Danger which appeared under Cartwright's name in 1795. He discussed the situation in France and then said of Britain that "her government is in fact no other than a REPUBLIC a COMMONWEALTH, nor will admit of any other earthly definition".[53] Cartwright was asserting here that English political institutions were more characteristic of a republic than a monarchy. J.W. Osborne con-

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50 Cartwright, The People's Barrier Against Undue Influence and Corruption: or the Commons House of Parliament According to the Constitution (London, 1780).

51 J.W. Osborne, John Cartwright (Cambridge, 1972), 30.

52 Ibid., 31.

53 Cartwright, The Commonwealth in Danger (London, 1795), 97.

cludes that: "In the People's Barrier, 1780 and then in The Commonwealth in Danger [sic] 1795, he first implied and then asserted the fact that England was basically a republic."[54]

Cartwright ridiculed persons who demanded an equal division of property and he assured the government that the most effective way to halt the spread of republicanism was to grant political reforms. The real dangers to liberty he felt, were the encroachment of the Crown upon the people's liberty and the control by the nobility of too many seats in the House of Commons.[55] Thus, to put Cartwright in the context of the British Republican tradition we must conclude that he belongs in the line that stretches from the Presbyterian Party in the Long Parliament to those republicans who, like Charles Bradlaugh, shrank from radical social reform. To his credit, though, Cartwright stuck to his principles despite the tremendous pressures on those holding such opinions. In 1823, a year before his death he wrote: "God makes men equal, kings make them unequal".[56] We must turn now to Cartwright's main rival in left-wing circles, the prophet of nineteenth century radicalism, Thomas Paine.

One day late in the year 1789, a Unitarian Preacher, Richard Price, delivered a radical sermon to the Revolution Society. This sermon occasioned Edmund Burke to write Reflections on the Revolution in France, a

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54 Osborne, John Cartwright, 165-7.

55 Cartwright, A Letter from John Cartwright Esq. to a Friend at Boston in the County of Lincoln, 1793, 17-24.

56 Cartwright, The English Constitution Produced and Illustrated (London, 1823), 231.

work which led to its author being dubbed the champion of reaction in England. In reply to Burke, Thomas Paine wrote the Rights of Man, part one of which was published in 1791, concentrating on the situation in France and that country's constitution. Part two, written in 1791 and published the following year, dealt with the follies of the so-called constitution of England. By the end of the spring of 1792 an action had been brought against the publisher of the work, and in June, Paine himself appeared before the King's Bench. However his trial for sedition was delayed until the end of the year.

Paine received some compensation in that the Convention made him an honorary French citizen and the Pas de Calais elected him a member. On the advice of fellow republican William Blake he left England to take up his seat: he escaped arrest at Dover by a mere twenty minutes. In 1794 the first part of the Age of Reason was published to try and prevent the French from plunging head first into a chaotic atheism. The political climate in France was changing drastically by the very day at this time, and Paine had the misfortune to be arrested as an enemy alien. Consequently, part two of the Age of Reason was written in the Luxembourg prison. Eventually published in 1796, it launched a savage onslaught on the follies and errors of organised religion. In fact, it went too far for many people and all but destroyed Paine's good reputation in the United States. When he finally got out of prison and returned to America in 1802, he discovered that his circle of admirers had dwindled to a few extreme republicans and deists. And so he died "amid lies and scandals in poverty and obscurity in 1809".[57]

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[57] Royle, Radical Politics, 20.

Thomas Paine enormously broadened current radical proposals for change to include a progressive income tax, old age pensions, family allowances, state education, and public works projects. This was radical reform with a vengeance. Republicanism was bad enough, but when it was linked to proposals for the reorganisation of society "a shudder went through the ranks of the propertied classes".[58] But we must not allow such a statement to put the situation out of perspective. As Edward Royle warns:

> Paine's reputation has always been more extreme than his actual views. In politics he was radical, but not more so than Jefferson or Priestly. In theology he was neither extreme nor original. In fact he was a typical product of the age of reason, a profoundly religious, humanistic deist.[59]

The Charles Bradlaugh Collection includes a paper simply headed: Thomas Paine, born 1737, died 1809. It states that, "During the whole of the year 1793, Government was mainly employed in stamping out Paine and his works". The leaflet then goes on to cite examples of persons prosecuted for selling, publishing or advertising Paine's works. It ends on the following note: "Thomas Muir of Hunterskill, for simply advising persons to read Mr. Paine's book before they condemned it was actually sentenced to FOURTEEN YEARS' TRANSPORTATION!!"[60] Besides the severity and lack of uniformity of the punishments, what is in-

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58 Osborne, John Cartwright, 156.

59 Royle, Radical Politics, 20.

60 Charles Bradlaugh Collection, National Secular Society, Holloway Rd., London, Env. 989.

teresting in the account is that most of the towns mentioned became republican strongholds in the 1870's.

The publication of the Rights of Man sparked off an explosion of literary propaganda both supporting and condemning Paine's assertions. Many writers, who were not unnaturally frightened of prosecution, pretended to attack Paine while actually using skillful sarcasm to support his views. For example a "gentleman" writing in 1799 made the appearance of condemning Paine and:

> ... many other rascals in the country too much like him, who grudge the poor king his salary that he labours so hard for, and would dock him two hundred thousand pounds a year. What ignorant puppies such fellows must be to suppose the dignity of a King can be supported by such a trifling sum! Why it would be scarcely £ 600 per day and what would this be for a King! a mere trifle, a nothing; such a salary would starve him by inches [61]

While making a superficial pretence of monarchism, the sarcasm of this excerpt and the rest of the pamphlet, marks the author as a republican.

Most of the organised support for republicanism in these years was found in the various Corresponding Societies dotted around the country. The prototype was founded in London in 1794 by Thomas Hardy, Horne Tooke and John Thelwall who apparently once blew froth from his beer with the rejoinder: "So would I treat all kings".[62] J.W. Osborne

[61] A Gentleman, The Pernicious Principles of Tom Paine exposed in an address to Labourers and Mechanics. (London, 1799)

[62] Kingsley Martin, The Magic of Monarchy (London, 1937), 29. See also E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (London, 1964)

tells us that: "An assumption that a Republican form of government was best for the country was held by many members of the London Corresponding Society ..."[63] In addition to the latter, John Cartwright began the Society for Constitutional Information with branches in London, Manchester and Birmingham and possibly other urban centres as well. Cartwright disagreed with Paine on certain points, but at least he was another voice for reform. W.H. Reid reported that anti-clericalism was rife among the aforementioned political societies and apparently a common toast was: "May the last King be strangled in the bowels of the last Priest!!!"[64]

With revolution and regicide occurring on the other side of the Channel, the supporters of Royalism were not slow to add their weight to the campaign of repression launched by the Government. Throughout the 1790's the Association for Preserving Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers conducted an active propaganda campaign and operated a Committee of Sedition Hunters under the chairmanship of John Reeves.[65] A man by the name of John Aitken published a pamphlet headed: Pain, Sin and the Devil, -- Intercepted Correspondence from Satan to Citizen Paine.[66] The essence of this work can be easily deduced from its title.

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63 Osborne, John Cartwright, 48.

64 Royle, Radical Politics, 7.

65 Political Broadsheets, British Museum. 8122 F.51.

66 J. Aitken, Pain, Sin and the Devil, -- Intercepted Correspondence from Satan to Citizen Paine (London , 1794).

What made Thomas Paine so valuable was his practical vision and blunt common sense which continued to guide the popular democratic movement throughout the nineteenth century. Some idea of the reverence in which Paine was held by English radicals can be gathered from the fact that they celebrated his birthday, most faithfully, every year virtually until the turn of the century. In 1875 the Republican Chronicle ran a series entitled Political Aphorisms of Thomas Paine. In the April issue the Chronicle quoted from the Rights of Man Part I: "In short, we cannot conceive at more ridiculous a figure of government than hereditary succession" and: "A nation under a well regulated government, will permit none to remain uninstructed. It is monarchical and aristocratical government only that requires ignorance for its support".[67] The May issue contained a short maxim from Common Sense:

> King of England. "Individuals are undoubtedly safer in England than in some countries, but the will of the king is as much the law of the land in Britain as in France, with this difference, that instead of proceeding directly from his mouth, it is handed to the people under the more formidable shape of an act of parliament. For the fate of Charles the First hath only made kings more subtle not more just".

And from the Rights of Man Part II:

> Peers as hereditary legislators. "The idea of hereditary legislators is as inconsistent as that of hereditary judges or hereditary juries; and as absurd as an hereditary mathematician or an hereditary wiseman; and as ridiculous as an hereditary poet-laureate".[68]

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67 George Standring, ed., Republican Chronicle, April 1875.

68 Ibid., May 1875.

There is no need to enter into a detailed discussion of the problems of the new industrial society in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars. Suffice it to say that there were a number of factors which kept the radical movement and latent republicanism on the boil. Among the more important factors might be listed the restrictions on the press and on trade unions, economic problems associated with, and repercussions of the trade cycle, the inefficient poor law and the urban problem. By the latter we mean the difficulties experienced by large numbers of people in trying to adapt to factory work and life in the city. Most were disillusioned by the opportunities, or lack of same, that they found in the industrial towns. Once the post war boom was over there was much unemployment which was exacerbated by the onset of mechanisation, and the wages of those who could find work were generally low. On top of all this the living conditions of the industrial poor were invariably abominable.[69] Moreover, prior to 1835 the existing local government machinery, having been designed for medieval villages, was unable to cope.

The alienation and upheaval involved in the transition to industrialism contributed to the revival of those old Commonwealth notions regarding the Tradition of Lost Rights and Norman Yoke. John Clare, a peasant whose village of Hepstone had been closed in 1809 wrote:

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69 See R.M. Hartwell, "Interpretations of the Industrial Revolution in England", Journal of Economic History, 19 (1959) 229-50. E.J. Hobsbawm, "The British Standard of Living 1790-1850", Economic History Review, 2, 10, 1 (1957), 46-58. T.S. Ashton, "The Standard of Life of Workers in England 1790-1830", Journal of Economic History Supplement, 9 (1949) 19-38. For a useful appraisal of the impact of industrialisation see Peter Mathias, The First Industrial Nation (London, 1969), 2-18.

> Oh England, boasted land of liberty
> With strangers still thou mayest the title own;
> But thy poor slaves the alteration see:
> With many a loss to them the truth is known
> And every village owns its tyrants now,
> And parish slaves must live as parish kings allow.[70]

H.A.L. Fisher believed that there were two types of republican minds among English intellectuals at this time. The first was the man who disliked kings because they lowered his personal pride and he cites W.S. Landor as his example in this category. The second included those who hated the king because they cared for the common people. William Wordsworth, he says, was such a man. Although horrified by the bloodshed of the Terror, he was initially a supporter of the French republic and "that England should fight the democracy of France seemed to Wordsworth the height of impiety".[71] Although Southey and Coleridge were at one time Gallophil republicans, they both ended up, along with Wordsworth, as pillars of English conservatism.

Fisher also talks about William Godwin, the author of a History of the English Commonwealth. He regards Godwin as a rather more subtle writer than Paine and somewhat more French in his "abstract and generalising cast of mind".[72] But, says Fisher, his work was:

> ... far too fantastic and loosely reasoned to disturb the judgement of the country, and had it not been for the singular influence which Godwin's teaching exerted over the mind of Shelley, he would have been a negligible factor in the organic development of English thought.[73]

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70 Torr, Tom Mann, 1:129.

71 Fisher, Republican Tradition, 148.

72 Ibid., 144.

73 Ibid.

Shelley is probably the most well-known and authentic of all English republican poets, mainly due to his scathing attack on monarchy in Queen Mab.

> Whence thinkst thou Kings and Parasites arose,
> Whence that unnatural line of drones, who heap
> Toil and unvanquishable penury
> On those who build their palaces, and bring
> Their daily bread? ...[74]

Lord Byron was also known to have some sympathy with republican principles. Yet what of the Monarchy itself in this period? Kingsley Martin believed that the 1820's and 1830's mark the nadir of the English monarchy. The republican and democratic sentiments which had swept through England on the heels of the French Revolution, were re-emerging from the period of Tory reaction at the very moment when the Royal Family was in a most disreputable condition. The outbursts of enthusiasm which made a heroine of Queen Caroline were due not so much to love of the Queen as hatred of the King. Englishmen were willing to tolerate the sordid private lives of members of the Royal Family but the latter persisted in asking the House of Commons to pay their debts. Martin maintained that:

> The morals of the sons of George III shocked and disgusted even the less puritannical standards of the pre-Victorian period, and their interference with politics and their obstructive attitude towards reforming legislation was sufficient to complete their unpopularity.[75]

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74 George Standring, ed., Republican, August, 1886.

75 Martin, Magic of Monarchy, 25-6.

When George IV died, his epitaph in The Times included the following lines:

> It is shocking that foul examples should emanate from so high a source -- that the very name of modesty should be so obliterated from the walls of that edifice whose lord is the "fountain of honour", for all Englishmen and their children. But let us hope for better things.[76]

Although this was one of the paper's more liberal periods, these were nevertheless, strong words.

Larkin, "a celebrated Tyneside orator of his time" (1831) accused the King of treating the advice of the House of Commons with scorn and charged the Queen with exerting her influence against the rights of the people. He asked two questions: firstly, should not William IV recollect the fate of Louis XVI; and secondly, should not a Queen who was a meddling politician remember the fate of Marie Antoinette?[77] Leigh Hunt was imprisoned for calling the Prince Regent "a fat Adonis of forty"[78] but the phrase caught on and was freely used by the Prince's critics.

Another group of thinkers who added weight to the republican cause were the followers of Jeremy Bentham. Monarchy was judged as being incompatible with utilitarianism, and Bentham considered that the only good act of which a monarch was capable was to abolish his own office. Even the more sober disciples of Bentham concluded that Monarchy "was

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76 28 June 1830.

77 E.R. Jones, The Life and Speeches of Joseph Cowen (London, 1885), 7.

78 National Reformer, 9 July 1871.

an indefensible anomaly". If the greatest happiness for the greatest number was the criterion of government then a majority decision must always be better than a minority one. Most sinister of all was "the influence of a single man wielding a final veto and an incalculable influence over political decisions".[79] However, Bentham's republicanism was always theoretical rather than practical.[80] If the king exercised his political prerogatives he hampered the drive towards democracy, if he did not then why pay him for doing nothing? The same argument was still being used half a century later. James Mill mathematically demonstrated the advantages of democracy and the evils of monarchy. John Francis Bray of Leeds, a pioneer socialist of the 1830's, was a republican for a while but rejected the creed on the grounds that a simple change in the form of government would do little or nothing to improve the lot of the average working man.[81] Surely he could have retained his republicanism while stressing, like some others did, that social reform must follow the political change.

However, the most important and active of the English republicans of the twenties and thirties have not yet been mentioned in this account. Thus the remainder of this chapter will be devoted to the careers of Richard Carlile and his associates, and the struggle for the cheap press.

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79 Martin, Magic of Monarchy, 29.

80 Elie Halévy, The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism, translated by Mary Morris with a preface by A.D. Lindsay (London, 1928), 415.

81 T.R. Tholfson, "The Intellectual Origins of Mid Victorian Stability", Political Science Quarterly, 76, 1 (March 1871), 59-60.

Richard Carlile probably did more than any other individual to break down the walls of repression and encourage free discussion in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. G.A. Aldred, one of Carlile's biographers, clarified the problem of free discussion by citing the case of a Baptist minister from Plymouth, the Rev. William Winterbotham. The clergyman was prosecuted for preaching two seditious sermons in November 1792 and tried on successive days in July of the following year. An extract from one of the offending sermons will facilitate an understanding of what was considered to be sedition:

> His majesty was placed upon the throne upon condition of keeping certain laws and rules, and if he does not observe them he has no more right to the throne than the Stuarts had.[82]

At the trial, a Sargeant Rooke made the final speech for the Crown:

> The terms on which His Majesty holds his Crown ought not to be the subject of investigation, for when once people come to make this a subject for discussion (even among the ablest men) and to reason and speculate on the great principles of government, they endanger the constitution, under which they have so long been happy, and which has been the envy of every surrounding nation.[83]

After two and a half hours the jury returned a verdict of guilty: the next day they took five hours but the verdict was the same. Winterbotham was duly sentenced to four year's imprisonment and fined £200. The authorities had declared then, that monarchy was not to be a topic for dis-

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82 G.A. Aldred, Richard Carlile, Agitator: His Life and Times (London, 1923), 39.

83 Ibid., 47.

cussion among His Majesty's loyal subjects.

Early in 1817 a young prison officer by the name of William Sherwin arrived in London with a political pamphlet he had written. He presented the work to the radical publisher William Hone but "they were all afraid of it as too strong"[84] so he set himself up as a printer and publisher, and on 1 March 1817 issued the first of a series of weekly papers called the Republican. Not long after this, Carlile was accepted by Sherwin as publisher and general risk taker. After only five numbers Sherwin changed the name of his journal to Sherwin's Weekly Political Register as the word "republican" was evidently objectional to some of his friends and associates.

The Six Acts, passed towards the end of 1819 gave magistrates greater powers to enforce the laws against blasphemous and seditious publications. In addition to this, the financial restrictions on the press were tightened. Henceforward, newspapers issued more frequently than once a month were brought within the terms of the Stamp Act, and as a result many radical papers were forced to triple their price or go out of business, or more commonly, go unstamped. If this was not enough the Society for the Suppression of Vice was joined in 1820 by its secular counterpart the Constitutional Association, more commonly known to the radicals as the Bridge Street Gang. The Gang commenced a number of prosecutions against London and provincial radicals, especially those who worked for Carlile. Their method was to threaten booksellers with the crippling cost of a court action and to obstruct their business by having the accused imprisoned

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84 Richard Carlile, ed., Republican, 3 March 1820.

while awaiting trial. However, in the first two years of its existence the association only managed to obtain four convictions, just one of those being carried through to sentence. But their tactics did succeed in slowing down the distribution of radical literature. Thus, the odds were heavily stacked against Carlile and his compatriots.

By 1819 Carlile had become increasingly dissatisfied with Sherwin and decided to edit his own Republican. But before the first issue went to press he was in gaol, and it was from there that the paper was often produced over the next seven years. Julian St. John took over when, from time to time, Carlile found it absolutely impossible to edit the paper. Carlile made little or no money out of his newspapers. In 1820 the circulation of the Republican soared to an all time peak of fifteen thousand copies, but thereafter the paper lost money as its popularity waned.[85] His other papers such as the Lion, the Prompter and the Cosmopolite were relatively short-lived and not an enormous success.

What then was the nature of Carlile's Republicanism? Patricia Hollis gives sound reasons for her belief that there was not one but two "radical rhetorics" in the unstamped press of the period. The first and older of these was formulated around 1819 and denounced aristocracy, monopoly, taxes and "Old Corruption". Carlile, along with that other great pioneer of the popular press, William Cobbett, fits into this category. The second concentrated more on questions of exploitation, property

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85 See P. Hollis, The Pauper Press (Oxford, 1970), 102-3, 117.

and power and boasted such men as Hetherington, Carpenter, Lorymer and Bronterre O'Brien among its adherents.[86]

Carlile first achieved notoriety for the republication of Paine's proscribed works. This was in 1818 while he was still running Sherwin's shop in Fleet Street, and indeed Carlile was entranced with the writings of the master. He wrote in a pamphlet in 1821 that:

> The writings of Thomas Paine; alone, form a standard for anything worthy of being called Radical Reform. They are not Radical Reformers who do not come up to the whole of the political principles of Thomas Paine ... There can be no Radical Reform short of -- a Republican form of government.[87]

Yet Carlile made much of Paine's doctrine of individual rights and neglected others: the vista of social proposals opened up in the second part of the Rights of Man being the area that touched Carlile least. He disliked political parties and associations of any kind; his view of authority was anarchistic: "The power of reason was the only organiser which he admitted, and the press the only multiplier".[88] Of paramount importance for Carlile was the power of knowledge, the "zetetic principle". He stated in the Republican:

> Let us then endeavour to progress in knowledge, since knowledge is demonstrably proved to be power. It is the power of knowledge that checks that crimes of cabinets and courts, ... it is the power of knowledge that must put a stop to bloody wars and the direful effects of devastating armies.[89]

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86 Ibid., VIII.

87 Carlile, An Effort to Set at Rest Some Little Disputes and Misunderstandings between the Reformers of Leeds (London, 1821), 7.

88 Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, 764.

89 Carlile, ed., Republican, 26 April 1822.

This reminds one of the stress laid on education by Charles Bradlaugh and his republican followers in the 1870's, and more immediately in W.J. Linton's English Republic.

Professor E.P. Thompson has accused Carlile of what he likes to call "petit bourgeois individualism". He says that:

> What Carlile was doing was taking the bourgeois jealousy of the power of the Crown, in defence of their political and property rights, and extending it to the Shoreditch Hatter or the Birmingham toymaker and his artisans.[90]

Like Cobbett, Carlile regarded one of the great evils afflicting little masters and artisans as being taxation by sinecurists and placemen. He believed there should be as little government as possible and that little must be cheap. He said that every man must be free to think, to write, to trade or to carry a gun, but he was preoccupied with the first two to the point where freedom of the press was no longer a means but an end in itself. Thompson disapproves of this but surely it is understandable considering the pressures on the radical press and freedom of speech at the time, together with Carlile's long spells in unpleasant prisons, that this struggle would become so overwhelmingly important to him.

Patricia Hollis is also fairly critical of the development of Carlile's political thought. She states that his writings never advanced beyond the stage they had reached in 1819. For his description of "Old Corruption" as "kingcraft, lordcraft, and priestcraft" he went back to Paine and the Age of Reason and seemed incapable of going beyond this.

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90 Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, 765.

Ironically, he criticised as narrow minded, other writers who thought taxes were the sole source and mainstay of corruption, and that universal suffrage was the remedy.[91] Only republicanism and the end of priestly and aristocratic power, said Carlile, would free the people from "Old Corruption"; taxes would then disappear automatically.[92] The clergy he detested as the chief buttress of "Old Corruption" for they, like the nobility, lived off the financial manipulation of that corruption, namely rates tithes and taxes; but they were even worse because they used religion to make the people acquiesce in the situation.

David Tribe has observed that Carlile effectively established the pattern for mainstream British Republicanism for at least the next half-century. Moreover, he expressed the opinion that "all the essential ideas of the movement led by Bradlaugh came from this source".[93] There is much truth in what Tribe says. We have seen how Carlile emphasised individualism and education together with his hostility to government interference in society. Such views were certainly prominent in Bradlaugh's make-up. Tribe's opinion is reinforced by Carlile's notion of a republic as explained in the very first issue of the Republican. Carlile defined a republican government as one "which consults the public interest -- the interest of the whole people". He asked for a "fair and equal system of representation without excluding the suffrage of any one man of sound

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91 Carlile, ed., Republican, 24 May 1822.

92 Hollis, Pauper Press, 206.

93 Tribe, President Charles Bradlaugh, M.P., 315.

mind and unimpeached conduct: then let every other thing stand or fall with it".[94] The only other necessity stipulated by Carlile was "a House of real representatives possessing a Democratic ascendancy, renewed every year, free from the influence or control of any bodies or establishments".[95] This certainly anticipates the republic pure and simple as advocated by Bradlaugh and other political republicans fifty years later. Of course Carlile, like Bradlaugh, was also an unbeliever: "That I have since my imprisonment avowed what is vulgarly called Atheism I confess".[96]

We must surely conclude, therefore, that Carlile's publications, whatever their shortcomings, made a lasting impression on the history of English radicalism. The support given to him was phenomenal, over £ 1,400 being collected towards his legal expenses. A large proportion of that sum was made up of hard-earned pennies contributed by the poor. In 1822 alone almost £ 900 was donated by fifty-seven localities throughout Britain. Nearly £ 400 of this came from London, but other towns that sent over £ 20 were Edinburgh, Huddersfield, Leeds, Manchester, Stockport and Nottingham. Apparently forty or fifty localities boasted hard-core Carlileite groups, and notwithstanding their hero's dislike of organisation, about half of these reported organised societies.[97] According to Aldred "150 persons suffered incarceration for acting as

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94 Carlile, ed., Republican, 24 September 1819.

95 Ibid. 96 Ibid., 28 March 1823. 97 Ibid., 30 December 1825.

Carlile's agents in this struggle", that is, for selling forbidden literature.[98]

It is now appropriate to analyse the group of republicans that effectively took over from Carlile and spearheaded the movement in the late twenties and early thirties. These are the men who fit into Patricia Hollis' aforementioned second category of more progressive and original radicals. Reformers like James Watson, Henry Hetherington, John Cleave, William Lovett, William Carpenter, and J.B. Lorymer were, besides being involved in the radical press, all prominent figures in the National Union of the Working Classes: no distrust of organisation here. E.P. Thompson, for one, maintains that they and their associates left Carlile far behind in their political and social theory.[99] Notwithstanding Thompson's judgement, these people really were in debt to Carlile as it was he who began the struggle they had chosen to continue. Incidently, it should not be forgotten that Carlile himself continued to put out various publications in the early thirties but none of them managed to rekindle the fire of the original Republican.

James Watson was a young radical publisher from Leeds who moved to London in the twenties to replace the drain on Carlile's rapidly vanishing shopmen. It was not long before Watson himself was forced to serve a year's imprisonment for reissuing Elihu Palmer's Principles of Nature, the most popular radical work after those by Paine. Ten

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98 Aldred, Richard Carlile, 131.

99 Thompson, The Making of the English Working Classes, 768.

years later he served a further six months for selling Hetherington's unstamped Poor Man's Guardian. Despite these setbacks Watson survived to publish radical literature well into the 1850's and was responsible for teaching a good deal to the young Bradlaugh.

In 1830, Charles X of France was forced to abdicate, and Louis Philippe, the "Citizen King", replaced him. For many "the revelation of the July Revolution was that history is made by the people"[100] and this sparked off a new wave of political activity in Britain which merged with the agitation for the Reform Bill. On 26 March 1831, Henry Hetherington published his first weekly Republican: Or Voice of the People price $\frac{1}{2}$d, and, like the Poor Man's Guardian, unstamped. This was followed in August by the Radical which became the Radical Reformer until merging with the Republican in the winter of 1832. When Hetherington was imprisoned in December, the paper merged with Watson and Cleave's Working Man's Friend. In contrast to Miss Hollis, David Tribe thinks that "Hetheringtonian republicanism was in the bland Carlile-Bradlaugh tradition".[101] What is certain is that Hetherington's publications were republican, favoured universal male suffrage, and were vehemently anticlerical. His papers also reported regularly on debates at London's Rotunda, where all the patrons referred to each other as "citizen" in emulation of their continental brethren.

The editor of Hetherington's Republican from the beginning of 1832

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100 Douglas Johnson, Guizot -- Aspects of French History 1787-1874 (London, 1963), 241.

101 Tribe, President Charles Bradlaugh M.P., 316.

was James Baden Lorymer. This young man was a former barrister whose "apocalyptic radicalism made the columns of Hansard, edited over six years a profusion of Radicals, Republicans and Reformers, adding or subtracting papers as they caught his fancy".[102] When Hetherington was sent to prison, Lorymer struck out on his own, launching a library of republican books and a tract society. In fact, he eventually turned his office into the Western Republican Repository and from it published the Bonnet Rouge from February through April 1833. He replaced the Bonnet Rouge with his own Republican which ran for a year.

Since Carlile distrusted organisation the republican movement was robbed of its natural leader. Lorymer tried to use his papers to organise the London republicans, and along with associates such as Lee, Davenport and Mee, he suggested that a National Convention be called to discuss the means by which land might be restored to the people: "they tapped a land hunger and an agrarian dream that passed through Owen into the various land schemes of the 1840's".[103] But more than this, such aspirations take one back to Winstanley and the Diggers and forward to the Land and Labour League. Although separated by over two centuries, both groups argued on the basis of the Norman Yoke. This was the notion that the land belonging to the English people had been sequestered by foreign oppressors following the Norman Conquest, and what they left was seized by an unauthorized church at the time of the Refor-

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102 Hollis, Pauper Press, 127.

103 Ibid., 213.

mation. Such arguments were used by both Cobbett and Paine at the turn of the century, and Lorymer combined them with an attack on "Old Corruption" and the aristocrats who prevented the people from being represented in parliament.[104]

The Great Reform Act was passed in 1832 but it left most of the radical world feeling thoroughly disillusioned as there was almost nothing in it for the working man. In July 1833 in the wake of this disappointment Lorymer founded the Republican Association which linked up small societies and met frequently at a house in Theobalds Road. In addition to his own projects he wrote for the Working Man's Friend and sent a couple of letters to Carpenter's True Sun, for the first of which he was prosecuted. He also lectured intermittently at the Rotunda.[105] More than Hetherington then, Lorymer was a very different breed of republican from Carlile. He was infinitely more practical and made a genuine attempt to organise the republican movement and put it on a sound footing.

Unfortunately for the republicans, they had no support in Parliament during these years, but there was hope for the future vested in such persons as T. Wakley, a middle class radical who stood for Finsbury in the General Election of 1832. His platform was extremely radical for a Parliamentary candidate at that time. It included demands for an end to primogeniture and entail, tithes, monopolies, taxes on knowledge, flogging, the press gang, negro slavery, assessed taxes, a variety of

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104 Ibid. 105 Ibid., 263.

customs duties, and the repeal of the Corn Laws. The Cosmopolite, the Reformer and the Destructive printed, at the same time, a list of proposals to be submitted to a National Convention. The list included Wakley's programme and in addition called for a republic, the disestablishment of the Church of England, the end of the National Debt, foreign troops in England, standing armies, capital punishment, the game laws, and all wars. It was also stated that Ireland should legislate for itself and that there should be laws against public nuisances, adulteration of food, and a sliding scale on machinery according to the number of men out of work. Church, Crown and charity lands should be taken over by the people, but no individual should possess more than 1,280 acres and anti-reformers and absentees no more than 60 acres. Every soldier who co-operated with the people should receive 16 acres free for life.

Thus were the details of a new society envisaged. Patricia Hollis remarks that:

> ... the radicals of the unstamped press disagreed only about its broad outlines -- whether it would be primarily agricultural or industrial; organised in communities or on a profit-sharing basis within existing businesses and whether it should be democratic or paternalistic.[106]

Mrs. Hollis makes light of these differences but they are absolutely fundamental and illustrate perfectly the lack of cohesion in the British left wing at this time.

But whatever the limitations of the republican movement in the

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106 Ibid., 253.

two decades prior to the accession of Queen Victoria, one cannot stress enough the value of the work of the journalists and publishers whose story has occupied the last few pages. Their message would undoubtedly have reached a wider reading public had it not been for continual harassment by the authorities and "burking" by many retailers who thought such newspapers were simply too hot to handle. As it was, the people they did reach formed the nucleus of English radicalism for the ensuing decades. G.A. Aldred stated that between 1831 and 1834 at least 750 people went to gaol for selling the Poor Man's Guardian and Poor Man's Conservative. However, it would appear that the authorities were slowly beginning to realise the futility of trying to prevent people from reading the literature of their choice:

> On the last prosecution of Hetherington, Lord Lyndhurst, a Tory judge, exhibited disgust with the prosecution, and practically told the jury to legalise the sale. This was done, and the stamp tax prosecution collapsed. Carlile's policy won the day and knowledge became a public right.[107]

The first encounter had been won, but the battle was only just beginning.

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107 Aldred, Richard Carlile, 132.

CHAPTER 3

THE CHARTER AND SOMETHING MORE: 1837-1867

> George the First was always reckoned
> Vile, but viler George the Second.
> And what mortal ever heard
> Any good of George the Third?
> When from earth the Fourth descended,
> (God be praised!) the Georges ended.[1]

Those lines were composed by W.S. Landor and it is probable that his opinion of William IV was no better. However, the accession to the throne of the young Queen Victoria in 1837 did much to restore the popularity of the Monarchy. Lytton Strachey remarked that

> ... the spectacle of the little girl-queen, innocent, modest, with fair hair and pink cheeks, driving through her capital, filled the hearts of the beholders with raptures of affectionate loyalty. What above all, struck everybody with overwhelming force was the contrast between Queen Victoria and her uncles. The nasty old men, debauched and selfish, pig-headed and ridiculous, with their perpetual burden of debts, confusions, and disreputabilities - they had vanished like the snows of winter, and here at last, crowned and radiant, was the spring.[2]

Even so, the affection shown to the new Queen at her accession did not prevent people calling "Mrs. Melbourne" after her during the Bedchamber Crisis.[3] Nor was the hard core of English radicals likely

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1 W.S. Landor, Atlas, 24 April 1855.

2 Lytton Strachey, Queen Victoria (New York, 1921), 72.

3 Martin, The Magic of Monarchy, 31.

to be seduced from their cause by a pretty royal face.

The Reform Act of 1832 certainly did not go far enough for most radicals. However, at least they thought it could mark the beginning of a societal transformation that would lead not only to universal suffrage, but also to the disestablishment of the Church of England and the abolition of all hereditary institutions including the House of Lords and the Monarchy.

Henry, Lord Brougham, was very much in tune with current trends in political thought, and knew that the Monarchy as an institution was far from being unanimously applauded. Brougham committed his beliefs to paper and sent the article to Queen Victoria, predicting what might happen if the shortcomings of the Monarchy were not remedied. Moreover, he warned the Queen that:

> A year has made great changes in the feelings of exuberant loyalty and affection which greeted you on your first public appearance, - feelings which, if they were sincere, and meant anything more than curiosity, did the people little credit; for what possible claim to national gratitude, or to public confidence could you possess, when you had never rendered a single public service.[4]

Brougham stated that he perceived the most manifest increase in the prevalence of republican doctrines. Moreover he suspected that the favourite occupation of the community at large was, "to dwell upon the anomalies of kingly government, and to count its cost, while no pains whatever are taken to recommend it".[5] However, he reassuringly

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[4] Henry Brougham, Letter to the Queen on the State of the Monarchy by a Friend of the People (London, 1838), 11.

[5] Ibid., 22.

added that he considered most people to be "favourable to monarchy; and that the republican party is, in point of numbers, not a majority; in point of weight from property, rank and capacity, a most inconsiderable minority indeed".[6] Above all, said Brougham in this loyal warning to his Sovereign, the franchise must be extended further if serious political and social strife was to be avoided.

By the time Victoria came to the throne an entirely new force was at work in society. As an almost exclusively proletarian movement which bitterly attacked class domination of the social and political system, Chartism was unique in the nineteenth century. In fact Trygve R. Tholfson has described it as "a working class movement of a scope and magnitude that has not been approximated before or since".[7] Chartism, prior to 1848, was neither revolutionary nor socialist, and, in most cases, its demands did not extend beyond parliamentary reform. However, leaning heavily on the left-wing legacy of the past, it formulated its own ideology rejecting that which an aggressive bourgeoisie was trying to impose. J.T. Ward has commented that

> ... with a few exceptions, the middle class reformers kept aloof from a predominantly proletarian movement. One exception was Dr. John Taylor, who was, however, hostile to the moderate Birmingham-oriented leadership. His New Liberator had failed in May 1838, but a month later the energetic democrat was establishing a new Republican Club on the very day of the Coronation.[8]

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6 Ibid.

7 Trygve R. Tholfson, Working Class Radicalism in Mid-Victorian England (New York, 1977), 23.

8 J.T. Ward, Chartism (London, 1973), 95.

However, the first Chartist-affiliated republican club of the new reign was founded by the aforementioned G.J. Harney, along with Allan Davenport and Charles Neesom. It was called the East London Democratic Association and declared its object to be the promotion of the moral and political condition of the working class "by disseminating the principles propagated by that great philosopher and redeemer of mankind, the immortal Thomas Paine".[9] The group advocated a democratic and republican England, a natural society based on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity, announcing that:

> Kings, aristocrats and tyrants of every description ... are slaves in rebellion against the sovereign of the earth, which is the people, and against the legislator of the universe which is nature.[10]

They went beyond the political moral force Chartism of Lovett and Attwood, while rejecting the doctrines of O'Connor as incoherent and impractical.

As the Queen matured, she and her husband Prince Albert played an increasingly active role in executive government, especially foreign affairs, and as a result were looked on with suspicion by some people who thought they might be going too far. On top of this the young couple persistently took advice from Albert's old friend and counsellor Baron Stockmar. Such reliance was not popular in radical circles.

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[9] Among the more useful studies of London Chartism are: D.J. Rowe, "The London Working Men's Association and the People's Charter", Past and Present, 36 (April 1967), 73-86. D.J. Rowe and Iorwerth Prothero, "The London Working Men's Association and the People's Charter", Debate and Rejoinder, Past and Present, 38 (December 1967), 169-176. Iorwerth Prothero, "Chartism in London", Past and Present, 44 (August 1969), 76-105.

[10] London Weekly Dispatch (4 June 1837).

It was bad enough that Royalty should interfere in ministerial affairs at all, but the notion that English foreign policy was being controlled by a pair of German aristocrats was simply intolerable.

The radical press of the period was not slow to use this as a pretext to attack the Monarchy. Also decried was the need for a costly Court with its useless trappings and entourage of placemen and pensioners. In August 1850 The Red Republican printed an anonymous article entitled "Royal Paupers and Plunderers".

> The Royal line has indeed been, and still is "DEAR" to the people of England. From the accession of George the Third, to the year 1848, THE TOTAL COST OF THE ROYAL FAMILY WAS ONE HUNDRED AND ONE MILLIONS, NINE HUNDRED AND FIFTY SEVEN THOUSAND, EIGHT HUNDRED POUNDS. Dear enough, in all conscience.[11]

This particular attack on the Royal Family ended with a statement of the need to:

> ... impress the too unthinking millions with the importance of the lesson left to them by Milton that the cost of the mere trappings of monarchy would more than cover the legitimate expenses of a Republic.[12]

By 1851, the paper had changed its name to the Friend of the People but its tone remained the same. On 15 February the paper's founder and editor, George Julian Harney, sarcastically reported on

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[11] Anon., "Royal Paupers and Plunderers", The Red Republican, 3 August 1850, 52.

[12] Ibid., 53.

the opening of Parliament:

> The display of "colour" was, according to the Times, truly gorgeous. The horses were of the colour of cream, the Peelers - blue, the courtiers - bronze, and the loyal spectators - green![13]

Harney went on to heap scorn upon the "landlords and money lords, who make the Queen their puppet, and the people their slaves".[14] Harney was very much the spearhead of radical republicanism in the 1850's and one of his earlier publications, the Democratic Review, greeted the birth of Prince Arthur as "... a royal burden from whom the greatest and most potent monarch in the world has condescendingly allowed herself, in her magnanimous deference to natural law, to be relieved".[15] A parody of the Prince Consort's chorale for the same event illustrates further the Review's irreverent attitude towards the Monarchy:

> Bring forth the babe! From foreign lands
> Fresh royal vampires come to greet
> This new one in its nurse's hands
> For royal mothers give no teat.
>
> Bring forth the toy of princely whim
> And on your knees fall down and pray,
> For ought we not to pray for him
> Who'll prey on us enough someday?[16]

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[14] Ibid.

[15] Democratic Review, July 1850, quoted in A.R. Schoyen, The Chartist Challenge - A Portrait of George Julian Harney (London, 1958), 188.

[16] Ibid.

Prince Albert was particularly sensitive to any adverse criticism in the press, and to his dying day never accepted or understood the ways of the British newspaper industry. In July 1860, only a few months before the Prince's death, W.E. Adams writing under the name of "Caractacus" said in the National Reformer that the Prince must not complain if his writings or speeches were attacked in the press. He must learn that this is customary in England and his rank is no protection against valid academic criticism. "Caractacus" stated that "a sham elevated so high as the throne" is corrupting everyone beneath it. But, he continued, most Englishmen were contemptuous of rank "when no natural qualifications support it" because the "divinity of kingship is obsolete".[17] He went on to maintain that by and large Englishmen were fired by patriotism rather than loyalty to the Crown.

A later chapter will be devoted entirely to the topic of the Crown and Republicanism so no more need be said on the subject at this juncture save to quote William James Linton from the English Republic dated November 1851. Bearing in mind that Linton was one of the most ardent republicans of his generation, it is highly significant that he thought Queen Victoria to be "undoubtedly our best Monarch for centuries".[18] Notwithstanding the failings of the Monarchy as an institution, Victoria, as a person, was infinitely more popular than any

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17 W.E. Adams (Caractacus), "To the Prince Consort", National Reformer, 7 July 1860.

18 W.J. Linton, ed., English Republic (London, 1851) November 1851, 355.

of her predecessors since Elizabeth I, and this was a major stumbling block for the republican movement after 1837.

It is extremely difficult to separate the various strands of radicalism in the late forties and early fifties. Chartism, republicanism and freethought intertwined making it almost impossible to distinguish one from the other. Moreover, trade unionism and co-operation occasionally intruded, to complicate matters even further. For the purpose of this thesis, however, it may be safely asserted that republicanism was nurtured on Chartist bitterness due to the failures and suppression of 1848. Those Chartists who were imprisoned were not cured of their radicalism but driven to greater extremes. The six points of the Charter, which could be put into effect within the existing constitutional framework, were deemed to be insufficient. In order to significantly reorganise society, it was stipulated that political change must be accompanied by a republic and some degree of social reform.

A serious attempt was made by William James Linton and his followers to haul republicanism out of the radical morass, and organise it on a national basis through a chain of local societies. Unfortunately, the latter were far too intellectually demanding to attract the average working man. The result was that the total number of people in Linton's organisation was never more than a few hundred. But if Linton was too much of a purist to succeed in establishing a national republican movement, he set up many precedents, both organisationally and ideologically, for his successors in 1870.

The Chartist movement, throughout its history, was notoriously prone to factionalism, and republicanism was always a subject of controversy. The Chartist Convention sent a loyal address to Queen Victoria indicating that, at least prior to 1848, there were few republicans in their ranks. Moreover, Feargus O'Connor, probably the most important Chartist leader in the forties, devoted much time and energy to preventing Chartism being swamped by republicanism.[19]

The majority of Chartist newspapers with the exception of those with which Harney, Ernest Jones and Bronterre O'Brien were involved, tended to be cynical, resenting courtiers and sinecurists, but with no deep aversion to the monarchy per se. But Harney and his associates were of the school for whom monarchy embodies, in a single identifiable form, all the evils of class government. It was propped up by a decadent aristocracy who seduced the workers from asserting their independence.

There is evidence of some radical republicanism in earlier Chartism. Alexander Somerville, the Scottish artisan, in his autobiography, discussed a plan in 1839 by certain republican Chartists and trade unionists to take over the country.[20] Somerville was pressed to participate in this enterprise but refused. Whilst in the army he had been flogged for writing newspaper articles supporting parliamentary reform, and had also co-operated with Richard Carlile on a short-lived publication entitled the Political Soldier. But Somerville was neither revolu-

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19 See the Red Republican and Friend of the People, 1850-1.

20 A. Somerville, The Autobiography of a Working Man (London, 1848), 396.

tionary nor republican and:

> On seeing the criminal folly of those who solicited me to join in the military part of the intended revolution in 1839, I, at once, set myself to counter them, by writing and publishing a series of pamphlets entitled Warnings to the People on Street Warfare.[21]

He attacked the American republic as an uncivilised country ruled by the Bowie knife, and accused the Swiss Republic of religious intolerance. He also criticised the French Revolution as having bred more chaos and violence than freedom. Somerville's faith in Britain as the home of liberty was unshakable and he naively clung to the belief that his homeland could boast complete freedom of speech and the press. This is remarkable for someone who had been brutally flogged for speaking his mind on a current political question. However, his attitude illustrates perfectly the stubborn patriotism and deference of some British artisans.[22] What is particularly important for our purpose though, is that Somerville had no doubts about the existence of a republican element in the Chartism of the late thirties and early forties.

For most English republicans in this period the holy gospel was that according to Thomas Paine, and their heroes were the nationalist freedom fighters from the Continent, such as Mazzini, Garibaldi and Kossuth. It did not seem to matter to the English republican that his idols were mostly bourgeois with little or no interest in specifically

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21 Ibid., 422.

22 See Robert Roberts, The Classic Slum (Manchester, 1971), 141-4.

working class concerns. George Howell, who became a Chartist in 1847, mentioned later that Kossuth, Mazzini, Blanc and Ledru-Rollin "were familiar to me as household words of that period".[23]

These foreign agitators were forced to spend a good deal of their time in Britain owing to the reactionary nature of the governments in their homelands. Their opinions were diverse, ranging from the bourgeois nationalist to the revolutionary socialist. However, the latter were by no means as popular as the former. Harney and his friends were in close contact with these émigrés and, on 22 September 1845, at a banquet held to celebrate the French republican constitution of 1793, succeeded in bringing together most republicans, democrats and socialists in the Society of Fraternal Democrats. John Saville has described this as "an organisation that preceded the First International by some twenty years; and it has good claim to be reckoned as the first open international association of the world socialist movement".[24]

Mazzini, though, was opposed to socialism and stood for the liberal bourgeois republic. The fact that he was generally regarded in England as "the apostle of Republicanism",[25] therefore tells us something about English working class attitudes. W.J. Linton translated Mazzini's Republic and Royalty in Italy into English and commented that "It is the

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23 George Howell Collection (Bishopsgate Institute, London), McMaster University Microfilm, 95922/1, 35.

24 Saville, introduction to The Red Republican and Friend of the People, viii.

25 Linton, "The English Republic", Friend of the People, 11 January 1851, 38.

same question the world through; Republic or Royalty; and this would be (even if the name of Mazzini were not) sufficient apology for translating"[26] this work. But some members of the radical community fervently warned Englishmen against becoming too enamoured of the doctrines of bourgeois liberals. J. George Eccarius, a disciple of Karl Marx who later became prominent in the First International, wrote in Ernest Jones' Notes to the People that "Kossuth's professed republicanism does by no means alter his character as a bourgeois politician".[27]

Whatever the particular views of these continental personalities, it can be said that every instance of republican fervour in Europe, especially France, acted as a catalyst for the English movement. Ernest Jones, addressing a public meeting at the Literary Institute in London on 28 March 1848, proclaimed that "we won't be intemperate and hot-headed - but we will be determined - we'll respect the law if the law-makers respect us - if they don't - France is a Republic".[28]

Jones seemed to see republicanism as a middle class phenomenon and that the only advantage in co-operating with middle class radicals was that they would help spread republican doctrines to the rank and file. This sentiment was expressed in an open letter to the Chartists written sometime between his arrest on 6 June 1848 and his trial on the 10th:

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26 Linton, trans., Joseph Mazzini, "Republicanism and Royalty in Italy", The Red Republican, 29 June 1850.

27 Ernest Jones, ed., Notes to the People (London, 1967), 2:887.

28 Northern Star, 1 April 1848.

> But the time is rapidly, very rapidly, approaching when the democracy of the middle class will join the working classes, and that very middle class will imbue the Chartists with a spirit of republicanism.[29]

Jones was probably referring here to former Philosophic Radicals such as J.S. Mill and Joseph Parkes.[30] While in the dock of the Old Bailey on Monday, 10 June, Ernest Jones wrote a passage which he intended to address to the judge before sentence was passed. Part of it reads as follows:

> Oh! my lord, instead of enlarging your prisons, multiply your schools. Depend on it, the schoolmaster is the best policeman ... I warn you the stream may greaten as it flows, and the word "Charter" may be changed to the shibboleth "Republic!"...[31]

Most recent authorities on the Chartists now accept the view that the decline of the movement was partly due to the spread of republicanism among certain Chartist leaders.[32] At the end of 1847 a new publication appeared on the news stands. Published by James Watson and edited by gas inspector Cornelius George Harding, it bore the name Republican, and advocated the sovereignty of the people plus the exposure of priestcraft and statecraft. However the paper died after a few months. In the summer of 1848, W.J. Linton and George Jacob Holyoake discussed the develop-

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29 Ibid., (1 July 1848).

30 Joseph Hamburger, Intellectuals in Politics - John Stuart Mill and the Philosophic Radicals, (New Haven and London, 1965), 271.

31 J. Saville, Ernest Jones - Chartist (London, 1952), 209.

32 P.W. Slosson, Decline of the Chartist Movement (London, 1967), 96, 106.

ment of the republican wing of Chartism and the possibilities of forming a republican party. They appear to have been quite ready to co-operate with the Star Chartists, namely Feargus O'Connor and his followers, but the latter were not interested. It is necessary now to take a closer look at the republicans vis-à-vis declining Chartism after 1848.

The Reverend Henry Solly, Christian Chartist and later editor of the Bee Hive newspaper, remarked in his memoirs that the government was in no doubt of the existence of a republican element in Chartism. He lamented "the deplorably mischievous and foolish Chartist gathering on Kennington Common, 10 April 1848", blaming the disastrous outcome of the demonstration on O'Connor's bad planning. He says the government was:

> ... glad to make O'Connor's folly and criminal vanity the pretext for attacks upon free speech and the right of public meetings. They hastily carried through Parliament a Bill for the "Security of the Crown and Government, making the open and advised advocacy of Republican opinions, felony!"[33]

Very much in the vanguard of republican Chartism was a man whose name has occurred several times in this chapter already; G.J. Harney. By autumn 1849 reaction in Europe was stronger than ever. The June Days had marked the defeat of the revolution in France, the Roman Republic had been suppressed and the Hungarian nationalists crushed by a combination of Austrian and Russian troops. Finally, in England the Chartist movement had taken a severe tumble from which it would never

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33 H. Solly, These Eighty Years (London, 1893), 2:59.

completely recover. The future looked bleak for Europe's radicals, but Harney's Democratic Review offered a channel of communication that was of the utmost value. The Review folded in May 1850 but its policies and functions were continued by the Red Republican, the first issue of which appeared on 22 June 1850.

The columns of the Red Republican were open to foreign radicals of all shades of opinion, the most regular contributors being Mazzini, Blanc and Ledru-Rollin. Thus, the journal became the standard source for the narratives and propaganda of foreign émigrés after the defeats of 1848-49. In fact the catholicity of Harney's editorial policy was the source of considerable irritation to Marx and Engels who wanted the paper to represent only socialist doctrines.

It seems likely that Harney was not particularly interested in the way his two German friends approached political, social and economic problems since, "eloquent declamation and denunciation were more suited to his cast of thinking than inquiry and analysis".[34] John Saville has stated that "he seems to have remained at heart an internationally minded Jacobin. That is his place in history".[35] However, after a few months the paper was brought somewhat closer to the day-to-day struggles of ordinary working people. Harney printed an appeal to trade unions and co-operative societies to send in accounts of strikes, examples of oppression by employers and results of co-operative experiments. Unlike his

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34 Saville, introduction to The Red Republican and Friend of the People, viii.

35 Ibid.

compatriot, Ernest Jones, he did appreciate that a swing to trade unions and co-operatives was a natural enough reaction to political defeat among working people.

The Red Republican lasted for twenty-four numbers, the final issue being dated 30 November 1850; Harney then changed the name to Friend of the People. The main reason for the change was that the paper was being "burked" by booksellers on account of its title, so Harney simply decided to make the paper less conspicuously seditious. In fact, the Friend ran for eight months before closing due to financial problems. It reappeared for twelve numbers in 1852 and in May of that year amalgamated with the Northern Star, which Harney had recently purchased, to become the Star of Freedom. The latter failed to endure for very long and Harney embarked on his last Chartist publishing venture, the Vanguard, a weekly, which ran for just seven numbers from January to March 1853. Throughout this time Harney received valuable support from Gerald Massey, Helen McFarlane, G.J. Holyoake, and Ernest Jones until a quarrel broke their friendship.

An increasingly disillusioned man, Harney wrote in the third number of the Vanguard that Chartists had:

> ... fallen from their once lofty position, destroyed by egotism, their very remains the prey of factious mendacious charlatans! ... In truth there is not on the soil of the country any party, or popular organisation, willing and competent to continue the struggle for the triumph of pure unsullied democracy.[36]

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[36] Ibid., xv.

From the Vanguard Harney went to Newcastle where he joined forces with Joseph Cowen Jr., the wealthy republican industrialist and prominent city politician. Together they founded the Northern Republican Brotherhood and its literary organ the Northern Tribune. After that he slid out of the mainstream of radical journalism to a six year sojourn with the Jersey Independent. Shattered by the death of his wife, he emigrated to the United States in 1855 and thenceforward, except for a few articles he sent to the Newcastle Weekly Chronicle, the British establishment was free from the sting of his pen. John Saville has pertinently summarised Harney's contribution to radical journalism:

> ... during these black days of defeated hopes and dispirited movements, Harney provided a centre for international discussion and contact that was of inestimable value both at the time and for the movements of the future.[37]

But what of the creed that Harney was initially representing? He wrote in the Red Republican in June 1850 that:

> In future numbers of the Red Republican I shall proceed to an examination of the institutions of this country with a view of deducing therefrom the absolute necessity for a grand national movement to obtain the establishment of THE CHARTER AND SOMETHING MORE![38]

That last phrase became the slogan for republicans throughout the land. In the same issue columnist Howard Morton, probably the pseudonym of

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37 Ibid., xi.

38 Harney (L'ami du Peuple), "The Charter and Something More", The Red Republican, 22 June 1850, 2.

Helen McFarlane, explained what was meant by this in the light of the development of Chartism over the last decade. Morton wrote that:

> ... CHARTISM IN 1850 Is a different thing from Chartism in 1840. The leaders of the English Proletarians have proved that they are true Democrats, and no shams by going a-head so rapidly within the last few years. They have progressed from the idea of a simple political reform to the idea of a Social Revolution.[39]

In the tradition of social republicans stretching from the Diggers to the Land and Labour League, the Red Republican advocated a public economy with nationalisation of the land and currency reform. Moreover, it attacked not only the Monarchy and aristocracy but those members of the middle classes who liked to consider themselves allies of the working man. Take, for example, an article written for the Friend of the People by Alexander Bell. He recommended the workers to "distrust the 'liberals'" for "history hath proved them to be deadly enemies of the people ..."[40] In fact, a campaign was launched in the Red Republican to oppose the Working Men's Memorial to Sir Robert Peel. It was indignantly asserted that "no circumstances within our recollection has [sic] been to us so disgusting as the attempt of certain professing Chartists and middle class liberals to exhibit the late member for Tamworth in the light of a "working man's friend"."[41]

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39 Helen McFarlane (Howard Morton), "Chartism in 1850", Ibid., 3.

40 Alexander Bell, "What have the "Liberals" done for the People", Friend of the People, 28 December 1850, 20.

41 Anon., "The Peel Monument", The Red Republican, 17 August 1850, 69.

As a logical extension of this suspicion of the middle classes, it is only to be expected that Harney and his friends would be most anxious to imbue the workers with a sense of class consciousness, and to ultimately aim at abolishing the class system altogether. Harney's editorial for the Friend on 25 January 1851 declared that:

> ... political rights must be used to enforce the acknowledgement of SOCIAL RIGHTS, especially the right of all to live by free labour on a free soil. The cooperative and industrial movement will advance the discussion of social principles and thereby prepare the way for those Social Revolutionists who seek, through Universal Suffrage, THE ABOLITION OF CLASSES AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF LABOUR.[42]

The republicans were extremely fond of ridiculing the various industrial exhibitions that were held in this period. These were branded as just another instrument of class oppression since the artisans themselves received little or no recognition for their labours. If their idea or product was sold abroad, the profits went straight into the purse of the employer. The Great Exhibition of 1851 naturally qualified for special attention. It was denounced as "a remarkable feat of flunkeyism", and it was declared that a genuine industrial exhibition could only take place

> ... when the working classes shall first have renounced flunkeyism and substituted for the rule of masters, and the royalty of a degenerated monarchy - the supremacy of Labour and the Sovereignty of the Nation.[43]

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[42] Harney, "Social and Political Reform", Friend of the People, 25 January 1851, 50.

[43] Harney (L'ami du Peuple), "The Great Exhibition", Friend of the People, 10 May 1851, 190.

There was also on this subject, a fascinating letter signed "Christopher", which guardedly spoke of a plot to set fire to the Crystal Palace.[44] This is somewhat ironical in the light of the ultimate fate of that structure.[45]

It might seem inconsistent to the modern reader that a newspaper advocating opinions such as those described above, could be an enthusiastic supporter of the British Empire. Nevertheless, Harney himself wrote two articles on the subject. Taking care never to attack the concept of Empire per se, he merely grumbled that the lower classes had not received their fair share of benefits from the colonies. He stated that "the integrity of the British Empire must be maintained; but the advantages of that empire must be no longer monopolised by privileged usurpers and Moloch-like Mammonites".[46]

Probably the best summary of the creed of those social republicans among the latter days Chartists, is to be found in Harney's final editorial for the Friend of the People. He belittled the Monarch as a "puppet in the hands of a ruthless oligarchy of landlords and capitalists" and went on to proclaim that:

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44 "Christopher", What Exhibitions have done for the People, Ibid., 7 December 1850, 2.

45 The Crystal Palace was destroyed by fire.

46 Harney (L'ami du Peuple), "Our Indian and Colonial Empire", The Red Republican, 24 August 1850, 32.

> It is not enough to abolish what are termed "class distinctions", classes themselves must be abolished; otherwise the reign of democracy is impossible ... the SOCIAL REPUBLIC as I understand it, means the abolition of classes, and the extinction of wage slavery. Instead of the present order of things the STATE would be THE ONLY LANDLORD, CAPITALIST AND TRADER.[47]

However, as was stated earlier, by no means all Chartists were in favour of a republic, let alone the sort of social republic that Harney and his friends wanted. E.F. Nichol was a republican but he was unhappy at the prospect of the new trend dividing the left-wing:

> There is little doubt that if the Chartist party prove themselves practical men, and make themselves a party worthy of the respect of earnest, thoughtful men, that it will absorb this small body of determined Republicans. Should the Chartist party not prove worthy, I, for one, would gladly see the Republicans take its place. But would unworthy Chartists make worthy Republicans?[48]

A stream of letters to the Red Republican called for the unification of the Left. Thus James Williams pleaded for the "consolidation of the democratic mind of the country into one entire body",[49] and Richard Marsden echoed these sentiments.[50] These two letters provoked a short editorial comment on what Harney considered were the miscon-

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47 Harney (L'ami du Peuple), "The Republic-Democratic - Social and Universal", Friend of the People, 26 July 1851, 278.

48 E.F. Nichol, "Aids and Hindrances to Democracy", Ibid., 5 July 1851, 255.

49 J. Williams, "The Great Obstacle to Union", The Red Republican, 24 September 1850, 115.

50 R. Marsden, "Popular Organisation", Ibid., 114-5.

ceptions of the two men:

> If we understand Mr. Marsden aright, he would have all parties unite simply for the obtainment of the Charter. So would we; but with this difference, that we would have the people instructed in a knowledge of their social rights while struggling for the obtainment of political power.[51]

It is doubtful whether Harney was as willing to co-operate with the non-republican Chartists as were Linton, Holyoake and Ernest Jones; but this hardly mattered because on the other side Feargus O'Connor remained implacable. O'Connor, unlike Jones and many other Chartists, had avoided imprisonment. A.R. Schoyen suggests that it was a sojourn in gaol that had converted a goodly number of O'Connor's colleagues. When referring to the republican aspect of Chartism, Schoyen states that "still another accession of strength came with the freeing of the London Chartists sentenced in 1848, whose imprisonment had, as one declared, converted them into "Red Republicans"."[52]

In a letter to Engels in March 1849 Harney spoke of:

> ... O'C's villainous denunciations of our principles. I say "our principles" for his denunciations were levelled against more than Republicanism - against every principle we hold dear. The fact is he is a thorough aristocrat masquerading in the outward profession of democracy. More still; he is worse than an aristocrat, he has all the vulgarism, the money-grabbing (in spite of his boasting to the contrary) of a dirty bourgeois.[53]

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51 Harney, "Union", Ibid., 116.

52 Schoyen, The Chartist Challenge, 196.

53 Harney to Engels, 19 March 1849, E.G. and R.M. Black, eds., The Harney Papers (Assen, 1969), 249.

For a while Ernest Jones made a real effort to compromise for which he was attacked by G.W.M. Reynolds, Marx and Engels. His address "To The Chartists" was an impassioned plea for Chartist unity stating that:

> ... to divide the movement in two separate and rival associations. This is just what the government want - if they can neutralise the Chartist agitation, by following one portion of it against the other, during the stormy times that are coming, they will be able to weather the crises in safety.[54]

On 4 January 1851 the Friend of the People contained a report of the first meeting of a new Chartist Executive.[55] O'Connor had been elected to the body in the hope that factionalism would be forgotten. Unfortunately, this was not to be. O'Connor and his supporters on the Manchester Council refused the overtures of the republicans and the Northern Star declined even to print Jones' appeal. One can easily see how "Servo" could sorrowfully remark that "Chartism is only known to the nation by its squabbles and impotence ..."[56]

Mirroring the decline of orthodox Chartism, the circulation of O'Connor's newspaper, the Northern Star, dropped from 21,000 in 1848 to 1,200 in 1852.[57] As stated, Harney bought the Star planning to merge it with his Friend of the People. Ernest Jones was most upset at this

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54 Jones, "To the Chartists", Friend of the People, 25 January 1851.

55 Friend of the People, 4 January 1851.

56 E.F. Nichol (Servo), "To the Ernest and Thoughtful of all Classes", Ibid., 12 April 1851, 161.

57 Schoyen, The Chartist Challenge, 223.

new venture and he accused Harney of trying to ruin the chances of his proposed People's Paper, by direct competition. This, together with Jones' temporary inclination to co-operate with middle class radicals, caused a rift between the two leading republicans that damaged the movement considerably. However, they were reconciled some years later, ironically when neither was any longer a force in public life.

It would appear that the majority of hard-core Chartists had turned to some form of republicanism, while those who had favoured the Charter pure and simple fell away, probably to concentrate their energies in co-operative societies and trade unions. As a result O'Connor lost ground rapidly. He

> ... damned Harney and Reynolds as "Red Republicans" and denounced socialism and communism at a public meeting. In a pitiful scene he was told flatly that, while they owed much to his past efforts, his usefulness was at an end - a judgement which evoked loud cheers.[58]

The Reynolds referred to here is, of course, G.W.M. Reynolds who was to become one of the leading radical journalists and newspaper proprietors of the century.

What then did the future hold? The rank and file who had supported the Charter pure and simple were fast disappearing and the process was hastened by the decline of O'Connor's mental powers. On the other hand, the republicans were few in number and, though very enthusiastic, disorganised and prone to factionalism. The clearest head in the crisis

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58 Schoyen, The Chartist Challenge, 196.

turned out to belong to W.J. Linton who hoped to:

> ... supersede the present associations by a more vital, a further-purposed, and a more powerful organisation ... if an altogether new organisation is to be commenced, what can it be but Republican? Taking the enduring principle of the Charter as its first object; the foundation upon which to build.[59]

He went on to put the whole matter in a nutshell and give the soundest advice possible: "Chartism is indeed dead. Bury it decently, and go home to think about what next is to be done".[60] Linton at least, did just that.

It would be meaningful to pause at this juncture to put this narrative in the context of national politics as a whole. Throughout the 1850's both major political parties were weak. The Tories had not yet recovered from the Corn Law crisis, and the Whig party had still to discover its Gladstonian identity. Lord Derby and Benjamin Disraeli guided a minority Tory government gamely through 1852, and Disraeli even attempted a curious alliance with the radicals in an effort to prolong his survival in office. However Bright would have none of it, but, as Robert Blake suggests, even if he had been prepared to play, "the game would have been effectively ended by Derby".[61] The Tories were defeated by a coalition of Whigs and Peelites which inevitably became the next government. Lord Aberdeen, the Peelite leader, al-

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59 Linton, ed., The English Republic, February 1851, 85.

60 Ibid., 175.

61 Robert Blake, Disraeli (London, 1966), 343.

though commanding only about forty votes in the House, became Prime Minister and secured five more places in the Cabinet for his followers. Russell and Palmerston were both unhappy but forced to make the best of things.

The next ten years saw a succession of weak minority and coalition governments with no party appearing capable of providing strong national leadership. In addition to this, the Crimea was the scene of a futile and bloody war. One might think that this situation presented a golden opportunity for republicans and radicals to strengthen their hand and endeavour to influence the course of national politics. The opportunity was not taken advantage of because the Left was hopelessly fragmented and incapable of uniting over anything. Thus, out of apparent instability arose stability. Equipoise reigned supreme and Palmerston to some extent kept the working classes occupied with xenophobia of varying descriptions. In fact, not until Palmerston died in 1865 would the road to reform be open once more.

The one man who did try to impose some order on the prevailing left-wing chaos was Linton. His father had been a republican and the atmosphere in which Linton was raised was thick with the spirits of heroes of the English commonwealth. Linton was trained as an engraver, but from an early age pondered religious and political questions deeply. He became a secularist and contributed to the Oracle of Reason, one of the country's first atheist magazines. His own first editorial effort was on the National in 1839.

Linton's importance lies in the fact that he devised an entire political, social and economic system for his English Republic, and this justifies a thorough examination of his theories. None of his contempories endeavoured to construct such a utopia, being generally content to present a rough outline of the type of republic they wanted. In 1867 Linton published a brochure which Kineton Parkes believed to contain the best definition of his idea of republicanism, and indeed, this included all the fundamental tenets of Linton's ideology.[62]

During the last four months of 1850 Linton contributed a series of ten letters on Republican Principles to the Red Republican. Much of the material for the social and political theory behind these letters was based on the pamphlet To the Peoples - the Organisation of Democracy, issued by the Central European Democratic Committee in London on 22 July 1850, and compiled by Ledru-Rollin, Albert Darasz, Arnold Ruge and Mazzini.[63] One of Linton's disciples, W.E. Adams, tells us that most of the work for the pamphlet was done by Mazzini whom he called "the greatest teacher since Christ". He continued his eulogy as follows:

> I do not hesitate to say that it is loftier, broader, and more enduring than even the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration ... was meant for a nation: the Proclamation was meant for Mankind.[64]

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62 Linton, "Ireland for the Irish, Rhymes and Reasons against Landlordism with a Preface on Fenianism and Republicanism", (New York, 1867), quoted in K. Parkes, "William James Linton", Bookman's Journal and Print Collector, 8 July 1921. See Appendix 1.

63 W.E. Adams, Memoirs of a Social Atom (London, 1903), 1:262.

64 Ibid., 263.

The French Revolution had deified Rights, but it was reserved for Mazzini to "preach the higher doctrine, Duty, which meant sacrifice, service, endeavour, the devotion of all the faculties possessed and all the powers acquired to the welfare and improvement of humanity".[65] Devotion to duty in the Mazzinian sense was a priority for Linton and his disciples.

Linton's economic ideas, says F.B. Smith, mostly derived from James Bronterre O'Brien's contributions to the Southern Star and the Poor Man's Guardian.[66] Linton never took a doctrinaire position on economics and could always be relied upon to support middle class demands for tax reduction and cuts in government expenditure. He was also influenced to some extent by the semi-socialist Christian Republicanism of Lamennais, together with the pamphlets of William Hone and Richard Carlile.

Linton had no wish to kill Chartism. On the contrary, he believed that "universal suffrage is the first step of republican progress",[67] and what he wanted to do was:

> ... to form ... within the Chartist body a knot, however small, of further looking men, determined to teach themselves and others what use they should make of the Suffrage when obtained, and acknowledging the Republic as the end for which they require it.[68]

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65 Ibid., 265.

66 F.B. Smith, Radical Artisan - William James Linton 1812-97 (Manchester, 1973), 31.

67 W.J. Linton, "Republican Principles Letter X", The Red Republican, 30 November 1850, 187.

68 Ibid., 187.

He was elected to the Chartist Executive in 1850, but on losing his seat the following year decided the movement had nothing left to offer and resolved to devote his attentions entirely to his brain-child; a periodical entitled the English Republic.

The publication started as a monthly but was issued weekly throughout 1852 and 1853. However, in 1854, it reverted to being a monthly and remained so until it folded in April 1855 "because the response I meet with is not sufficient to justify the further continuance of my endeavour".[69] The paper was produced, along with the Northern Tribune, from Linton's home at Brantwood in the Lake District. That estate, incidently, was purchased for him by Joseph Cowen. The staff consisted of himself, W.E. Adams, and two other young men named James Glover and Thomas Hailing.[70] They were joined for a time by George Robert Vine who felt his historic mission to be the task of converting England to republicanism. He was wont to push around a handcart decorated in republican colours of blue, white and green, and inscribed with the motto "God and the People". The cart would be filled with democratic publications which he would peddle to passers-by. The paper was printed at Leeds and distributed in London by James Watson. Joseph Cowen of Newcastle paid the bills for paper and printing.[71]

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69 English Republic, 15 April 1855.

70 W.E. Adams, Memoirs, 1:280-1.

71 Ibid., 1:285-6.

F.B. Smith remarks in his absorbing biography of Linton that "the English Republic, manifesting the teachings of Lamennais, Mazzini, and Ledru-Rollin's La Voix du Proscrit, is the fullest and most venturesome transposition of European republicanism into English".[72] But more than this, the paper supplied a complete social democratic programme. It encompassed a focus for egalitarian fervour and a commitment to parliamentary reform and class harmony that kept alive the essence of "moral force" Chartist ideology through a demoralising period. Consequently, such values were allowed to survive to be taken up again by the reform movement of the 1860's and the republicanism of the 1870's.

Linton's scheme did not provide for the supremacy of the producing classes. Like Hetherington and Watson, he was content to be vague about the distribution of authority between classes once universal suffrage was achieved. He looked forward ultimately to a classless society but in the meantime was content to hope for an equal distribution of powers and mutual respect between classes. In fact, he believed that the aristocracy and gentry would disappear automatically once hereditary possession of land was abolished.

He wanted everyone's needs to be provided for by an economy to which all would contribute and whose goods would all be distributed equally. In such an economy, hours of labour could be progressively reduced and a proportion of the profits invested in beautifying factories and improving machinery. He was determined that the "natural

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72 F.B. Smith, Radical Artisan, 105.

balance" between the resources of the nation and its people be restored. Whether or not it had ever existed is open to question; but Linton, like many earlier radicals including Algernon Sydney, Richard Carlile and John Cartwright, clung to the notion that such a situation had existed during the reign of King Alfred.

Factories were to be small and conducted by groups of hand-workers. This idea reflects Linton's background of industry in London where independent, respectable craftsmen in small workshops predominated. He had no understanding of the great northern mills and semi-skilled factory workers, let alone the great mass of unskilled labourers, and the different problems they presented to reformers. His citizens would be well paid and not overworked and supposedly would labour from a combination of altruism and the pleasure of making the product of their choice.

The republic was to embrace ongoing social reform but would not be thoroughly socialist. The citizens' wages and the objects they produced were to remain inviolate from the community. The land, and in some cases, the factories, were to be state owned, but small personal properties were sacred. His scheme echoed the first clause of the "Declaration of the National Union of the Working Classes" in 1831 which stated that "all property (honestly acquired) to be sacred and inviolable".[73] Linton himself stipulated in one of his "Republican Letters" that:

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73 W. Lovett, Life and Struggles (London, 1876), 73.

> Our complaint is not that there is too much individual property but that there is too little; not that the few have, but that the many have not. Property, wherever it is the real result of work - "its sign and its fruit" - we deem inviolable, sacred as an individual right.[74]

There are shades of John Locke here together with a liberal dose of Mazzini, but no Karl Marx save for the labour theory of value.

At times, Linton's stance on the subject of private property seems decidedly ambiguous, but one must simply remember that, anticipating Henry George, he treated land in a slightly different way from other types of property. He thought the earth had been bequeathed to mankind as the source of communal well-being and its possession was not linked in any way to the owner's individuality. He opposed O'Connor's land scheme on the grounds that it encouraged individual ownership and would therefore be a barrier to nationalisation.

Linton wrote in the English Republic in April 1852 that "Republicanism is not republican unless it is social as well as democratic. But on the other hand, Socialism may be republican or not".[75] What he meant by this was that socialists frequently ignored those libertarian and ethical aspects of republicanism that were so dear to him. There was no point in replacing the tyranny of a number of small capitalists with oppression by an even stronger corporate majority.

More than anything else though, Linton stressed the importance

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74 Linton, "Republican Principles Letter IV", The Red Republican, 20 October 1850, 147.

75 English Republic, April 1852, 69.

of free, compulsory state education in both technical and academic disciplines. He held that education is the "business of Government, because only Government can be intrusted with it, and because only Government can officially manage it".[76] Citizens must learn to recognise their duty to practise altruism and help everyone realise their potentiality for personal expression. The representative assembly was to formulate national legislation but this would be ratified by referendum, so obviously the populace would have to be well educated and knowledgeable about current affairs. Local government would demand even more public participation. All restrictions on the press, speech or association, whether for political, social or religious purposes, must be abolished, as such limitations necessarily hampered the spread of knowledge. Among his other schemes was a system of central banking and national credit. People needing additional capital for tools, further education, housing, or to help them in time of sickness or unemployment, would receive loans from the People's money to be held in the Treasury.

W.J. Linton's goal can best be summed up in his own words. He was anxious to revive "the soul of earnestness which marked the brief days of our Commonwealth as the grandest period of English history ..."[77] He did not merely wish to change society; he knew that if his English Republic was to work, he had to change the people as well. Although he looked back to the Commonwealth as a time when England's prestige abroad had never been higher, he was neither a militarist nor an imperialist.

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76 Ibid., December 1850, 23. 77 Ibid., 4.

Rather, he envisaged an international government based on a global federation of national republics. He stated that "the object is to found a Republican Church, in harmony with the European Republican Party; not to add to the great number of Republican sects already existing".[78]

Fundamentally, he believed in the perfectibility of the human race; that is to say in its power of continual improvement. Furthermore, he advocated that this improvement may be systematized and accelerated by men acting in association, freely organised under a government of the wisest and most virtuous. What he really wanted was the harmonization of individual welfare with national progress. Linton's writings inspired the formation of several working men's republican clubs. One was formed in the Leicester area by John Sketchley, a disillusioned Chartist.[79] Others started groups in Bethnal Green, Macclesfield, York, Manchester, Liverpool, Nottingham, Banbury, Cambridge, Plymouth and Cheltenham.[80]

W.E. Adams was very much involved with the Cheltenham society. Adams received his political education from the works of Paine, and G.W.M. Reynolds' early publications, but the young man's imagination was really captured by the events of 1848 in France. He was barely seventeen when he became a member of the National Charter Association, and two years later was taking the Chair at Chartist meetings and corresponding with M.P.'s regarding the treatment of Chartist prisoners. He tells us that:

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78 Ibid., 59.

79 See below, 187 n. 34, 443.

80 Adams, Memoirs, 1:151-2.

> ... even at that time I was "a Chartist and something more", for it appeared to me that the Charter fell far short of the ideal that ought to be sought and must be attained before society could be constituted on a proper basis. And so, while still active in Chartist circles, I was at the age of eighteen years and a half elected president of a Republican Association.[81]

Adams says that he and his Cheltenham friends disliked Harney's Red Republican because it "savoured of blood ... We were Republicans but not Red Republicans!!"[82] Even so, he joined the Fraternal Democrats and was a lifelong admirer of Harney. He goes on to explain the standpoint of the Cheltenham group: "The Republic as they understand it, was not so much a form of government as a system of morals, a law of life, a creed, a faith, and new and benign gospel".[83] One can detect the influence of their mentor in the quasi-religious nature of their republicanism. And again they closely followed Linton's instructions in not attempting to disturb the established order by agitation:

> We wanted to make Republicans not a Republic. When we had done that, we felt and knew that the change would come as naturally and with as little disturbance as the fruit succeeds the flower.[84]

Inspired by the high ideals of Linton, these young men worked hard at distributing tracts and leaflets in whatever locality they found themselves. Generally, their meetings would be small and held in member's houses. At these gatherings political works would be discussed, tracts circulated and members' essays read and debated. Their idealism

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81 Ibid., 1:262. 82 Ibid., 1:223. 83 Ibid., 1:266. 84 Ibid., 2:330.

was such that they never stood a chance of creating the mass movement necessary to put their ideas into practice. Adams confessed that they could never have converted the ignorant masses "for our rules were so strict and our demands on the understanding of our associates too exigent ..."[85] Every member of the society had to thoroughly comprehend each aspect of the principles he was going to teach; it was not enough merely to call oneself a republican.

Among Linton's other followers may be numbered William Newton of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, and Thomas Mottershead, later to become a prominent Trade Union leader and member of the General Council of the I.W.M.A. James Thompson, a poet and activist in connection with George Standring's Republican of the 1880's, was an old associate of Linton's, as was George Dawson, who for many years preached ethical religion and republicanism in Birmingham.

The influence of Linton and his associates on the history of British republicanism was considerable. He had reservations about socialism on the same grounds as that other great secularist republican Charles Bradlaugh, considering that it endangered individual liberty. Yet his republic would be more social than Bradlaugh's and he believed his system to contain most of the important features of the socialist creed. For him the socialists' main deficiency was in the department of ethics and morals. But more than this, the Lintonites were the first to attempt to begin a nationwide republican movement based on local societies, and boasting its own newspaper as an organ of propaganda. They failed

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85 Ibid., 1:268.

because their ideals were too high and their utopia too remote for the average working men to grasp. The education system they proposed for the final scheme of things would have needed to be in existence at the outset to create the new citizens who could make the dream come true. A more material legacy bequeathed by Linton to the later republicans was the English republican flag, the Tricolour. He composed a poem of thirteen verses about his chosen banner: the second verse reads thus:

> Choose for hope the blue sky serene, freedom
> Albion's cliffs so white,
> And the eternal ocean's green choose we for
> our native right:
> Blue and white and green shall span England's
> flag republican.[86]

Throughout British history there has been a tendency for republicans to be prone to secularism or at least anticlericalism. The Red Republican ran a weekly series entitled "The Crimes and Frauds of Priests", and in fact George Jacob Holyoake, the most prominent secularist of the period, wrote the editorial for the preliminary issue of the Friend of the People when Harney was ill. For the most part though, Holyoake was involved in enough projects of his own to keep him more than occupied. From 1843-1845, he edited, with the assistance of M.Q. Ryall, published and printed a journal called The Movement (Anti Persecution) Gazette) and Register of Progress, a weekly journal of republican politics, anti-theology and utilitarian morals. He founded the pioneering secularist journal the Oracle of Reason and then in 1846 began the Reasoner

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86 English Republic, December 1850, 35.

announcing that: "The Reasoner will be Communistic in Social Economy - utilitarian in morals - Republican in Politics - and Anti-Theological in Religion".[87] The journal ran until 1861, a long stint for a radical newspaper in those times, and then evolved into the Counsellor and ultimately the Secular World. In 1854, the Fleet Street Advertiser had appeared but not lasted for long. William Maccall's Propagandist was equally short-lived.

By 1860, there was little agitation on the continent and Britain became part of this trend. Consequently, the republican element in the Reasoner diminished. However, Holyoake had never been too concerned about organising English republicanism, having always been more interested in secularism and primitive Owenite socialism.[88] His papers exhibited a general sympathy with republican principles and enthusiastically supported republican movements abroad.

Holyoake's shop in Fleet Street was dedicated to "Communism and Propagandism" and commonly known as the Political Exchange. It was used as a rendezvous by radicals and revolutionaries from all over Europe.[89] Holyoake informs us in his memoirs that:

> We printed and published also the "Manifesto of the Republican Party", by Kossuth, Ledru-Rollin, and Mazzini. Though written by Mazzini, he modestly, as was his wont, put his name last. All the publications I issued bore my imprint as printer as well as publisher.[90]

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87 The Reasoner, 3 June 1846.

88 For Holyoake's republican principles, see Appendix 13.

89 J. McCabe, George Jacob Holyoake (London, 1922), 165.

90 G.J. Holyoake, Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life (London, 1906), 165.

The Manifesto was essentially a call for international co-operation under the banner of republicanism.[91] Holyoake was personally involved in moral force republican organisations such as the Democratic Friends of all Nations and the People's International League. The latter also included Linton, Adams, W.J. Fox, P.A. Taylor, Thornton Hunt and J. Stansfeld.[92] Holyoake was never as close as Harney to the extremist refugees, who like Marx, were involved in the League of the Just which had become the Communist League in 1847. The secularists of the 1870's remained similarly moderate. In his discourses on free thought in this period, Edward Royle has stated that:

> The atheists may not always have been enthusiastic Chartists but they were dedicated republicans ... Throne and altar, especially in Continental Europe, were two aspects of the same repressive system, and socialism and communism were international terms linking the aims and even the organisations of the British radicals. This spirit of international co-operation was promoted by the fact that Britain in the nineteenth century was a recognised political sanctuary for refugees of all persuasions.[93]

In 1858 on the occasion of Orsini's attempt to assassinate Napoleon III, Edward Truelove was prosecuted for publishing a pamphlet by W.E. Adams condoning tyrannicide. A defence fund was started, of which a young radical secularist named Charles Bradlaugh volunteered to

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91 Louis Kossuth, Ledru-Rollin, and Joseph Mazzini, "Manifesto of the Republican Party", (London, 1855), in the Joseph Cowen Collection, Newcastle City Archives, A36.

92 Cowen Collection, A9.

93 E. Royle, Victorian Infidels (Manchester, 1974), 137-8.

be secretary. David Tribe tells us that "this brought Bradlaugh into contact with the republican set".[94] He became a close friend of the French émigré, Dr. Simon Bernard, who introduced him to the likes of Mazzini, Blanc, Ledru-Rollin and Linton.

In February 1860, Bradlaugh, who was now using the pseudonym "Iconoclast" founded The Reformer Newspaper Co. Ltd. with a capital of two thousand ten shilling shares. In 1860 radicalism in England was at a low ebb; "The new artisans wanted a philosophy of life to go with academic free thinking. Iconoclast and his backers believed he could give it to them".[95] Initially, Joseph Barker was co-editor of the Reformer, and Holyoake was to make substantial contributions. However, disputes with both eventually left Bradlaugh in sole charge. His major columnist was W.E. Adams, who wrote under the pseudonym of "Caractacus" until he left to edit the Newcastle Chronicle for his old friend and patron Joseph Cowen. In May 1862, W.H. Smith & Son gave the National Reformer the official stamp of authentic radicalism by refusing to handle it on their bookstalls.

While on the subject of the press, it must not be forgotten that a significant relaxation of the laws governing printed matter occurred during this period. In 1853 the tax on advertisements in newspapers was abolished and in 1855 the Times and Lloyds' both installed the new Rotary Press, allowing them to produce ten thousand copies an hour. The same

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94 Tribe, President Charles Bradlaugh M.P., 35.

95 Ibid., 67.

year greeted, at last, the abolition of the Stamp Tax, although the latter had been only 1d since 1836. By 1857, the cost of newsprint had halved and the process was completed in 1861 with the abolition of the paper duty. All these developments helped to bring news to the ordinary people at prices they could afford. The radical press, in particular, flourished as the sixties progressed and Reynolds, Lloyds', the Bee Hive passim, the National Reformer and the Miner all had circulations wide enough to keep them in business.

Foremost among the interesting news items about which the literate could read in the new cheap press was the American Civil War. Middle class radicals had for years looked to the United States as Moslems turn towards Mecca, and their view of that country can be understood by glancing at a passage written by the Positivist Professor, Edward Spencer Beesly in 1865:

> America is a standing rebuke to England. Her free institutions, her prosperity, the education of her people, the absence of a privileged class, are in too glaring contrast with our own position to be forgiven ... a vast impetus has been given to Republican sentiments in England ...[96]

In that last sentence, Beesly was referring to the victory of the North which he saw as a triumph for republicanism. He endeavoured to convince the English working classes that if labour was cheap in one place, such as the American South, in the long run this would drag down its value everywhere else as well. He stated at a meeting of radicals and trade

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96 E.S. Beesly, "The Republican Triumph", Bee Hive, 29 April 1865.

unionists at St. James' Hall in 1862 that "it is not in our interest that labour should be cheap here or anywhere else, much less that it should be absolutely unpaid".[97] Beesly saw slaves and labourers as "soldiers in the same cause".[98]

By no means all English Republicans, however, were convinced of the efficacy of the American system. Over a decade earlier, the Red Republican had condemned the United States as a "sham republic", going on to say that:

> That Eldorado of the middle class leaders, the be-praised of sleek Mr. Bright, and the beau ideal of practical Mr. Cobden is in fair way of becoming another England, presenting the same hideous contrasts of luxury and starvation, of rich and poor.[99]

Neither was W.J. Linton in love with the American republic. He remarked that the United States presents us with "a sample of mere democracy ... It is not republican government. It is not the ideal to which we would raise the thoughts of Englishmen!!"[100] In a subsequent issue of the English Republic he had expressed doubts about the degree of political, let alone social freedom, in America:

> Freedom is not universal, equality does not exist. If there is neither a noble class there is yet the worst monarchy and

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97 Royden Harrison, "E.S. Beesly and Karl Marx", International Review of Social History, 4, (1959), 29.

98 Ibid.

99 6 July 1850.

100 English Republic, 31 January 1853, 225.

> aristocracy of mere wealth; and for freedom - to say nothing here of the acknowledged slaves in the South, of the women both South and North (and the Red Indians?) - the rest of the adult population has just the freedom of changing its masters at every election for Congress.[101]

Joseph Barker in the National Reformer talked sarcastically of Americans who "kill Indians, and whip Africans, and fight with each other for mastery over one another, have decreed that all men are born free and equal, and have certain inalienable rights!!"[102] Bradlaugh, too, was unhappy about the divisions in America and the scab of slavery, but he still maintained:

> that the republican institutions of American are superior to the governments of Europe, and have a substantial claim upon the attention and confidence of mankind, is placed beyond successful dispute, by the past and present state of our Continent.[103]

Most republicans joined with John Bright in supporting the North in the Civil War; the trade unions, however, were by no means so eager to make such political commitments. When victory was assured, English republicanism, as Beesly had predicted, received tremendous inspiration as did the growing clamour for further parliamentary reform.[104]

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101 January 1855, 65.

102 22 June 1861.

103 28 September 1861.

104 Miner and Workman's Advocate, 16 December 1865. For insights on the general working class reaction to the American Civil War, see: Harrison, Before the Socialists, Chapter 2; Mary Ellison, Support for Secession, Lancashire and the American Civil War, with an epilogue by Peter d'A Jones (Chicago, 1972); John Ward, "The Diary of John Ward of Clitheroe, Weaver, 1860-1864", intro. by R. Sharpe France, Transactions of the Historical Society at Lancashire and Cheshire, 105 (1953).

The Miner and Workman's Advocate, dated 16 December 1865, contained a report of a large gathering at St. Martin's Hall organised by the Reform League. Edmond Beales was in the chair and among those present were Bradlaugh, trade unionists George Odger and Randal Cremer, socialists William Osborne, Karl Marx and J.G. Eccarius, plus Frederic Harrison the Positivist. One of the most important features of the meeting, says the Advocate, was the:

> ... tremendous enthusiasm with which every allusion to the American Republic, its victories and the principles of Manhood Suffrage and the Ballot, upon which the constitution of the republic is based, was received ... in fact, the mention of the American Republic seemed to have an almost magical effect on the audience.[105]

The following week, the Advocate hit out at the middle class press for either ignoring or condemning the meeting.[106]

The reform movement undoubtedly became more radical after the Northern victory, and there was some evidence of republicans among reform demonstrators. No longer was it customary to give three cheers for the Queen at reform meetings. Some red caps and sashes could be seen dotted around the crowds and the Marseillaise was becoming more popular than God Save the Queen in certain circles. The Clerkenwellians were particularly prone to republican views and a meeting was held on the Green on Sunday 16 June 1867 when some two hundred people met to discuss "various matters connected with Republicanism".[107]

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105 23 December 1865.

106 See also Harrison, Before the Socialists, 40-77.

107 Summary of Police Reports Registered in the Home Office with reference to Political Meetings held in the Metropolis during the years 1867 to 1870 inclusive, W.E. Gladstone Papers, British Museum, Add MS. 44617, FF. 95-104.

What may be said, then, by way of conclusion? The young Queen who had succeeded to the throne in 1837 was now middle aged, languishing in widowed seclusion, and a good deal less popular. Chartism, coinciding precisely "with the point of transition between the history and pre-history of the working classes",[108] had made the proletariat more aware of their existence as a separate, underprivileged entity. For a time it appeared that certain Chartists and republicans of the late forties and early fifties would succeed in sowing the seeds of class consciousness. However, the lack of foreign examples occasioned a lull in the radical activity and education around 1860. This, together with the rise of the labour aristocracy and their desire to emulate the middle classes, placed the working classes in the bosom of the Liberal Party. In 1867 it was these new labour "aristocrats"[109] who received the vote, the rank and file remaining outside the pale of the constitution. Thus, Britain exhibited only the barest hint of political and social egalitarianism, and did not even approach the basic rights of the American republic. There was much work still to be done and a small, but determined group of men were prepared to carry on the struggle.

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108 Torr, Tom Mann, 1:146.

109 See below, 99, n. 7, for interpretation of the "labour aristocracy".

CHAPTER 4

THE RADICAL CLIMATE 1867-1874: REPUBLICANISM AND CLASS RELATIONSHIPS

Part I: The Political and Economic Background

Nineteenth century British Republicanism reached a peak of popularity and notoriety in the first three years of the 1870's. The climb to that pinnacle began following the passing of the Second Reform Act in 1867, and the Conservative victory in the General Election of 1874 heralded the movement's dramatic decline. Precisely why, then, did these seven years witness such a determined conviction that the system of government should be changed from a constitutional monarchy to a republic?

The withdrawal of the Queen from public life after the death of Prince Albert, made the Monarchy seem increasingly redundant. Not only was it the symbol of an anachronistic régime of extravagance and privilege, but it was no longer performing its limited functions in government competently. The carnal exploits of the heir to the Throne were a national scandal and rumours even circulated about his mother. As Royden Harrison points out, the amount of truth contained in these rumours is not important; it is the fact that they were widespread and actually got into print that is significant.[1] The London Republican

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[1] Harrison, Before the Socialists, 211, n. 1.

Club, whose origins will be discussed in the chapter on Metropolitan Republicanism , declared the Royal Family to be "remarkable neither for virtue, intelligence, decision of character, nor devotion to national interests".[2] Moreover, the members stated that the inertia of Queen Victoria since Albert's death, plus the vices of the Prince of Wales, justified "the repeal of the Act of Settlement under which alone the Brunswick family have the right to sit".[3] Moreover, the Monarchy was indissolubly linked with an avaricious and parasitic aristocracy. It was lamented that less than two hundred families owned half of England and Ireland and three-quarters of Scotland.[4] Eleven million acres of cultivatable land lay untouched, and as a result natural resources were being shamefully wasted. Such evils, it was said, could hardly be remedied "while the present system of government endures".[5]

The economic situation in the period under discussion is crucial to the development of republicanism. Historians now agree that the so-called mid-Victorian boom affected the lower reaches of society only marginally.[6] The lion's share of the benefits from the boom went to

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2 Tribe, President Charles Bradlaugh M.P. (London, 1971), 122. For further details on the Monarchy, see below Chapter 10.

3 Ibid., 123.

4 See John Bateman, The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland, 4th edition (New York, 1970).

5 Ibid., 122.

6 For the clearest summary of works supporting these conclusions see: Geoffrey Best, Mid-Victorian Britain (London, 1971), Chapter 2.

the capitalist classes and the remainder was gobbled up by the labour aristocracy.[7] More vital was that 600,000 able bodied paupers were unemployed and available to provide a nucleus of support for demonstrations and the more extreme republican groups. The situation was especially dire in London where "Pauperism was higher in 1869-70 than it had been in any year since 1848".[8] In particular, London ship wrights were suffering from the increase of iron shipbuilding.[9] Nonetheless, by the early 1870's, subsistence was becoming less of a struggle for many working class families due to a gradual raising of standards of living in society as a whole. With less time and energy being devoted to survival there was more opportunity to engage in abstract political

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[7] This thesis will not debate the ideological controversy over the labour aristocracy since the issue is as yet unresolved. However, the term may be used in a non-ideological sense to describe those working men who were distinguished from the majority of proletarians by their adherence to middle class values such as sobriety, education, the importance of the home and family unit, respect for the law, and political participation through existing channels. Such workmen were usually, but not exclusively, to be found amongst the more highly skilled.

For details of the ideological debate see:

E.J. Hobsbawm, Labouring Men-Studies in the History of Labour (London, 1964), Chapter 15.

Henry Pelling, Popular Politics and Society in Late Victorian Britain (London, 1968), Chapter 3.

John Foster, Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution (London, 1974), Chapter 7.

Harrison, Before the Socialists.

For non-ideological interpretations see:

J.F.C. Harrison, The Early Victorians 1832-51 (Bungay, Suffolk, 1971), 177.

Hugh McLeod, Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City (London, 1974), 44.

Geoffrey Crossick, "The Labour Aristocracy and its Values - A Study of Mid-Victorian Kentish London", Victorian Studies, 19, 3 (March, 1976), 301-329.

Robert Q. Gray, The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh, Oxford, University Press (Oxford, 1976).

Harold Perkin, The Origins of Modern English Society 1780-1880 (London, 1969).

[8] Harrison, Before the Socialists, 211.

[9] Sydney Pollard, "The Decline of Ship-building on the Thames", Economic History Review, 2, 3 (1950-1), 88.

speculation. In this period with the United States, and later France and Spain, so much in the public eye, such speculation often led to republicanism. If one's political aspirations were a reality in countries with republican governments, then it was only logical to advocate a similar system for one's homeland.

We have seen how the Northern victory in the American Civil War encouraged the development of republican sympathies in Britain, and introduced a republican element into the reform agitation. In fact, the Reform Act of 1867 was profoundly disappointing for large numbers of working class people. Only the more well-to-do artisans had been given the vote, and they tended to be more interested in improving their own circumstances than in trying to raise the overall level of working class consciousness. Thus, it is hardly surprising that working class parliamentary candidates, such as the republican shoemaker and leading trade unionist George Odger, received harsh treatment at the hands of an electorate which did not include most of his supporters.[10] In a letter on republicanism to the Nonconformist, journalist and trade union leader George Potter pointed out that, despite the Reform Act, millions of working men were still without the vote and although they had "many good friends in other grades of society, they have not one man of their own order who can speak in Parliament their desires in their own language".[11]

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[10] Harrison, Before the Socialists, 211.

[11] George Potter, Republicanism in England. Four Letters reprinted from the Nonconformist, April and June 1871 - A Question which is now seriously engaging the attention of the People of the United Kingdom (London, 1871), 3.

It has been explained how some English republicans disapproved of the American Republic with its increasingly dominant commercial oligarchy, believing it to be only marginally superior to the British Constitutional Monarchy.[12] Those people looked to France as the home of genuine social and democratic republicanism. The autocracy of Napoleon III and the revival of the cult of Bonapartism was, of course, repugnant to the French republicans, and opposition to the Empire gathered momentum in the late sixties. Repression increased as the decaying government strove to keep control, but this only served to heighten subversive activities. French critics of the Bonapartist government were punished harshly and the liberal pretensions of the régime began to appear increasingly hollow. Liberals and republicans throughout Europe were outraged, and it seemed that such a situation could not continue for much longer.[13] Ledru-Rollin was happy to see the Emperor slowly losing his grip, and wrote to G.J. Harney in 1867 proclaiming that "the fall of the tyrant" appeared near and that aspirations for liberty were "becoming universal".[14] Continuing, he maintained that a new French republic would give "such an impulsion to Europe that there would be an end to all monarchical coalitions and that all people would march, at least, with an equal step in the path of liberty and progress".[15]

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12 See above, 93-4.

13 For further details see Theodore Zeldin, The Political System of Napoleon III (New York, 1971).

14 Ledru-Rollin to G.J. Harney, 19 January 1867, The Harney Papers, 211-12.

15 Ibid.

When the Franco-Prussian War broke out in July 1870 the reaction of the British public was mixed. The upper classes, throughout the war, tended to side with Germany. After all, the Queen's eldest daughter was married to the Crown Prince of Prussia and the aristocracies of the two nations had been closely linked for two hundred years. The growing cult of Teutonism among British intellectuals gave rise to another pool of support for the Prussians. Moreover France was the traditional enemy of England and in this case had been manipulated by Bismarck into appearing the aggressor.[16] The Norfolk News explained that "because the war was the unprovoked aggressive act of France, or rather the French Emperor pandering to the French war-spirit, the wishes of England are unmistakably with Germany".[17] In the initial stages of the war the Prussians were not without support even among the lower classes of English society. It should be remembered that Francophobia was by no means so prevalent in Scotland and Ireland and natives of those parts were much quicker to take the side of France.

Three principal factors were instrumental in changing the views of large numbers of working men and advanced sections of the middle classes by October 1870. Firstly, people began to realise that the war was inspired by the government, the French nation having little enthusiasm for it on the whole. Secondly, the Prussian military machine was looking

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16 See P M. Kennedy, "Idealists and Realists. British Views of Germany", Royal Historical Society Transactions, 5, 25 (1975), 137-157.

17 3 September 1870.

decidedly formidable and a potential danger to the balance of power in Europe. With notable exceptions such as J.S. Mill and John Morley, who both admired Prussian efficiency, most English radicals by the end of 1870 were more suspicious of Prussian militarism than French. F.W. Hirst's opinion on the entire affair is also revealing. He observed that:

> In war as in sport, the average Englishman is apt to side with the loser so long as he fights gamely. After the surrender of Napoleon and Bazaine, followed by the flight of the Empress Eugenie, and the Prince Imperial to England, this feeling began to operate in English society.[18]

This indicates that a change to the French side also occurred in the higher strata of society.

Thirdly, the declaration of the Third French Republic in September sparked off a wave of sympathy for France among British workmen. This was manifested in numerous public meetings, rallies and deputations to the government to demand recognition for the Republic. Charles Bradlaugh decided to "throw in my lot with France - Republican France".[19] Nina, Vicomtesse de Brimont Brassac, visited Bradlaugh to urge him to rouse British public opinion in favour of the Republic since she had reason to believe that the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Granville, was planning to help restore Napoleon III. As a republican of many years standing, Bradlaugh needed little persuasion and, although dogged by ill health,

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[18] F.W. Hirst, Early Life and Letters of John Morley, 2 Vols. (London, 1927), 1:164-5.

[19] National Reformer, 14 September 1870.

he started a campaign of rallies up and down the country. Among the more important of these meetings was one held on 10 September at St. James' Hall, at which such figures as Odger, Howell, Beesly, Harrison, Captain Maxse, and Bradlaugh himself, were all present. A mass meeting in Hyde Park earlier the same day proclaimed through the voice of George Odger that "we hereby offer you our most cordial sympathy and our ardent wishes for the success of the Republic which is the only form of government suitable for and worthy of a great people".[20]

The outburst of support for France after the declaration of the Republic is a persuasive argument that many British workmen quietly cherished republican ideals before that date. The new government in France and the subsequent organisation of public meetings to express sympathy merely gave them the opportunity to voice their opinions out loud. The National Reformer and Reynolds' Newspaper had contained a profusion of articles and letters throughout the late sixties which indicated that republican views were becoming more widespread. In February 1869, "Gracchus" [pseud] passim had written in Reynolds' that "the advantages of republican government over monarchical are so manifest and manifold, that it is almost superfluous discussing the subject".[21]

By early 1871 the spread of republicanism, particularly among the working classes, had become the most conspicuous feature of British political life. On 27 March, the Birmingham Daily Mail observed that

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20 Bee Hive, 17 September 1870.

21 28 February 1869.

"Republicanism is looking up. It has been noticed in Parliament. It has had the honour of one of Mr. Gladstone's diffuse snubbings".[22] The article went on to relate how The Hon. G. Bentinck M.P. had "trembled for the safety of our glorious constitution"[23] and appealed to Mr. Gladstone to take some action to halt the spread of sedition.

Bentinck asked the Prime Minister in the House of Commons whether his attention had been called to a report in The Times of a republican meeting held on Wednesday 24 March at Wellington Music Hall, at which was passed a resolution that

> ... any government formed under the present system, is so much under the influence of the few privileged families now monopolising place and honour in the nation, and is therefore incapable of the broad and comprehensive legislation urgently demanded in the interests of the industrial community. It was then declared that "a republican form of Government is the only one capable of developing the great resources of the Country, and worthy of the confidence and support of all true democrats".[24]

Bentinck inquired that if this report proved to be accurate whether Gladstone would

> ... consult the Law Officers of the Crown as to whether, in their opinion, such language is of a treasonable or seditious character; and, whether, in the event of such being the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown, the Government is prepared to take any steps for dealing by law with those who have held this language.[25]

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22 27 March 1871.

23 Ibid.

24 Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 3rd ser., 15 March-1 May 1871 (London, 1871), CCV:574.

25 Ibid.

Gladstone replied that he was not previously aware of the meeting but

> ... it is not the intention of the Government to consult the Law Officers ... In this country there is great and just unwillingness to interfere with the expression of any opinion that is not attended with danger to the public peace ... it seems to me ... that it is the best course to pursue, except where the public is endangered, to trust to the notorious good sense and loyalty of the great mass of the people for the repression of wrong and foolish opinions; and secondly that public notice taken of these opinions ... has a tendency to give them an importance to which otherwise they would not attain, and to prevent them sinking into that oblivion which is their destined and proper course.[26]

A section of the above passage might be construed as giving moral support to the "loyalist" thugs who invaded public meetings in order to repress "wrong and foolish opinions", but it is unlikely that Gladstone would have condoned such behaviour. Thomas Wright, who wrote under the name of the "Journeyman Engineer", commented that

> ... it is scarcely possible to conceive that anyone, with even a little of his claim to be considered a Statesman, would stigmatise as wrong and foolish the abstract proposition that a Republic is the best of the known forms of government. That surely is a fairly debatable question, as it is undoubtedly one on the affirmative side of which weighty arguments can be adduced.[27]

Notwithstanding his reply to Bentinck, Gladstone did investigate republican meetings further. He asked for, and received, a summary of Police Reports, registered in the Home Office, referring to political meetings

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[26] Ibid., 574-5.

[27] Thomas Wright (Journeyman Engineer), "English Republicanism", Fraser's Magazine (June 1871), in Our New Masters (London, 1873), 161.

held in London during the years 1867 to 1870 inclusive. A letter, with an illegible signature, accompanying the list was dated 30 August 1871. This recommended the prosecution of the republican leaders, seeing the situation in terms of gangs of criminals who could be dissipated by imprisoning their leaders. Gladstone was by no means so naive. Unlike the police, he realised that the very worst thing to do was create martyrs which, far from strangling the movement, would give it new life and determination.[28] The Birmingham Daily Mail was one of the few newspapers that displayed an insight comparable to the Prime Minister's on this issue. It maintained that in the long run both society and the Monarchy would benefit from republican agitation because:

> It will show Royalty that it has duties and responsibilities which it could be dangerous to neglect, and that kings and queens are not paid fabulous sums of money for being merely "ornaments" to a constitution.

The article went on to contend that "there was very little chance of a republic ever being proclaimed in England although many people are sick of paying for a pomp and a pageant which they never see". It was admitted that there was "widespread dissatisfaction with the present system of rule" and stated that until the causes of that dissatisfaction were removed by the Queen appearing more in public and the heir apparent exhibiting some signs of a capacity to govern "we must expect to hear sinister threats of a monarchical collapse and a resuscitated Commonwealth".[29]

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28 Summary of Police Reports, Gladstone Papers, B.M. Add. MS. 44167, ff. 95-104.

29 27 March 1871.

The Tory press was almost unanimous in pointing to the folly of holding republican doctrines. They endeavoured to convince their readers that in reality there were very few republicans in the country, while the amount of space given over to the subject, together with their alarmed cries for suppression, indicated the opposite. They invariably confused the different categories of republicans, and displayed only a superficial knowledge of republican principles. Republicanism was simply linked with bloodshed in Paris, corruption in Washington and chaos in South America. The legality of republican meetings and declarations was questioned and suppression advocated. The Norfolk Chronicle and Norwich Gazette considered it the duty

> ... not only of the Conservative press but of such Liberals who have not yet renounced their allegiance to the Queen and Constitution, to point out ... that these effusions are the offspring of only a few ultra-principled, or rather unprincipled, malcontents, and that the people generally ... are too well satisfied with their own Constitution to be desirous of changing it ...[30]

Of course, the republican agitation indicated "that people generally" were not satisfied with Constitution, but the Tories were endeavouring to reverse the current political fashion and so tried to convince the populace that the majority were happy to preserve the status quo. In a review of the year 1872 the Leicester Journal and Midland Counties General Advertiser maintained that:

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30 24 September 1870.

> The "demonstrations of the Odger and Bradlaugh school have had no permanent effect, and estimated by its number of followers and pecuniary resources, democracy is in a very pitiable condition indeed. Had a firm Administration been in office, capable of dealing with public difficulties as they crop up, the feeble light of Republicanism would ere this have been completely snuffed out.[31]

However, the Advertiser considered republicanism important enough to devote almost half of this annual review to the subject.

The Conservatives consistently accused the Liberals of having republican sympathies, because of the Government's reluctance to suppress the movement, and embarrassed them on every possible occasion. In fact, most Liberals did not see British republicanism as a real danger to society or the Monarchy. They followed Gladstone in thinking it was best to humour republicans, allow them freedom to meet and talk, and show Monarchy where reform was needed. Many Liberals were no longer unquestioningly deferential towards the Monarchy and believed that the Queen could, and had, done wrong. Some mild reforms would not be out of the way, and a number of Liberals seemed to think that the more moderate republicans had some sound ideas in that respect.

A common assertion, which dates back to the writings of Major Cartwright[32] was that a republic was not necessary in Britain because the populace already enjoyed all the benefits of republican government. This point of view was expressed by a number of individuals and several newspapers. One of these, the Birmingham Daily Post, stated that "for all

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31 3 January 1873.

32 See above, 29.

practical purposes we have a Republic already, veiled under monarchical forms. No country in the world is freer, or more thoroughly self governed..."[33] A republican would doubtless have replied that just because existing republics had limitations, that was no reason not to strive for one that would be more egalitarian. The achievement of such a goal would surely put Britain even further ahead of other countries. Echoing the sentiments of the Birmingham Post, Lord John Russell wrote in a letter to his son Lord Amberley that "thanks to La Hogue, the Boyne and Blenheim we are a free nation, quite as free as the yankee republic".[34]

Having mentioned the Amberleys, it might be useful to take a brief look at the attitude of these young, progressive Whig aristocrats to republicanism. They were great admirers of Mazzini, who was on several occasions a guest in their home, and almost all of their circle of friends, such as J.S. Mill and the Positivist Henry Crompton, were republicans. In addition, there were shades of republicanism on the Russell side of the family, William Lord Russell having been executed for treason in 1683.[35] Set against this was a deeply ingrained sense of loyalty to the aristocracy which, given the nature of republicanism in 1870, must stand or fall with the Monarchy. Thus, the Amberleys were caught between the Scylla of political fashion and Charybdis of political obligation. They sympathized with republicanism against their inclinations and the wishes of their

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33 14 May 1873.

34 Lord John Russell to Lord Amberley, 23 March 1872, Bertrand and Patricia Russell, eds., The Amberley Papers. 2 Vols. (London, 1937), 2:492.

35 See above, 23.

parents because it was the current trend for leftish intellectuals. But republicans among the upper classes were few and far between in the 1870's. Nevertheless, there was a certain young baronet who was to achieve considerable notoriety in this connection. His part in the proceedings will be dealt with fully at a later stage in this thesis.[36]

Having examined the political and economic factors which facilitated the development of republicanism from 1867 to 1874, and to a certain degree analysed the reactions of the various sectors of society to the phenomenon, it is now necessary to put republicanism in the context of the complex class relationships of the period.

Part II: Republicanism and Class Relationships

To analyse republicanism in the context of class relationships, it is essential at the outset to define what is meant by class and class relationship. This has been attempted from a sociological perspective by such scholars as N.J. Smelser and R. Dahrendorf,[37] and by historians of the calibre of E.P. Thompson and Harold Perkin.[38] Class, as understood in this thesis, is really a convenient label used to describe groups of people with shared experiences and similar interests, often of an economic

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36 See below, 265-79.

37 N.J. Smelser, Social Change in the Industrial Revolution (London, 1959). R. Dahrendorf, Clan and Class Conflict in Industrial Society (London, 1959).

38 E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (London, 1964). Harold Perkin, The Origins of Modern English Society 1780-1880 (London, 1969).

nature, in order to differentiate them from groups with another set of experiences and interests. Without plunging head first into a debate that has been raging for decades, one might tentatively propose that class be considered a relationship rather than an absolute entity; and is consequently without meaning in a society devoid of conflicting interest groups. Of course, in a feudal society the interests of the different social groups are opposed to one another but there is no general consciousness of the fact.

In mid-Victorian Britain there were many features which marked off one class from another, for example, dress, food, drink, environment, occupation and most important of all, political rights, institutions and aspirations. The tensions and conflicts in the period 1867-1874 are an indication that at least some members of each class were aware of these differences and can therefore be said to possess a degree of class consciousness. That is not to say that they thought in terms of class warfare. In fact many people, particularly among the middle and upper classes but by no means exclusively so, actively worked to close what they saw as a widening gulf between classes. Yet ironically, with the emergence of the labour aristocracy, classes in 1867 were a good deal less distinct than twenty years earlier. What, then, was the nature of the British working classes in the period 1867 to 1874? Thomas Wright stated in his book The Great Unwashed that

> there is no typical working man. The phrase 'the working man' though neat enough as a figure of speech is utterly erroneous and misleading when employed, as it generally is, as a synonym for the working classes.[39]

[39] Thomas Wright (Journeyman Engineer), The Great Unwashed (London, 1868), 5.

In 1871 Wright submitted an article to the Contemporary Review on the composition of the working classes. He did not differentiate between the various groups of working men on the basis of earnings, education and craftsmanship as one might have expected. However, he did draw the traditional distinction between drunken and sober workers, and discussed the tension between union and non-union labour. In fact, he divided working men into three categories. The first of these he christened the "Old School" in which "the largest percentage of the lack of education, prejudice, and feeling of class antagonism that stand in the way of the self elevation of the working classes is to be found".[40] It is worth noting that Wright saw class consciousness as old school and backward looking. Doubtless he was thinking of survivors of the Chartist era. Socialists, of course, were anxious to rekindle the flame of working class awareness that had burned fleetingly in former decades.

Wright called his second category the "School of the Day". This included the sons of the "Old School" who, with the benefits of a superior education and wider range of experiences, had a much broader outlook on life than their parents. They were not so suspicious of book learning and, on the contrary, set a high value on education especially for their children. However, they tended to take the working class press as gospel without bothering to consult other printed sources of information. At the same time they lent "too ready and credulous an ear to those 'friends

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40 Idem. "The Composition of the Working Classes", Contemporary Review, 12 (1871), 526.

of the working man' who do flatter them - who would fain persuade them that, like the king, they can do no wrong".[41]

The third and last group he christened the "Rising School" and this was, in effect, what some modern historians understand as the labour aristocracy. Numerically the smallest of the three groups, they had already reaped the benefits striven for by the others, that is, improved political status, better living conditions, a higher standard of living and extended education. Realising there are two sides to every issue they read the Times and the Pall Mall Gazette on working class questions, as well as Lloyds', Reynolds' and the Bee Hive. Their improved circumstances encouraged them to aspire to progress even further up the social scale, rather than remaining in their place until the time was ripe to lead a rising of the entire proletariat as Marx would have advised. They had become sufficiently enlightened to realise, said Wright, that there is good and bad in all classes and consequently had little class prejudice. One receives the impression that Wright considered himself a member of this group, believing that there must be self-improvement to eradicate intemperance, ignorance and bigotry, before improvement by outside agencies and legislation can achieve much. He regretted that this "school" tended to be egotistical and too self-assured, flaunting an air of superiority in their dealings with the rest. Such an attitude naturally caused some resentment. Wright came to the conclusion that

> ...their strength is wasted and made ineffective by want of

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41 Ibid.

> coherence. Though all schools and sections of them have broad interests in common, they are so divided in feelings as to be incapable of united action even for a common object.[42]

Included in the working classes were artisans, semi-skilled factory workers and manual labourers. Clerks and shop assistants, although no better off than artisans, were ranked apart from and above them.[43] Most skilled tradesmen disliked the labourers' predilection for radical reconstruction of the social system because, if put into practice, such changes would herald the disappearance of the artisans' comparative social and political superiority.

The most articulate section of the British working classes consisted of those skilled workmen organised in Trade Unions, particularly men such as Applegarth who had been involved in the Royal Commission on Trade Unions of 1869. However, trade unionists were not necessarily the most active republicans. Dedicated unionists tended to concentrate on the fight to achieve an adequate legal settlement, and to gain recognition for their unions as respectable institutions. Although after September 1870 many did jump on the republican bandwagon. Sir Charles Dilke summed up their position in a newspaper interview when he explained that

> ... nearly all the leaders of the skilled workmen in London - men like Mr. Howell, Mr. Allen, Mr. Applegarth - are at least theoretical Republicans; but they care more for the advancement of practical measures of immediate legislation directly affecting the interests of their class, than they do for agitation

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42 Ibid.

43 See David Lockwood, The Blackcoated Worker (London, 1958), 99 and Christopher Kent, "The Whittington Club: A Bohemian Experiment in Middle Class Social Reform", Victorian Studies, 18, 1 (September, 1974), 38-9.

against the monarchy.[44]

However, he went on to state that in the provinces, especially Lancashire, union leaders were often "earnest and active Conservatives and use the influence they possess over their followers for the advancement of conservative interests".[45] This is a question which will be returned to in a subsequent chapter dealing with provincial republicanism.

The views of trade unionists generally on the subject of republicanism may be clarified somewhat by looking at the annual meetings of the Trades Union Congress in the period. The meetings of 1871[46] and 1873[47] were notable for the absence of any mention of republicanism, but there was an incident at the Nottingham conference in 1872. In a letter to Charles Bartlett, George Howell related how the delegates were received by the Mayor of Nottingham in the town hall for a public banquet. All went smoothly except that some people

> ... thought they were supporting and advancing republicanism by hissing the name of the Queen when the normal Royal toast was proposed. This silly incident caused some little excitement and a good deal of very abusive criticism ... But all drank the toast like good citizens ... though some of us (who) are sound Republicans, looked upon the toast as the normal thing to do, especially at a Mayor's feast, but without any political significance whatsoever.[48]

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44 Sir Charles Dilke, "English Republicanism", interview for the New York World, reprinted in the Leicester Guardian, 22 November 1871.

45 Ibid. See also Patrick Joyce, "The Factory Politics of Lancashire in the Later Nineteenth Century", Historical Journal, 18, 1 (1975), 523-53.

46 Birmingham Weekly Post, 11 March 1871.

47 People's Journal for Forfarshire, 18 January 1873.

48 George Howell Collection, Microfilm, 95922/15, Howell to Charles Bartlett, 17 March 1872.

This letter is particularly valuable because, aside from the information it provides on the Nottingham incident, it is proof that in 1872 Howell considered himself a republican, at least in theory. W.J. Davies, in his history of the T.U.C., mentions that many of the Nottingham delegates were republicans in principle although they drank the toast.[49] The Nottingham Journal had this to say about the affair:

> We wish to speak with all possible respect of Mr. Odger and the two or three illustrious heroes who followed his example at the Mayor's dinner on Monday evening, in keeping their seats, and some of them in expressing disgust when the healths of the Queen and Prince of Wales were drunk, but we think such silly conduct calls for a remark or two ... There was no particular heroism in Mr. Odger and his enlightened friends, doing what they did. It was purely and simply a specimen of bad manners, - of that want of common tact which has been so often noted in the career of one of them - of that dogged un-English impertinence which makes many a man turn away from English Republicans as the worse specimens of their class. We do not wish to lay any great stress upon a trifling incident. We only desire to point out that it is by little acts of this kind of silly uncalled for expression of opinion, on what ought to be neutral ground, that the Republicans are in such bad odour.[50]

The Nottingham Journal was by no means intolerant of republican principles, but was, in this case, simply echoing respectable public opinion. Namely that, republicanism was no excuse for bad manners. Doubtless the republicans who remained seated on these occasions saw it as a matter of principle rather than bad manners. There were ardent, practical republicans, such as Odger, Thomas Mottershead and Ben Lucraft, among the trade unionists, but they were not in the majority. In fact theoretical republicans were

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[49] W.J. Davies, The British Trades Union Congress History and Recollections (London, 1910), 28.

[50] 10 January 1872.

much more common in this sector. This lack of enthusiasm for republicanism on the part of certain trade unions undoubtedly hampered the development of the movement, but it may well have alienated some working class republicans from the trade unions. The role of George Odger as a link between the trade union establishment and the republican leadership was crucial. Unfortunately, his efforts to bring the two groups together were thwarted by a singular lack of interest on the trade union side.

Robert Applegarth of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, was a bitter opponent of Bradlaugh and other republicans throughout this period. He charged that attacks on the Royal Family were designed to divert the minds of the working classes from more important issues such as trade union legislation. The trade union élite were just beginning to convince their betters that they were good citizens entitled to respect, and not reckless revolutionaries in the French mould. Substantial rewards were expected shortly for the advances that had been made, and the union leaders had no intention of being branded as subversive republicans and losing their advantages.

George Potter was generally considered to be one of the more radical trade union leaders of the sixties,[51] yet by 1871 he was toeing the Liberal party line on almost every issue. This assertion may be verified by glancing at Potter's editorials in the Bee Hive. In the

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[51] Harrison, Before the Socialists, 11.

spring of 1871 he sent four letters on English republicanism to the Nonconformist. In the first he used expressions such as "brother citizens",[52] which one would expect only from a republican. He also talked of the U. S. A. in glowing terms, saying that "the restoration and consolidation of the Union upon a basis of freedom as complete in fact as it used to be in profession only"[53] was an achievement that all enlightened Englishmen envied and admired. Potter went on, though, to respectfully compliment his Sovereign stating that by "character, conduct, and domestic experience, the Queen has obtained a place in the hearts of her subjects, without at any time exciting feelings of distrust, still less of hostility".[54] However, he did question whether "the Heir Apparent and his brothers will be wise enough to follow her example".[55]

Potter sympathized with republican principles but only in theory. These articles were essentially a warning to the Queen and aristocracy of what would happen if certain reforms were not implemented in the near future. Echoing Lord Brougham's warning to the Queen thirty-four years earlier, Potter stated that:

> I for one am far from giving up the extended experiment of popular government under hereditary presidency as a thing to be despaired of. Yet it can succeed only by the prompt adoption of broad measures, honestly fitted by the evident circumstances, the just claims and the staring needs of the bulk of the people.[56]

The reforms Potter considered necessary to reconcile the toiling

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[52] Potter, Republicanism in England, 3.

[53] Ibid. [54] Ibid. [55] Ibid. [56] Ibid., 6.

millions to the continuance of the Monarchy included the curtailment of the costs of the Crown with a revised and reduced Civil List, some modification of the powers of the House of Lords, a readjustment of electoral districts and redistribution of seats, the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of England, and the reform of land tenure. Regarding the latter, Potter declared himself to be against nationalization but in favour of ending primogeniture and entail. He also mentioned the necessity of providing less brutalizing working and living conditions for the labouring classes.

Two things stand out from these letters. Firstly, Potter himself represents the belief of many labour aristocrats and middle class radicals that although republics are fine in theory and overseas, the legislation required to better the lot of the working classes could just as easily be obtained under the existing political system. Other republicans would have argued that once the republic was established, all those reforms would follow as a matter of course. Secondly, Potter was convinced that republicanism had taken a strong hold over the masses and was threatening to become a serious political alternative.

Thus, the majority of trade union leaders did not wish to see their followers declare war on other classes under the banner of republicanism or any other ideology. In fact, their attitudes confirm Thomas Wright's contention that most of the current crop of labour leaders were not interested in independent working class action and considered such a policy thoroughly retrogressive. It is ironic that many upper and middle class people did not perceive this, and were led by their fear of

the masses into endowing them with a unity they did not possess, and thinking in terms of class warfare to a much greater degree than the workers themselves. Wright correctly observed that "though they speak of the working classes, most people in other grades of society think only of a working class ... The working classes are not a single-acting, single-idea'd body".[57]

An article in the Contemporary Review, anonymously signed by "An Ex-M.P.", bore out Wright's assertion, stating that "there is a class feeling among workmen".[58] The gentleman betrayed a great fear of possible violent revolution by "the representatives of modern democracy in Trafalgar Square".[59] Rather misguidedly he compared John Bright to Louis Blanc. As will be explained later, many working class republicans condemned Bright as having taken a sharp turn to the Right after 1867. Criticising an article by the radical Professor Goldwin Smith, our "Ex-M.P." pointed to the coarseness of the American Republic. He maintained that the payment of members of Congress seemed to attract low adventurers into politics, and attributed American lawlessness to universal suffrage. In the final analysis his contention was that "the combination of all classes is wise; but if history is not a fable, the worst of all things for good government is the predominance of the class (wherever it is found) which reads little, thinks less, and drinks much".[60]

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57 Ibid., 515.

58 An Ex-M.P., "The Republicanism of Young England", Contemporary Review, 3 (June, 1867), 241.

59 Ibid. 60 Ibid., 242.

Even a relatively enlightened commentator like Mrs. Gaskell was content to divide the working classes into two stereotypes. Her Mr. Higgins in North and South[61] represented the industrious, honest workman who was sensible enough to produce only as many children as he could afford to raise. He was a trade union leader, but his union activities were of a strictly diplomatic nature. In contrast, the irresponsible, rabble-rousing, spendthrift Mr. Boucher represented the "Irish type" or residuum. It is important to note that a liking for drink was the one thing both men had in common. As Professor H.W. McCready[62] explained, most upper and middle class mid-Victorians tended to believe the entire working classes were either synonymous with the Irish or being degraded by them. Of course, the Irish spectre was to a large extent a myth, the number of Irish immigrants being greatly exaggerated. They were simply heavily concentrated in certain areas; London, Manchester and Liverpool in particular.

In 1867 The Christian Socialist John Malcolm Ludlow, together with radical journalist Lloyd Jones published a book entitled Progress of the Working Class 1832-1867. The work was an attempt to correct various upper and middle class misconceptions regarding the nature of the British working classes. In particular, they set out to show how some workmen had progressed from a position of militant conflict with the ruling classes to one of cooperation. For example, it was stated that "thousands of working

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61 Elizabeth Gaskell, North and South (Harmondsworth, 1970). First published in Household Words (1854-5).

62 H.W. McCready, "Conceptions of the Mid Victorian Working Classes" (M.A. Seminar, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, June 1973).

men are learning to ... share the interests of the employer class".[63] Two years later another prominent Christian Socialist, F.D. Maurice, contributed an article to the Contemporary Review on the "Working Men's Parliamentary Association". Like Ludlow and Jones, he showed himself anxious to discourage independent political action by the working classes and to encourage cooperation with the middle classes.

> If we provoke the workmen by our selfishness and our vulgar prejudices they will no doubt become selfish too; but if we will work with them now, we may look forward to the time when class distinctions shall be forgotten by a united nation.[64]

However there was no longer any real danger of a violent confrontation of classes after 1867. The Second Reform Act brought the working class leaders within the pale of the constitution and strengthened their resolve to cooperate with the ruling and monied classes. The process that culminated with the Second Reform Act was to some extent begun, as Professor Vincent suggests, by John Bright.[65] In the decade from 1855 to 1865 Bright led the crusade to widen the franchise which had the effect of bringing the better educated and more prosperous working men closer to the middle classes. To give the vote to the working class leaders, while excluding the rank and file, was bound to damage their sense of solidarity. Men such as Howell and Applegarth, once convinced of the efficacy of self improvement and respectability through the medium of Gladstonian Liberalism,

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63 J.M. Ludlow and Lloyd Jones, Progress of the Working Class 1832-1867 (London, 1887), 139.

64 Ibid., 59.

65 John Vincent, The Formation of the Liberal Party 1857-1868 (London, 1966), 195-244.

rarely deviated from their chosen path.

It was not only the middle classes who tried to seduce the workers away from independent action. In 1850 Prince Albert had conceived of an alliance between skilled artisans and the aristocracy designed to prevent class warfare. The name he chose for the project was the New Social Movement. In 1871 Scott Russell, a former engineer and political adventurer, made a naive but genuine attempt to revive the idea and bridge what he mistakenly saw as the widening gulf between classes. In October 1871 several newspapers printed a list of seven propositions that were supposed to form the basis of the alliance.[66] The alleged signatories on behalf of the Peers and Commons were Salisbury, Lorne, Lichfield, Carnarvon, Manners, Lennox, Pakington, Northcote, Hardy and Richmond. Derby and Disraeli were "understood to have been privy to the negotiations"[67] but did not sign. It is noteworthy that all except the Marquis of Lorne were Tories. Signing for the artisans were Applegarth, Guile, Howell, Hughes, Potter, Lloyd Jones, Broadhurst, Wetstone, Deighton, Barker, Squires, Barry, Latham, Englander and Scott Russell by virtue of his having trained as an engineer. Two weeks later, Reynolds' Newspaper reported that a memorandum was published on 1 August last, by Salisbury, Carnarvon, Pakington, Manners, Northcote, Hardy and Lennox promising to consider Russell's proposals "in a friendly and impartial spirit" but adding that "we cannot become parties to any legislation which we do not believe to

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66 See Appendix 2.

67 Reynolds' Newspaper, 15 October 1871.

be consistent with the real interests of all classes".[68] Shortly afterwards Derby, Carnarvon, Richmond and Gathone Hardy all wrote to The Times denying any connection with the New Social Alliance.

Reynolds' described the project as a "New Political Dodge" and hoped the bulk of the working classes would not be "dazzled by a blaze of titles or hoodwinked by the delusive promises of a band of Tory tricksters".[69] At a meeting of the London Patriotic Society on Monday 23 October, Odger described the alliance as "all bosh", adding that "workmen must rely on themselves to improve their conditions not on Whig and Tory aristocrats".[70] The Universal Republican League raised the voice of the extreme left against Russell's proposals in the form of the following resolution:

> This meeting has no confidence whatever in the peers belonging to the so-called political alliance, and considers the scheme itself to be one meant to retard useful reforms and check the spread of republicanism.[71]

Reynolds' leader for 19 November reported that Scott Russell had stated that he never set out to recruit workmen for the Tories, but merely wanted to see an end to the party strife which was delaying reform. The article also spoke of a meeting of Russell with the Council of Skilled Workmen. Russell expressed regret that certain alarming words such as "commune" and "proletariat" had been used in the original list of seven proposals. These, he said, were a fabrication of unscrupulous journalists. Instead, he promulgated his own list of seven evils of English society which demanded remedies: he did not specify what remedies should be

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[68] Ibid., 29 October, 1871. [69] Ibid., 15 October 1871. [70] Ibid., 29 October 1871. [71] Ibid.

applied.[72] The Council passed a resolution: "that in the absence of any propositions from the Legislative Council, the workers would take no further action. But they would be willing to cooperate in the future on any measures aimed at improving the lot of the working classes, on condition that such action was independent of political parties".[73]

The Primitive Methodist said that the present form of the New Social Movement "was inaugurated with the conviction that the social relations between the different classes of society in England are too intolerable to last long as they are".[74] Actually, the vast majority of people were well aware that class relationships in these years were less tense than for a long time. The most vital radical manifestation of the day was the republican movement, and, as will be shown in due course, that cut right across class lines. The Tories involved in the Legislative Council were more frightened of losing credibility in the eyes of their own class, through being associated with radical social reform, than they were of class warfare. Violent class confrontation was always unlikely in Victorian Britain after 1867, firstly because the labour leaders by this time had too much to lose, and secondly, as Professor Tholfson has remarked, because even those working class radicals "whose rhetoric occurred in the context of an attack on middle class ideology were caught up in a cultural pattern that drew the sting from their protests by associating it with more of the same".[75] Thus, the

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72 See Appendix 3.

73 Reynolds' Newspaper, 19 November 1871.

74 Primitive Methodist, 23 November 1871.

75 Trygve R. Tholfson, Working Class Radicalism in Mid Victorian England (New York, 1977), 260-1.

New Social Movement duly faded into oblivion.

Only the trade union élite were involved in Scott Russell's enterprise, but a few months later the Liberal industrialist Samuel Morley presided over "a strictly private and confidential gathering of every shade of working men".[76] This was no idle statement because the gathering at the Cannon Street hotel not only included the leading members of the London Trades Council and the Labour Representation League, but also representatives from the quasi-Marxist Land and Labour League and "even some of the Hole-in-the-wall contingent",[77] the latter being radical social republicans and communists. The purpose of the meeting was to agree upon a common ground of unity so as to avoid dividing the Liberal strength. The endeavour was not a success though, and, as will be discussed later, there are grounds for suspecting that the Liberal defeat in 1874 was partly due to the abstention of the republican vote.

However, not everyone outside of the working classes was in favour of the embourgeoisment of labour. The Positivist hierarchy, including Richard Congreve, John Henry Bridges, Henry Crompton, Frederic Harrison and Edward Spencer Beesly considered the English workers to be thoroughly naive because "they tended in their innocence, to assume that the working and middle classes had a great common interest in political progress".[78]

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76 Lloyds' Weekly, 30 June 1872.

77 Ibid.

78 Royden Harrison, "Professor Beesly and the English Working Class Movement", in Asa Briggs and John Saville, eds., Essays in Labour History (London, 1967), 1:221.

Beesly was probably the closest to the workmen themselves. He was the respected friend and confidant of trade union leaders such as Odger and Applegarth, and in fact he was made the first honorary member of Applegarth's union, the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners. He also worked closely with many other trade unions and shortly after its foundation in 1863, the National Association of Miners made him an official advisor.

Beesly contributed regularly to the Bee Hive and a number of periodicals with articles on working class questions. He and the other Positivists were also able to have articles, expressing the working class point of view on various issues, printed in publications such as The Times or The Standard, which rarely accepted contributions from the workers themselves. Initially, Beesly saw John Bright in the role of Auguste Comte's "Captain of Industry", and thought that workers and radical manufacturers should unite against the ruling oligarchy. However, he came to realise that middle class radicals were only interested in political reforms, whereas what the vast majority of the working classes needed was comprehensive social reform. For years he laboured to encourage British workmen to go beyond the "worn out denominations of English Liberalism".[79] He pressed the trade union case for a satisfactory settlement, not metaphysically in terms of abstract principles, but in class terms. The unionists' demands were valid because they corresponded to the interests of the working classes as a whole. He publicly accused some union leaders of being mere election agents for the Liberals instead of promoting the interests of their own members.[80]

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79 E.S. Beesly, "The Ministry and the Workmen", Bee Hive, 16 August 1873.

80 E.S. Beesly, Bee Hive, 29 July 1871.

In March 1869 George Howell resigned as secretary of the Reform League, one of his reasons being that his "profound faith in our great Liberal leader - Mr. Gladstone - makes me feel all the more secure as to the future".[81] George Potter, editor of the Bee Hive, pledged the full support of his paper to the Liberals during the 1868 General Election, in exchange for financial help from wealthy businessmen and politicians. From this point, until Lloyd Jones began to write for the paper in 1871, the Bee Hive moved towards the Right. The old Christian Chartist Henry Solly became joint editor with Potter, and by February 1870 was effectively editor-in-chief. He advocated his ideal of a proletariat of "working bees rejoicing in cheerful labour ... true to their brother bees of every class, and to the Queen bee on her honoured throne".[82] This was the last straw and it was at this point that the International formally severed all connections with the paper. It is hardly surprising that the Republican of October 1870 joined the Positivists denouncing certain unnamed labour aristocrats as "'hired Political Mercenaries' warranted to say and do anything if upper and middle classes will pay expenses".[83]

When a group of manufacturers led by S.C. Kell of Bradford gained control of the Commonwealth newspaper, the Positivists were attacked along with Marx as instigators of class hatred. Royden Harrison has shown that Beesly was actually more important than Marx in the early

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81 George Howell to Edmond Beales, 10 March 1869, quoted in Royden Harrison, "The Land and Labour League", Bulletin of the International Institute of Social History - Amsterdam, 3 (1953), 177.

82 19 February 1870.

83 1 October 1870.

days of the International. Certainly, Beesly did the lion's share of the groundwork leading up to the founding of the organisation at St. Martin's Hall on 28 September 1864. Marx, of course, became the dominant figure later on after Beesly's interest had waned.[84] In fact, Beesly always avoided taking up positions of power in working class organisations, and the Positivists in general "persuaded themselves that their influence over working class opinion would be all the greater if they abstained from assuming such responsibilities".[85]

Thus, the Positivist strategy in this period was to:

> ... pass beyond middle-class radicalism to the formation of an independent labour party which would be based on and supported by the trade unions and which would make unionist demands for a satisfactory legal settlement the main plank of its programme.[86]

John Hales, a prominent member of the International, also put forward plans to establish "a distinct Labour Party, based on the principles of the International".[87] R.A. Cooper proposed a third party centering on the Republican movement, and John Morley proposed a more respectable kind of radical party based on Joseph Chamberlain's Unauthorised Programme. However, none of these enterprises met with any real success.

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84 Harrison, "E.S. Beesly and Karl Marx", 31.

85 Ibid., 32.

86 Harrison, "Professor Beesly and the English Working Class Movement" in Briggs and Saville, Essays in Labour History, 1:228.

87 Henry Collins, "The English Branches of the First International" in Briggs and Saville, Essays in Labour History, 1:262.

Where, then, does republicanism fit into this framework? Which sections of society produced republicans and why, and what sort of republicans were they? It was mentioned earlier that the republicanism of the 1870's was directed as much against the privileged aristocracy as against the Monarchy, and so naturally there were few republicans or even sympathizers to be found among the upper classes. However, there were more middle class republicans especially in intellectual circles. All members of the middle classes were conscious of suffering from the backlash of aristocratic privilege and so, to some degree, many sympathized with the republican demand for a more egalitarian society, or at least a meritocracy. However, as E.B. Bax prophetically states in his autobiography, "the middle class mind of the time flattered itself" that Queen Victoria "was a woman after its own heart".[88] This high regard for the personal qualities of the Queen, irrespective of whether she was doing her job properly, understandably inhibited many middle class people from committing themselves to republicanism. The bulk of republicans were then, from the working classes. In order to illuminate this assertion, let us turn once more to the writings of Thomas Wright.

In an article on English republicanism written in the spring of 1871, the "Journeyman Engineer" categorically stated "that in its theory and possibilities a republic is a better form of government for the working population of a country than either a monarchical or autocratic one may

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88 E.B. Bax, Reminiscences and Recollections of a Mid and Late Victorian (New York, 1920), 18.

be taken as an admitted truism".[89] Because of this truth, said Wright, there has in England "always been a considerable degree of instinctive Republican feeling among the working classes, and a certain measure of philosophical Republicanism among scholarly and speculative politicians untrammelled by the exigencies of political statesmanship".[90] He chided the ruling classes for dismissing republicanism as a serious political alternative, maintaining that on the contrary:

> Republicanism has reached a new, an advanced and advancing stage - has become an important though a little recognised or understood actuality of practical politics. For years past Republicanism has been spreading among the working classes doctrinally to such a degree that now it may be safely said that it is - in some more or less modified form - the political creed of ninety-nine working men in a hundred.[91]

Even if Wright drastically overestimated the prevalence of working class republicanism, and he was not generally prone to exaggeration, it would still appear that the creed enjoyed a substantial following. He was convinced that "all the elements of a great Republican party lie ready".[92] A letter published in Reynolds' Newspaper from a Sheffield man expressed the same opinion. He stated that:

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89 Thomas Wright (Journeyman Engineer), "English Republicanism", Fraser's Magazine (June 1871) in Our New Masters (London, 1873), 161.

90 Ibid.

91 Ibid., 162.

92 Wright, "English Republicanism", 181.

> ... If put to a fair trial of strength in England, the Republican Party would even now be found in the majority. Certain it is that the intellect of the country would be found enrolled beneath the banner of republicanism.[93]

But Wright astutely observed that although the movement contained great thinkers, "it has not a statesman capable of carrying on the practical work of government".[94] Those Members of Parliament involved in republicanism, such as Dilke, Taylor, Fawcett, Herbert, Lawson, Trevelyan and Anderson[95] might have been just a little hurt by that statement. However, it cannot be denied that, as yet, none of those men was a proven administrator. Wright was basically correct when he stated that "the House of Commons does not number a single Republican member"[96] because none of the aforementioned Members had been elected on a republican ticket. They were simply advanced Liberals with republican principles.

It may seem paradoxical that while many of the allegedly republican working classes now had the means to send representatives of their political views to Parliament, there were no such men in the House. As might be expected, this fact was seized upon by the opponents of republicanism in order to challenge the contention that such views were widely held among the populace. For example, The Times remarked that "there is not, we believe, a single member of Parliament returned on republican principles,

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93 8 May 1870.

94 Wright, "English Republicanism", 184.

95 See below, 265-89, 335-6, 409-10.

96 Wright, "The Composition of the Working Classes", 514.

nor a single constituency in Great Britain where it would be safe for a candidate to profess republican opinions".[97] This may have been taken by some as proof that republicanism barely existed; but, on the other hand, it could be seen as illustrating the defects of the British representative system.

Thomas Wright was not under the illusion that a republic would immediately ensure full employment and comfortable living but he believed that many others were. Most of those were to be found among the socialist element whose existence he freely acknowledged. However, he maintained that "those who form the bulk of the Republicans do not expect impossibilities from a Republic and are not so foolish as to hold levelling doctrines".[98] In fact the republicans of this period may be divided into three major categories according to the type of republic they envisaged. Firstly, there were those like Sir Charles Dilke, Applegarth, Howell and Potter, whose republicanism was essentially theoretical and who rarely criticised the Monarch or Royal Family except to recommend financial economy. Secondly, there was the Bradlaugh school. This secularist-dominated group were practical republicans although they recognised that there was much work to be done, especially regarding the education of the populace, before the nation would be ready to participate in a democratic republic. Thus, they accepted that the republic would probably not be declared until the death of Queen Victoria. Unfortunately, the Queen

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97 27 March 1871.

98 Wright, "English Republicanism", 183.

lived for many years more than they anticipated and the longer she lived, the more respect she commanded and the weaker the republican movement became. This group advocated the republic pure and simple, leaving decisions as to the exact nature of the new system to be worked out later. Lastly, there were those such as the Positivists, the members of the International, the Land and Labour League, the Universal Republican League and the Republican Brotherhood, who insisted that social reform must follow closely on the heels of political change. They, therefore, constructed a whole panacea of collectivist proposals to be instituted if and when the republic was proclaimed. Some of this group did not see why there had to be any delay in rousing the masses to demand a republic but they were in a minority. Most agreed with Bradlaugh that the process must be slow and peaceful. It must be noted that these categories were far from rigid and there was a fair amount of intermingling between them. For the most part though, they facilitate the most adequate differentiation between the various types of republicanism.

Few contemporary newspapers, and no later historians successfully identified these categories. The most common mistake was to label all bourgeois republicans as moderates and all proletarians as extremists. The radical press was, of course, by no means so superficial, and the more advanced Liberal papers were generally pretty well informed. The Weekly Dispatch was such a paper. The leading article in the Dispatch for 23 April 1871 stated that there were two main groups of republicans and made the following judgement:

> Theoretic Republicanism, indeed is becoming very evident in England. It has its representatives in the bar, the pulpit, the academic classroom, the senate. Patricians, too, have given their lisping utterances, with hands outstretched in delicate lavender tinted gloves; thinking no doubt, that it is well to move with the times. But the first section - that of theory and persuasion - is an important one entitled to all respect.[99]

However, the "second section" was described as "the Gallic notion of violence and subversion (which) is alien to the English character",[100] and summarily condemned. The Tory press was often guilty of going one step further and indiscriminately branding all republicans as red revolutionaries. The article concluded that "the Tory party loves to look to order and plan - the Republican looks to the fullest possible freedom. The Tory would control - the Republican would enlarge and liberate".[101] The Dispatch predictably decided that the best course for England to take was a middle way between the two.

This chapter then, has attempted to outline the political and economic circumstances which encouraged the growth of British republicanism after 1867, and also to describe the nature of that republicanism in the context of the prevailing class relationships. All but a small minority of the populace were content with the basic framework of society. Within that framework there were ideological conflicts and differing aspirations; but the acceptance by the labour aristocracy of upper and middle class hegemony, together with their desire to be respected and allowed a share

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99 23 April 1871.

100 Ibid.

101 Ibid.

in government, watered down their radicalism. Those in the lowest reaches of society had the most to gain by a republic, particularly if it became social, and it is therefore to be expected that extreme republican sentiments tended to be most common among those whose economic circumstances were the direst. As the reader was warned earlier though, one must be aware of over-simplification here. Middle class intellectuals, particularly the Positivists, were among the most extreme republicans, while sections of the residuum remained loyal to Her Majesty.[102] On the other hand, the trade union élite characteristically aped the advanced Liberal middle and upper classes in their milk-and-water theoretical republicanism.

Sources of all kinds, whether they be personal manuscripts, newspapers, or parliamentary papers, indicate that republicanism in this period enjoyed a popularity unprecedented since the Civil War. The actual numbers involved are exceedingly difficult to gauge, but between 1869 and 1874 there were ninety-two republican societies founded in England, Scotland and Wales, plus at least another forty associations that were republican in sentiment if not in name. The membership of a club, depending on the size and character of the town in which it was located, could fluctuate between several hundreds, even thousands in a few cases, and a mere handful. It is even harder to estimate the number of republicans not enrolled in societies but the total figure may well have been several hundred thousand. Lastly, it must be stressed once more that although the declaration of the Third French Republic gave a tremendous impetus

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102 See Hugh Mcleod, Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City (London, 1974), 62.

to British republicanism, it was not responsible for initiating the movement. There was a republican tradition in Britain, far older than that of the French which could be, and indeed had been, drawn upon. The British republican revival began at least three years before September 1870, and although foreign influence was important, it was in many ways a domestic affair.

CHAPTER 5

METROPOLITAN REPUBLICANISM

It has been shown how, in the wake of the American Civil War and throughout the Reform agitation, republican sentiments gradually became more prevalent among working class Londoners. Events such as Beesly's address on the Civil War at St. James' Hall in 1862, the founding of the International Working Men's Association at St. Martin's Hall in 1864, and the enthusiasm for the American Republic at the St. Martin's Reform meeting in 1865, were all indicative of a new upsurge of radicalism. Charles Bradlaugh had lectured on the merits of republicanism at the New Hall of Science in October 1862.[1] In March 1867 a crowded meeting in London commemorated the French Republic of 1848, and by January 1869, the East London Secular Society was holding regular republican meetings.[3] Later that year the first authentic republican associations were founded in the capital. More than anything else, these early republican groups were a response to the prevailing economic conditions in East London.

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the two most important industries in the East End of London were ship-building and silk weaving. In the forty years after 1830, both industries collapsed,

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1 National Reformer, 22 October 1868.

2 Ibid., 10 March 1867.

3 Ibid., 3 January 1869.

neither being able to surmount "the technological threats posed by industrialization, whether it was factory production and the steam-powered loom, or the iron steamship".[4] Silk weaving, which in 1824 had employed 50,000, could provide work for only 9,500 by 1860 and was still on the decline. But the distress of the weavers in the 1860's was engulfed by the collapse of the East London ship-building industry between 1866 and 1868. This was sparked off by the crash of the Overend and Gurney bank in 1866; a disaster which also ended the boom in building and railway construction.

By January 1867, 30,000 were destitute in Poplar alone. Fuel was added to the fire by an outbreak of cholera which had killed 3,909 people in East London and brought economic distress to the survivors owing to the cost of medical treatment and burials. Moreover, food was scarce, due to the disastrous harvest of 1866. That winter was especially harsh. The river froze, and dockers, lightermen, coal whippers, and all others who depended on riverside employment, were laid off. Recovery was slow and very limited. Chronically depressed conditions continued into the winter of 1868-9 and had barely improved by 1870.

By 1871 the numbers employed in ship-building and its ancillary engineering trades had still risen only to 9,000 after falling from 27,000 in 1865. This was the limit of recovery and trade became confined either to repair work, or else to large but infrequent government orders. Stedman Jones remarks that "wages remained high, but work became increasingly irregular"[5] and states that of all the trades affected,

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4 Gareth Stedman Jones, Outcast London (Oxford, 1971), 101.

5 Ibid., 105.

shipwrights fared worst because of the replacement of sail by steam. This entailed the building of larger ships, and the older docks were too shallow, their quays too short and their entrances too narrow to accomodate large steamships.

The local reports of East End Charity Organisation Societies in the 1870's show that even in the most prosperous years there "was always a considerable number of tailors, cabinet makers, and particularly shoemakers in need of charity".[6] High levels of unemployment in East London persisted into the early 1870's and the various political demonstrations continued to arouse occasional flurries of anxiety in the West End. Pauperism, although declining in the rest of the country after 1870, did not begin to decrease in London until 1872. All this misfortune combined with wretched housing conditions to create a perfect breeding ground in the East End for social republicanism.

On 4 July 1869 the National Reformer printed a report, signed "A Socialist", of the founding of the International Republican Association,[7] the first genuine republican club of the period in Britain. The following week a further report, this time signed by the secretary John Johnson, stated that the group had substituted the word "Democratic" for "Republican" in order to avoid harassment by the law.[8] With the majority of its members culled from the "Soho O'Brienites",[9] the I.D.A.

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6 Ibid., 109. 7 Ibid., 4 July 1869. 8 Ibid., 11 July 1869. See below, 350-2 for further details on the I.D.A. and its members.

9 The "Soho O'Brienites" were disciples of the late Bronterre O'Brien who occupied the extreme left wing of the Metropolitan political spectrum. See Stan Shipley, Club Life and Socialism in Mid Victorian London (Oxford, 1972).

was the creation of P. A. V. Le Lubez and German refugee Lassallean Weber. The republicanism of this group was of the advanced social kind and they had no scruples about launching personal attacks upon members of the Royal Family and contrasting royal wealth with the dire poverty of many Londoners. The fortunes of this organisation must now be traced.

The Weekly Dispatch for 16 April 1871 reported a meeting of the I.D.A. on Clerkenwell Green with a Mr. Owen in the chair and John Weston, Charles Murray, a major organiser of support for the Paris Commune, and John Johnson on the platform. It seems that at this point Le Lubez was not so much involved; as the article indicates he was on the fringe of this group. Probably he was simply not a member of the executive at that time. A resolution was passed declaring that "all property beyond what it cost is robbery",[10] and the opinion expressed that if they could get this principle recognized, society might be reorganised without bloodshed.

The next issue of the Dispatch contained an announcement of a proposed conference between republicans and socialists to promote unity of action among the democratic organisations in London, the provinces and on the continent.[11] Proposed by the I.D.A., the conference was to be held over three nights at the Eleusis Club in Chelsea. In the course of these meetings the I.D.A. was replaced by a new body called the Universal Republican League. Among the moving spirits were John Weston and Martin J. Boon, and Le Lubez was involved once again. The object

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10 16 April 1871.

11 23 April 1871.

of the League was to promote the intellectual, moral and material welfare of mankind by uniting republicans of all nations and establishing branches of the League, and republican clubs, all over the world. The members were pledged to support a comprehensive list of proposals for the transformation of society.[12]

Towards the end of the year, the League announced that its programme had been "accepted by a large number of the Democratic Party in the country".[13] The reference to a "Democratic Party" is highly significant, anticipating a general republican desire for a radical third party by 1873.[14] They also called for support in securing a Central Republican Hall in London. Since its inception in April, the League had met every week at the Lord Clyde tavern in Vauxhall Gardens. But the police were endeavouring to combat the spread of republicanism by terrorizing the landlords of pubs in which the republicans met.[15]

Bradlaugh and his followers were not impressed. They found the Old Street Hall of Science a perfectly adequate place to hold meetings. More important, they disagreed with the I.D.A. in that they were agitating for a republic pure and simple. They believed that if people were asked to subscribe to a long list of reforms which the republic must accomplish, large numbers of potential supporters might be lost

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12 See Appendix 4.

13 National Reformer, 10 December 1871.

14 See below, 165.

15 Ibid., 9 April 1871.

because they disagreed with one or two points. Thus they were content to leave the nature of the republic to be decided after it had come into being. This was a fundamental dichotomy in London republicanism which from the outset seriously hampered the development of the movement.

A second organisation in which the social republican element predominated was the Land and Labour League. Key members of the I.D.A. became involved as did Bradlaugh, and for a time it may have helped to ease the tension between the two groups. At a meeting of the Holborn branch of the National Reform League in September 1869, William Osborne and John Johnson proposed the summoning of a conference to establish a new radical organisation which would advocate land nationalization and republicanism.[16] The conference took place at the Bell Inn, Old Bailey, on 13, 20 and 27 October. Marx rejoiced at the founding of the new organisation, welcoming it as the long awaited workers' party with no bourgeois associations. Royden Harrison has stated that there were "many tendencies within the League, but at its inception Marx was justified in believing that his was the dominant one".[17] There are certainly good grounds for saying this. For example, the first point in the League's programme was nationalization of the land,[18] anticipating the crusade of Henry George later in the century. Marx had spent much time and energy convincing the English members of the I.W.M.A. of the im-

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16 Ibid., 19 September 1869.

17 Harrison, Before the Socialists, 216.

18 See Appendix 5.

portance of breaking down the old semi-feudal system of land ownership. Most of the League's founding members were at least peripherally involved with the International as well. One of these men, Martin J. Boon, in one of the League's first official publications, revived the old arguments based on the Norman Yoke.[19]

After a slight disagreement as to whether or not the League should have a president, the office was given to an Irish tailor, Patrick Hennessey. The treasurer was John Weston and the secretaries were Martin J. Boon and J. George Eccarius. According to the Republican, Le Lubez had replaced Eccarius by September 1870.[20] Harrison states that the General Council of the League was thirty-seven strong and included Osborne, Lucraft, Hales, Mottershead and Jung. However, if the Republican is to be believed, this had been reduced to twelve by September 1870.[21] The League became the self-appointed champion of the unemployed, and organised a grand demonstration in Trafalgar Square on Good Friday 1870 to show where its sympathies on this, and other issues, lay. Moreover, the demonstrators wore scarlet sashes and carried the emblematical "corps" in emulation of the sans culottes of the first French Revolution.[22] Not surprisingly, The Times printed some scathing

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19 M.J. Boon, A Protest Against the Present Emigrationists (London, 1869). See above, 49.

20 1 September 1870.

21 Ibid. The twelve were Bradlaugh, Odger, Johnson, Chatterton, Milner, Townshend, Wilson, McGriffen, Schoen, Mullins, Harris and Holliday.

22 The Times, 16 April 1870.

editorial comment on the League's activities.[23]

At its inception, the Land and Labour League was not an avowedly republican organisation but for a time it did become the major clearing house for that stream of radicalism. The Republican avowed that:

> ... The only society that we know of ... that can alone bring about a lasting Republic, is the Land and Labour League ... there is no hope for the Democracy of England, until the means of existence is open to all ... our first work is to secure the untilled land for cultivation, and secondly, to have the use of an exchange medium for our production.[24]

It is significant that Daniel Chatterton, the proprietor of the Republican was also a member of the League's General Council. The Dundee Courier and Argus also maintained in an editorial that land reform was an essential precondition for a British Republic.[25] Between September 1870 and January 1871, three new branches of the League were set up in London, together with groups in Cardiff, Bristol, Oxford and Southampton. They were very much involved in the pro-French republican agitation in these months, as well as being the first to protest against the proposed dowry for the Princess Louise on the occasion of her marriage to the Marquis of Lorne.[26]

However, from the middle of 1872, the League started to fade as its members seemed to become more interested in words than actions, and

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23 12-16 April 1870.

24 1 October 1870.

25 20 September 1872. N.B. Both The Dundee Courier and Argus and the Dundee Advertiser are excellent sources for news of republican activities.

26 See below, 154, 411-13.

became increasingly involved in other organisations. The League had always been willing to accomodate differing shades of opinion within the left-wing but relations among a number of the crotcheteers were becoming very strained. William Osborne, who was also secretary of the London Patriotic Society, led one group away from the League, urging concentration on the single question of attaining political power rather than wasting time with complex and tedious debates about currency reform. As president of the London Republican Club, Bradlaugh had, since the middle of 1871, devoted an increasing amount of time to that organisation. Odger had been involved in a difference of opinion with the International regarding the merits of the Paris Commune, and this brought him into direct conflict with several important members of the League, particularly since they were also part of the International.' In September 1871 Patrick Hennessey, along with P. O'Leary, set up the Metropolitical Home Rule Association which diverted much of his time away from the activities of the Land and Labour League.

The second major reason for the decline in the League's fortunes was the change in the economic situation. Boom conditions steadily replaced the depression and by the middle of 1872 even the situation in the East End of London had temporarily improved. As a result, many people turned to simple political republicanism as far less disturbing and disrupting. It is possible also, that at this time the League also lost some support to its middle class rival the Land Tenure Reform Association.

On 22 July 1869 John Stuart Mill, who had lost his seat in the

Commons the previous year, and a group of radical M.P.'s sent out invitations to a conference which they hoped would establish a new organisation for land reform. The invitations were headed with the words of Richard Cobden: "I would have a League for free trade in Land, just as we had a League for free trade in corn."[27] Mill was faced with a dilemma in that among the working men who wished to join were a group in favour of nationalization that included Odger, Cremer and Lucraft. However, Mill was initially against any change in the programme of the Association on the grounds that any move towards nationalization would antagonize large numbers of potential middle class supporters, while attracting only a small section of working men.

Yet by April 1870, Mill was endeavouring to find a revised programme on which working class land reformers could co-operate with those middle class members who could not entertain complete nationalization. The revised programme advocated:

> The interception, by Taxation, for the benefit of the state, of the future Unearned Increase of the Rent of Land (so far as the same can be ascertained) or a great part of such increase, which is continually taking place without any effort or outlay by the proprietors, merely through the growth of population and wealth.[28]

This lost a few middle class allies but gained more working men, such as Cremer, an original member of the Land and Labour League who would have nothing to do with the Land Tenure Reform Association on the basis of the original programme. However, Mill never managed to secure the

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27 Harrison, Before the Socialists, 223.

28 Idem., "The Land and Labour League", Bulletin of the International Institute of Social History, 3 (Amsterdam, 1953), 172.

more important members of the League such as Odger. It is interesting that the high Tory Norfolk Chronicle stated that Mill and his Association deserved the "well-earned title of 'levellers' - although even a stronger epithet might not be considered out of place".[29] One wonders what they thought of the Land and Labour League. In fact, neither organisation really gained a conclusive advantage over the other and both petered out in the mid 1870's. For a time though, they had revitalized the radical movement in Britain and left behind an important legacy for the future.[30]

In September 1870, coinciding almost exactly with the declaration of the Third French Republic, an anonymous penny paper appeared on the news stands. The paper was called the Republican: A Monthly Advocate and Record of Republican and Democratic Principles and Movements; its opening address ran as follows:

> The mission of Republicanism and Democracy is work - and for that work to be complete we include the evolution of thought or ideas. The Press is the most powerful lever in the hands of our opponents. Why should we not use the same weapon? We shall endeavour in our experiment to make the "Republican" the "Irreconcilable" to wrong, fraud, oppression, and crime, and fearlessly to speak the truth in preference to saying what is merely agreeable. The press is falling more and more into the hands of the capitalists and threatens to become their monopoly. Thousands are also in a state of entire destitution from no fault of their own, they have literally been educated to it ... Excessive wealth among the few, necessarily produces excessive poverty among the many; and poverty is the natural parent of all the vices and corruptions that exist. Whatever may be the wrongs of the government or capitalist classes, we cannot accept that they should be, as individuals, despoiled and vituperated.[31]

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29 10 May 1873.

30 See H.V. Emy, Liberals, Radicals and Social Politics 1892-1914 (Cambridge, 1973), 203-11 and 216-24.

31 1 September 1870.

Instead, the paper "despoiled and vituperated" leaders of the labour movement. Bradlaugh was attacked for his atheism, but drawing this into discussions on republicanism only served to widen the already alarming gulf between the various shades of republicans. One columnist wrote in February 1872 that:

> ... so long as Mr. Bradlaugh is supposed to be one of the leaders in our cause, it can never prosper ... let him not be classed as one having authority and influence among us. As soon, nay sooner, would we recognise as co-workers and model Republicans, the Czar of Russia, the Sultan of Turkey, or the Pope of Rome ... Atheism such as Bradlaugh teaches is as inconsistent with Republicanism, as ignorance and vice are opposed to true happiness.[32]

More than this, trade unionism was condemned as "selfishness and despotism".[33] Odger was singled out for particular abuse, so much so that protests were sent to the paper from John Weston and some branches of the Land and Labour League.[34]

Although the Republican was not the official organ of the League, the latter was the only organisation to receive consistent support from that mercurial publication. In April 1871 the Newcastle Weekly Chronicle, itself a republican paper edited by W.E. Adams, stated that:

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32 1 February 1872.

33 1 June 1871.

34 Harrison, Before the Socialists, 238.

> We cannot say that we are altogether favourably impressed with such of the numbers of the Republican as have fallen into our hands. There are too many crotchets ventilated in it - crotchets which have not the remotest connection with the principles of Republicanism. Moreover, the conspicuous vice of the Old Chartist party is repeated in its columns. The conductors of the Republican are so personal and quarrelsome that the last number published is full of complaints against their policy ...[35]

Twelve months later the Chronicle more bluntly described the Republican as "a spiteful little publication",[36] not renowned for printing the truth. As Harrison succinctly put it, "the paper buried itself under the weight of its own vituperation",[37] the last issue being published in February 1872. It was replaced almost immediately by the International Herald, with William Harrison Riley as editor, which at least tried to be more conciliatory. However, the Newcastle Chronicle was no more impressed with the Herald than with the Republican, condemning it as "the organ of a small party of political fanatics" which merely assisted the forces of reaction with "its wild and frenzied talk". Ironically, W.E. Adams, who had written a pamphlet condoning tyrannicide fifteen years earlier, viciously attacked "the miscreants and lunatics who write admiringly of assassination", and assassination groups such as The London and Cork Secret Society. Obviously, his views had changed with maturity. Nonetheless, Adams did concede that

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35 8 April 1871.

36 20 April 1872.

37 Harrison, Before the Socialists, 238.

the paper "sometimes contained sensible enough things too".[38] In 1874 the word "International" was replaced by "Republican" and Riley became increasingly committed to Marxist political economy. The republican movement as a whole was beginning to decline, and that particular section of it was losing popularity the fastest, owing to the demise of the International in England. The days of the Republican Herald looked to be numbered, and sure enough by the end of the year it had disappeared.

Regarding the other London working men's newspapers; the reader is reminded that when they exhibited any republican sympathies at all, Lloyds' and the Bee Hive represented the more moderate, theoretical republicanism of the trade union élite and radical middle classes. The secularist National Reformer advocated republicanism of a far more practical nature while rejecting that which demanded an immediate root and branch transformation of society. Reynolds', on the other hand, advocated, as it had for the last twenty years and would continue to do for twenty more, "The Democratic, Social and Universal Republic". Gracchus wrote on 2 October that:

> Whatever amount of liberty and prosperity we English enjoy has been obtained solely by depriving royalty and aristocracy of some of their powers and several of their privileges. How much better off, then, should we now be if we never had kings or nobles.[39]

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38 6 September 1873.

39 2 October 1870.

However, newspaper articles do not necessarily provide concrete evidence of the popularity of certain types of opinions. Mass meetings, both indoors and in the open air, are more conclusive proof that there was a strong caucus of republicans in London, together with large numbers of people willing, at least, to listen to their arguments. From 10-25 September 1870 there were several public meetings and demonstrations of working men and middle class radicals, of all shades of opinion, to express sympathy with the new French Republic. The culmination of these activities was a giant meeting of forty thousand people in Hyde Park on 25 September. The Liberal government remained unmoved and did not see fit to recognize the new régime. Thus, on 27 September, the London branch of the Labour Representation League organised a deputation to Gladstone requesting official recognition of the French Republic. The Labour Representation League was dominated by the trade union élite, and the fact that they were deeply involved in republican agitation at this point is an indication of the level of excitement in the capital. Reynolds' report of the deputation said that "the attendance was numerous, consisting of representatives of over a hundred trade societies of London and the provinces".[40] As the servant of a Royal Family whose sympathies were with the Prussians and naturally anti-Republican, Gladstone was in a very difficult position. He therefore stated that:

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40 2 October 1870.

> The principles on which the Government would act were to accept whatever form of Government in France the people of France might choose; but until the opinion of France had been fully given, it would not be just for Her Majesty's Government to assume what it would be.[41]

Among the leaders of that deputation to Gladstone were Applegarth, Howell, Potter, Lloyd Jones, who was soon to become editor of the Bee Hive, and the League's President Robert M. Latham. Yet only three months later at a League meeting, Latham, with tiresome deference, moved the following resolution:

> This League condemns as uncalled for, the offensive reference made by certain working men to the dowry of the Princess Louise, and hereby expresses its firm conviction that the working men of England would not permit their attention to be drawn away from the great questions affecting their own and the nation's welfare by paltry and vexatious attempts to excite unworthy prejudices in a matter which in its liberal and exceptional character commends itself to the hearty approval of the nation.[42]

Those thoroughly Liberal and middle class sentiments were seconded by William Allan, General Secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, and supported by Applegarth, Howell and Lloyd Jones. At the same time, the Land and Labour League was leading the protest against the dowry in the streets and political clubs, while Peter Taylor led the offensive in the House of Commons.[43]

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41 Dundee Advertiser, 30 September 1870.

42 Birmingham Daily Post, 31 January 1871.

43 See below, 336, 411-13.

On 7 October 1870 a conference was convened by the councils of the Land and Labour League and the I.D.A. This took place at the Bell Inn, Old Bailey, and was for the purpose of considering the best means of making the people's voice heard by the government. The desire was expressed that immediate action be taken in rendering aid to France, initiated by official recognition of the Republic. An executive council was then appointed to frame resolutions and organise the protest. A further meeting was held the next day at 2 Poets' Corner, Westminster, at which the Anglo-French Intervention Committee was formed. Dr. Richard Congreve, the founding father of English Positivism, was appointed to the Chair, and a list of propositions agreed to.[44] At a meeting of the group on 13 October a declaration was passed:

> That in the event of the bombardment of Paris, the people of England demand that pensions heretofore granted to any German princes concerned directly or indirectly in the bombardment shall cease either to them or their wives and children (Cheers!).[45]

It was not long before the Positivists had converted the movement for recognition of the Republic into a demand for armed intervention on behalf of France. But along with Mill and John Morley, who both admired Prussian efficiency and thoroughness, there were many republicans who thought Beesly and company were going too far. The Workmen's Peace Association[46] was one such group.

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44 Republican, 1 November 1870 - see Appendix 6.

45 Ibid.

46 For a somewhat extravagant perspective on the working class peace movement in mid-Victorian Britain see E.W. Sager, "The Working Class Peace Movement in Victorian England", Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, London, Ontario, 1978.

Aided and abetted by Edmond Beales and Benjamin Lucraft, Randal Cremer founded the Workmen's Peace Committee, and their first major rally was held in September 1870. Anticipating the pacifists and pro-Boers of thirty years hence, they said that "what we would implore the peoples of Europe to do, without regard to Country, Cabinets, or Dynasties - is to insist upon arbitration as a substitute for war".[47] The society convened a gathering at St. James Hall, chaired by Edmond Beales and attended by such notables as Beesly, Bridges, Congreve, Odger, Mottershead, Guile, Cremer and Applegarth. The general feeling of the meeting was that the declaration of the Republic had effectively removed the cause of the war and thus peace could not be far away. The war, it was decided, did not have its origin in any quarrel between the French and German peoples but in antagonism between the régimes that had governed them. Beesly demanded that the British government "use all its efforts to prevent any territorial spoilation of France"[48] and this was seconded by Applegarth. A further motion condemned standing armies and war in general. However, as the Prussian grip tightened, the Positivists would soon be urging armed intervention on behalf of their beloved France.[49] The meeting then decided that George Odger and William Trout should go to Paris to present the various addresses and resolutions to M. Jules Favre.

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47 Howard Evans, Sir Randal Cremer (London and New York, 1973), 81.

48 Anon., "The English Working Classes and the French Republic", Bee Hive, 17 September 1870.

49 See above, 155 and below, 339-40.

The society changed its name in 1871 to the Workmen's Peace Association and continued to urge British neutrality and arbitration. Also without sympathy for the interventionists was Christopher Neville, the self-appointed guide of workmen in Hatton Gardens. He was "altogether against our country being dragged into the same misery and possibly the very same defeat, in a quarrel with which we had nothing whatever to do".[50] Cremer and Neville need not have worried though, for there was no likelihood of the Gladstonian Cabinet embroiling Britain in a continental war.

Meanwhile, republicanism was growing in strength. The National Reformer dated 19 March 1871 contained a letter, signed "A.W.E.", stating that "Republicanism is fast becoming the order of the day"[51] and inquiring when a republican club would be formed in London. Of course if one was inclined towards a social republicanism one could join the I.D.A. or even the Land and Labour League. However, if one's republicanism was of a practical but more restrained nature then the only acceptable organisation in existence at the beginning of 1871 was the Land and Tenure Reform Association which was not a republican society per se. Although the majority of its members were republican, its aim was land reform, not the establishment of a republic.

The prominent secularist Christopher Charles Cattell founded a republican club in Birmingham in January 1871. This became the proto-

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50 Bee Hive, 14 January 1871.

51 19 March 1871.

type for many others throughout the country; at least those designed to cater for people favouring the republic pure and simple. A London club of this persuasion was slow to get off the mark because Bradlaugh, the leading representative of this type of republicanism in the capital, had been out of circulation owing to the death of his mother. By the beginning of April, though, the London Republican Club was at last a reality. Unlike some of its rivals in the city the club stressed "no dead level equality of either property or person", but the right "to climb to the highest".[52] In other words, the prime objective was a meritocracy as against socialism. Neither Bradlaugh nor most of his followers had any personal grievances against Queen Victoria: monarchy was simply the pinnacle and symbol of a system of privilege which they abhorred. If the Monarch's privileges were acknowledged on what grounds could class privileges be challenged? David Tribe remarked, while discussing this topic that:

> It was all very well to say the British monarch was constitutional and her powers mere pomp. Under her were the House of Lords, the Established Church, and the noble families who ruled the army and constituency parties, sat on benches of magistrates and boards of charities and pocketed perpetual pensions while the destitute old toiled in workhouses. These powers and privileges were real enough.[53]

The inaugural meeting of the London Republican Club did not

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[52] Charles Bradlaugh, "London Republican Club. The Inaugural Address of the President, Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, 1871," quoted in D. Tribe, President Charles Bradlaugh M.P., 123.

[53] Ibid.

actually take place until 12 May. Bradlaugh, as president, gave the inaugural address, and a list of societal evils to be remedied by a republic was compiled.[54] No proposals for specific economic and social reforms were prepared, the members being content to leave such details until the republic was in existence. This indifference to social questions was poorly received by other republican groups, both in the metropolis and in the provinces, and was to be the cause of much friction within the movement.

Many republicans were only too aware how the divisions in their ranks would damage the movement and early in the year there had been several attempts to rectify the situation. The Weekly Dispatch of 26 March 1871 carried a report of a meeting of London republicans at Wellington Street Music Hall, Brooke Street, Holborn, held on 21 March. The purpose of the meeting, which was convened and chaired by Odger, was to make arrangements to establish a great national republican movement. Odger stated that, for a long time, large numbers of working men in London had wanted to create some sort of central organisation around which all Britain's republicans could rally, and help each other propagate republican principles throughout the country. He went on to maintain that no period in British history had been so favourable to the establishment of a real republican movement and he "felt sure that the provinces would respond to the appeal of the metropolis".[55] It was

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54 See Appendix 7.

55 26 March 1871.

resolved to form a Central Republican Association, and an executive council and general committee was elected to prepare an address to the country and draw up a programme for a large public meeting to inaugurate the Association. Unfortunately the Association did not last long mainly because the London Republican Club was reluctant to accomodate a wide spectrum of republican opinion.

The Weekly Dispatch dated 9 April referred to a meeting of the council of the Central Republican Association. Fifty people were present and Odger was again in the Chair. The purpose of the meeting was to draw up a programme acceptable to all the country's democrats. A resolution was passed declaring that "Republicanism be taken to mean the repudiation of the hereditary principle as found in monarchical and aristocratic institutions and of all artificial distinctions and privileges of birth".[56] Those present admitted that they did not expect to be successful in a year or two but were prepared to carry on peacefully and quietly and await results. Osborne mentioned the conduct of certain persons who had disturbed a meeting held at St. James' Hall the previous Tuesday, by exhibiting red flags, etc., and said such conduct was bringing discredit to the republican cause. He also condemned certain republicans for calling meetings in Hyde Park and elsewhere without the sanction of the general body of republicans. A resolution was then passed which stated that "this meeting cannot endorse the conduct of certain men exhibiting red flags and caps of liberty at recent public meetings, and consider such conduct as very damaging to the cause

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56 Ibid., 9 April 1871.

of Republicanism".[57] Thus, right at the beginning of this republican unification project, factionalism was rearing its ugly head.

The same meeting at St. James' Hall was the subject of an interesting article by the London correspondent of the Western Weekly News in Plymouth. He expressed the opinion that:

> The collision between the upper class radicals and the lower class Reds, at St. James' Hall, is only one sympton of a very dangerous movement which is going on at the present time, quietly for the most part, though with occasional eruptions sufficient to warn society of the volcanic forces at work beneath the surface.[58]

This particular journalist obviously had no doubts about the significance of the republican movement and the deep laid forces that brought it into being. But at the same time he fell into the trap of interpreting the movement as a simple polarization between upper class moderates and lower class extremists.

The following week, a commentary on metropolitan republicanism appeared in the Weekly Dispatch which stated that:

> A serious breach has arisen between the two sections of the London Republicans. The first section, under the leadership of Messrs. Bradlaugh, Odger, Shipton, Osborne and others, are endeavouring to unite the Republicans of all classes, and create a national organisation under a programme for a Republic pure and simple, deferring any questions as to the form the Republic should take, and the consideration of all social questions connected therewith, until the mass of the people are better educated in Republican principles. The second section is represented by a few men banded under the name of the International Democratic Association, and in which the foreign Democratic element is strongly represented. The programme of this section

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57 Ibid.

58 8 April 1871.

> is the Universal Republic, Social and Democratic and their platform very similar to that of the Paris Communists, with whom they express great sympathy.[59]

This is probably the most accurate appraisal of the situation to be found outside the working class press. It is interesting to compare the above passage with a piece taken from the Newcastle Courant a few months later:

> ... all that is clear is that the game of "follow-my-leader" must for the London working man present features of peculiar difficulty. No two of his many leaders appear to hold the same views upon any one point; each of them appears to consider all the rest "hypocritical", "half-hearted", etc. The Republicans of the Bell Inn, Old Bailey, have no confidence in the Republicans of Cockspur Street - The Republicans of Cockspur Street consider the Republicans of the Bell Inn to be beneath contempt. Is it not truth to say that what one section thinks of the other, the country thinks of the whole?[60]

This was a singularly less intelligent commentary than would have been found in the Weekly Dispatch or the Newcastle Chronicle, but illustrates two points well. Firstly, the article betrays an assumption that large numbers of London workers were republicans. Secondly, it shows that by the end of the year the London republicans were no closer to reconciling their differences.

In the first month of the new year a conference was called by Dilke, Odger and other republican leaders in London. They maintained that one result of this was "the adjustment of certain differences

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59 16 April 1871.

60 15 December 1871.

which have hitherto existed, and agreement upon a plan for the future conduct of the Republican movement in and out of Parliament".[61] Plans were also put forward to open a well-furnished house in central London to serve as headquarters for a new association to be called the British Republican Club, which would direct the movements of the party throughout the country. In a report of the meeting the Newcastle Chronicle stated that "a card of membership is being engraved in a high style of art. The card is surrounded by a wreath of vine leaves, and bears upon it the portraits of four representative Republicans, Milton, Cromwell, Washington and Lincoln".[62] But this project went the way of many others and nothing more was heard of it.

The provincial republicans constantly looked to the capital for national leadership but were always disappointed. To a great extent the blame for disunity must be placed on the shoulders of Bradlaugh and the secularists. Yet the latter could already boast a national organisation with branches all over the country, and surely this might have provided the basis for a unified national republican movement. Bradlaugh, though, had always been prone to feuds with his fellow radicals, the rift with G.J. Holyoake in the early 1860's being a prime example. In particular, Bradlaugh had problems co-operating with socialists, primarily because he could not agree with their ideology. He quarrelled constantly with the I.W.M.A. until he broke with it com-

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61 Newcastle Weekly Chronicle, 13 January 1872.

62 Ibid.

pletely. More serious was the rivalry with John De Morgan and the Republican Brotherhood of Sheffield. The personal feud between Bradlaugh and De Morgan will be dealt with later,[63] but something must be said now about the lack of co-operation between the social republicans of Sheffield and Nottingham and the London Republican Club.

The National Reformer for 10 November 1872 contained a report by G.W. Foote, a prominent secularist and secretary of the London Republican Club, of a meeting of that organisation on 28 October at which plans were discussed for the foundation of a British Republican Association.[64] About the same time a meeting was held in the Yorkshire mining town of Mexborough, followed by one in Sheffield, to discuss the possibility of holding a national conference in the steel city. The Londoners held a further meeting on 25 November at which delegates from all the other London democratic societies were present. It was decided to express sympathy with the proposed Sheffield conference but not to attend, and to convey the opinion that the Sheffield people had not taken sufficient precautions to render their conference nationally representative. It is significant that a notice encouraging all republican clubs to attend the conference did not appear in the National Reformer until the very day the event was to take place.[65] Whether the advertisement was submitted late or held back on purpose by Bradlaugh, it is impossible to determine, but the latter seems more likely.

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63 See below, 205-6, 321-2.

64 10 November 1872.

65 1 December 1872.

At the beginning of January 1873 a circular was sent out by the London Republican Club, in conjunction with the London Patriotic Society and the West Central Democratic Society,[66] calling for a conference to establish a National Republican Association "with none of those vexed economical or purely social questions which so greatly divide even avowed Republicans".[67] The conference took place on 6 January; Bradlaugh presided and among those on the platform were Odger and R.A. Cooper, secretary of the National Secular Society and founder of the Norwich Republican Club. Virtually all the democratic organisations in the capital sent representatives.

Odger stated that the time was right for the practical union of all societies supporting democratic principles. He maintained that in Scotland, especially, republican feeling was most intense and intelligently directed. In the north of England, even in places such as Liverpool, where Tory influence was so potent, the strength of republicanism, he alleged, was immense. Finally, he recommended that a national conference be held in the spring or early summer. Cooper observed that it was high time the republicans broke away from the Liberal Party and proved that the latter was too weak to stand without the republican vote. In fact, republican candidates should be nominated and supported at every parliamentary and municipal election unless the Liberals promised to carry through a reasonable portion of the democratic programme.

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66 There were at least 25 political organisations throughout London that were republican - see Appendix 8.

67 International Herald, 4 January 1873.

All the speakers stressed that violence could safely be left to the Royalists.[68] In fact, an Anti-Republican Association had been in existence in London since December 1871. The Keighley News commented that:

> It is a phenomenon worthy of serious attention, that those who profess to be champions of law and order should systematically resort to violence, and make the first appeal to physical force ... We earnestly protest the idea, which seems to find general favour with the conservative party, that the strongest arguments which can be urged in support of the Monarchy are the brickbats and bludgeons wielded by hired rowdyism.[69]

Royalist violence in the provinces will be discussed later.[70] Such conduct does not seem to have been so prevalent in London.

By the end of the month the predictable retort of the Sheffield Republican Club to the deliberations of the Londoners had been received; it read as follows:

> We, the members of the Sheffield Republican Club, are of opinion that it would be unwise to hold another Republican Conference as there has been one so recently, and every Republican Club in England had an opportunity of being represented; and therefore to call another Conference to set at naught its deliberations would be a direct insult to every club represented, either personally or by proxy. We therefore call on all clubs represented at the Sheffield Conference to withold their support from any Conference called at the present time; and we are of opinion that the next Conference ought to emanate from the Republican Brotherhood in not less than six months from the Conference held at Sheffield.[71]

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68 National Reformer, 12 January 1873.

69 Keighley News, 9 December 1871.

70 See below, 225, 234-40, 243.

71 National Reformer, 26 January 1873.

G.W. Foote replied that a national conference was being planned in London as far back as April 1872, and the London club was therefore not setting itself up in opposition to the Sheffield Brotherhood, and neither were they trying to split the movement.[72] But whatever Foote's contention, the London Republicans were doing exactly that, and making no attempt whatsoever to compromise. It was announced in the National Reformer on 2 March that a republican conference would be held in Birmingham Town Hall on 21 May.[73] Since it was decided to hold this conference in Birmingham there will be no further discussion of the event at this juncture.[74]

It was tragic from the republican point of view that at the very time when there seemed to be sufficient enthusiasm to form a viable third party, the movement was split down the middle and nothing very constructive was done. It was remarkable that considering the herculean effort made to unite all shades of republicans in London, that no compromise could be reached with the Republican Brotherhood. One detects a strong element of north-south rivalry here.

To conclude this chapter a word must be said about republican demonstrations in the capital, and the parks controversy which was closely linked to those demonstrations. The list of republican meetings held in London between 1867 and 1874 is a long one and will be found in an appendix to this study.[75] The larger indoor gatherings took place at

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72 Ibid., 4 May 1873.

73 Ibid., 2 March 1873.

74 See below, 182-6.

75 See Appendix 9.

St. James' Hall or the New Hall of Science, while the regular meetings of the local branches of societies were generally held in pubs. Hyde Park and Trafalgar Square were the favourite venues for large open air demonstrations, and smaller gatherings met weekly on Clerkenwell Green. The Clerkenwell News tells us that in September 1870 a Republican Demonstration Committee was formed. Its members were almost certainly members of the Land and Labour League and the I.D.A.[76]

Open air meetings were particularly efficacious in the conversion of people to the republican cause, in the same way as evangelical revival meetings sparked off countless religious experiences among those present. For example, the Clerkenwell News stated that at a republican meeting in Hyde Park on 10 September 1870, many of the English artisans present sympathized with Germany at the beginning of the meeting. However, after listening to speeches from Weston, Beesly, Le Lubez, Merrimen and Shipton, they carried a resolution in favour of the French Republic. The report also mentioned that the London Irish could always be counted upon to swell the numbers at a republican demonstration, and had taken the side of France much earlier than the English workmen, some of whom still did not trust the old enemy.[77]

Of course, respectable members of the community had been taught to be suspicious of mass meetings; they could so easily lead to riots and damage to property. Not that such incidents often occurred, but

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76 Clerkenwell News and London Daily Chronicle, 21 September 1870.

77 Ibid., 13 September 1870.

when they did the ruling classes did not forget in a hurry. The more thoughtful republicans were aware of the stigma attached to demonstrations and warned that such tactics might do the cause more harm than good. H.V. Mayer wrote in the Republican that:

> Demonstrations should be made on great occasions only ... Depend upon it, the advocacy of Republicanism to be successful in this country, must be conducted logically and decorously, and the less it has to do with red caps and red flags the better ...[78]

G.W. Foote, in his capacity as secretary of the London Republican Club, wrote to the Penny Illustrated Paper protesting the respectability of the majority of republicans and condemning "... ridiculous imitations of Parisian practices such as banner flaunting, flag waving and drum beating".[79]

We have already learnt something of official attitudes towards republican meetings and demonstrations, and referred to the information sent by the police to Gladstone about such gatherings. The writer of the accompanying letter, whose signature is unfortunately indecipherable, stated that "the list I have given does not include all even of the exceptional and important meetings held during the period specified ..."[80] If the list is compared to the main calendar of republican events, both printed in the appendix to this chapter, this will be seen to be correct.[81] The aforementioned letter continued to say that:

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78 1 May 1871.

79 22 April 1871.

80 Summary of Police Reports, Gladstone Papers, BM, Add. MS. 44617, ff. 95-104.

81 See Appendix 9.

> The meetings here mentioned, however, may safely be taken as specimens of all that have been held. Our general observation applies to all of them, and that is that they seem to be promoted not by the working men of London, but by a small set of troublesome and utterly disreputable agitators, who generally meet for the purpose in a Public House which bears the singularly suitable appellation of the "Hole-in-the-Wall". (Here) the speakers transgressed the bounds of common decency.[82]

The claim that the republican movement was entirely composed of professional agitators rather than ordinary working men may contain some truth for the period up to the declaration of the Third French Republic. However, that certainly was not the case after that time. The writer admitted that after September 1870 the republican numbers swelled immensely and they acquired some more reputable speakers. It is amusing that Professor Beesly was cited as such a man although he had been speaking for the republican cause for almost a decade. Bradlaugh and Odger were stated to have been:

> ... comparatively moderate in their expressions, but they have been constantly found on the same platform with scoundrels like Osborne and Finlen who bawl themselves hoarse in denouncing the Queen in terms that would befit a brothel. The addresses delivered at the ordinary Sunday meetings at Clerkenwell appear to be invariably of this character.[83]

Even the radical Newcastle Weekly Chronicle said that at the Clerkenwell Green meetings "some of the language used was of a very violent character".[84]

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82 Gladstone Papers, BM, Add. MS. 44617, ff. 95-104.

83 Ibid.

84 8 April 1871.

Throughout the early 1870's a variety of methods were employed by the Metropolitan Police to suppress republican meetings. On 9 April 1871, the Weekly Dispatch reported a meeting of the various metropolitan republican clubs to discuss police tactics; William Osborne was in the chair. Apparently the headquarters of the South London clubs, the Lord Clyde tavern, had recently forfeited its licence after a visit by the police, and the licence of the Hall of Science had also been confiscated. It was decided that the only alternative was to open private clubs. However it seems that in due course, both premises managed to obtain new licences as they were again being used for republican meetings by the end of the year.

The authorities were not so worried, though, about indoor meetings or even a few hundred people on Clerkenwell Green on a Sunday morning: they were relatively easy to control. But fifty thousand people in Hyde Park was a different matter altogether. The controversy over the right to hold demonstrations in public parks had begun in earnest after the notorious reform meetings of July 1866, when republican sentiments were not so prevalent among working men. This probably explains why, at the time, Police Commissioner Sir Richard Mayne and Home Secretary Spencer Walpole, rather than the Queen, were blamed for the closure of the parks for reform meetings. Walpole was severely reprimanded in the working class press for "attempting to transfer the odium of suppressing public discussion to the Queen",[85] and Mayne was accused of

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85 The Working Man - A Weekly Record of Social and Political Progress, 28 July 1866.

trying to set up a police state. Actually, it is highly unlikely that the Queen approved of her loyal subjects holding reform demonstrations in Hyde Park.[86]

The debate that subsequently developed was whether the parks were the property of the Crown or the people. Even the far from revolutionary editor of the Working Man stated that "if I mistake not the people have paid the Crown for Hyde Park, and I am quite sure they pay for keeping it in order and if not for their own use, I should like to know for whose use they do pay for it".[87] The Prime Minister, Lord Derby, voiced the opinion of the government on the matter:

> There is no doubt that the Crown is the owner of these parks. It is true that they are kept up at the expense of the public and for the enjoyment and recreation of the public but the Crown has the undoubted right of exercising such control over the parks as to prevent them being diverted from their purpose to objects which may interfere with the recreation and enjoyment of the people.[88]

Lord Derby believed political demonstrations most certainly did not constitute proper use of public parks. When the Conservatives introduced a Parks Regulation Bill in the summer of 1867, the editorial staff of the National Reformer pledged themselves "to tear the statute to pieces in Hyde Park in the presence of 50,000 men",[89] if it was passed. In

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86 See Harrison, Before the Socialists, 82-111.

87 Ibid.

88 National Reformer, 29 July 1866.

89 Ibid., 4 August 1867.

fact, the Bill did not become law, presumably because a majority of members considered it far too provocative.

As 1871 progressed, republican demonstrations mushroomed and the police feverishly sought ways to contain them. For example, an attempt was made to prevent a demonstration in Trafalgar Square by resurrecting an old act from the reign of George III. Organised by the Universal Republican League, the meeting was particularly obnoxious because it was proposing publicly to endorse the actions of the Paris Commune and pledge assistance to the Communard refugees. Under an act of 1817, no public meeting was to be held within a mile of Westminster Hall when Parliament was in session. Eventually, the police decided that discretion was the better part of valour, and resolved to let the meeting go on uninterrupted unless the public peace was disturbed.[90] Of course, there was no riot because contrary to popular belief among the upper classes, very few republicans were in favour of physical force. A week later the Weekly Dispatch condemned all restrictions on public meetings as more likely to create a revolutionary situation than prevent one, being a flagrant usurpation of the rights of free born Englishmen.[91]

The issue really came to a head when, at the opening of the 1872 parliamentary session, Ayrton introduced a new Public Parks Regulation Bill aimed directly at curbing republican meetings. A protest meeting against the Bill was immediately organised and held in Hyde Park on Sunday 3 March. The meeting divided into two halves, Odger

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90 Weekly Dispatch, 6 August 1871.

91 Ibid., 13 August 1871.

addressing one, Bradlaugh the other. The object of the meeting was declared to be "to uphold the right of public meeting and the freedom of speech".[92] Odger proclaimed that "the so-called Liberal Government had ... picked up one of the rags of conservatism and was now flaunting it in the face of the people".[93] At a similar meeting the following week, Odger publicly burnt a copy of the Bill "as a mark of their profound contempt for the tyrannical so-called Liberal Government which had got into power through the aid of the working classes only to turn around on their friends and do the dirty work of the Tories".[94] Frederic Harrison wrote to Sir Charles Dilke that "this is monstrous about the Parks ... something quite unlike the habits of English ministers".[95] But like its two predecessors the Bill was withdrawn, probably because the popular outcry persuaded the Liberals that to persist with it could lose them a considerable number of votes at the next election. Unfortunately, the damage was already done, men such as Odger being utterly alienated from the Liberal Party.

It is perhaps significant that the only instance, in this period, of speakers at a public meeting being arrested and prosecuted, was at a huge Hyde Park demonstration of thirty thousand people, in November 1872, to demand the unconditional release of Fenian Prisoners.[96] It

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92 Dundee Advertiser, 4 March 1872.

93 Bee Hive, 9 March 1872.

94 Ibid., 16 March 1872.

95 Frederic Harrison to Sir Charles Dilke, 24 July 1872, Dilke Papers, BM., Add. MS. 43898.

96 Lloyds' Weekly, 24 November 1872.

seems that the government regarded British republicanism as infinitely more ominous when linked to the Irish cause. The Newcastle Weekly Chronicle maintained that although only the more extreme republicans wholeheartedly supported the Fenians, almost all were home rulers.[97]

It would appear, therefore, that in London in the period 1867-1874 progressive thinkers of all shades, and working men in particular, were turning to republicanism. By the beginning of 1871 it had become the political creed of the day; it was fashionable to be a republican and for a while it seemed as if the entire democratic movement could be united under the republican banner. Metropolitan republicanism had many more facets than were to be found in the provincial cities, but of course London was a much larger place, containing a substantial number of foreign refugees to strengthen the left-wing. The London republicans have been criticized for fluctuating too readily between the different organisations. But to some extent this enabled compromises to be reached which at times created a semblance of unity. At the beginning of 1873, when co-operation was at a maximum, there seemed to be a possibility of a London coalition leading the country towards the foundation of a Republican Party that would be capable of challenging the two major parties both at a national and local level. This did not come to pass because the republicans simply proved to be incapable of carrying out the necessary organisation. The major factor here was the disunity in the movement, epitomized by the rather childish feud with the Sheffield based Republican Brotherhood. Parochialism, pride and pig-headedness, espe-

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97 9 August 1873. See below, 352.

cially on the London side, was the order of the day and the split was made irreparable by Bradlaugh's bitter personal battle with the Brotherhood secretary John De Morgan. Thus, having looked at republicanism from the metropolitan angle, it is now time to examine the phenomenon in the provinces, Scotland and Wales.

CHAPTER 6

REPUBLICANISM IN THE REGIONS

This chapter will examine the nature and determine the prevalence of republican sentiments in the English provinces, Scotland and Wales. Ireland has been excluded because republicanism there had an entirely different objective, namely, an independent Irish republic, and its proponents were not averse to the use of violence to achieve their goals. Thus, Irish republicanism was not comparable to most other British varieties.

The provincial republicans did not simply follow the lead of the capital. Towns such as Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Birmingham and Nottingham had republican traditions of their own. Their heritage combined with current political and economic factors to produce nineteen provincial republican clubs before the inauguration of the London Republican Club in May 1871.[1] The latter was even based on the Birmingham prototype. By and large, republicanism in the provinces was much more homogeneous than in London. Each town seems to have adhered to one type of republicanism, and even where two clubs existed in the same town they tended to be of the same persuasion. Thus, the provincial republicans escaped the internecine strife suffered by the Londoners, and many were able to organise more quickly.

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[1] See Appendix 19.

Besides explaining the development of provincial republicanism in the 1870's, an attempt will be made to correlate the dominant industries and occupations in a given area with the prevalence and type of republicanism in that district. A lack of evidence, together with the limitations imposed by the scope of this thesis will necessarily inhibit the conclusions that can be made in this connection. Where possible, the republican traditions of a particular town will be examined. Since the first British political society of the period to use the title "republican club" was founded in Birmingham, it is logical to begin there.

Part 1: BIRMINGHAM

Victorian Birmingham did not have a concentration of large factories and consequently escaped many of the abuses of the factory system. In particular, the alienation of the worker from his trade, his master, and the oppressive class which his master represented, was not apparent. In the small workshops of Birmingham, small masters worked in close contact with skilled craftsmen. Briggs has remarked that "economic development in Birmingham in the first half of the nineteenth century multiplied the number of producing units rather than added to the scale of existing enterprises".[2] Moreover, there was a fair amount of social mobility in the community which blurred social distinctions. The Birmingham Political Union was the focal point of

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[2] Asa Briggs, "The Local Background of Chartism", in Asa Briggs, ed., Chartist Studies (London, 1959), 7.

moral force in Chartism in the thirties and forties, and Thomas Attwood, its most important founder and leader, always taught that the interests of masters and men were one. That conciliatory radical tradition was reflected in the Birmingham republicanism of the 1870's.

The Birmingham radicals were quick to show their enthusiasm for the new French Republic. Reynolds' Newspaper reported that "a crowded meeting was held in Birmingham Town Hall on Monday night for the purpose of expressing good wishes for the peace and prosperity of the French Republic".[3] Two thousand five hundred people were present and by all accounts extremely enthusiastic.[4] The city's most advanced Liberal newspaper, the Birmingham Morning News, expressed support for the Third Republic and demanded its official recognition by the British Government on the grounds that "what England was quick to do for the Empire, she need not be slow to do for the Republic".[5] However, the paper declared against military aid or intervention.[6] The Birmingham Daily Post reported a meeting of French sympathizers to decide upon the best way of publicly expressing their feelings on the subject. Charles C. Cattell was voted to the chair and the Birmingham Committee to Express Sympathy with France was formed.[7] Two weeks later the town hall was filled with

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3 18 September 1870.

4 Dundee Advertiser, 13 September 1870.

5 3 January 1871.

6 16 January 1871.

7 12 January 1871.

people wishing to express their feelings for France.[8] The following day a meeting was held at St. George's Hall in Upper Dean Street for the purpose of forming a republican club. The Birmingham Morning News reported that "there was a good attendance, and a large number of letters were read from parties desirous of joining the club. About forty persons were also enrolled as members".[9]

The opening meeting of the Birmingham Republican Club was held at St. George's Hall on 14 February: there was a good attendance. Charles C. Cattell was unanimously elected president, Mr. J. McClelland became vice-president, Mr. Potter treasurer, Mr. Reddalls secretary and Mr. Scott librarian. The vice-president took the chair, and, in opening the meeting, expressed the hope that the principles of republicanism would soon extend over the whole of the United Kingdom. The president then delivered the inaugural address promulgating a list of twelve club rules.[10] However, no list of desirable political and social reforms was prepared; the stated goal being the republic pure and simple. This might have been expected since Cattell was a leading secularist and an associate of Bradlaugh's. The Birmingham rules were adopted by virtually every other club whose republicanism was of a similar variety, including the London Republican Club.

In October 1871 the Birmingham Republican Club applied to the

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8 25 January 1871.

9 25 January 1871.

10 See Appendix 10.

Corporation for the lease of the town hall for one night. Their purpose was to find a large venue where Charles Bradlaugh could lecture on "The Impeachment of the House of Brunswick". Several councillors believed the proposed lecture to be treasonable and tantamount to impeachment of the government of the country of which they were a part. When the matter was put to the vote, twenty-six were against holding the lecture, nineteen in favour. It appeared therefore, that Birmingham was not "loyal to the backbone" as the Mayor had claimed. The rising young councillor, Joseph Chamberlain, was adamant that the lecture should be permitted. Such matters, he said, ought to be discussed in a quiet constitutional way or else they were liable to recur in a more disagreeable form.[11] The Birmingham Daily Mail supported the official ruling and stated that if the republicans had wanted the hall for a bona fide discussion of the pros and cons of republicanism and monarchy, their request would have been acceptable. However, they considered Bradlaugh's subject to be illegal and beyond the bounds of free speech. The Mail added that such lectures would alienate respectable people from the republican cause.[12] Nevertheless, the lecture was eventually delivered seven months later on 6 May 1872.

The Birmingham republicans did not confine themselves to theorizing. The proposed dowry for the Princess Louise[13] was very much a test case for republican enthusiasm throughout the country, and Birmingham was in the vanguard of the opposition. On 23 January 1871 a meeting of the

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11 Weekly Dispatch, 15 October 1871.

12 11 October 1871.

13 See above, 146, 154, and below, 411-13.

Birmingham branch of the Labour Representation League unanimously declared themselves to be against the dowry.[14] The following week the League sent a deputation to M.P.'s Dixon and Muntz expressing their members' opposition to the dowry.[15] Birmingham town hall was the scene of another anti-dowry meeting on 20 February, also organised by the Labour Representation League.[16] It is paradoxical that while the Birmingham branch of the League was busy organising opposition to the dowry in their city, the main branch in London was condemning such opposition.[17] This indicates a singular lack of discipline and cohesion within that organisation.

The events leading up to the republican conference held at Birmingham in May 1873, were to some extent dealt with in the last chapter, but from the point of view of the London involvement. It is now appropriate to take up the story of that conference once more. A provisional committee was set up in London prior to the calling of the conference. G.W. Foote was the secretary and also included were Bradlaugh, Odger and Cooper. They chose Birmingham as the site for the conference primarily because of its central location, but also probably because the vast majority of the city's republicans were of the same persuasion as themselves. All known republican clubs and radical organisations in the country were invited. What survived in London of the International declined on the

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14 Birmhingham Daily Post, 23 January 1871.

15 Birmingham Morning News, 4 February 1871.

16 Ibid., 21 February 1871,

17 See above, 154.

grounds that "all important questions of a true social character" were excluded from the programme. Foote replied that no programme yet existed, but the republican delegates may themselves formulate one.[18] The conference took place in Birmingham town hall on 11 and 12 May. Over five thousand people were present including official delegates from republican groups throughout the country.[19]

A nationwide organisation was founded at the conference, called the National Republican League. Significantly, a resolution was passed stipulating that "the objects of the League be furthered by purely legal and moral means". The conference voted 5,000 to 15 in favour of the assertion of the republican principle in England and prepared a twelve point manifesto. This consisted of political demands with a few additions such as the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of England and free, compulsory, secular and technical education. There were no proposals for comprehensive social reform. Few representatives from the National Republican Brotherhood clubs were present so they, the Universal Republican League and the Land and Labour League would have been easily outvoted. The suggestions for land reform did not, in fact, go beyond those of the Land Tenure Reform Association.[20] A further resolution in favour of the abolition of property qualifications for local elections was carried. There was also a motion of sympathy with the new Spanish Republic, and a con-

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18 National Reformer, 4 May 1873.

19 See Appendix 11.

20 See Appendix 12.

demnation of Carlist atrocities. The Liberal government was criticized for failing to support the Spanish republicans. Something has already been said about the desire for a radical third party. In fact, the republicans agreed to withdraw their support from the Liberal Party in the 1874 General Election unless some of their reform proposals were adopted.[21] However, a separate study would be required in order to estimate the degree to which this decision may have affected the outcome of that election.[22] The presidency of the League was left open, but G.W. Foote was elected secretary, and R.A. Cooper became treasurer. Charles Watts, a prominent secularist and republican lecturer, wrote in the National Reformer that all the National Republican League really wanted was "a government that shall have the unfettered will of the people as its foundation, such government to be chosen by national consent independent of class distinctions and birth influence".[23] The Republican Brotherhood commented that the League's programme was "no better than constitutional monarchy". It also alleged that the majority of republican clubs had not been represented at the conference and that where "delegates were received ... the Clubs did not exist".[24]

The conference received mixed reports in the press. Some chose to attack it as illegal and dangerous, some thought it interesting but harmless, some ridiculed it, many small local papers ignored it completely.

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21 W.E. Adams, "Republicanism at Home and Abroad", Newcastle Weekly Chronicle, 17 May 1873.

22 See Appendix 30.

23 15 June 1873.

24 International Herald, 31 May 1873. The issues for 24 May and 21 June contained similar attacks on the conference.

The radical press, with the exception of the National Reformer, criticized it as being unrepresentative. By contrast, the view of the conservative Examiner was that the conference

> ... far exceeded in numbers, importance, as well as in the intelligence displayed by its members anything of a similar name or nature that has been held since the present movement was first originated.[25]

The Birmingham Morning News, on the other hand, expressed the opinion that republican agitation, was a "great waste of energy". The paper acknowledged that there were still many abuses to be remedied but there was no guarantee that England would be "at all the better for the establishment of a republic". Aspiring politicians were advised to direct their energy to more constructive ends and heed "the words just uttered by Mr. Bright".[26] John Bright had written a letter declining to attend, and explaining why he was not in favour of a British Republic.[27] The letter shocked many republicans, some of whom had hitherto considered Bright an ally, and delighted everyone else. Many right-wing newspapers said nothing about the deliberations of the conference but just quoted gleefully from Bright's letter.

Some of Birmingham's more conventional residents understandably became worried about their city's reputation after a republican conference had been held there. The Daily Post sought to reassure these people with an editorial on "Republicanism in Birmingham", which stated that "the

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25 17 May 1873.

26 17 May 1873.

27 See below, 294-8.

connection of the affair with Birmingham was an accident: the town happened to be a convenient meeting place ..."[28] It was stressed that the importance of the meeting should not be overstated; but the article did admit that there were plenty of republicans "in all classes of society" while qualifying that with the statement that it "is all theory: a mere speculative profession of political belief". The Daily Post certainly under-estimated the number of practical republicans. Birmingham's own leader, Cattell, although he agreed that Britain was not ready for a republic immediately, thought it could be achieved in a decade or two. The strength of republicanism in the Birmingham area was also underestimated. The Birmingham Republican Club was the first and strongest of its kind in the country, and by 1873 it had been joined by the Birmingham All Saints Club. Just outside the city were the Walsall and West Bromwich Republican Clubs.[29]

On 22 November 1873 the Newcastle Weekly Chronicle welcomed the election of Chamberlain as Mayor of Birmingham because "on more than one public occasion in his own town and elsewhere, Mr. Chamberlain has quietly and unobtrusively announced his (republican) opinions".[30] Chamberlain, in fact, led the opposition to paying for a visit by Prince Arthur to Birmingham out of the rates. But just prior to a visit by the Prince and Princess of Wales in October 1874 Chamberlain remarked

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28 14 May 1873.

29 See Appendix 19.

30 W.E. Adams, "Republicanism in High Places", 22 November 1873.

that, "Radicals and Liberals have quite enough to occupy their best energies without wasting their time in what seems to me a very remote speculation".[31] This led many people to doubt the sincerity of his republicanism. Desiring a meritocracy, Chamberlain appreciated that this could best be attained under a republican system but could not bring himself to advocate practical republicanism and put his promising political career in jeopardy. While Birmingham "society" was reassured that their Mayor was not a political agitator, the republicans were dismayed. Cattell disputed Chamberlain's statement that "I have never, in private or in public advocated Republicanism for this country", and accused him of hypocrisy. But he had to lament the loss of such an able and influential ally, stating that he was "firmly believed in Birmingham" to be a republican.[32]

Chamberlain did not, on this occasion, object to the decision to pay for the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales out of the rates. Along with seven others, he abstained from voting on the motion which was carried by a majority of forty to four. However, the Birmingham Republican Club did object. Reddalls chaired a meeting on the subject and seven hundred people signed a petition of protest.[33] In an "Address to the People", Birmingham Republican Association[34] said of the visit that the

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[31] Joseph Chamberlain, Speech in Birmingham, 17 October 1874, quoted in F. Hardie, The Political Influence of Queen Victoria (Oxford, 1935), 217.

[32] Charles C. Cattell, National Reformer, 25 October 1874.

[33] Reynolds' Newspaper, 18 October 1874.

[34] The Association came into being in 1874 when John Sketchley breathed new life into an ailing Birmingham Republican Club.

people turned out to see the show "as they would a circus procession", and since a holiday had been declared they had nothing better to do anyway. Apparently volleys of groans and allusions to the Mordaunt Case arose from the crowd at all times but

> ... the subject of general remark was the apparent (and easily to be understood) dejected looks of the two royal visitors. I think we may congratulate ourselves that the royal visit has stimulated and strengthened the Republican cause in this enlightened and progressive town.[35]

The Association sent weekly letters on political and social questions to Reynolds' Newspaper up to the spring of 1878. The group had been moving steadily towards socialism and Sketchley changed the name to the Midland Social Democratic Association.[36]

In January 1881 Francis Neale wrote in Standring's Republican that "Birmingham in a certain sense may be regarded as the birth place of the modern phase of English Republicanism".[37] Certainly, the Birmingham republicans were the first to organise themselves into a coherent organisation that, for once, was not hindered by factionalism. The homogeneity of the Birmingham working population was in large measure responsible for this. Moreover, their particular brand of republicanism was the one which became the dominant strain in the 1870's. However, one might argue that Cattell and company simply adopted Bradlaugh's ideas and had nothing original to offer. Since Cattell was a friend of Bradlaugh's, it is more

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35 Ibid., 6 December 1874.

36 See below, 443.

37 January 1881.

likely that a mutual exchange of ideas took place. In any case, most of those ideas originated with earlier political theorists such as Richard Carlile and W.J. Linton.

Part 2: NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE AND THE NORTH EAST

As much as Birmingham contributed to the development and organisation of republicanism in the 1870's, the city's republican tradition was no more distinguished than that of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. At an election meeting at Bath Lane School in Newcastle in 1874, Joseph Cowen asked those present to recall "when the people of Newcastle were summoned to the walls to protect themselves against the advance of the adherents of the House of Stuart".[38] The dockers and miners of the Newcastle area had a long history of religious nonconformity which was linked to political radicalism. The city was, for example, a centre of militant Chartism, and it is to be expected that its inhabitants would be eager to participate in the republican agitation of the 1870's. But there was organised republican activity in Victorian Newcastle before 1870 and this should be looked at first.

In January 1855 Joseph Cowen Junior and G.J. Harney formed the Northern Republican Brotherhood based in Newcastle. The literary organs of the organisation were the Republican Record,[39] which amalgamated

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38 Joseph Cowen Jr., Election Speech at Bath Lane School, Newcastle, 1874, Cowen Collection, Local Archives Dept., 109 Pilgrim St., Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

39 The Republican Record -- A Series of tracts to be issued occasionally by the Republican Brotherhood of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, January 1855.

with G.J. Holyoake's Reasoner after a few issues, and the Northern Tribune which lasted until March 1855.[40] The two founders stressed that the Brotherhood was strictly a peaceful and educational institution and they were not aiming to "conspire against the present system of government".[41] The Brotherhood followed W.J. Linton's guidelines for republican clubs. Namely, that they should not be concerned with establishing a premature republic, but rather should teach republican principles to prepare the public for participation in a democratic system. One of the Brotherhood's major reasons for advocating a new system of government was to enhance British prestige abroad. The members of the Brotherhood were most perturbed by Britain's poor showing in the Crimea and the imperialist element encountered in the Red Republican and Friend of the People reared its head once more. In an article entitled "The Country in Danger" the Northern Tribune stated that

> ... Aristocracy, monopoly, and class rule have tarnished the glory and imperilled the safety of Britain. A radical remedy is needed. To the People we appeal to demand, exact and enforce their sovereignty through UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE.[42]

Both the Northern Daily Express and the Reasoner, in January 1856, carried reports of a New Year's Eve Republican Dinner at the Grainger

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40 The Northern Tribune -- A Periodical for the People -- Light! More Light, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Joseph Barlow, 1 Nelson St., and 28 Grainger St., London, Holyoake and Co., 147 Fleet St.

41 Jane Cowen, "Notes on the Life of Joseph Cowen", 47, Cowen Collection, E436.

42 Vol. II, No. 7, 78.

Hotel in Newcastle. Cowen presided and proposed the following toast: "The Republican Union -- may it unite true men, inspired by the genius of liberty, and animated by the traditions bequeathed to us by our Republican Fathers".[43] It was then stated that "a new life should be evolved, worthy of this great nation, and as a means to that end the Republican flag was unfurled".[44] This seems to have been the last significant public act of the Brotherhood, or Republican Union, as it had become. Its two literary organs had failed to last out the year, and even Linton's English Republic became a victim of a "considerable political apathy" to which Cowen referred.[45] So, for the next fifteen years, Newcastle republicanism lay in hibernation.

If those republican newspapers with which Cowen was involved failed to give him any return on his investment, some compensation was forthcoming from the Newcastle Chronicle of which he was also proprietor. Run on both a daily and weekly basis, the Chronicle was edited after 1866 by Linton's old protégé, W.E. Adams, who had recently left the staff of the National Reformer. With the accomplished combination of Cowen and Adams at the helm, the Chronicle steered a decidedly republican course during the late sixties when the creed was starting to re-emerge.

The declaration of the Third French Republic was greeted with profound joy and optimism by the Newcastle Weekly Chronicle. A poem by James Souter entitled "Vive La Republique" was printed; one verse of

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43 2 January 1856, 13 January 1856.

44 Ibid. 45 Ibid.

which read as follows:

> "Heaven speed the new Republic!" England cries
> And may its counsels with goodwill be fraught --
> That other lands by its example taught
> May grow more peaceful prosperous and wise.[46]

Neither was a section of the Newcastle populace slow to herald the founding of the new republic. A congratulatory meeting was held at the Lecture Room on 6 September and Joseph Cowen proposed that "... this meeting of the people of Newcastle hails with pleasure and satisfaction the re-establishment of a Republic in France".[47] Cowen went on to enumerate the calumnies of Napoleon III, pointing out that when he went to war with Prussia "it was not so much in the interests of the French nation as with the view of securing the safety and perpetuation of his own dynasty".[48] Cowen mentioned that the French Republican Party were always opposed to the conflict and republican leader Jules Favre "declined to give even the silent sanction of a vote in favour of war".[49] The new republic, Cowen concluded, would set an example for the rest of the world. The Weekly Chronicle of 8 October commented that the Marseillaise was the most popular song of the moment in the music halls and on the streets but "whether this is caused by a reversion of sympathy from Germany to France, the spread of Republican ideas, or mere idle curiosity, we leave our readers to judge".[50]

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47 Joseph Cowen, Speech at a meeting to congratulate the founders of the Third French Republic, Lecture Room, Newcastle, 6 September 1870, Cowen Collection, A910, 4.

48 Ibid., 8-9. 49 Ibid., 10.

50 8 October 1870.

By the new year, republican fervour was at its height. On 28 January the Chronicle reported a meeting of the workers at Barrington Colliery to express sympathy with France.[51] After a nationwide lecturing tour, republican secularist Charles Watts stressed how strong republicanism was in the mining areas of the north east.[52] In February, Charles Bradlaugh lectured in Newcastle on the "Impeachment of the House of Brunswick". We are told that "not a whisper of dissent from the principles enunciated by the lecturer was heard during the evening".[53] The Newcastle and Gateshead Republican Club was formed on 26 February. It is perhaps surprising, considering the town's long republican traditions, that the club was content to adopt the Birmingham rules.[54] R. McRoberts was elected secretary and Joseph Cowen, although absent from the meeting, was voted to the presidency. However, he never took office and always maintained that he had never given permission for his name to be put forward. The public inauguration of the club did not take place for another four months. Odger was present as guest speaker claiming ingeniously that taxes to maintain the paraphernalia of Royalty had made the cost of living so high that both workers and masters were suffering; the result being a deterioration in labour relations.[55] Odger was honoured with a eulogy in the Newcastle Weekly Chronicle.[56] In the midst of all this, however, a counter

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51 Ibid., 28 January 1871.

52 Charles Watts in the National Reformer, 3 November 1872.

53 Newcastle Weekly Chronicle, 25 February 1871.

54 Ibid., 4 March 1871.

55 Newcastle Courant, 30 June 1871.

56 1 July 1871.

movement began in Newcastle aimed at demonstrating loyalty to the Crown, the city having acquired a reputation as a hotbed of republicanism.[57]

The major republican event of the decade took place in the city the following November. This was Sir Charles Dilke's public address in which he attacked, among other things, the extravagance of the royal family, and monarchy as a system of government. Such conduct was expected from the likes of Odger and Bradlaugh but to hear it from a baronet, who was an M.P. with ministerial potential, astounded the nation. The result was a barrage of criticism from respectable society and joyful adulation from the republicans. The Weekly Chronicle printed an enthusiastic report of the speech and defended Dilke from the charge that he had made a personal attack on the Queen.[58] It is worth noting that Dilke had lectured in Manchester a new days before, but waited until Newcastle to introduce the republican element into his speech. Clearly, he was confident of a sympathetic hearing on Tyneside.

The 2 April 1872 witnessed the first attempt at drawing together some of the country's republican clubs. At a conference in Newcastle, attended by twenty delegates from clubs throughout the north of England, the Northern Republican League was founded.[59] No list of proposals or goals is available but the delegates deplored the use of seditious language or violent insurrection, advocating instead the peaceful transforma-

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57 National Reformer, 26 January 1871.

58 2 December 1871, and see below, 268-72, 385-6.

59 Newcastle Weekly Chronicle, 6 April 1872.

tion of the political system. The republicanism of the Newcastle group seems to have been pretty much akin to that of the secularists, but, the Tynesiders did not attend the National Conference in May 1873. But neither did they show much interest in the National Republican Brotherhood, preferring to pursue the policy of splendid isolation that was characteristic of Tyneside.

In January 1874, Cowen found it necessary to absolve himself completely from all suspicion of involvement with republican agitation, in order to gain the Liberal nomination for Newcastle in the General Election. The Tories expended much energy trying to darken Cowen's reputation with the stain of republicanism, and he was forced to compromise his political principles somewhat. However, with the aid of some skillful rhetoric at political meetings, he managed to convince the mainstream Liberals that he was no agitator, while never actually denying theoretical republicanism. He not only gained the nomination but eventually won the seat.[60]

At some indeterminate point during the mid-seventies, the Newcastle and Gateshead Republican Club ignominiously disappeared, like so many other societies of its kind, never to be revived. However, the town retained its radicalism and it is rumoured that when the Queen's train passed through the town on its way to Scotland, she would pull down the blinds on the carriage windows.

Republican activity in the north east was by no means confined to Newcastle. Middlesborough, Jarrow, North Shields, Bedlington and

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60 See below, 184.

Blyth all formed clubs in 1871.[61] But next to Newcastle, the largest urban centre in the area was Sunderland. The Newcastle Weekly Chronicle reported a meeting on 18 April 1871 between Mr. Candlish M.P. and his Sunderland constituents. Much republican sentiment was discernible at the gathering and the opinion was voiced that when popular education reached a certain level, a Republic must inevitably follow. Cheers were given for the republican Liberal M.P. for Leicester, P.A. Taylor.[62] On 6 May, the Sunderland Times devoted a full column to the description of a meeting the previous Wednesday to form a republican club in the town. One hundred persons decided on a policy of non-interference with the present monarch, no communism, and no violence. Like the republicanism of Newcastle and the rest of the north east, the Sunderland variety was political rather than social.[63]

In June a club was formed in Tynemouth,[64] and Stockton-on-Tees followed in February 1872. At the inaugural meeting of the Stockton-on-Tees Republican Club, Mr. W. Mark, presiding, stated that he believed "there were at present in active operation about one hundred Republican societies in England and he felt proud to think that they were met that night to add one more". G. Thackeray was elected secretary.[65] The

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61 See Appendix 19.

62 22 April 1871.

63 6 May 1871.

64 National Reformer, 18 June 1871.

65 Ibid., 25 February 1872.

South Durham and Cleveland Mercury remarked in an editorial that "sentiment in favour of a republican form of government ... is to be found in greater force among the working classes".[66] This was indeed the case in that area where miners, steelworkers and shipyard workers provided the caucus of radicalism. The Mercury went on to point out, though, that even if republicans were most often to be found among labouring men, they were not entirely alone. The views of politicians such as Auberon Herbert and intellectuals like Frederic Harrison were mentioned, and it was stated that "among the manufacturing and commercial classes, too ... the feeling grows that some day it will become the duty of England to put a Crown on the head of a well-ordered Democracy".[67]

A word or two should be said about Cumberland and Westmorland. The mining and iron industries which in other parts of the country never failed to produce republicans, were the dominant trades in the area but hardly a republican was to be found. Several newspapers in the district were designed to cater for working men but concentrated almost entirely on local questions. Republican meetings elsewhere were simply not reported and locally there seems to have been no interest in the movement whatsoever. This Cumbrian conservatism remains an enigma and demands a detailed study of the locality.

Few of the aforementioned republican societies survived the nation-wide collapse of 1875, following the Conservative victory in the General

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66 22 April 1871. See Appendix 20 for further details of republican activity in the north east.

67 Ibid.

Election of 1874. One exception was the Tynemouth Republican Club which retained its vitality for at least another two years. In August 1876 the members unanimously empowered their secretary to write to M.P.'s Cowen, Taylor, Dilke, MacDonald and Burt,[68] calling their attention to the abuse of hereditary privilege in the army.[69] It is impossible to offer a conclusive explanation as to why, out of ten republican clubs in one area where economic and social conditions were basically the same, one should have survived much longer than the rest. It may well have been simply that the Tynemouth republicans were more persevering and dedicated than their counterparts in Newcastle, Sunderland or Middlesborough. But there could also be other reasons which future research will bring to light.

Before leaving the north east, something must be said about the part played by the area in the republican revival of the early 1880's inspired by George Standring. The inauguration of the South Shields Branch of the Republican League took place in October 1883.[70] The club persisted for a year or two and its major organisational success was a meeting in South Shields Market Square in the summer of 1884 to protest against the existence of the House of Lords and hereditary legislation.[71] About the same time, a republican organisation was founded at

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68 Thomas Burt, miner and trade unionist, elected M.P. for Morpeth in 1874. Alexander MacDonald, leader of the National Association of Mineworkers, President of the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. Also elected to Parliament in 1874 as member for Stafford.

69 National Reformer, 13 August 1886.

70 Standring, ed., The Republican, November 1883.

71 Ibid., August 1884.

Seaham Harbour in County Durham.[72] It is possible that there were some fishermen among the republicans of these two coastal towns. The prevalence of republicanism in such places as Hull, Grimsby, Aberdeen and Yarmouth suggests that the fishing industry, which paid abominably low wages,[73] may have provided a spawning ground for republicans. It is curious that none of the major urban centres in the north east showed any inclination to join Standring's Republican League. However, republicanism was no longer popular in fashionable radical circles and it is therefore understandable that Standring should receive support from communities that were, perhaps, less in tune with current political trends.

Part 3: SHEFFIELD

Prior to 1850, Sheffield was a city of light industry and a semi-independent skilled labour force which was not particularly amenable to political and industrial discipline and leadership. During the decade after 1850 the city's small concentration of heavy industry expanded rapidly and the sixties witnessed the establishment of the massive John Brown and Atlas steel plants which have been the backbone of the British iron and steel industry down to the present day. Apart from the engineers, most of the workforce employed by those plants was unskilled and not organised in trade unions. The workers were crowded into the slums of Attercliffe and Brightside because, in the absence of affordable public transportation, they had to be close to their place of work. In

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72 Ibid., September 1884.

73 See Geoffrey Best, Mid-Victorian Britain 1851-1875 (London, 1971), 38.

addition, there was no civic leadership from the Sheffield employers like that of Sir Titus Salt in Bradford. Commerce was not so highly evolved as in Bradford, Birmingham or Leeds, and manufacturers therefore had to spend more time with their businesses than on public affairs. The emphasis in Sheffield was invariably on economy, whether it be the Conservative dominated and notoriously inefficient city council, or the predominantly Conservative manufacturers. Thus, low incomes and brutalizing living conditions soured a labour force which, without the benefit of strong trade unions, was powerless to resist. Unlike places such as Birmingham, classes in Sheffield were polarized and herein we may look for the origins of Sheffield's peculiar brand of republicanism.

On 6 January 1871, the Sheffield and Rotherham Independent described a meeting at the Cannon Street Hotel in Sheffield to sympathize with the Third French Republic. Mr. Lockyer presided, and J.J. Merriman[74] proposed a resolution calling for the British government to press for effectual negotiations to end the war. This was duly passed by the body of the meeting. Mr. Solomon then proposed that the government be coerced into recognizing the de facto French Republic. At first, the chairman declared this resolution lost, but there was an uproar on the floor and so the motion was put again. This time the resolution was carried.[75] The following month, Mr. Francis Newberry lectured in Temperance Hall, Ellesmere Road, on "The Princess Louise's Dowry, including the question

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74 J.J. Merriman, a barrister and member of the I.W.M.A. tried, but failed, to gain one of the Liberal nominations for Nottingham in 1868.

75 6 January 1871.

of cheap government, and the relative merits of the monarchy and the republic". Unfortunately, the newspaper report does not specify how many people attended and what proportion were republican.[76]

The Sheffield Republican Club was founded in March 1871 with W. Garbutt as its first president. The club submitted the following report to Reynolds' Newspaper:

> We have formed a Republican Club believing as we do that it is the duty of the people to establish that form of government which is the most economic, and yet shall give the greatest amount of happiness to the whole people. It is a propagandist society to teach the people it [sic] is sovereign, government is its work and property, the public functionaries are its agents and officers; the people may, when it pleases, revoke its mandates; that the law should be the free and solemn expression of the people's will.[77]

The Sheffield republicans adopted the Birmingham Rules but in addition composed a comprehensive plan of political and social reform. Over the next few months, republican fervour was sustained by visits from some of the nation's most famous republican speakers. In October, Bradlaugh lectured on the question of whether or not the Queen was "morally and physically incapable" of performing her duties. He took for his text a slip of the tongue by Disraeli who was referring to the Queen's current indisposition.[78] "Iconoclast" broadened the inference somewhat, noting that important state papers had been returned from Balmoral unsigned, and proposing that the Queen forfeit her wages if she did not work.

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76 28 February 1871.

77 26 March 1871.

78 National Reformer, 8, 15, 22 October 1871.

Bradlaugh admitted that the people of England were not yet prepared for a Republic but he hoped to live to take part in one. He added that he and his supporters were determined that the Prince of Wales should never rule, and proposed that the transition from monarchy to republic be assisted by a council of regency composed of the Lord Chancellor and two judges of the superior courts. The lecture was received very well indeed.[79] George Odger also visited the city, giving a rousing lecture in a crowded Paradise Square. He attacked the aristocracy and the House of Lords and declared that "every man who serves an institution in this land is a Conservative".[80] The meeting ended with three cheers for Dilke and "the Republican Party".

The first signs of socialist tendencies among the Sheffield republicans became evident when they organised a joint meeting with the I.W.M.A. One newspaper stated that:

> A meeting under the auspices of the Republican Club and the International was held at Sheffield yesterday afternoon. Cheers for the International and Republicanism were given, and the Prince of Wales and Royal Family were hooted.[81]

In the same week, a republican meeting of almost all the clubs in the Sheffield area was held at Mexborough.[82] Doncaster had possessed a

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79 North Wales Press, 8 November 1871.

80 W.H. Armytage, "George Odger (1820-1877) A founder of the British Labour Movement", University of Toronto Quarterly (October 1948), 75.

81 Dundee Courier and Argus, 23 September 1872.

82 See Appendix 14.

thriving republican club since April 1871 but did not send a representative. A committee was set up, of which John De Morgan was appointed secretary, to call a national republican conference. A circular outlining the committee's proposals was sent to all clubs in the country.[83] Bradlaugh supposedly inquired into De Morgan's history and found it unsatisfactory. Letters were privately sent warning the clubs that the organisers of the conference were not to be trusted and they were advised not to attend.[84] G.W. Foote replied to the Yorkshire invitation on behalf of the London Republican Club:

> We cannot but think that in this case sufficient precautions have not been taken to render the Conference nationally representative ... Certainly the country at large could not be held in any way bound by decisions made upon such slender and unstable foundations.[85]

In fact, the London Republican Club had taken precautions to ensure that the conference would not be nationally representative.[86] Leading middle class republicans including Dilke, Herbert, Taylor, Beesly, and Harrison were also invited but they too declined.

Notwithstanding these setbacks, the Conference took place as scheduled on 1 and 2 December 1872. Proceedings begans with the rally in Paradise Square to protest against the Parks Regulation Bill and to

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83 National Reformer, 3 November 1872.

84 Tribe, President Charles Bradlaugh, M.P., 137.

85 International Herald, 14 December 1872.

86 See above, 164.

demand the right of free speech. Two thousand republicans took part. The congregation then dispersed and the official delegates moved indoors for the conference proper. According to the Sheffield and Rotherham Independent there were thirty delegates from as many clubs.[87] David Tribe, though, states that twenty-two clubs were represented by six delegates and signed voting papers, and another twelve committed themselves in advance to whatever the conference might decide. Tribe's version seems to have been taken from the International Herald, and although the latter became the organ of the Brotherhood, the report agrees to the letter with Cattell's version in the National Reformer. Cattell, as a member of the Bradlaugh clique, may well have underestimated the number of delegates.[88] The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent was not at all inclined towards republicanism and had no reason to exaggerate. There were 150 apologies for non-attendance and the hope was expressed that all shades of the republican movement would co-operate. The claims of Home Rulers and Fenians to kinship were to be recognized. The National Republican Brotherhood was brought into being and a list of nine resolutions, including some radical proposals for the reorganisation of society, were agreed upon.[89] The meeting then adjourned for tea.

When the conference reconvened there was apparently a much larger gathering than before, some latecomers having recently arrived. Sixty delegates were now present. Unfortunately, the newspaper reports do not

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87 7 December 1872.

88 Tribe, President Charles Bradlaugh M.P., 138.

89 See Appendix 15.

specify which clubs were represented and by whom. De Morgan was elected secretary. Thomas Smith of Nottingham was made treasurer. William Harrison Riley, the editor of the International Herald, was elected to the executive council along with Bradlaugh, Watts, Cattell and Reddalls. These four secularists, of course, refused to serve.[90] The fact that they were elected, despite their condescending attitude to the conference says much about their stature in the republican movement. The Independent concluded its report with the following judgement:

> Taking the Conference all through, it was the most mischievously childish gathering which had perhaps ever come together in England. They propose to subscribe a shilling a year each, and raise England with the balance after paying expenses.[91]

Yet many leading newspapers, including The Times, felt the conference was important enough to merit a lengthy report.

The Londoners continued to shun any kind of co-operation with Sheffield. Bradlaugh wrote in the National Reformer that the Brotherhood was "in the nature of a treasonable conspiracy" because of "a threat of ridiculous physical force" made by De Morgan. He added that since there was "no sufficient guarantee for Mr. Morgan's stability and discretion in the movement he has so recently entered, I earnestly entreat our friends throughout the country to abstain from joining the so-called "Brotherhood" until a fully representative conference can be called".[92]

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90 Tribe, President Charles Bradlaugh M.P., 141.

91 7 December 1872.

92 8 December 1872.

On behalf of the London Republican Club, G.W. Foote wrote to the Brotherhood refusing to join on the grounds that it was an "illegal association" and because "Mr. 'de' Morgan is yet too little known to be trusted in such a position as that to which he aspires".[93] This letter was circulated around the clubs. Sheffield naturally declared these accusations "out of place and uncalled for and hereby express our confidence in John de Morgan".[94] The first of Foote's accusations was quite remarkable since the Brotherhood was surely no more illegal than the London Republican Club. As for the second accusation, it will be shown later that at least some of the charges laid against De Morgan were unjust.[95] In fact, he was made the scapegoat for the jealousy of the London secularists towards the social republicans of Sheffield.

The Sheffield Conference significantly aroused the concern of the Home Office. On 12 December 1872, a Home Office memorandum was sent by A.F.O. Liddall to the Treasury Solicitor enclosing a cutting from The Times on the conference. Liddall inquired firstly "whether a society formed for the objects stated in the passage marked, but specially the object of establishing a Republican form of government in this Country by legal or any means, is a legal society" and secondly "whether meetings held in furtherance of such objects are lawful or unlawful".[96] The letter

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93 15 December 1872.

94 22 December 1872.

95 See below, 321.

96 A.F.O. Liddall, Home Office Memorandum to the Treasury Solicitor, 12 December 1872. On the Republican Conference at Sheffield, 1 December 1872, H.O. 45 9325/18163, Public Records Office, Chancery Lane, London.

was referred to the Attorney General who replied in the affirmative to both questions.[97] The fact that no action was taken suggests that when the Home Secretary learned of these investigations he warned that it was injudicious to give any publicity to the republicans and therefore no prosecutions were to be initiated.

Sheffield republicanism, like most brands of the creed, did not survive for long the return of the Conservatives. There seems to have been no active republican club in the area after the middle of the decade. However, Standring's Republican for January 1880 reported the story of a Dr. Miller who contested a parliamentary election in Sheffield as a "Republican Candidate":

> ... his candidature was a farce, and its every feature partook of the pantomimic element. Whether he was planted upon the town as a heavy joke by some conservative organisation it is impossible to tell, in all probability, however, Dr. Miller is a more or less lover of notoriety who merely sought to gratify his passion at the expense of Sheffield and Republicanism.[98]

A sorry epitaph indeed for Sheffield republicanism.

Part 4: LEEDS, THE REST OF YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE

Leeds was not without radical traditions. The town was very much involved with the Chartist movement and contained groups of both physical and moral force Chartists. One thing on which the Leeds Chartists agreed was, as J.F.C. Harrison has pointed out, the need to "secure

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97 The Attorney General to A.F.O. Liddall, 17 December 1872.

98 January 1880.

independent working class political action".[99] Hence, in 1837 an attempt was made to establish an independent working class organisation in the town in the form of the Leeds Working Men's Association. Within the Association were groups representing both types of Chartism along with Owenism.[100] The treasurer of the organisation was John Francis Bray.[101] He came to advocate social reform in contrast to the political demands of the Chartists. In 1848 Joseph Barker, who was involved in the early days of the National Reformer, founded a republican journal in Leeds called The People. The publication was essentially an attempt to adapt Chartism to a changing society with new aspirations. It should be remembered also, that the first few issues of Linton's English Republic were printed and published in Leeds.[102]

By the 1840's, Leeds industry was already diversifying and alongside the traditional woollen and flax industries there were various kinds of engineering. Thus, the place was not so prone to economic distress as other West Riding towns which were almost totally committed to the wool trade. To make matters worse in the wool towns, there were large numbers of depressed handworkers who were easily seduced by the more reckless Chartists. But in 1870, the towns had largely surmounted the problems posed by mechanization and business was relatively good. Places

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99 J.F.C. Harrison, "Chartism in Leeds", in Briggs, ed., Chartist Studies, 71.

100 Ibid., 72.

101 See above, 39.

102 Ibid., 96.

such as Halifax, Dewsbury and Keighley were not, in 1870, significantly more radical than Leeds as had been the case thirty years earlier.

Leeds and the surrounding districtwere actually rather slow to join the organised republican movement. The republicans of Halifax formed the first club in the area but that was not officially inaugurated until 27 January 1872, when "upwards of 130 members and friends took tea together".[103] Leeds followed in May and Normanton in November, but there were no clubs in Huddersfield, Bradford, Keighley and Dewsbury until 1873. A second group in Leeds founded the Wodehouse Republican Club towards the end of 1874.[104] The Leeds republicans were of the more moderate variety and not given to radical social policies. This may go some way towards explaining why they took so long to organise. Trade in Leeds was profoundly depressed in late 1870 and early 1871 and so the working classes in the area were probably more interested in eking out a living than engaging in political speculation. The Leeds Weekly Express commented that:

> Since the commencement of the war, several failures in the linen and canvas trades have taken place in Leeds, which have caused a large number of workpeople to be thrown out of employment. In some of the machine manufactories the reduction in the hours of labour keeps gradually increasing, and in some branches of labour a reduction in wages has been made. Iron-founders are also experiencing the bad effects of the war. Joiners and carpenters are still short of work. The stone trade is far from brisk, and some failures in that branch of trade are reported. Many operatives in the woollen trade complain of being short of work; the same may be stated of woollen warehousemen. The prospects of winter to the working classes are at present very gloomy.[105]

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103 National Reformer, 28 January 1872.

104 See Appendix 19.

105 8 October 1870.

There do not seem to have been any social republicans in Leeds who might have made use of this economic distress to rouse the populace. Possibly such doctrines were associated with communism and bloodshed and shunned. Bradlaugh's creed was "prosperity" republicanism and it is natural that it would not gain support until economic conditions improved.

Notwithstanding the slowness of the republicans in the Leeds area to organise, there is some evidence of interest in republicanism prior to 1872. In January 1871 the Leeds Evening Express printed a letter from R. Jeffrey of Hunslet supporting the actions of the London republicans,[106] and this was followed by many others in a similar vein. The editor of the Express also exhibited republican sympathies on a number of occasions.[107] Leeds also entered the debate on the Princess Louise's dowry. On 6 February, the Evening Express featured an editorial which claimed that "working men are right, both upon principle and in justice, in agitating the question of the Royal dowries and annuities, for the tendency amongst the upper classes is to make the rich richer and the poor poorer".[108] The following day, the Express printed a rundown on the cost of monarchy by way of an answer to charges of factual ignorance on the part of opponents to the dowry.[109] George Odger arrived in town at the end of July to encourage republicanism as best he could. The Music Hall

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106 Leeds Evening Express, 27 January 1871.

107 Anon., Editorial, "A Growing Challenge", 17 April 1871.

108 Editorial, "The Royal Dowry Question", 6 February 1871.

109 7 February 1871.

in Albion Street was packed and an enthusiastic reception given to Odger's lecture on "A Republic for England, Government of the People by the People and for the People".[110] Odger was followed on 23 November by Dilke,[111] but it was another six months before the Leeds and District Republican Club came into being.

Let us turn our attention now from Leeds to the neighbouring town of Keighley. The local paper, although it could not be described as republican per se, was fairly sympathetic to the cause. In November 1871, an editorial on republicanism stated that:

> ... we would protest against the idea which many people seem to think it their duty to entertain, that the Monarchy is above criticism. ... The monarchical system is part of the English constitution, and in that capacity is just as much open to criticism as the representative system or the law of trial by jury. Men have a perfect right to consider whether the Monarchy is a necessary or desirable feature of our institutions; ...[112]

There is little evidence of interest in republicanism in the town after this time until the foundation of the Keighley Republican Club in June 1873.[113] In November, G.W. Foote was scheduled to lecture at the Albion Hall under the auspices of the Republican Club. A local solicitor by the name of R.H. Hodgson considered the poster advertising the meeting to be seditious, and forwarded a copy to the Home Office with a letter asking for advice as to whether legal proceedings should be taken.[114]

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110 25 July 1871.

111 Keighley News, 25 November 1871.

112 Ibid., 25 November 1871.

113 Ibid., June 1873.

114 R.H. Hodgson, Keighley Solicitor, to the Home Office, 14 November 1873, Republican Meeting in Heighley, H.O. 459353/28535, P.R.O.

The Chief Constable of the West Riding of Yorkshire, Duncan McNeill, also wrote to the Home Office asking "what steps should be taken to prevent so disloyal a proceeding".[115] After consultation with Robert Lowe, the Home Secretary, A.F.O. Liddall wrote back to the Chief Constable stating that the printer, by omitting his name from the poster, was liable to prosecution. If threatened with this "he may be willing to give up the name of the person who ordered the Placard". He also suggested that a shorthand writer, accompanied by a plainclothes policeman to corroborate the accuracy of his account, be dispatched to the lecture to determine if it contained anything seditious. In addition, Liddall stated that the Home Secretary wished to "ascertain the usual place of abode of the lecturer, and his destination on leaving Keighley so that, if wanted, he might readily be found".[116]

The lecture took place on 19 November and turned out to be not the slightest bit revolutionary. Meanwhile, McNeill wrote to the Home Office stating that the offending posters had been ordered by Mr. Carey Williams, secretary of the Keighley Republican Club, and the printer was a Mr. Elijah Craven.[117] Liddall wrote back in the following terms:

> The whole affair seems to me too contemptible to merit any serious treatment such as bundling the lecturer or the Chairman before a jury ... (but) I think we should proceed for penalties against the printer and the Chairman (sic) who published

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115 Duncan McNeill, Chief Constable of the West Riding of Yorkshire, Wakefield, to the Home Office, 15 November 1873, ibid.

116 A.F.O. Liddall to McNeill, 17 November 1873, ibid.

117 McNeill to the Home Office, 22 November 1873, ibid.

the anonymous placard.[118]

McNeill wrote back once more complaining that he could not charge the printer because in such cases "the information must be laid in the name of Her Majesty's Attorney General".[119] Liddall duly wrote to Sir Henry James, the Attorney General, that "Mr. Lowe ... was of opinion that it was hardly a matter for serious interference by the Government, but he sees no objection to the law being enforced by the local authorities".[120] The Attorney General did not agree; he replied that:

> ... I think this is a case in which it will be much better no proceedings should be taken -- The meeting was a contemptible affair ... the prosecution of the printer will only call attention to the fact that those who arranged and conducted the meeting are not prosecuted. Regarding the prosecution as being left in my discretion I do not give my consent to its being instituted.[121]

Thus, the matter closed.

In Huddersfield, a republican club was formed in May 1873 and publicly inaugurated on 10 June. The opening lecture was delivered by James Hooper of Nottingham. The meeting was described as being "well attended" including thirty-one paid up members.[122] On 23 November, the club proudly announced that membership had doubled.[123] Unfortunately,

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118 Liddall to McNeill, 25 November 1873, ibid.

119 McNeill to Liddall, 2 December 1873, ibid.

120 Liddall to Sir Henry James, Attorney General, 4 December 1873, ibid.

121 James to Liddall, no date, ibid.

122 National Reformer, 15 June 1873.

123 Ibid., 23 November 1873.

the scholar is faced with the problem that the number of subscribing members in a republican club is by no means a reliable guide to the actual number of republicans in the locality. Available sources failed to provide any details of the republican clubs in Bradford, Dewsbury, Pudsey and Normanton, all of which were founded in 1873.[124]

Reynolds' Newspaper for 19 March 1871 printed a letter from a Hull republican stating that until recently he had not allowed his republicanism to become known outside his immediate family. However, since making his views publicly he had found many others in the town who felt the same. He suggested that steps be taken to form a National Republican Association, based in London with branches in the provinces. The organisation would endeavour to unearth and mobilize republicans and aim for a political position from which they could return members to Parliament.[125] In fact, the Humberside republicans were by no means slow to organise. Grimsby Republican Club was founded in June 1871[126] and Hull Republican Club in August. The Hull News reported a meeting at the Foresters' Hall on Wednesday 23 August to found a republican club. Mr. Billany was elected president, George Leaper became secretary and Mr. Stanfield agreed to serve as treasurer: James Hooper was the guest speaker.[127] The club became embroiled in a bitter local dispute over its application to the Mayor

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124 See Appendix 19 for dates of foundation.

125 19 March 1871.

126 National Reformer, 11 June 1871.

127 26 August 1871.

for permission to hold a demonstration in Corporation Field on 27 February 1872. There would have been nothing outrageous about such a request had that particular date not been designated as National Thanksgiving Day for the Prince of Wales' recovery from typhoid. The Town Clerk, Mr. Roberts, wrote to the club secretary, George Leaper, on behalf of the Mayor:

> The first duty of the Mayor is allegiance to the Queen, and he certainly would be out of the course of his duty in giving permission for a proceeding designed, however remote its influence may be, to subvert the throne, and he believes he would do violence to the very strong feelings of the inhabitants generally ...[128]

Mr. Leaper wrote back stating that the Mayor's refusal was not unexpected but since he admitted to not even being aware of the existence of the club he was hardly a fit person to judge the "feelings of the inhabitants generally of the town". A meeting was organised for the following Tuesday to protest against the Mayor's decision. The Republican Club was also refused permission to participate in the local Thanksgiving Procession, and this is certainly understandable because they would doubtless have tried to disrupt it. After some argument, the club decided to abide by the ruling. A republican meeting was eventually held on Thanksgiving Day and was apparently a "great success". The club experienced further difficulties when the Foresters' Hall refused to allow them to use the premises. However, new rooms were found at the Oddfellows' Hall.[129]

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128 24 February 1872.

129 Ibid., 9 March 1872.

The succeeding years proved the Humberside clubs to be among the most resilient in the country and both persisted until after the middle of the decade. The Leeds and district organisation, although having been slow to get started, continued until around 1876. None of the clubs in the area seem to have shown any interest in Standring's Republican League.

Part 5: NOTTINGHAM, LEICESTER, KIDDERMINSTER AND THE REST OF THE MIDLANDS

Republicanism in Nottingham was intensely vital and of the more radical social kind. The leaders were not secularists and their allegiance was with the Sheffield group rather than the Bradlaugh set. This social republicanism becomes easily comprehensible when viewed in the light of the town's radical tradition and industrial make-up. Asa Briggs referred to the town as "turbulent Nottingham, which once had nurtured the Luddites and elected Feargus O'Connor to Parliament".[130] The Nottingham working classes were involved in small manufacturing industries such as hosiery and lace making. These industries were liable to frequent slumps and even in prosperous times wages tended to be low. Also, one of the town's M.P.'s, Auberon Herbert, was himself a republican. The Nottingham Daily Guardian more than once reflected that "in electing him as one of their representatives the people of Nottingham made an egregious mistake".[131]

On 28 February the Guardian reported an open air republican meeting in Nottingham. Indicating that smaller meetings had been going on for some

[130] Briggs, "The Local Background of Chartism", in Briggs, ed., Chartist Studies, 2.

[131] 20 January 1871.

time, the report stated that "last evening the band of Republicans who have hitherto held meeting in Sneiton Market Place, assembled with their followers in the Great Market Place". In the reporter's view "the disposition of the people generally seemed to be one of indifference", and he estimated that two thousand people were present, only five hundred of whom "could be identified with the object of the meeting".[132] Two Nottingham republican leaders, J.H. Hollins and James Hooper, attacked the Guardian for seriously underestimating the numbers present at their meetings. Indeed, if we look at two other reports of that same meeting, their complaint would seem to be justified. The Nottingham Journal printed an abusive but lengthy report of the meeting, referring to those present as the "Nottingham Reds", and estimated that seven thousand people were in attendance. Given the Journal's attitude to republicanism it seems very unlikely that it would have overestimated the numbers at the meeting by as much as five thousand![133]

To find a more objective view of the meeting one must turn to the Nottingham Daily Express. The Express stated that "we imagine not less than ten thousand persons were present at one period, despite the almost ceaseless downpour of rain". Tri-colour flags were displayed, together with banners proclaiming "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" and "Less Starvation! Less Taxation! A Republic!" This shows that in Nottingham we are not dealing with prosperity republicanism. James Hooper, a stockingmaker by trade, was one of the speakers and he out-

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132 28 February 1872.

133 28 February 1872.

lined some of their aims, taking care to emphasize the non-violent nature of their republicanism. Following the example of Linton, he maintained that the masses must be educated before the republic could become a reality. They did not think it necessary that the Queen should abdicate because, on the whole, her reign had been a peaceful and moral one. However, her successor must have the approbation of the people before ascending the throne. Quoting from the Newcastle Weekly Chronicle, Hooper also attacked the cost of monarchy.[134]

A hard core of republicans met regularly in Sneiton Market Place and in the first week of March, 350 founded the Nottingham Republican Club.[135] The most important leaders were Hollins, Hooper and Thomas Smith, founder of the Nottingham branch of the International and later to become treasurer of the National Republican Brotherhood. The club promulgated a comprehensive list of political and social reforms it wished to see implemented.[136] This programme reflected the radical and proletarian nature of the Nottingham republicans and put them firmly in the Sheffield camp. Two weeks later J.H. Hollins wrote to the Express defending his society from charges of drunkenness and disreputability. Such charges had absolutely no foundation, he said, and not only were their members thoroughly respectable and sober, but they were not infidels and conducted no business on Sundays. For the most part, though, the Express was sympathetic and dispassionate and determined to uphold

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134 28 February 1871.

135 Nottingham Daily Guardian, 7 March 1871.

136 See Appendix 16.

the rights of free speech. Occasionally it had something to say against hereditary legislators itself.[137] Meanwhile the other newspapers in the town continued their persecution campaign.

In April, Auberon Herbert addressed his constituents. The meeting began with three cheers for republicanism and three groans for all dynasties.[138] By the first week in May the Nottingham West End Club had been founded.[139] It was of a similar persuasion to the Nottingham Republican Club, and this is a good indication of the strength of social republicanism in the town. If the reader refers to the programme of the National Republican Brotherhood,[140] he or she will be reminded that, for reasons which remain a mystery, it decided to move its headquarters to Nottingham. The second conference of the Brotherhood was held on Monday 15 September 1873 at the rooms of the West End Club in Parliament Street. J. Judge of Nottingham presided, De Morgan and W.H. Riley were also present, together with delegates from several towns.[141] Harriet Law, the radical secularist, was present "as a friend", and letters were read supporting the Brotherhood from G.W.M. Reynolds, G.B. Shipworth, A. Trevelyan J.P., Auberon Herbert, Rev. W. Griffiths, Rev. G. Barmby, and Rev. R. Hutchinson.

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137 29 March 1871.

138 Newcastle Weekly Chronicle, 8 April 1871.

139 Reynolds' Newspaper, 7 May 1871.

140 See Appendix 15.

141 The towns represented were Manchester, Sheffield, Kidderminster, Salford, Bristol, Wakefield, London, Tamworth, Wellington, Stroud and Nantwich. Apologies were received from Buckfastleigh and Derby.

Because of the infidel dominance of the National Republican League, republican clerics and churchgoers who wished to join a nationally organised republican body were obliged to embrace the social programme of the Brotherhood. Many Christians probably felt no affinity with either group and therefore remained outside the organised movement. Captain Maxse, Colonel Henry Clinton, and Jacob Bright all sent letters declaring themselves to be against the organisation. The delegates restated their commitment to social republicanism and the programme of 1872. Added to their platform were four new planks which called for the repeal of the Game Laws, revision of the currency, abolition of indirect taxation and proportional representation. It was lamented that "unfortunately the English people are politically apathetic when in full work, or in receipt of fair wages".[142] However, Republicanism continued to thrive in Nottingham for many years after most of the clubs formed in the early seventies had folded. A notice appeared in the National Reformer as late as 23 June 1878 stating that:

> "The Nottingham Republican Club is desirous of communicating with any kindred society in the United Kingdom with the view of calling together a Republican Conference" signed on behalf of the club by James Hooper, Secretary.[143]

There is no record of any response to the appeal and by the end of the decade the club had disappeared. Doubtless the members came to the con-

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[142] Reynolds' Newspaper, 21 September 1873. See also Newcastle Weekly Chronicle, 20 September 1873.

[143] 23 June 1878. See also Sheffield Weekly Telegraph, 16 September 1873.

clusion that the republican movement had no future, at least in its present form, and they must therefore devote their energies to other radical causes.

The economic and social structure of Leicester was similar to that of Nottingham. The vast majority of the industrial working classes were employed in stocking manufacturing, an industry that was notorious for low wages and long hours. Leicester had a long nonconformist-radical tradition and had been in the thick of the Chartist agitation. Leicester could also boast a republican Liberal M.P. in the form of Peter A. Taylor.

In March 1871 the National Reformer announced the formation of the Leicester Democratic Association. The Association's seven point programme was primarily political and did not specifically advocate the abolition of monarchy and the setting up of a republic. However, it did recommend the abolition of royal grants and hereditary legislators in the form of the House of Lords.[144] At a meeting on Wednesday 10 January 1872 the Association changed its name to Leicester Republican Club.[145] The old programme was retained with the addition of a further six points which were more social in nature.[146] The Leicester republicans seem to have been halfway between the Brotherhood and the National Republican League but eventually decided to join the latter.

There was an open air republican meeting in Leicester on Wednesday

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144 See Appendix 17.

145 Midland Free Press, 13 January 1872.

146 See Appendix 17.

14 August 1872 held under the auspices of the Republican Club. This was apparently a success and "there was a numerous attendance".[147] The following December witnessed a great demonstration in the city at which P.A. Taylor and J.D. Harris, M.P.'s for Leicester, addressed their constituents. Taylor advocated the sovereignty of the people but maintained that there was no point in having a republic until the people were sufficiently well educated to make it work. He expressed the opinion that ninety people out of a hundred were in favour of a republic. Judging by the tumultuous reception he received, he was probably not far wrong, at least as regards his own constituents.[148] But, with the sole exception of the radical Midland Free Press, the Leicester press had little that was complimentary to say about Peter Taylor or republicanism. The Leicester Journal and Midland Counties General Advertiser was particularly fond of making political capital out of the republicans, and gleefully accused the Liberals of "coquetting with Republican ideas".[149]

Another midlands town that exhibited considerable interest in republicanism was Kidderminster. In fact, the town could boast one of the leading provincial radical organs in the country, the Kidderminster Shuttle. Considering that the town possessed a quasi-republican newspaper, it is surprising that no republican club was formed in Kidderminster until May 1872.[150] Although they did send a representative

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147 Midland Free Press, 7 December 1872.

148 Reynolds' Newspaper, 18 August 1872.

149 17 January 1873.

150 National Reformer, 5 May 1872.

to the Birmingham Conference, the Kidderminster Republican Club was of the more social variety and became closely tied to the Brotherhood. The dominant industry in Kidderminster was carpet-weaving, a trade that was particularly sensitive to economic fluctuations. Indeed, earlier decades had witnessed much industrial turbulence in the town. The Brotherhood often held meetings in the town, one of the more important of these occurring in April 1873 at Temperance Hall. The full executive council was present and letters of apology were read from Mr. T. Lea M.P., the Mayor of Kidderminster, Councillor Airey of Worcester, Auberon Herbert, Joseph Chamberlain and Jacob Bright. The latter was the only one who stated in his letter of apology that he did not agree with their views.[151] Some months later the National Reformer gave news of a grand republican dinner in the town, stating that "the Kidderminster Shuttle gives two columns and a half report of the proceedings at the recent Republican dinner in that town. The Rev. E. Parry is reported as speaking warmly in favour of Republican principles".[152]

Let us turn now to the Northampton area. The major industries in Northampton were tanning and boot manufacturing.[153] Nearby Kettering was also a centre of boot and shoe making as were Stafford, Bristol, Walsall and Norwich. All of these towns were involved in the republican

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151 Northampton Daily Guardian, 14 April 1873 and Birmingham Morning News, 10 April 1873.

152 19 October 1873.

153 For more information on the industrial make-up of Northampton, see Foster, Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution, 84-87.

movement perpetuating the traditional link between cobblers and radicalism. Kettering, like Nottingham and Leicester, was also involved in the hosiery business and it is therefore no surprise to find both a thriving republican club and a secular society in the town. There was also a club in neighbouring Daventry.[154] Reynolds' Newspaper dated 26 March announced that a public meeting would be held in Northampton on 3 April for the purpose of founding a republican club.[155] A republican newspaper, the Northampton Radical,[156] was published in the town for several years. Bradlaugh was tremendously popular in Northampton and the electorate stubbornly stood by their chosen member of parliament during the "Oath crisis" of 1880.[157] The other member for Northampton, Henry Labouchère, sympathized with republicanism while never becoming actively involved.

Republicanism was generally strong throughout the midlands. Besides the town and cities that have already been mentioned, Wolverhampton, Stourbridge, Coventry and Lincoln all had republican societies.[158] A republican meeting was held at Blackheath in June 1871[159] and the Potteries even had their own republican newspaper for a couple of years. The Potteries Republican was edited by Mr. H. Wedgewood of Chatham Republican Club, and based at Hanley near Stoke.[160] What is most significant is that

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154 National Reformer, 16 February 1873.

155 See Appendix 10.

156 Charles Bradlaugh Collection, National Secular Society, Holloway Road, London, f. 395.

157 For further details see Tribe, President Charles Bradlaugh M.P., chapter 8; Walter L. Arnstein, The Bradlaugh Case, A Study in Late Victorian Opinion and Politics (London, 1965); Philip Magnus, Gladstone (London, 1954), 278-9.

158 See Appendix 19.

159 National Reformer, 11 April 1871.

160 Ibid., 27 April 1873. No copies of the Potteries Republican traceable.

for the most part the republicans in the Midlands met with no violent opposition. The one exception was a riotous meeting at Derby on 7 January 1873. Dilke lectured on "The Land and the People"[161] and serious fighting broke out in the crowd between republicans and loyalists.

None of the republican clubs mentioned above were notable for their longevity and most of them had disappeared by the middle of the decade. Northampton, though, seems to have retained its republican spirit even if the local republican club did not last. The Bradlaugh papers contain the official programme for a reform demonstration on 6 October 1884. The list of songs to be sung by the demonstrators included "The People's Anthem", to be sung to the tune of "God Save the Queen", and "The People and the Peers". Both songs were blatantly republican.[162]

Part 6: LANCASHIRE

The Lancastrian economy during the nineteenth century was based on the cotton industry and centred upon Manchester. Class warfare between hungry cotton operatives and prosperous mill owners had provided the basis for the post 1815 radicalism and militant Chartism for which Manchester was notorious.[163] But the social situation in Lancashire had

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161 Eastern Post, 11 January 1873.

162 Reform Demonstration at Northampton, Monday 6 October 1884, Bradlaugh Collection, Env. 1172.

163 Donald Read, "Chartism in Manchester", in Briggs, Chartist Studies, 30. N.B. The Manchester Council supported O'Connor in his opposition to the republicanism of Jones and Harney. See above, 75.

changed in the twenty years after 1848. The cotton workers had become incorporated into trade unions that were as respectable as working class organisation could be in the eyes of the rest of society.[164] In times of normal trade the labour force, particularly the once so radical weavers of the north Lancashire towns, had come to enjoy a standard of living that compared very favourably with that of any other working class occupation group. The entire cotton famine produced only one riot, at Stalybridge, and this is surely conclusive evidence of the disappearance of militance in Lancashire by the mid sixties. New industries were breaking into the area and reinforcing this process of milking the venom from the Lancashire working class movement. W.D. Rubinstein contends that northern, especially Lancashire, industrialists were more deferential to the landed aristocracy than their counterparts in the south, and that this spread down the scale to the relationship between masters and workmen.[165] Moreover, operatives came to identify with the mill in which they worked and would "readily accept its political shibboleths".[166] John Morley, a native of Blackburn, wrote that

> ... as a rule in the cotton districts where the trade relations between master and man have been ... established on a satisfactory basis, the man, in the truly feudal spirit, takes part with his master, and wears his political colour.[167]

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164 See above, 115-116.

165 W.D. Rubinstein, "Wealth, Elites and the Class Struggle of Modern Britain", Past and Present, 76 (August 1977), 114-116.

166 W.A. Abram, "Social Conditions and Political Prospects of the Lancashire Workman", Fortnightly Review, new ser. xxii, October 1868, 437.

167 John Morley, "The Chamber of Mediocrity", Fortnightly Review, December 1869, 690.

Morley's argument is supported by at least one modern historian. Patrick Joyce quotes a Bolton spinner who described how before the coming of limited companies after the Great War, "they was all family concerns see and ... the workpeople had to be very careful how they voted or how they spoke about politics".[168] But it was not only threats of dismissal or exclusion from promotion that solidified the political loyalty of a mill. Dinners and teas were periodically held for the supervisory, and sometimes for the skilled members of the labour force, and the entire factory would be given a treat at Christmas. There might also be celegrations to mark the coming of age of the master's son, for presentations to old hands and managers, or an upswing in trade. Sometimes the workers themselves might even contribute to the cost. But the influence of masters over men did not cease at the factory gates: it was "buttressed by a wide-ranging patronage involvement in the life of the town".[169] For example, the workers were often obliged to go to the employer's church, and their children to attend the factory school. The hierarchy of the workplace might also be found in local temperance, philanthropic, co-operative and friendly societies, plus the volunteers. All this may go some way towards explaining why Lancashire republicanism in the 1870's was not particularly strong compared with urban centres elsewhere in the country.

The first sign of interest in republicanism in Manchester was

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168 Joyce, "The Factory Politics of Lancashire in the Later Nineteenth Century", 542.

169 Ibid., 546.

when N.J. Ridgeway, secretary of the Manchester Secular Institute, invited G.J. Holyoake to speak to the group on "The Prospects of the French Republic".[170] None of the Manchester newspapers were particularly enthusiastic about republicanism but neither were they very antagonistic. By and large, they seem to have taken a Gladstonian standpoint. Unlike most other major cities, Manchester did not organise a meeting of sympathy with the French Republic. In fact, a meeting was held at the Free Trade Hall in support of the government policy of strict neutrality.[171] The Manchester Guardian maintained that the vast majority of people "continues to prefer a constitutional monarchy", but added that "we may laugh at the bugbear of English republicanism, but we may at the same time admit that the maintenance of a monarchy without a court is a problem surrounded by many dangers both political and social".[172] Thus, although the Guardian did not take British republicanism too seriously, it was seen as a useful agency for making the Monarchy more aware of its indiscretions. The Manchester Weekly News was also Gladstonian and condescending while the Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser was Tory and more hostile.

The Manchester Evening News was by far the most sympathetic to republicanism, but it could not be said to support the cause unreservedly. For example, the movement against the Princess Louise's dowry was soundly

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170 National Reformer, 2 October 1870.

171 Manchester Guardian, 2 February 1871.

172 8 February 1871.

condemned in its columns:[173] not that Manchester took part in the agitation anyway. On 22 April 1871, the paper carried a report of a lecture delivered in Manchester by Bradlaugh on "The Coming English Revolution". It was stated that although "the Chairman invited those who were in favour of the formation of a Republican Club in the city to remain behind the rest. Very few persons answered the invitation".[174] A Manchester Republican Club did not, in fact, materialize for another two years. The Salford Weekly News reported that most of the members were from the Manchester Secular Institute, and the moving spirit behind the club was a prominent local secularist, Dr. Pankhurst.[175] The club had fifty members at the time of its inauguration and soon acquired fifty more.[176]

The Manchester Queens Park Eclectic Society criticized the republicans for not being very practical, but there is nothing to suggest that they themselves were any better.[177] At a meeting of the Manchester Republican Club in January 1874, Dr. Pankhurst expressed the opinion that England was governed by an aristocratic republic, and what they wanted was a popular republic. Approximately three hundred people were present.[178] The following month, A.H. Gurst, the club secretary, reported

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173 8 February 1871.

174 22 April 1871.

175 Dr. Pankhurst's wife and daughters became leaders of the women's suffrage movement.

176 17 May 1873.

177 National Reformer, 9 November 1873.

178 Ibid., 1 February 1874.

a decision to assist in the formation of an election committee composed of republicans representing all the radical and advanced Liberal societies in Manchester. They recommended that similar committees be set up everywhere in order to unite the working classes "and effectively abolish the monopoly in the choice of candidates which the Whigs and Tories have so long enjoyed".[179] Thus, we have another example of a genuine attempt to organise a radical alternative to the two major political parties. However, there is no evidence that anything came of the Manchester project.

Salford preceded Manchester by four and a half months in the founding of a republican club.[180] Considering the generally low standard of living in Salford, it is to be expected that social republicanism might be in the ascendancy there. Sure enough, the Salford club quickly became affiliated to the National Republican Brotherhood. A few days after its inauguration the club organised a public meeting to congratulate the Spanish people on the establishment of a republic.

Class consciousness was not necessarily connected with republicanism so there is no reason why the mellowing of class tensions in Manchester should have prohibited the spread of moderate republican doctrines. In Birmingham there was a tradition of class co-operation and the result was widespread political republicanism. Sheffield and Nottingham, on the other hand, were class conscious towns and this was reflected in their social republicanism. Manchester was somewhere between the two and

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179 Ibid., 1 March 1874.

180 Ibid., 5 January 1873.

the result was neither type of republicanism took a strong hold. The reason for this remains very much a mystery.

The Tory stronghold of Liverpool amazed the radical world by founding one of the earlier republican clubs in April 1871. Warrington started a club around the same time.[181] The press in that part of the world showed so little interest in these societies that no details of the people involved are to be found. Besides having deep Unitarian and Quaker traditions Liverpool had a thriving secular society but this was by no means as republican as its counterparts elsewhere in the country. A lecture to the society on "Republicanism" caused a "sharp discussion" indicating that many of those present were not republican.[182]

Across the river in Birkenhead the political scene was also dominated by the Conservative party. Yet "J. M. P." of Birkenhead announced in a letter to the Republican that "I have sold three dozen of the Republican every issue, since it first appeared, a great deal to be said for this Tory-ridden borough".[183] A few weeks later a republican song appeared in the National Reformer contributed by J.M. Peacock of Birkenhead. One suspects that these two men were the same person. A section of that song reads as follows:

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181 National Reformer, 23 April 1871.

182 National Reformer, 1 October 1876.

183 1 July 1871.

Old Monarchy must tumble down,
Blood blazon'd was its monstrous birth,
The sword, the sceptre and the crown,
How scarred the fairest lands of earth,
And kings are fools and tools to knaves,
Who flatter them our fruits to get
Away with them my brother slaves,
And we shall breathe of freedom yet.[184]

The Birkenhead Radical Club was the nearest thing to a republican club that the town could manage. In April 1873 Bradlaugh delivered his lecture on "The Impeachment of the House of Brunswick" to the club. W. Dodd wrote that Bradlaugh spoke "to a large and highly respectable audience whose frequent and hearty applause testified their appreciation".[185]

Birkenhead was only one of several Tory strongholds in Cheshire and it was perhaps surprising to find a republican club in Altrincham as early as June 1871, and another in Chester by May 1872. They were joined in March 1874 by the Nantwich Republican Club, which in August became the Nantwich and Crewe Republican Club.[186] It is curious that Macclesfield, which boasted a republican club in the fifties, was not at all involved in the seventies, and even Stockport, with its long tradition of radicalism, was half-hearted to say the least. Radical Stalybridge, of course, had a republican club but not until June 1873.[187] However, the town did send a delegate to the Birmingham conference a month before that. To the north of Manchester; Oldham,[188] Rochdale,

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184 23 January 1871.

185 26 April 1873.

186 See Appendix 19.

187 Ibid.

188 For further details on the industrial make-up of Oldham see Foster, Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution.

Middleton, Mossley and Heywood were occasionally enthusiastic but never actually formed clubs. Yet Charles Watts reported that his lectures in those towns were well attended by sympathetic audiences and recommended that they form republican societies.[189] The working classes in the Burnley area were comparatively prosperous and conservative and the local Constitutional Association seems to have been the most thriving society in that particular town.

One north Lancashire town that did possess a strong republican club was Preston. When Charles Watts went there to lecture on "Monarchy and Republicanism", many people had to be turned away for lack of room in the hall.[190] In June 1872 the Constitutional Association of Preston challenged the Republican Club to a debate on "Republicanism versus Monarchy". Having made the challenge, the royalists were unable to find a suitable champion to defend their point of view and were consequently made to look rather foolish. The National Reformer remarked with some relish that in Preston "the royalist party are apparently at a discount".[191] The fact that the Preston Secular and Republican Club was still thriving in February 1880 says more than enough about the perserverance and determination of the Preston republicans.[192] So far as can be ascertained, the Preston club enjoyed the longest life of any republican society founded after 1867. The county town of Lancaster was also well endowed with re-

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189 National Reformer, 24 November 1872.

190 17 December 1871.

191 2 June 1872.

192 February 1880.

publicans and there was a thriving republican club as well as a secular society. The Lancaster Republican Club had the distinction of holding its inaugural meeting on the eve of the Thanksgiving celebrations for the Prince of Wales' recovery from typhoid.[193] Both the Lancaster and Preston republicans were disciples of Bradlaugh and advocated the republic pure and simple.

Possibly the most vibrant of the Lancashire republican clubs in the early seventies was the one located in Bolton. The Bolton Republican Club was founded in June 1871 with sixty-five fully paid up members.[194] In a week, forty-five more had been accepted into the ranks,[195] and nine months later their numbers had risen to 250.[196] However, monarchy was not without its supporters in Bolton. In November 1871, militant royalists disturbed a Republican Club meeting at which Odger was the guest speaker.[197] A month later, Sir Charles Dilke was due to lecture at the Temperance Hall and a riot ensued. The circumstances and aftermath of this riot are worth examining in detail.

The trouble started as soon as it became generally known that Dilke was to give a lecture in the town. A week before the event the Bolton Evening News warned that Tory militants had already been chalking

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193 Reynolds' Newspaper, 29 March 1872.

194 National Reformer, 18 June 1871.

195 25 June 1871.

196 17 March 1872.

197 Leicester Guardian, 29 November 1871.

up anti-republican slogans and inaccurate reports of Dilke's Newcastle speech.[198] A placard was posted around the town saying:

> Let it be seen that you are true born Englishmen, and refuse a hearing to any man who preaches sedition and treason ... He has attacked his sovereign in an unmanly and odious way, without the slightest consideration for her sex and august position.[199]

The paper also reported that a prominent local Tory had ordered a large quantity of beer to lubricate the toughs, and commented that "if the Tories do carry out this programme, the public will know who is largely responsible".[200] It appears that the chairman of the meeting, a Mr. Mellor, wrote twice to the Mayor asking for sufficient police to prevent a possible riot. He received no reply but was honoured with a deputation from the magistrates who said their masters thought the likelihood of a riot had been increased by the selling of tickets, and it would be safer to simply open the hall to all comers. This statement does not hold water in view of the fact that the inflammatory Tory placards had been posted before any tickets were issued. When all ticket holders were inside the hall, the doors were closed. However, the windows were bombarded by the royalists outside and one William Schofield was killed by a projectile thrown through a window. While all this was in progress no police were in sight although one hundred were congregated down the street in the town hall at a corporation banquet. The force assigned to the meeting

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198 23 November 1871.

199 1 December 1871.

200 23 November 1871.

consisted of one sergeant, two constables and two runners to report to the magistrates. By the time the police eventually arrived, the riot had burnt itself out.[201]

Two petitions, the first signed by twelve Bolton republicans and the second by twenty more, were sent to Home Secretary Bruce demanding an official inquiry into the conduct of the magistrates. The republicans stated that tickets for the meeting had already gone on sale before the magistrates advised against it, and that just as the decision to throw the doors open to all had been made, the bombardment began. Those inside unanimously decided, after a vote, that it would be dangerous to open the doors. The bombardment continued for about three quarters of an hour until the police arrived, although they had been informed immediately the riot began. The second of the two petitions concluded with the words: "Your Petitioners pray that an enquiry may be instituted as to the conduct of the magistrates and the police in relation to the meeting of the 30th of November last".[202]

R. McRoberts, the secretary of Newcastle and Gateshead Republican Club, also wrote to Bruce stating that a meeting of the club had passed a resolution to request a special inquiry into the death of Mr. William Schofield in the Bolton riots.[203] A third petition was sent from Bolton,

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201 1 December 1871.

202 Two petitions from the citizens of Bolton to Home Secretary, H.A. Bruce, December 1871, Dilke Riots, H. O. 45 9296/9391, ff. 1-99, P.R.O.

203 R. McRoberts, Secretary of Newcastle and Gateshead Republican Club, to H.A. Bruce, 28 December 1871, ibid.

this time asking for a stipendiary magistrate for the town. The petitioners pointed out that the population of the town was eighty thousand and increasing by one thousand each year. The recent incident, they said, was concrete evidence that the old system was no longer adequate, and a professional official was essential in a town of that size.[204] The Bolton magistrates made out a report to the Home Secretary, relating the affair from their point of view:

> The Mayor took personal conference with the Chief Constable and it was arranged that the body of Constables should until a necessity arose for their employment be kept at a convenient distance and that only a few constables should be present at the place of meeting -- "The Temperance Hall".

They were forced to admit that at 7:25 p.m. a note was received requesting more police at the hall, but denied that the police force intentionally held back to allow the mob to prevent Dilke from speaking. They contended that the delay in the arrival of the police reinforcements was due to "'divided counsels' at a moment when immediate action should have been taken". Lastly, they stated that the damage was not as great as had been widely publicized and the hall had not been "wrecked". The actual cost of the damage was, however, omitted.[205]

The Clerk to the Justice at Bolton Magistrate's Office, Mr. Robert Winder, sent a supplementary letter to the Home Secretary pointing out that the magistrates' report had neglected to quote the actual cost of

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[204] 3rd Petition from the citizens of Bolton to H.A. Bruce asking for a Stipendiary Magistrate, no date, ibid.

[205] Report of the Bolton Magistrate to the H.A. Bruce, January 1872, ibid.

damage to the hall: it was £20. Rumours that certain Tory magistrates had threatened Winder were refuted both by the body of magistrates and Winder himself.[206] However, certain magistrates must have been willing to let the Tory mob have its way since there was a dispute as to whether the police should be sent to quell the riot or not. By their own admission, there was a delay of forty-five minutes, during which time a man was killed. The Mayor of Bolton also sent a letter on behalf of the magistrates. He stated that "the justices who unanimously adopt this Report are of both political parties and they join in repelling that accusation as untrue". He added that the main point of issue was surely whether or not the meeting should have been allowed in the first place.[207] But was that not academic? If a riot was in progress, why delay sending the police to do their duty?

In February 1872, seventeen rioters were prosecuted in Bolton. Sources, incidently, disagree on the number. Some say thirteen, some fifteen,but the majority agree on seventeen. A defence fund was organised on behalf of the royalists. John Hall, the Public Prosecutor of Bolton, wrote to the Secretary of the Treasury stating that the fund had raised £1,000 and would be able to buy the best possible legal assistance. The prosecution therefore needed more money to secure a conviction.[208]

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206 Robert Winder, Clerk to the Justices: Bolton Magistrates Office, to H.A. Bruce, 16 January 1872, ibid.

207 Mayor of Bolton to H.A. Bruce, no date, ibid.

208 John Hall, Public Prosecutor of Bolton to the Secretary of the Treasury, 24 February 1872, ibid.

The case was concluded on 20 March but the jury could not agree and so the rioters were acquitted. In summing up the judge declared that "He would have been sorry to have passed sentence upon them, but that would have been his duty if the jury had not been unable, from conscientious motives, to come to an agreement".[209] He also expressed the wish that the prosecution would drop the case. His wish appears to have been granted, there being no record of any further proceedings being taken.

The inquiry into the conduct of the police was conducted by Captain Elgee. Mr. Beech, the Chief Constable of Bolton declined to answer when asked what instructions were given to the men on the night of the riot.[210] A letter to the Bolton Evening News, signed "w", stated that although "Mr. Beech declined to furnish the information required, it is notorious. The Police had orders not to interfere".[211] John A. Haslem of Bolton wrote to the Home Secretary asking for better police control of public meetings to stop the "strife and blood letting". He mentioned, as well, that he had been hit by a stone during the Dilke riots.[212] Bruce also received an anonymous letter complaining about the acquittal of the rioters and the judge's biased summing up.[213]

The final act in this particular play was the inquiry into the

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209 Bolton Evening News, 21 March 1872. See also Bolton Guardian and Bolton Chronicle.

210 Ibid., 14 March 1872.

211 Inquiry into the Conduct of Bolton Police during Dilke Riots, Captain Elgee, Dilke Riots, H. O. 45 9295/9391, P.R.O.

212 John A. Haslem to H.A. Bruce, 25 March 1872, ibid.

213 Anonymous letter to H.A. Bruce, 27 March 1872, ibid.

conduct of the Bolton magistrates. This did not begin until 29 April and lasted until 3 May. The report said that out of forty-three witnesses examined, twenty-two were critical of the magistrates' conduct, while twenty-one supported it. The inquiry concluded that there did not

> ... appear to be any grounds for the assertion that the Police Force were intentionally kept from the Temperance Hall by the Magistrates from political motives. It moreover appears that no charge against any individual Magistrate has any real foundation.[214]

Notwithstanding the result of this inquiry the fact remains that for forty-five minutes the police were prevented from stopping a serious riot.

Part 7: THE SOUTH, THE WEST COUNTRY AND EAST ANGLIA

The south of England, with the exception of the Greater London area, was not particularly interested in republicanism. What industry there was in the south was concentrated in small workshops where masters and men worked in close consort. There were vast numbers of agricultural labourers throughout the southern counties, but they were traditionally conservative and could only get excited over local grievances. If these local problems could somehow be linked to a wider cause, as occurred for a time during the Chartist agitation, then all well and good. Such a situation did not often arise. By 1870, attempts were being made to bring the agricultural workers within the pale of the organised labour

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[214] Inquiry into the Conduct of Bolton Magistrates during Dilke Riots, 17 May 1872, ibid.

movement. The most important figure in this endeavour was Joseph Arch. He wanted to emulate the apparent respectability of the amalgamateds and would have nothing to do with republicans. The National Reformer was at a loss to understand "how Joseph Arch, who said that he found in a state of destitution, labourers employed by the Queen at the Isle of Wight, could be a party to asking the Prince of Wales to patronize the agricultural labourers' movement". Even stranger, said the article, was the "persistent refusal of Mr. Arch to co-operate with the Federal Union, or to speak on the same platform with Mr. Odger".[215] Mr. Arch obviously had no time for republicanism or republicans.

The first republican organisation to be set up in the south outside the metropolis was not the product of social and economic forces; but rather the child of intellectual conviction. The society in question was formed at the University of Cambridge in December 1870. It was an offshoot of Professor Henry Fawcett's radical club and the main figures involved in the enterprise, besides Fawcett, were William Kingdon Clifford, who was appointed secretary, Mr. Sedley Taylor and Mr. Sedgewick. Republicanism was defined by the club as "hostility to the hereditary principle as exemplified in monarchical and aristocratic institutions, and to all social and political privileges dependent upon differences of sex".[216] The dons of Cambridge were seized with alarm at this outbreak of radicalism in their midst, but no steps were taken to suppress the club. There was

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215 21 June 1874.

216 Leslie Stephen, Life of Henry Fawcett (London, 1886), 286. See also Newcastle Weekly Chronicle, 3 December 1870.

also a republican incident in the town itself. A councillor by the name of Henry Thomas Hall opposed a motion of sympathy by the council regarding the Prince of Wales' illness. Hall also ridiculed the notion that divine providence had intervened to effect the Prince's recovery. Derisory cries of "communism" and "bravo Odger" emanated from the floor in response to Hall's dissent. This story was widely publicized and Hall became something of a cult hero in republican circles due to his defiant gesture in such a conservative town.[217]

If society was shocked by the founding of the Cambridge Republican Club, people were doubly taken aback when it was announced some months later that a similar society had been formed at Wadham College Oxford. In an article on the British republican clubs, the Weekly Dispatch expressed no surprise that clubs were thriving in places such as Birmingham and Nottingham but was amazed that one existed "even within the classic home of Toryism, within the sacred enclosure of the University of Oxford".[218] However, that is not so remarkable when one remembers that Wadham was the Positivist college.[219]

The home counties were not exactly overflowing with republican clubs but one was formed in Reading, a centre of the clothing trade, in the first week of August 1871. However, the town also contained some people who were violently loyal to the Crown as George Odger found

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217 Midland Free Press, 6 January 1872.

218 6 August 1871.

219 See below, 337.

out to his cost. On 8 December, The Times printed a report of Odger's experiences in Reading as a visiting republican lecturer.[220] On reading this account Odger noticed some glaring inaccuracies and therefore sent the editor his own version which was duly printed a few days later. Odger claimed that he spoke for half an hour before the meeting had to disband. Everyone left the hall in a body, six stalwarts accompanying Odger to the station. Here they were jostled for twenty-five minutes by three hundred men until finally he was forced to take refuge in the urinal. Odger lamented that the world seemed to have forgotten the concept of fair play and the right of any man to express his opinions. He hoped that "the democrats of England will never degrade themselves by the use of such means" as were employed by the royalists of Reading. In conclusion he informed The Times that "I have a bruised head, sore arms and legs, and some ragged clothes, but nothing serious".[221]

There is some evidence of republican activity in Kent. Firstly, a republican club was formed by the printing towns of Chatham, Rochester and Strood,[222] and secondly, the Maidstone Working Men's Institute was known to be republican.[223] Maidstone was a paper manufacturing area and many of the Institute's members were probably employed in the paper mills. Most of Kent was thoroughly rural and unlikely to produce republicans. There were a few republicans in the Sussex coastal town of Hastings,

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220 8 December 1871.

221 11 December 1871.

222 National Reformer, 17 December 1871.

223 Ibid., 7 May 1871.

but the strongest group in that part of the world was to be found in Brighton of all places: the playground of kings and princes. Brighton's two M.P.'s, Fawcett and White, were both theoretical republicans and pledged to oppose the granting of a dowry to the Princess Louise, a pledge which Fawcett, but not White, fulfilled.[224] The Brighton Radical Association praised Dilke's opposition to the Civil List.[225]

Republican activity in these places did not persist much after 1874 but there is evidence of republican sympathy in two very unlikely locations in the early 1880's. The Republican of May 1882 was staggered, but happy, to report the foundation of a radical association in "Tory-ridden" Guildford.[226] But this may be accounted for by the fact that the printing trade was prominent in the Surrey town. There was also a flourishing radical club in Portsmouth in the eighties. Included in the club's programme were resolutions to abolish the House of Lords and to refuse absolutely any "further monetary grants to members of the present Royal Family".[227]

Considering that the overwhelming majority of working class people in East Anglia were engaged in agriculture, it is perhaps surprising to find two or three strong republican clubs in the area. However, there had been some Chartist activity in Suffolk,[228] and East Anglia generally

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224 Manchester Guardian, 25 January 1871. See below.

225 National Reformer, 31 March 1871.

226 May 1882.

227 February 1887.

228 Hugh Fearn, "Chartism in Suffolk", in Briggs, ed., Chartist Studies, 147-174.

contained a large proportion of Primitive Methodists who were prone to radicalism.[229] However, it is doubtful if nonconformists would have had much to do with the Norwich Republican Club as it was dominated by secularists. Ipswich never had a republican club as such, but the Ipswich Patriotic Society was predominantly republican.[230] The other knot of republicans in the area were to be found in Great Yarmouth where a club surfaced in August 1872.[231] Evidence is scanty but it is likely that the Yarmouth club was composed of fishermen and small tradesmen, some of whom may well have been nonconformists. Shoemakers were prominent in Norwich and Ipswich.

The foundation of a republican club in Norwich was precipitated by a visit from Odger. The latter travelled to Norwich in the autumn of 1871 for the purpose of giving three lectures. The first was on Tuesday 30 October and entitled "Labour, Capital and Trade Unions". The second, on the "Direct Representation of the People" was delivered on Thursday 2 November: it was outspokenly republican but received enthusiastically.[232] Odger gave his final lecture on Friday 10 November on the theme of "Government of, by and for the People". After this lecture, some members of the audience proposed to start a republican club in Norwich, and to meet for the purpose the following Monday. On the appointed day, "a crowded meeting" was held, presided over by R.A. Cooper,

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229 For geographical distribution of nonconformity, see Ian Sellers, Nineteenth Century Nonconformity (London, 1977), Ch. 4.

230 National Reformer, 17 December 1871.

231 Ibid., 11 August 1872.

232 Norfolk News, 4 November 1871.

a local confectioner and secularist. The congregation testified to the peaceful nature of their republicanism and disclaimed any hostility towards the Queen as a person.

The Norwich and Norfolk Republican Club was founded with an entrance fee of 3d and a weekly subscription of one penny.[233] R.A. Cooper was elected chairman and a committee of working men was appointed. It was agreed that neither religion nor local politics should enter into their discussions and this may well have been an attempt to accomodate the nonconformists. The object of the club was declared to be "to substitute, by all lawful means, the Republican for the Monarchical form of government".[234] The new republican club was greeted with a torrent of invective from the local Tory press. The Norfolk Chronicle and Norwich Gazette printed the following article:

> Thanks to the patting and fondling that it has received at the hands of our Liberal Government, Treason now stalks openly amongst us -- unchecked and apparently uncared for by those whose duty it is to repress it. ... We wait for an explanation of the means that can be "lawfully" used to overthrow the Throne; and it is high time that it should be proved whether even the intention to do so is lawful or not.

The article went on to warn of the "lamentable consequences that must ensue if the promotors of this boldly-avowed scheme are permitted to pursue their machinations unmolested". This ardent loyalist maintained

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233 This was fairly high compared with the subscription to the National Republican Brotherhood which was one shilling a year. This indicates that the Norwich republicans were relatively prosperous.

234 Ibid., 11 November 1871.

that the peaceful protestations of the republicans should not be taken seriously, pointing out that Robespierre and his supporters were non-violent in the beginning. He then rather ironically stated that the republicans would have to resort to violence anyway because the royalists would not "quietly surrender their constitution", and "hundreds of Conservatives will be ready to fight to the death for the Throne".[235] It is just as well for the continuing peaceful coexistence of the nation that the vast majority of Englishmen did not think in terms of civil war like this particular newspaper columnist. However, he was not without supporters in Norfolk and one must remember that the Hon. G. Bentinck, who advocated suppression of the republicans in the Commons, was M.P. for West Norfolk.[236]

True to form, the Gazette openly supported the royalists thugs who disrupted republican meetings in Bolton, Derby and Reading. The paper did say that normally it would not condone such behaviour but in this case they viewed the incidents with "more than leniency".[237] The local Liberals tried hard to rid themselves of the republican stigma planted upon them by the Tories, and as a result became less indulgent of the republicans than Liberals elsewhere. However, they were at least content with ridicule and, unlike the Tories, did not advocate violent repression. With this tremendous weight of opinion against them it is something of an achievement that the Norwich republicans managed to keep

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235 25 November 1871.

236 See above, 105-6.

237 9 December 1871.

their club alive for five years or so. In fact, there is evidence that a number of candidates stood in local elections on a republican ticket, but they met with little success.[238]

From the east let us cross to the south western side of the country. Gloucestershire specialized in clothing manufacture and was the centre of the broadcloth trade which produced some of the republicans in Kidderminster. Although Cheltenham was the scene of W.E. Adams' republican endeavours in the fifties, there is no evidence of republicanism in the town in the seventies. However, there is evidence of republican activity in Gloucester,[239] and Stroud was actually a member of the National Republican Brotherhood.[240]

Bristol had possessed republican sympathizers since the Civil War, and in the nineteenth century leather work and clothing manufacturing were carried on in the town.[241] Both industries were very often present where republicans were found. In August 1870, Bradlaugh lectured to the Bristol Secular Society on the topic of "George Prince of Wales, with recent Contrasts and Coincidences". The secretary of the society, J. Moss Jr., reported that the walls of the hall were covered with slogans such as "Republic for ever -- democratic and social", "Liberty, equality, fraternity", and "Democracy the world o'er".[242] On Tuesday 3

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238 Norfolk Chronicle and Norwich Gazette, 4 October 1873.

239 National Reformer, 18 May 1873.

240 Reynolds' Newspaper, 21 September 1873.

241 L. Dudley Stamp and S.H. Beaver, The British Isles, A Geographic and Economic Survey (London, 1963), 567-9.

242 National Reformer, 14 August 1870.

January 1871 at St. George's Hall Bristol, the local Radical Association passed a resolution against the proposed dowry for the Princess Louise. The following motion, proposed by Mr. J. Marshall and seconded by Mr. C.K. Lewes, was carried unanimously:

> When this meeting considers the state of millions of our countrymen and countrywomen, at the present moment bordering on starvation, resulting from excessive taxation, and when it considers the immense wealth of the Queen, part of which ought to be applied to the maintenance of her family, -- it begs leave earnestly to request that the members for Bristol will oppose any grant of public money for such a purpose, and also to assure the "members" that in Bristol, the amount of poverty is very great, and the suffering proportionate.[243]

This was signed on behalf of the club by the secretary Thomas Howse. A similar resolution was passed by the Bristol Secular Society.[244]

Dilke lectured at Bristol on 20 November 1871 on "The Redistribution of Seats". Taking the chair was Sir Christopher Thomas, chairman of the Bristol Liberal Association. It is noteworthy that a Dilke lecture, given after the Newcastle affair, was presented in Bristol by the Liberals, rather than the Radicals. This indicates that the Bristol Liberals were relatively advanced. A report of the proceedings in the Leicester Guardian stated that:

> When a loyalist proposed three cheers for the Queen, the applause was speedily drowned in hisses and groans. The republicans were cheered with enthusiasm, and Sir Charles Dilke's

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243 Republican, 1 February 1871. See also National Reformer, 15 January 1871.

244 National Reformer, 5 February 1871.

> admission that he was a Republican was received with applause which lasted a considerable time.[245]

The Bristol Republican Club was formed on 11 December 1872,[246] presumably out of members of the Radical and Liberal Associations and the Secular Society. Like so many others, it thrived for a few years and then faded away sometime after the middle of the decade.

Just a few miles to the east of Bristol lies the old Roman spa of Bath. The town possessed a Working Men's Association, formed by plasterers and shoemakers, by 1837; and was also involved in Chartist movement.[247] Bath Republican Club was formed in February 1873,[248] but unfortunately there are very few available details concerning its membership and policies. However, the one club bulletin that still exists indicates that the members must be counted among those who wished to form a radical third party. The following statement was signed on behalf of Bath Republican Club by C. Hazeldine, the secretary, and informs us that:

> Republicans here (as in most places) have met with a considerable amount of unkindly opposition, especially from the Whig party, and now that the oft repeated cry of "don't split up the party" has lost its charm, it is truly amusing to note the anxiety of the "effete party". Republican voters find themselves sufficiently strong to turn the tide, so that the so-called Liberal party will be bound to take up a part of our programme, or bow to "the great Conservative reaction".[249]

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245 22 November 1871.

246 National Reformer, 22 December 1872.

247 R.B. Pugh, "Chartism in Somerset and Wiltshire", in Briggs, Chartist Studies, 174-5.

248 National Reformer, 16 February 1873.

249 Ibid., 5 October 1873.

However, the Liberals did not embrace any part of the republican programme and "the great Conservative reaction" did indeed come to pass.

There is little evidence of republican activity in Somerset, Devon and Cornwall. The Bridgewater and Wellington Republican Club existed for a few months during 1874 but was not particularly strong.[250] The serge trade was still prominent in this area incidently and seems to be the only likely source of republicans. The three most westerly counties of England possessed a high percentage of agricultural workers who were notoriously conservative. However, what was left of the Cornish mining community was known to dabble in radical politics from time to time, and there may have been some republicans amongst the miners. The St. Austell Weekly News and Advertiser was conspicuously sympathetic to the French Republic and faithfully reported republican events throughout the United Kingdom. The last outpost of republicanism in the west country was to be found in Plymouth. This study has revealed that coastal towns had a tendency to harbour republicans, and Plymouth, besides possessing a sizeable clique of radical nonconformists, had a Lintonite republican club in the fifties. The Plymouth Republican Institute was founded in March 1873. At the first general meeting of the club "the attendance was such as to justify the most sanguine expectations".[251] Yet, by 1875 the club had disappeared. Lastly, it is worth noting that although the Isle of Wight and the Channel Islands were, on the whole, not particularly interested in republicanism, there was one exception.

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250 Ibid., 11 April 1874.

251 Ibid., 23 March 1873.

The National Reformer noted in December 1871 that "we see by the Guernsey Mail that some of the English residents on the island, are arranging for the formation of a Republican Club".[252] The latter did not, though, endure for too long.

Part 8: WALES

A strong sense of national pride combined with militant nonconformity and economic factors to make parts of Wales thoroughly radical for much of the nineteenth century. The opposition to the Poor Law after 1834 had been fraught with much bitterness and in some areas the Poor Law Commissioners went in peril of their lives. Welsh Chartism too, was of the most extreme variety.[253] In 1850, a government report on mining districts concluded that journals conveying the "worst doctrines" had always circulated in colliery towns.[254] It is therefore, no great revelation to find Merthyr Tydvil at the centre of Welsh republicanism.

In April 1871, the Republican printed a letter from "Thomas R" who contended that "Merthyr is a thoroughly radical district, more especially among the working classes". Thomas declared himself to be a republican nonconformist and stated that "our rector is a good Reformer, and no milk and water about him as his sermons will prove".[255] But it

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252 Ibid., 24 December 1871.

253 David Williams, "Chartism in Wales", in Briggs, Chartist Studies, 220.

254 Report of the Commission appointed under the provisions of the act of 5th and 6th Vict. Cap. 99 to inquire into the operation of that act and the states of the population in the mining districts 1850 (London, 1851), quoted in the Quarterly Review, 89 (September, 1851), 536-7, in A.R. Schoyen, The Chartist Challenge, 201.

255 1 April 1871.

was nine months before a republican club was formed in Merthyr. A few days later, on 30 January 1872, a meeting was held in Merthyr at which Henry Richard M.P. addressed his constituents. At this meeting the chairman read a letter from the Republican Club censuring Mr. Richard for voting in favour of the Princess Louise's dowry. It seems that "much amazement was caused by the reading of this paper".[256] Just a week prior to this incident a programme of republican lectures was begun by the Aberdare Branch of the National Secular Society.[257] Cardiff had never been the most radical of places but some signs of republicanism were noticed when the Cardiff Branch of the National Secular Society resolved:

> That this society returns its sincere thanks to Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. A. Herbert, Mr. George Anderson and Sir Wilfrid Lawson, for their manly and courageous conduct in the House of Commons, relative to the question of the Civil List, and severely condemns the conduct of the other members of the House in trying to put down free discussion.[258]

On 28 September "a few friends" from the Secular Society formed the Cardiff Republican Club.[259]

The vast majority of newspapers in Wales were at worst bitterly hostile to the republicans, and at best simply ignored them. Only one newspaper was even mildly sympathetic or made a reasonable attempt at an

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256 Cardiff Weekly Mail, 3 February 1873.

257 National Reformer, 21 January 1872.

258 Ibid., 31 March 1872. See below, 410.

259 Ibid., 13 October 1872.

objective appraisal of the movement, and this was the North Wales Press. Ironically, the paper in question did not circulate in the Merthyr and Cardiff areas where Welsh republicanism was concentrated. In fact, republican literature was available in South Wales even if nothing was produced locally. The Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian was dismayed to find that the Republican "has a large circulation in South Wales".[260] Probably the National Reformer and Reynolds' Newspaper were also available although they are not mentioned in the article. The Bishop of St. Davids even preached a sermon against republicanism which indicates that the creed was filtering into the area.

It is something of a mystery why the republican movement was not stronger in Wales given the prevalence of nonconformity and a traditional dislike of the English monarchy. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the only organised republican societies in Wales seem to have been those at Merthyr, Aberdare and Cardiff. None of the clubs in those towns lasted for very long although Merthyr miners were always ready to support any leftist movement and remain so to this day.[261]

Part 9: SCOTLAND

> I cannot wi' a grace bow even to the king
> Deck'd wi' the pomp of place he's but a silly pampered thing;
> While eager thousands throng, and crouching, bend the knee,
> I only smile and pass along, but doff no hat to he:
> Slaves who are willing may; I cannot stoop, that's flat
> To idle forms of clay I'll never doff my hat.[262]

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260 3 June 1871.

261 For further details of Welsh politics see Kenneth O. Morgan, Wales in British Politics 1868-1922 (Cardiff, 1963).

262 Anon., "I'll Never Doff My Hat", originally from Tait's Magazine, reprinted by the Edinburgh Tract Society, no date, Cowen Collection.

The above is the fourth verse of an anonymous eight verse poem printed by the Edinburgh Tract Society sometime after 1850.

Right up to the present day, English monarchs have never been very popular in certain sectors of Scottish society. This deep-seated resentment of the English Crown may well have sharpened the edge of Scottish republicanism in the 1870's. But more significant is that the urban centres of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Paisley and Aberdeen had been in the thick of the Chartist movement,[263] and it was in these towns that republican clubs appeared twenty-five years later. The economic situation in Scotland was, like everywhere else in the world at that time, subject to sudden ebbs and flows, but Scottish wages and working conditions tended to be worse than the rest of Britain, and some workers lived in the most abominable slums imaginable.

The industries which seemed to be synonymous with republicanism in England were also found in republican strongholds north of the border. Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Paisley and Aberdeen had, for years, been connected with the linen industry which produced radicals in the West Riding of Yorkshire. The American Civil War and the cotton famine which accompanied it gave a boost to the manufacture of linen "but the prosperity was short-lived, and a steady decline set in" after 1865.[264] This was made worse by the establishment of a profusion of cotton mills in those areas, but at least the new mills absorbed some of the surplus labour from the

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263 Alex Wilson, "Chartism in Glasgow", in Briggs, ed., Chartist Studies, 251.

264 Stamp and Beaver, The British Isles, A Geographic and Economic Survey, 531.

dying linen trade. The manufacture of woollens was also prominent in the Glasgow/Paisley area, and Glasgow possessed a fledgling iron and steel industry which created similar conditions to those described in Sheffield.[265] In addition to being a textile centre, Dundee handled the manufacture of most of the machinery for the Scottish industries. Dundee was also, of course, an important shipyard in 1870. Aberdeen was one of the most important fishing ports in the British Isles and this adds weight to the hypothesis that there was a connection between fishermen and republicanism. There was also some granite mining around Aberdeen and since, as we have seen, miners tended towards republicanism, this may have been a contributory factor.

The Dundee Advertiser was an extremely professional and objective advanced Liberal newspaper, and is an excellent source for republican developments, not only in Dundee and the rest of Scotland, but for the whole of Britain. The Advertiser sympathized warmly with the new French Republic commenting on 10 October 1870 that there was presently "no more interesting phenomenon in London than the wonderful activity of these working men who cry out for recognition of the French Republic".[266] During the next few months the correspondence columns of the paper contained lively debates on the subject.

On 5 May 1871 the Advertiser reported a meeting of local republicans, summoned by advertisement, with a view to forming a republican club. One hundred and thirty people were present, most of whom were

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265 See above, 199.

266 10 October 1870.

working men, but a Mr. Peter Fleming was an Emigration agent, and John Sutherland was a spinning overseer. Copies of the Republican were circulated and a working committee was formed. By the end of the meeting, sixty people were enrolled.[267] On Wednesday 10 May, a full meeting of Dundee Republican Club was held.[268] The Birmingham rules were adopted with a few minor alterations: George Walker was elected president, William Buchan became secretary and Thomas Bennett treasurer. Within a week, the club had expanded to one hundred members. The programme consisted of eleven proposals for political and social reform.[269] The terms of the programme indicate that the club lay somewhere between the secularists and social republicans. In fact, two weeks later, the Advertiser printed a couple of letters from local republicans complaining that the Dundee Republican Club was too closely linked with the secular movement.[270] The link with secularism, in a still predominantly Christian society, was a terminal disability for British republicanism.

Two months later, the Dundee Republican Club began a petition against the proposed annuity for Prince Arthur on his coming of age. Everyone, they said, should provide for his own family and the Queen was no exception.[271] At a meeting held the following November, the

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267 Ibid., 5 May 1871.

268 12 May 1871.

269 See Appendix 18.

270 19 May 1871.

271 28 July 1871. See below, 413.

club resolved to form a branch of the I.W.M.A. in Dundee, but this was to be quite separate from the Republican Club.[272] Nevertheless, the fact that such a move was initiated by the club suggests that some of its members supported the International and maybe explains the existence of the social part of the Republican Club programme. The endeavours of the Dundee republicans were assisted to some degree by a Presbyterian minister named Gilfillan who had preached a sermon relating the crimes of monarchs throughout history. Although sympathizing with republican principles, Gilfillan warned that Britain was not yet ready for a republic and at all costs must avoid socialism and/or anarchy.[273] The same issue of the Advertiser which reported Gilfillan's activities noted that:

> the High Street and the Piazza of the Town House are to Dundee artisans very much what the smoking-room of the club is to the rich man. Saturday after Saturday you may see the same faces and hear the same talk, which when personal, is chiefly about work and wages, and when political, rather of a Republican order.[274]

In March 1872 Charles Watts delivered two lectures in the Thistle Hall, Dundee, under the auspices of the republican club.[275] They were well received and there was no trouble. But by May, the meetings of the Dundee Republican Club were becoming less frequent: they were sim-

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272 24 November 1871.

273 12 December 1871.

274 12 December 1871.

275 12 March 1872.

ply running out of subjects to debate. It was decided to have a three month recess during which time a working committee was to keep a close watch on the political scene.[276] The last two references were taken from Dundee's second advanced Liberal newspaper, the Courier and Argus, which, like the Advertiser, reported regularly and objectively on republican events. It is remarkable that when such newspapers were so rare, there should have been two in Dundee. This certainly says much about the radical nature of the town. In fact, the Courier and Argus amalgamated with the Advertiser in February 1873.

The Courier and Argus reported a meeting held on 9 January 1872 for the purpose of founding a republican club in Glasgow.[277] Three months later, Charles Bradlaugh visited the city to lecture on "Republicanism against Monarchy". The lecture took place in Glasgow City Hall and the event was fraught with conflict:

> Wilst the lecture was going on in the hall, Brothers, Macklow, Yuille, and Jameison addressed a concourse of four or five thousand in front of the County Buildings. Resolutions were adopted in favour of Monarchical Government and condemning the conduct of the Magistrates in letting the City Hall for a Republican lecture.[278]

An attempt was then made to batter down the doors of the City Hall but, fortunately, this was not successful. Bradlaugh's chief opponents in Glasgow were reported to be Irish Orangemen.[279] Charles Watts gave two

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276 8 May 1872.

277 10 January 1872.

278 2 April 1872.

279 4 April 1872. The National Reformer, 9 February 1873, tells us that nearby Paisley also had a republican club but no newspaper gives any details of its activities.

lectures in Perth; one on 6 March 1872 concerning "The American Republic and English Misrule", and another the following day entitled "The Government, the People, and the Coming Republic". About eight hundred people heard each lecture and there were no disturbances.[280] There was obviously some interest in republicanism in the town but no record exists of a club ever having been formed there.

The Aberdeen press was remarkably uninformative about the republicans in that town. Even the Aberdeen Free Press inclined towards conservatism and any republican meetings in the town went unrecorded. Thus, one is forced to turn to the national radical press which inform us simply that Aberdeen Republican Club was founded in November 1872.[281] There was also a club formed in Newmilns on the Ayrshire coal field.[282] The city of Edinburgh, though, was blessed with an advanced Liberal newspaper which sympathized with, and helped popularize, moderate republicanism. On 1 April 1871, the Edinburgh Reformer featured an article on "Republicanism" by their columnist "Bagman" who believed that the eventual fall of the monarchy was inevitable, but:

> There is no need for violence. The revolution will come as naturally and quietly as the ripe grain follows the sowing of the seed, if hot brained zealots do not attempt to reap the harvest while it is yet green.[283]

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280 National Reformer, 17 March 1872.

281 Ibid., 24 November 1872.

282 Ibid., 31 March 1872.

283 1 April 1871.

A spate of republican articles appeared in the columns of the paper including one from a Mr. Charles Delworth asking for interested persons who would like to form a republican club in Edinburgh.[284] This was eventually established in May.[285]

Republicanism did not die away as easily in Scotland as it did in many other parts of the country. Although the clubs founded in the early seventies disappeared after the middle of the decade, there was a tremendous response to George Standring's republican campaign in the early eighties. The Republican for January 1882 reported the reading of an essay on "The Best Form of Government", by Mr. G.A. Broome, to the Literary Association of Scotland. A lengthy discussion followed after which the meeting voted overwhelmingly in favour of Broome's contention that a republic was the best form of government.[286] A year later, branches of the Republican League were flourishing in Edinburgh and Glasgow.[287] However, this did not last and by the end of the decade, the Scottish republicans, like their counterparts in the rest of the United Kingdom, had either joined the socialists or opted for a quieter political life in the bosom of the Liberal Party.

Republicanism was certainly most prevalent in towns where there was already a tradition of radicalism. It is particularly noticeable

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284 8 April 1871.

285 National Reformer, 28 May 1871. See also Gray, The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh, 158-60.

286 January 1882.

287 January 1882.

that where Chartism had been virulent in the thirties and forties, republicanism was strong in the seventies. In fact, to go one step further, places that had adhered to moral force Chartism, such as Birmingham, tended to be moderate in their republicanism, whereas a town like Nottingham, which had nurtured physical force Chartists, produced social republicans. There were exceptions to this rule, of course, because in certain parts of the country economic and social conditions had altered quite markedly since 1848. The classic example of this would be Lancashire, and Manchester in particular, where class tensions had eased considerably by 1870. Even so, one would have expected political republicanism to have appealed more widely to the relatively prosperous cotton operatives. This was indeed the type of republicanism that predominated in Manchester but it was really very weak and slow to organise compared with other major urban centres.

It is quite logical to find social republicans in areas where depressed or ill organised industries predominated. Granted, a large proportion of the residual poor were totally devoid of political consciousness, but those that did shake off the chains of apathy were prone to embrace the most extreme doctrines.[288] Heavy industry, such as iron and steel and shipbuilding, generally seemed to produce social republicans but this was not always the case and depended to a large extent on the current political and social climate in the area. Mining districts had a long tradition of radicalism and certainly many republicans in this period were miners. However, they were not necessarily among the

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288 See Stedman Jones, Outcast London, Ch. 9.

most radical republicans and this may be due to the organisation and discipline that was being imposed by the National Association of Mineworkers.

Towns involved in the leather industry and shoemaking invariably had healthy republican clubs, but usually advocated the republic pure and simple. This was also true for textile centres of one kind or another. Lancashire did possess some strong republican clubs, like those in Bolton and Preston, but they were plagued with a good deal of loyalist opposition which was not apparent in other textile areas. Many coastal towns, particularly fishing ports, were also involved in the republican movement, but were not among the most radical participants.

Lastly, we are faced with the question of exactly what inspired the formation of over one hundred republican societies in Britain between 1870 and 1874. The declaration of the Third French Republic was unquestioningly the single most important factor in setting off the chain reaction which began in Birmingham. However, it is difficult to believe that the declaration of a republic in a foreign country created thousands of republicans overnight. What is more likely is that men who for some time had cherished republican ideals, felt that the time was at last ripe for them publicly to express their beliefs. Take, for example, the man in Hull who had been too embarassed to publicly acknowledge his republicanism, but after making inquiries discovered that there were many people in the town who shared his opinions.[289]

The presence and capabilities of local leaders was of crucial importance. Most large towns, and even some smaller ones, possessed

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289 See above, 214.

competent organisers who supervised the foundation of viable republican societies without any outside assistance. In fact, the development of republicanism in Birmingham, Nottingham, Sheffield and Newcastle was thoroughly independent, and in no way influenced by events in London. However, London republicans such as Odger, Bradlaugh, Dilke, Watts and Foote made frequent whistle stop lecturing tours through the provinces, and in several cases a lecture by one of these men precipitated the founding of a republican club in the locality. The Norwich Republican Club, for example, came into being in this way.[290]

Thus, provincial republicanism in the 1870's was the result of a complex fusion of political, social and economic factors, with local traditions of radicalism which saw overseas example as the cue to begin a campaign to improve their own political environment and increase their opportunities in life. The various degrees of republicanism in the provinces exhibited many of the contradictions and contrasts to be found in London, but were by no means always derivative. In fact, the strongest and most durable of the provincial organisations were those that developed independently of London.

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290 See above, 245. N.B. These lecturing tours were made possible by the vastly improved railway services -- an advantage that the Chartists, for example, did not enjoy.

CHAPTER 7

THEORETICAL REPUBLICANS AND SYMPATHIZERS

This chapter is the first of two which will analyze the attitudes and opinions of individual republicans. Those who have been placed in the first category are the men whose republicanism was, in the first place, more theoretical than practical, and in the second place, political rather than social. The chapter will also deal with people who sympathized with the republicans without taking any part in the movement, together with those, like John Bright, whom the republicans mistakenly counted among their supporters. This group, then, will include most of the republican Liberals in the Commons, the leaders of the trade union establishment, and various important advanced Liberals who, for one reason or another, are historically significant. But it would seem logical to begin with the man who "was credited by the Queen and the national press with leadership of the entire movement":[1] namely, Sir Charles Dilke.

Dilke was not, in fact, involved in republican organisation at any stage. He simply spoke his mind on a number of current issues to audiences that for the most part had already been converted. The radical press applauded his outspokenness and rejoiced that a promising young M.P. of gentle birth had joined the cause. However, they never made the mistake of over-estimating his importance. The radical jour-

[1] Harrison, Before the Socialists, 212.

nalists in touch with the republican movement knew very well that Dilke was not interested in organising republicans with a view to eventually seizing political power. The non-radical press assumed, because of Dilke's rank, that he must inevitably be the leader - an error of judgement which did much to hamper Dilke's political career.

Dilke was born in London, on 4 September 1843. He was a youthful admirer of Plato and Bodin,[2] and an English essay he wrote as a teenager begins with a quotation from Algernon Sydney.[3] He admired English republicans such as Milton and Vane and was full of praise for Plato's republic, which he earmarked as "the type of all similar projects".[4] He referred to Mazzini as a "good friend".[5] From his Cambridge days, Dilke believed that, for an advanced country, a republic was the best form of government. Dilke's father was closely associated with the Prince Consort, particularly in connection with the Great Exhibition, and the Dilke baronetcy was granted for services rendered at that time. But father and son were deeply estranged and it is likely that this lack of regard for his father encouraged Dilke to take an opposite political standpoint. In fact, Dilke was much closer to his grandfather. He described the latter as a "conservative republican in old age, a radical republican in youth, but a republican through life, and ... my young ideas were my grandfather's ideas".[6] A trip to the United States

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2 Dilke Papers, BM, Add. MS. 43950, ff. 180-3.

3 Ibid., f. 192.

4 Ibid., f. 217.

5 Dilke, "Unpublished Memoir", Dilke Papers, BM, Add. MS. 43931, f. 275.

6 Ibid., f. 194.

strengthened Dilke's belief in republican principles. Roy Jenkins comments that Dilke was

> ... as naturally disposed to be pro-American as it is possible to imagine. To find English energy and to hear the English language without the English Queen or other archaic paraphernalia was for him an exhilarating experience.[7]

He was in Paris in September 1870 to witness the declaration of the Third French Republic, having journeyed to France to observe the progress of the Franco-Prussian War. In his unpublished memoirs, Dilke talked with fond recollections of "the morning of the 4th September, my birthday and that of the French Republic".[8] Dilke's memoir contains a detailed account of his views on the Franco-Prussian War and experiences in Paris in the autumn of 1870 and spring of 1871. He had always felt an intellectual affinity with France and the downfall of Napoleon III at last allowed him to become wholeheartedly Francophil. The memoir is spiced with many anecdotes. For example, he tells us that "many would in the morning take an omnibus to the battlefield and fight, and take the omnibus back home again to dine and sleep".[9] He mentions, too, that Leon Gambetta, the most talented and respected statesman of the new republic was "for a long time ... my most intimate friend".[10]

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7 Roy Jenkins, Sir Charles Dilke (London, 1958), 35.

8 Dilke, "Unpublished Memoir", Dilke Papers, BM, Add. MS. 43931, f. 79.

9 Ibid., f. 138.

10 Ibid., f. 243.

The year 1870 also witnessed the founding of the London Radical Club. Among the members were advanced Liberals such as Peter Taylor and Auberon Herbert: Dilke was the secretary. A particularly notable feature of the club was that women were admitted, and even encouraged, as members. In the early years, there was a good deal of republicanism talked at the club's meetings, but Dilke stated that by the 1880's "several other members of the Club could hardly be looked upon as radicals".[11]

It was in the autumn of 1871, following his return from France, that the M.P. for Chelsea publicly acknowledged his republicanism during a series of lectures around the country. The tour began in Manchester but, realizing that republicanism was not strong in that city, Dilke refrained from introducing the topic on that occasion. Instead, he delayed the bombshell until 6 November at Newcastle where he could be certain of a sympathetic hearing.

The notorious Newcastle Speech dealt primarily, and in devastating fashion, with the cost of the Crown. Dilke estimated that the Civil List plus all miscellaneous payments to royalty and their servants brought the cost of the Crown to approximately £1 million per annum. This sum, he was careful to point out, was the direct cost, "the indirect cost, in the harm done to the army by the privileges of the Guards, I of course cannot assess".[12] Notwithstanding the surrender of Crown Lands in exchange

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[11] Ibid., f. 248. N.B. The first London Club to admit female members was the Bohemian Whittington Club founded in August 1846. See Christopher Kent, "The Whittington Club", 35.

[12] Dilke, Speech at Newcastle, 6 November 1871, Howell Collection, 13.

for a fixed Civil List, Dilke stated that the Crown still enjoyed considerable private property. He maintained that the Crown Lands "if ever they were private property at all, have been confiscated ten times over ..." Moreover, said Dilke, anyone who had examined the tenure of these lands could not possibly come to any conclusion except that they were "wholly within the authority and control of Parliament".[13]

Dilke also informed his audience that the Prince of Wales received £750,000 on coming of age, which was apparently the accumulation of grants during his minority. The Queen herself on one occasion received "a legacy of two-thirds of that amount".[14] Moreover, he mentioned that in answer to a recent question by George Dixon, M.P. for Birmingham, Gladstone stated that many of the sinecure officers of the Household had been abolished, and £100,000 a year was now being saved by cuts in court splendour. Dilke then asked where that money had gone to. Certainly, he said, it never reached the public and he implied that the Queen was amassing a private fortune.[15]

However, Dilke's most controversial assertion, which was later construed as a personal attack on Her Majesty, was that the Queen had never paid income tax. He stated that in 1855, the Financial Reform Association under the presidency of Mr. Robertson Gladstone had decided that the Queen need not pay the tax despite the fact that, when Peel's second ministry had introduced the impost, it had been agreed that she would. The Annual Register for 1871 called this an "outrageous charge,

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13 Ibid. 14 Ibid. 15 Ibid., 16.

which was absolutely unfounded in fact, the truth being that the Queen had paid income tax from the day of its first imposition".[16] In fact, there were elements of truth in both assertions: the Queen having paid some income tax but irregularly.[17]

Dilke next drew attention to "that waste of time and labour which arises from the circumstances that Her Majesty, neglecting the palaces which are maintained for her at the public cost, prefers to dwell at her private residences - Osborne and Balmoral". It was ridiculous, he said, that a member of the government had to be constantly in attendance at these out of the way places, and that every dispatch, however pressing, had to be sent there for the Queen's approval and then returned to London.[18] Lastly, Dilke warned that the efficiency of the armed forces was being impaired because promotion was based on birth rather than merit.[19] He concluded by condemning the Monarchy as "a centre of waste, and corruption and inefficiency in the national life"[20] and stated that:

> ... if you can show me a fair chance that a republic here will be free from the political corruption which hangs about the monarchy, I say, for my part - and I believe that the middle class in general will say - let it come.[21]

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16 The Annual Register, 1871, 121.

17 See below, 407-9.

18 Dilke, Speech at Newcastle, Howell Collection, 21.

19 Ibid., 22.

20 Jenkins, Sir Charles Dilke, 69.

21 The Times, 9 November 1871.

Victorian society was accustomed to unemployed labourers and atheists attacking the Monarchy. But to hear similar opinions publicly expressed by a baronet, who was also a Member of Parliament, was unprecedented in the Victorian era. The Times said there had been "great enthusiasm" among the Newcastle audience, but the crowd was largely composed of working men. The paper's judgement on the speech was "recklessness bordering on criminality".[22] The Spectator commented that "this address has added a good deal to the dislike of Royalty lately spreading among certain classes". Kate Field, London correspondent of the New York Tribune, exclaimed that the speech surpassed every other event of the day in popular interest.[23]

Nevertheless, seventeen days later in a lecture at Leeds, Dilke restated his principles and arguments. Although in deference to the Prince of Wales' illness and the bad publicity after Newcastle, some of his previous utterances were toned down. However, he continued to advocate a meritocracy, which may or may not require the overthrow of the monarchy, as essential "if we are to keep our place among the nations".[24] He regarded any monarch as "at best an expensive nuisance and at worst a strong reactionary force", but this was tempered by the conviction that "constitutional monarchy was firmly established in England and that ... attempts to uproot it were likely to be both unsuccessful and politically disadvantagous".[25] Dilke described his Leeds speech as a defence of the

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22 Ibid.

23 Dilke, "Unpublished Memoir", Dilke Papers, BM., Add. MS. 43931, f. 178.

24 S. Gwynn and G.M. Tuckwell, The Life of the Right Honourable Sir Charles Dilke (London, 1917), 2 vols. 1:142.

25 Jenkins, Sir Charles Dilke, 67.

right of free speech in the discussion of the cost of the Crown. Many years later, when his career lay in ruins, he stated in a private letter to the editor of Reynolds' Newspaper that "I care nothing for the ridiculous cry of 'treason', but I do care a great deal for a charge of having used discourteous words towards the Queen".[26]

It is debatable whether or not Dilke used discourteous words towards the Queen. What is important is that many contemporaries interpreted them as such with the result that Dilke was virtually ostracized from fashionable society.[27] Meanwhile, all Tory and some Liberal newspapers continued to devote space to the abuse of Dilke. There was actually a good deal of confusion as to the exact nature of Dilke's views. The radical journals, though, showed a much clearer understanding of Dilke's speeches. Lloyds' stated that the

> ... points raised by Sir Charles Dilke need the fullest enlightenment. Their solution need not bring about the downfall of the Monarchy, but it must restrict its price and even its power -- in the army and in the management of the national domains. With Sir Charles Dilke we yearn for no other revolution than this ...[28]

The republicans were naturally elated by the acquisition of such a distinguished ally. Early in the new year, attempts were made to or-

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[26] Dilke to the editor of Reynolds' Newspaper, 23 June 1894, quoted in Gwynn and Tuckwell, Dilke, 1:142.

[27] Shirley Brooks of Punch wrote in his diary for 5 December that "Macmillan asked me to dine, but as Sir C. Dilke, who has been spouting Republicanism, was to be one, I would not go, hating to dine with a man and abuse him in print as I must do", in G.S. Layard, Life, Letters and Diaries of Shirley Brooks, in Gwynn and Tuckwell, Dilke, 1:145.

[28] 12 November 1871.

ganise meetings of support for Dilke and to protest against the royalist violence that he and Odger had encountered in various parts of the country. On the evening of 5 February, between fifteen and eighteen thousand people assembled in Trafalgar Square. The declared purpose of the meeting was to "vindicate the Englishman's political right of free speech, which right has been disallowed at Bolton, Reading, Derby and other places, thereby provoking fearful riots and even loss of life".[29] Among the speakers were Weston, Le Lubez, and Shipton and resolutions were passed in favour of free speech and republicanism. The Reverend R.K. Appleby described the monarchical system as "a sham carrying in its wake a lot of pot-bellied bishops".[30] Lloyds' reporter described the gathering as "one of the most crowded open-air meetings held in London for many years".[31]

The Queen, of course, was not amused by all this and instructed Sir Henry Ponsonby, her private secretary, to write to W.E. Forster requesting his opinion on possible action that might be taken. There is no way of telling whether the Prime Minister knew of this communication, but he would certainly have approved of Forster's reply: that it would not be advisable for "Mr. Gladstone as Premier to seek an opportunity to give the speech the importance of a second notice".[32] Forster recommended that

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29 Reynolds' Newspaper, 11 February 1872; see above, 255, 234-40, 242-3.

30 11 February 1872.

31 Ibid.

32 W.E. Forster to Sir Henry Ponsonby, no date, quoted in A. Ponsonby, Henry Ponsonby, His Life from His Letters (London, 1943), 266-7.

the Queen consult Gladstone himself on the matter. Talking to Gladstone was one thing the Queen tried to avoid as much as possible but on this occasion she made an exception.[33] Victoria never forgot Dilke's speeches and his later attacks on the Civil List, and made a point of trying to obstruct his political advancement. In May 1880, she accepted a written explanation of his conduct in 1871, allowing him to become Under Secretary of State for foreign affairs.[34] But, it is obvious that she still considered him a potentially subversive republican because three years later she raised the same objections to his promotion to the Cabinet.[35]

The best account of the consequences suffered by Dilke on account of his republicanism is to be found in his unpublished and undated memoir. He protested that he never joined a republican club or assisted with organised republican propaganda. Dilke also lamented that the "perfect legality of holding republican opinions was even denied by many, while the wisdom of expressing them was denied by almost all". None but his closest friends really understood his position, and he wrote that:

> Some thought that I was of opinion that an immense amount of revolutionary feeling existed in the country, and that I wished to lead a storm to my own profit. Some thought I was sorry I said what I did.
>
> It never seemed to occur to anyone that there were many persons who had been trained up in families republican in sentiment, and that it was possible that I should have never been anything but a republican.

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33 See below, 385-7.

34 Sir Henry Ponsonby to Lord Granville, 5 May 1880, Dilke Papers, BM, Add. MS. 43878.

35 See below, 277.

He warned that historians must beware against "the silence of many being read into agreement with the fulsome nonsense that the majority talk about the personal loyalty of the country to the reigning house".[36]

In December 1873, Dilke visited Monaco, where he wrote a quasi-republican satirical novel entitled Prince Florestan of Monaco. It was about a Cambridge undergraduate who succeeded unexpectedly to the throne of the principality, and attempted to implement some radical ideas he had learnt in England. However, he clashed with the Church and was eventually overthrown. The first part of the story is a satire on Cambridge life and English politics; the second pokes fun at a tiny court, theoretically based upon the full panoply of feudal privilege, but in actuality upon the machinations of M. Blanc, manager of the casino. The work was published anonymously on 16 March 1874 and its authorship was the subject of much speculation. Many were convinced that it was the work of Matthew Arnold. The press, for the most part, missed the satire and Greenwood in the Pall Mall Gazette applauded it for poking fun at the radicals. One Tory paper even stated that the pamphlet contained "something for the Radical party in England, and the National Education League, for Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Gladstone to learn - to say nothing of the senior member for Chelsea".[37]

Only two people guessed correctly and it is no surprise to discover that they were both close friends of Dilke. Henry Fawcett wrote

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36 Dilke, "Unpublished Memoir", Dilke Papers, BM., Add. MS. 43931, ff. 191-215.

37 Ibid., BM., Add. MS. 43932, f. 66.

to congratulate him on the work,[38] as did Frederic Harrison who said: "Prince, you see how well I have respected your incognito, though I easily saw the Republican under your lace uniform". Harrison advised that now the work had become "a most palpable hit", Dilke should come forward and reveal his identity because:

> A good book which pokes fun at your enemies is not amiss; but to write a book which dunces think is to poke fun at yourself is a jest too good to be lost. Pull off the mask Prince before the town has finished its laugh. Show us the brown beard and moustache underneath, and let the duffers see you have been laughing at them.[39]

The new edition was eventually published complete with the author's name, and including the more misguided newspaper reviews for added effect. Although Dilke had initially been reluctant to reveal his identity, he need not have worried because the reaction of the media was favourable, and one journalist wrote that this had "led some people to discover that they always liked Sir Charles Dilke".[40]

Later that same year, during the General Election, Dilke found that the repercussions of his speeches of three years before were by no means over. Somehow he had to compromise his opinions so as to lose neither the republican nor the non-republican vote. He was obliged to address a public letter to his Chelsea constituents denying that he had

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38 Henry Fawcett to Sir Charles Dilke, 14 May 1874, ibid., 43910.

39 Frederic Harrison to Sir Charles Dilke, 4 May 1874, ibid., 43932, ff. 60-2.

40 Quoted in Dilke, "Unpublished Memoir", Dilke Papers, BM., Add. MS. 43932, f. 64.

ever been a republican agitator, although he managed to avoid casting aspersions on the efficacy of theoretical republicanism. He took special care to explain that he never meant "to impute blame to Her Majesty", and the fact that his words were understood in that manner "shows that they were wrong".[41] Roy Jenkins has perceived that "he could not go much further than that" and still maintain his credibility with the Left.[42]

Yet, despite this compromise, Dilke was still branded with the stigma of republicanism in the next General Election six years later. He wrote to Chamberlain in April 1880 complaining that a Conservative clergyman had inquired at an election meeting

> 'whether it was true that I was a republican?' I replied to the effect that 'while as a matter of speculative opinion I thought that a country starting afresh - as France after Sedan - would in these days generally do better to adopt a republican form of government than a limited monarchy, yet that in a country possessing a constitutional monarchy it would be mere folly even to try to disturb it.'[43]

Dilke wrote a similar letter to Lord Granville which was eventually passed on to the Queen who had been protesting at the idea of a republican being given minor office.[44] Unfortunately, Dilke's periodic requests for an inquiry into the Civil List continued to make him unpopular with his

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41 Gwynn and Tuckwell, Dilke, 1:171-2. See above, 274, and below, 410.

42 Jenkins, Sir Charles Dilke, 88.

43 Sir Charles Dilke to Joseph Chamberlain, 24 April 1880, quoted in Gwynn and Tuckwell, Dilke, 1:308.

44 See above, 274, and below, 410.

Sovereign.

Dilke's first biographer, Miss G.M. Tuckwell, sent her manuscript to J.E.C. Bodley, an old acquaintance of Dilke's, for criticism. Bodley wrote back to say that Chapter 9

> ... gives the conventional idea that people had of "Citizen Dilke" before he went to the Foreign Office and frequented the Marlboro' House set. If he had really spent his life in the atmosphere of the Birmingham Town Council and Mr. Peter Taylor, I should never have attached myself to him ...[45]

Such words reinforce this historian's opinion that Dilke's republicanism was much exaggerated. But Bodley was on less firm ground when he stated that "his proceedings in 1871 were the extravagances of a young man of barely 28".[46] In the first place, Dilke was not particularly extravagant in 1871, and in the second place, he held the same views about the cost of the Crown for the rest of his life. He simply learned to be more careful about what he said in public and how he said it. Also dubious is Bodley's contention that young as Dilke was in 1871, he was "hailed as a leader (by reason of his superior talent) by existing republicans who were his elders ..."[47] Dilke was welcomed by the republicans, not so much because of his talents but because of his rank. Upper class society automatically assumed that, as a baronet, he must join a working

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45 J.E.C. Bodley to Miss G.M. Tuckwell, 28 June 1912, Dilke Papers, Dilke, 1:308. BM., Add. MS. 43967, f. 10.

46 J.E.C. Bodley's note on Chapter 9:243 of Miss Tuckwell's biography of Dilke, ibid., 43884, f. 6.

47 Ibid.

and middle class movement as leader. But as Dilke himself was quick to point out, he never took any part in republican organisation or even joined a republican club.

Dilke, of course, was one of the very few members of the upper class to embrace republican principles. The aristocratic classical republicanism that had been evident in England in earlier centuries had by and large disappeared. Many republicans actually had less regard for aristocratic oligarchs than for the Queen herself. The republican strain in the Russell family and the advanced Whiggism of the Amberleys has been mentioned already in this thesis.[48] But in the early days of the French Republic the enthusiasm of Kate Amberley's Positivist friends was a little too overpowering for her.[49] However, as the months passed, both Kate and her husband, though not wholeheartedly supporting their Positivist friends, did become more sympathetic to the republican cause both at home and in France. Their cousin Arthur Russell was highly perturbed by this and wrote a series of letters to Kate condemning the Positivists.[50] The whole thing blew up into quite a family feud, particularly when the subject of the Commune was broached upon.[51] But Lady Russell, Amberley's mother, took the matter in her stride and predicted:

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48 See above, 110-11.

49 See Kate Amberley's Journal, 4 October 1870, B. and P. Russell, eds., Amberley Papers, 2:376.

50 See especially, Arthur Russell to Kate Amberley, 10 April 1871, B. and P. Russell, eds., Amberley Papers, 2:462-3.

51 See below, 367.

> Yes, it's quite true that you young ones will have to face the question of Republic or Monarchy ... Don't settle it in favour of a President to be elected for five years only ... If you have one let him be for life ...[52]

Few advanced thinkers in 1871 would have thought that a century later the change would still not have occurred.

However, the majority of theoretical republicans in the seventies were of middle class origin. One such man who gave Dilke constant support through all his trials and tribulations was Joseph Chamberlain. Little needs to be added to the analysis of Chamberlain's republicanism contained in Chapter 6,[53] but it is worth quoting from a letter which Chamberlain sent to Dilke immediately after the Newcastle Speech. In support of Dilke, Chamberlain prophesied that:

> The Republic must come, and at the rate at which we are moving it will come in our generation. The greater is the necessity for discussing its conditions beforehand, and for a clear recognition of what we may lose as well as what we shall gain.[54]

Dilke stated in his memoir that Chamberlain at one time joined a republican club.[55] This may or may not have been true in 1871, but three years later, while speaking in Paradise Square Sheffield, Chamberlain

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52 Lady Russell to Lord Amberley, 5 December 1871, B. and P. Russell, eds., Amberley Papers, 2:422.

53 See above, 181, 186-7.

54 Chamberlain to Dilke, 7 November 1871, Dilke Papers, BM., Add. MS. 43884, f. 6.

55 Dilke, "Unpublished Memoir", Dilke Papers, BM., Add. MS. 43931, ff. 191-215.

was asked if he was connected with any republican club. He answered that he was not. It is almost certain that by this time Chamberlain had realized that if he wanted to further his political career, it was better to be discreet about touchy issues such as republicanism. Even so, when, in July 1876, Chamberlain was returned as M.P. for Birmingham, Reynolds' Newspaper described him as "an advanced Liberal, a Radical, and we are inclined to believe, a Republican".[56] Three other members of Parliament who supported Dilke in those years were George Otto Trevelyan, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, better known as a temperance reformer than a republican sympathizer,[57] and George Anderson, M.P. for Glasgow.

Another notable theoretical republican was Dilke's old Cambridge professor Henry Fawcett. Leslie Stephen wrote his biography of Fawcett in the mid 1880's when republicanism was out of fashion and typically plays down the republican views of his subject. However, Fawcett's opinions were no secret and so in the interests of accurate historical scholarship Stephen was obliged to make some reference to the topic. The result was a number of rather ambiguous judgements.[58] Perhaps this ambiguity can be explained by the fact that no one was too sure exactly what sort of republic these theoretical republicans wanted, when, and under what circumstances, it should materialize. He was on more solid ground, though, when

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56 2 July 1876.

57 In 1884 Lawson was president of The People's League for the Abolition of the Hereditary Legislative Chamber (i.e., the House of Lords). Other prominent members included P.A. Taylor, E.S. Beesly, Henry Labouchère, Thorold Rogers and Thomas Burt.

58 See Leslie Stephen, Life of Henry Fawcett (London, 1886), 228.

he said of the Cambridge republicans that "they were as little likely to proclaim a provisional Government as a meeting of the senior Fellows of Trinity to blow up the chapel with dynamite".[59]

It is still a matter of some conjecture as to how serious Fawcett's republicanism was, since he had been known to joke about the subject on many occasions. He wrote that he often felt inclined to

> ... make money by talking republicanism to people who do not like it, and then winding up by saying that the Prince of Wales will never come to the throne, ... offering to back my opinion if they will give me odds, I having in my mind all the time only the probability that the Queen will outlive him owing to her life being a better one than his.[60]

Another favourite anecdote of Fawcett's was the story of Queen Victoria's proposed trip to Cambridge in 1871 to unveil a statue of Prince Albert. A statue of George III was to be removed to make way for the new one. So Fawcett and Moulton of the republican club issued an unsigned circular to Tory members of the Senate protesting against the removal of George III on high Tory grounds with the reminder that the late king had been a great benefactor to the university. The ruse worked like a charm. George III stayed put and the Queen did not visit Cambridge. A Tory who later heard the story reproached Fawcett for plotting to stop the Queen going to the university. Fawcett replied: "then I am a greater benefactor to the University than even George III".[61]

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59 Ibid., 287. See above, 241, for further details of Fawcett and the Cambridge republicans.

60 Extract from a letter by Fawcett, quoted in Dilke's "Unpublished Memoir", Dilke Papers, BM., Add. MS. 43932, f. 240.

61 Ibid., ff. 241-3.

In fact, Fawcett's republicanism was really far from frivolous and at times appeared to contain a purist element similar to the Lintonites. He did vote against the Princess Louise's dowry but refused to support Dilke's motion on the Civil List which he superciliously dismissed as a "miserable haggle over a few pounds". This, he said, only clouded the great moral issues concerned with republicanism.[62] Fawcett's republican principles were never in any doubt as far as Dilke was concerned. He protested to Gladstone that "my republicanism was a very small affair even in 1871 by the side of those who like Fawcett joined republican associations".[63] It would appear that Fawcett, like Dilke and Chamberlain, believed that republican institutions facilitated the most equitable form of government and were essential for a meritocratic society. However, he was no revolutionary and could see no way that a republic could be established in Britain, at least until Queen Victoria's death, and then only assuming that the populace were, in the meantime, enlightened to a point where they could make such a system work.

Yet another notable figure who must be counted with the theoretical republicans is Joseph Cowen jnr.[64] Cowen's republicanism was considerably exaggerated by his contemporaries, probably due to his association with G.J. Harney. Cowen did not advocate the overthrow of the Monarchy and was not given to verbal attacks upon members of the royal family. Feeling thoroughly irritated by rumours which were circulating

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62 See below, 409.

63 Dilke to Gladstone, 3 January 1883, Gladstone Papers, BM., Add. MS. 44149.

64 See above, 189-95.

about him, Cowen wrote to G.J. Holyoake in December 1871 to say that:

> I wish it to be clearly understood that I have no objections whatever to go before Her Majesty but on the contrary it would give me very great pleasure to do so - it is the state of the weather and the state of my health only that makes me hesitate.[65]

In December 1873, Joseph Cowen snr. died leaving a vacant seat for Newcastle, and the Liberals decided to ask his son to stand. Like Dilke and Chamberlain, Cowen knew he must make some compromise if he was to further his political career.

At the hustings Cowen did not deny his faith in republicanism as an abstract principle, but squirmed out of a difficult situation by maintaining firstly, that "if there was one monarch in the world respected by the people of this country it was the Queen of that realm. (loud applause) Queen Victoria was entitled to their respect. (applause)".[66] Secondly, he told the audience that "Republicanism was not a political question at all. It was no question of practical politics. It was merely a question of political speculation".[67] Cowen gained the Liberal nomination and subsequently won the seat despite a Tory campaign to brand him an irresponsible republican agitator. Moreover, in 1876 he led the Liberal assault on Disraeli's Royal Titles Bill.[68] W. Duncan,

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65 Cowen to Holyoake, 26 December 1871, Holyoake Papers 1840-79.

66 Cowen, Speech at Election Meeting in St. Peter's Hall, Newcastle, Newcastle Weekly Chronicle, 10 January 1874.

67 Ibid.

68 See below, 417-18.

one of Cowen's biographers, actually tried to maintain that Cowen was not a republican at all; but he was writing in 1904, only four years after Cowen's death, and anxious not to tarnish his reputation.[69] Duncan was right to argue that Cowen never wished to overthrow the Monarchy and that he was never disloyal to the Queen. But that does not mean that he did not consider a republican form of government superior to monarchy. It is simply that the longer Queen Victoria occupied the throne, the more unlikely a change of government became. Had the Monarch during Cowen's lifetime been a less reputable character, his republicanism might well have taken a much more practical form.

One radical who might have been expected to sympathize with theoretical republicanism, but did not, was A.J. Mundella, one of the M.P.'s for Sheffield. In November 1871, he wrote a letter to Harold Leader regarding some problems with the Licensing Bill, and complaining that "as if that were not enough to embarrass the government, the younger radicals started a republican movement". Continuing, Mundella declared that he would not "go after all sorts of political hares with the madcaps of the Radical Party".[70] One of those young radicals, Auberon Herbert, M.P. for Nottingham, was a friend of Mundella's and in the thick of republican agitation.[71] Mundella wrote to Herbert advising that he be

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69 William Duncan, Life of Joseph Cowen (London and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1904), 76-7.

70 A.J. Mundella to Harold Leader, 18 November 1871, Leader Correspondence quoted in W.H.G. Armytage, A.J. Mundella 1825-1897, The Liberal Background to the Labour Movement (London, 1951), 101.

71 It is worth noting that Herbert came from a very distinguished background. He was the third son of Henry Herbert, 3rd Earl of Carnarvon and Henrietta Howard, a niece of the 12th Duke of Norfolk. In 1871, he married Lady Florence Cowper, daughter of the 6th Earl of Cowper.

discreet about his republicanism and beware of inflaming working class opinion which he judged to be highly dangerous. He warned that civil war might not be out of the question if any attempt was made to abolish the monarchy. He told his young friend that:

> I would write you such a homily on your Republicanism, only I know that all injunctions to keep you quiet have the effect of convincing you that it is your duty to tell what you think ... In God's name have a care what you do.[72]

Herbert was the last person in the world who wanted a civil war and he himself warned the republicans that "violence always contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction".[73] In a speech to his Nottingham constituents in April 1871, Herbert outlined some of the advantages that he thought would result from a change in the British constitutional system from a monarchy to republic:

> I think that we should get a great increase of force and energy to deal with that poverty and that crime, and that want which are a great burden to this nation. I say that for this reason, because I think that men's minds would be carried in a simpler and more straightforward direction ... any Court system prevents our looking up to a standard of really simple and industrial life. To my mind, simplicity of life seems to be very closely allied to nobleness of life, and when you come to the pageantry and the outward show of glitter surrounding Court life, I think you mislead the mind of the nation and carry it in the wrong direction.[74]

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72 S. Hutchison-Harris, Auberon Herbert, Crusader for Liberty (London, 1943), 130.

73 Auberon Herbert, Speech to His Nottingham Constituents, London Daily Chronicle and Clerkenwell News, 11 April 1871.

74 Ibid.

Herbert was adamant that the republic should be allowed to evolve naturally and his individualism decried any centrally organised plan of social reform. In fact, in November 1886, George Standring's Radical, which was by no means a supporter of collectivism, criticized Auberon Herbert for "Ultra Individualism".[75]

One of the most intriguing of the young middle class theoretical republicans of the 1870's was the new editor of the Fortnightly Review, John Morley. Morley was a close acquaintance of the Positivists who were all staunch republicans and Francophils. He had been introduced to Comtist thought by James Cotter Morison, one of his tutors at Oxford, and in London he entered the Positivists' intellectual circle through his literary associations and personal friendship with George Eliot and G.H. Lewes. The latter, incidently, was his predecessor as editor of the Fortnightly. Morley came close to accepting the Positivist creed,but found it too biased and dogmatic for his taste. His latest biographer, D.A. Hamer, believes that:

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75 Standring, ed., The Radical, November 1886. By the 1890's, Herbert was a committed voluntaryist. He started a weekly paper called Free Life which evolved into a monthly entitled The Organ of Voluntary Taxation and the Voluntary State. This lasted until August 1901. He criticised trade unionism and analysed the relationship between capital and labour in "The True Line of Deliverance", published in 1891 as one of a collection of essays: A Plea for Liberty. He was converted to the principles of Herbert Spencer and in 1906 (the year of his death) delivered the Herbert Spencer Lecture at Oxford. This Lecture, together with an essay entitled "A Plea for Voluntarying", was included in a posthumous book The Voluntaryist Creed in 1908. Theologically, he was an agnostic: see his article, "Assuming the Foundations", Nineteenth Century and After, August-September, 1901.

> He felt the Positivist support for France in the Franco-Prussian War to be much too extreme, and found their endorsement of the activities of the Communards embarrassing and wrong. He himself was developing a considerable admiration for Prussia.[76]

He saw the prospect of a Franco-Russian alliance in the future and thought England and Germany must be natural allies against such an eventuality. In a further letter to Harrison, Morley reinforced this viewpoint by arguing that the Prussian cause was "the cause of order, discipline, loyalty, and steady development of Europe against the cause of irrational violence, reckless disrespect of the just rights of independent nations, and ... political incapacity".[77]

At the beginning of November 1870, Morley had been applauded in his pro-German stance by another long time theoretical republican, John Stuart Mill. The latter wrote to congratulate Morley on not having yielded to the "utterly false and mistaken sympathy with France".[78] Mill wrote Morley a further letter, early in the new year, expressing

> ...regret to see the political leaders of the working classes led away by the Comtists and the mere name of a republic into wishing to drag England into fighting for a government which dreads to face any popular representation.[79]

Morley wholeheartedly agreed that the French republic was not worth going to war for. Three days later he informed Lord Amberley that:

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76 D.A. Hamer, John Morley (London, 1968), 16.

77 Morley to Harrison, 26 April 1871, ibid.

78 Hirst, Morley, 1:168.

79 Mill to Morley, 6 January 1871, ibid., 1:71.

> There is to be a meeting tomorrow night, at which he (F.H.) and Beesly and I suppose Congreve also, are going to press the workmen directly towards war. Fortunately there is no serious feeling in this direction in the minds of any party in the country, except a small knot in London. Still their action is mischievous as far as it goes.[80]

Such examples of hostility towards France may cause the reader to doubt the authenticity of Morley's republicanism, but any such doubts may be easily dispelled. Morley wrote to Harrison just after the 1872 Thanksgiving celebrations saying that "people think we republicans are cowed. Why don't you send a blast from your trumpet".[81] In addition to this, F.W. Hirst, in his work on Morley's early life, categorically states that "his correspondence leaves no doubt that he shared the republican sentiments of Dilke, Chamberlain, Cowen and others of the Radical School".[82] The following statement most accurately explains Morley's position in 1871. "I am for the cause which is most moral - i.e., for the men whose aim is most moral".[83] Morley would support whoever fulfilled those requirements at any given moment in time.[84]

Another group of middle class theoretical republicans which demands a brief word is the Christian Socialists. According to H.C. Masterman, many Christian Socialists tended to be Republican in a mo-

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80 Morley to Lord Amberley, 9 January 1871, B. and P. Russell, eds., Amberley Papers, 2:443-4.

81 Morley to Harrison, 6 March 1872, Harrison Papers, 1/79.

82 Hirst, Morley, 2:38.

83 Morley to Harrison, 26 April 1871, Harrison Papers, 1/78.

84 See below, 370-1, for details on Morley's views on the Paris Commune.

derate, theoretical sort of way, but would have nothing to do with extremists. Many French refugees of 1848 were attracted to Christian Socialism by John Malcom Ludlow's French sympathies but "for the most part they had to be quietly dropped, either because of the dubiousness of their character or for their militant Republican views".[85] Yet, in the 1860's, Ludlow was delighted to find that "democratic republicanism was spreading underground in spite of 'the Bonapartist fetishism' which still prevailed among the peasantry".[86] He looked forward to a republic that would be supported by Christians of all persuasions including Catholicism. The republic would be "of a new Liberal kind which was being advocated by some of his friends 'who were strongly opposed to' the established hierarchy of the official church, most of which supported Napoleon III".[87]

Ludlow greeted the declaration of the Third Republic with joy. In a remarkable letter, headed with his signature and followed by those of a number of Positivists, foreign exiles and English working class leaders, Ludlow pointed out that "with the fall of Napoleon and the reappearance of the French Republic a complete change had taken place in Europe. Germany, not France, was now to be feared by England".[88] The letter denounced the government's continued recognition of the French imperial government and accused Bismarck of prolonging the war with the ultimate aim of dismembering France. Britain, said Ludlow, should form a defensive alliance with other European powers and call upon Prussia to make peace on reasonable terms with no seizure of French territory.

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85 H.C. Masterman, John Malcom Ludlow, The Builder of Christian Socialism (Cambridge, 1963), 81.

86 Ibid., 190. 87 Ibid., 208, 88 Ibid., 208.

If Prussia refused, then "in our opinion England should join France in her resistance and declare war against Prussia, to aid France in resuming that position among the western powers to which she is rightly entitled".[89] This was precisely the line taken by the Positivists. However, the Christian Socialists broke with the latter over the Paris Commune. They saw the Commune as little short of treason at a time when Prussian troops were still on French soil. Communard attacks on the Christian religion were particularly disapproved of.

There are some well-known middle class public figures from whom the republicans expected, but did not receive, support. One of these was Jacob Bright, M.P. for Manchester,[90] and another was John Ruskin. Certainly, a Dumfries newspaper thought Ruskin might have been sympathetic to republicans but printed extracts from his journal Fors Clavigera which proved that he was not. Ruskin advised the republicans to "meditate on the capital justice which you have lately accomplished yourself in France. You have had it all your own way there since Sedan". But, he added, ideas which were applicable to France would not necessarily work in Britain so "my good friends let me recommend you, in that point of view, to keep your Queen".[91] Ruskin's opinions were of no more than passing interest to the average working man, but those of a working class hero like John Bright were very important indeed.

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89 Ibid.

90 See below, 302.

91 John Ruskin from Fors Clavigera, quoted in the Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser, 3 January 1872.

A good many people thought Bright to be tainted with republicanism because of his open admiration for the United States. Moreover, he often talked like a republican because of his dislike of English "class" government and aristocratic privilege. For example, he argued in a letter to Richard Congreve in November 1866 that "the aristocratic Institutions of England have acted much like the Slavery Institutions of America".[92] His apparent disapproval of monarchy and aristocracy naturally led people to believe that he was a republican. A speech delivered by Bright at Edinburgh on 5 November 1868, contained a panegyric of the American republic and appeared to suggest that Britain emulate it. He also vehemently denounced aristocratic privilege and the House of Lords.[93]

Throughout the 1860's, Bright was, with the single exception of Garibaldi, the most popular public figure in the country with working men. However, the more extreme contingent of the radical community were always suspicious of his disapproval of independent working class action, trade unions and universal suffrage. Even in the early sixties, the occasional criticism of Bright could be found in the radical press. For instance, Reynolds' Newspaper informed its readers in March 1861 that "John Bright - as most Englishmen know and deplore - believes in the French Emperor".[94] By 1869, Reynolds' had more than passing comments to contribute on the subject of Bright's political "colour".

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92 John Bright to Richard Congreve, 24 November 1866, Positivist Papers, BM., Add. MS. 45241.

93 John Bright, Speech at Edinburgh, 5 November 1868, J.E. Thorold Rogers, ed., John Bright - Speeches on Questions of Public Policy (London, 1880), 109.

94 17 March 1861.

Bright took office in Gladstone's first ministry and had actually been reluctant to wear the customary dress when appearing at Court. This was probably due to his Quakerism rather than any desire to snub the Queen. After a shaky start, Bright actually got on quite well with the Queen and when he was ill in 1870 she sent him a "kind note".[95] It is pure irony that he and Victoria were still by no means sure of each other in January 1869 when Reynolds' accused him of playing the courtier. In an article headed "Taming the Lion" the paper discussed Bright's position vis-à-vis the Monarchy stating that:

> The man whose name six months ago none dared mention in the presence of royalty is now the honoured guest of the Sovereign, and even her proud and patrician attendants smile with benignity upon the Quaker democrat they had previously been taught to consider a revolutionist, a republican, and as great a hater of royalty as Robespierre himself.[96]

The article went on to imply that Bright might not have gone completely monarchist, but if not he was allowing himself to be easily seduced. The writer concluded by quoting from Bright's Edinburgh speech and suggesting that it be repeated at Court. In contrast to Reynolds' judgement on Bright, Lloyds' Weekly remarked in March 1872 that "we are delighted to find that Mr. Bright has not been spoiled by the air of office".[97]

Ill health curbed Bright's public activities during 1871 but by

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95 Bright to Gladstone, 11 January 1871, Gladstone Papers, BM., Add. MS. 44112.

96 10 January 1869.

97 10 March 1872.

the spring of 1872, he was slowly getting back into circulation. The republicans, needless to say, were anxious to discover whether Mr. Bright was friend or foe. On 7 April 1872, Bright wrote to a man who had informed him that the republicans would select him as their first president, if he was prepared to accept the post. Bright replied as follows:

> ... I hope and believe it will be a long time before we are asked to give our opinion; our ancestors decided the matter a long time since, and I would suggest that you and I should leave any further decisions to our posterity.[98]

Had that letter been publicized, it is doubtful whether the republicans would have bothered to invite Bright to the Birmingham republican conference just over a year later. As it was, they were still uncertain of his views, although the majority regarded him as a sympathizer, and so he was invited to attend. Bright declined with a highly controversial letter:

> ... It is easier to uproot a Monarchy than to give a healthy growth to that which is put in its place, and I suspect the price we should have to pay for the change would be greater than the change would be worth. Our forefathers had nearly a century of unsettled government, in consequence of the overthrow of the Monarchy, brought about by the folly and crimes of the monarch. France has endured many calamities and much humiliation for nearly one hundred years past, springing from the destruction of her ancient government and apparent impossibility of finding a stable government to succeed it. Spain is now in the same difficulty, and we watch the experiment with interest and anxiety. For forty years past in this country we have seen a course of improvements in our laws and administrations equal, perhaps superior, to anything which has been witnessed in other nations. This gives us hope and faith that we can establish a civil government so good as to attract to its support the respect and love

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98 H.J. Leech, ed., The Public Letters of John Bright (London, 1885), 225.

> of all the intelligent among our people, and this without bringing upon us the troubles which I believe are inseparable from that uprooting of an ancient monarchy ...[99]

This letter had repercussions throughout the political world. The non-republicans were overjoyed that Bright had dealt the movement such a crushing blow. To have won over a man of Bright's prestige would have given British republicism a tremendous boost, and by the same token, to be snubbed by the great man was extremely damaging. The republicans were dumbfounded and very bitter.

The Newcastle Weekly Chronicle criticized the letter on various counts but admitted that Bright "always has had a greater regard for practical results than theoretical excellences". The report was quick to point out that "Mr. Bright did not deny - indeed nobody can deny that theoretically a Republican form of government is the best and most perfect that has yet been conceived or devised".[100] It is possible that Bright still believed in republican principles in theory but could not conceive of putting such ideas into practice in Britain. However, Reynolds' Newspaper was nothing like so generous towards Bright. Its doubts about Bright's supposed radicalism confirmed, the paper launched into a full scale offensive. The front page headline for the issue dated 18 May 1873 read "Mr. Bright in Court Plush". Bright was accused of betraying the Quaker principles of humanity and progress and it was stated that his letter to the Birmingham conference was

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99 Nottingham Guardian, 13 May 1873.

100 17 May 1873.

> ... a sample of political timidity in a man who sees danger in the abstract and who loves to dwell on the success he has won in concrete forms ... Here is a man who for twenty years has been pointing to the Republic of the West as a model of what a free people can do ... But alas the glory of John Bright is for ever departed. The moment he breathed the atmosphere of a Court and donned Court attire, his nature changed, and his brain became addled ... the epistle is that of a twaddler and a driveller, of a toady and a tuft-hunter, not that of a leader of English democracy. Possibly we may live to see John Bright groom of the stole, gentleman of the dusthole, or filling some equally dignified Court function. So have the mighty fallen.[101]

Strong words indeed, but no stronger than a series of articles that appeared in the National Reformer. Charles Watts wrote an article in the Reformer criticizing Bright's letter, and this was later published as a pamphlet.[102] Watts began by pointing to Bright's innumerable eulogies of the U.S.A. in the past, and argued that:

> Mr. Bright's reference to the troubles and difficulties of France and Spain in no way affects the question of Republicanism in England. The miseries in France were brought on through years of Monarchical rule and the present obstacle to the development of free institutions in that country come from those who are endeavouring once more to fetter France with the reign of Monarchy ...

Regarding Bright's contention that the Victorian era had witnessed more progress in British society than anywhere else in the world, Watts stated that "improvements have taken place, not in consequence of Monarchy, but in spite of it".[103] Watts' refutation of Bright's arguments soothed the

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101 Reynolds' Newspaper, 18 May 1873.

102 Charles Watts, Republicanism - A Reply to Mr. John Bright's letter to the Birmingham Conference, (London, 1873).

103 Watts, "Republicanism - A Reply ...", National Reformer, 1 June 1873.

radicals somewhat. The Newcastle Chronicle commented that "Mr. Bright's letter ... has drawn forth a spirited reply from Mr. Charles Watts, Mr. Watts has the good taste to answer the arguments without challenging the motives of the member for Birmingham ..."[104] Gracchus wrote in Reynolds' that radicals could "rest and be thankful, the doctrine of Mr. Bright has been completely and successfully refuted by Mr. Watts".[105]

But regard for Bright died hard among some groups of working men. A republican farmer from Oxfordshire wrote that:

> Republicans need not be discouraged by John Bright's letter declining to attend the late Republican Conference at Birmingham. If read "between the lines" I think the letter shows that the writer has still much of his old love for an honest republic, though he may not openly help those who are trying to bring it about.[106]

This reads very much like a pathetic attempt to make excuses for an old hero. The radical campaign against Bright did not burn itself out in a few weeks. In August 1873, we find Reynolds' recommending that Bright's Birmingham constituents ask their M.P. the following question: "Tell us, John Bright, under pain of expulsion, whether you are a radical or rank Royalist, corruptionist or purist, courtier or free man - Speak!"[107] In October, R. Gale condemned Bright in the International Herald, sorrowfully concluding that "the day of John Bright has passed".[108] The same

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104 7 September 1873.
105 7 September 1873.
106 25 May 1873.
107 24 October 1873.
108 18 October 1873.

week, the National Reformer reported a meeting of the Birmingham Republican Club which, on a motion by Cattell, resolved to ask Bright to state his views on certain questions of public policy.[109] Bright replied that

> Some of them, to use a homely phrase, will "keep" for some time; some probably until we may not be here to discuss or to deal with them. As to the rest, or to a portion of them, I have often spoken of them in Birmingham, and my opinions are doubtless so well known that there can be no necessity for my entering into a long correspondence with you about them.[110]

He also declined to attend a proposed meeting of the Republican Club on 22 October.[111]

Needless to say, the republicans did not consider this a satisfactory response, and it simply confirmed their worst fears about Bright's growing conservatism. Thus, Bright's reputation was severely tarnished in radical circles and he was regarded, for the remainder of his career, as an anachronism. By way of compensation, he was looked on much more favourably by the right-wing sections of society that had previously loathed him. Bright had become generally recognized and accepted as a respectable elder statesman.

Before turning to working class theoretical republicans, something must be said about Professor Goldwin Smith. Having emigrated to

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109 See Appendix 21.

110 John Bright to Birmingham Republican Club, 14 October 1873, quoted in National Reformer, 26 October 1873.

111 Ibid.

North America by 1870, Smith was somewhat out of the picture as regards British republicanism but he must take some credit for helping to begin the movement in the mid sixties.

In 1866, Lord Elcho had denounced Smith on a public platform as an "advocate of Republicanism" whom it was "strange to see holding a professorship at Oxford".[112] In an article for the Manchester Guardian, Smith attested that the restricted franchise and the House of Lords were relics of a bygone age of feudalism and privilege. The House of Lords, he said, "being exclusively hereditary, and almost exclusively territorial, ... rests upon two principles which all over the world are dead unless the shadow should go back on the sundial of history".[113] He went on to voice the sentiment that:

> My own conviction, I repeat, is, and has long been, that our old feudal constitution has worn out; that it cannot, without changes from which our superstition shrinks, be made to serve the purposes of society in the present era ...[114]

A. Haultain, one of Smith's biographers, quotes the words of Lady St. Helier, an intimate friend of Smith's, on his expatriation. She explained that he left England because he found the place "unsympathetic, and it did not meet his particular views of life ... He still entertains his stern Republicanism and his objection to monarchical and hereditary institutions".[115] Haultain himself states that "America opened a new

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112 The Standard, 3 September 1866.

113 Goldwin Smith, article in the Manchester Guardian, quoted in "An Ex-M.P.". "The Republicanism of Young England", Contemporary Review, 3 (June 1867), 255.

114 Ibid.

115 A. Haultain, Goldwin Smith, His Life and Opinions (Toronto, 1914), 53.

field. There, the Republican and democratic North had conquered. Perhaps the stern Republican thought that in that Republican and democratic North there was scope for his ambition".[116]

Smith remained in contact with many of his former acquaintances after moving to North America, and was not short of comment when the republican bubble burst in September 1870. He was not a supporter of the Positivists, thinking them too dogmatic by far, and expressed the opinion to Max Müller that "to the Positivists Paris is what Rome is to an Ultramontane; all her acts are holy, all the acts of her opponents are impious". He spoke out against the unfairness of directing Germany to lay down her arms before she was assured of her future security, but also voiced the opinion that:

> All true Liberals throughout Europe will be led by this experience to labour more steadily, and combine more closely, for the gradual abolition of dynastic and aristocratic institutions, and for the tranquil inauguration of Governments thoroughly in union with those popular and individual interests, the ascendancy of which is the only security for international peace as well as for national progress and happiness.[117]

Smith always considered that the virtues of Queen Victoria had been exaggerated and was intensely irritated by the "unreasonable panegyric" which filled the newspapers for some weeks after her death. He personally judged the late Queen to be

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116 Ibid., 62.

117 Simon Maccoby, English Radicalism 1853-1886, 166.

> ... a most ordinary woman; she had no intellect. She disliked the society of intellectual men. That was why she liked Osborne and Balmoral. She was amongst her own people there. She was a good woman and an excellent mother. But, dear me, I hope these are not such rarities among English ladies.[118]

One of Smith's most regular correspondents was the trade unionist George Howell. Besides helping to organise the work force in the building trade, Howell was active in many organisations. Most notably he had been secretary of the Reform League, and was secretary to the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. On 13 November 1870, Howell received a letter from Smith reprimanding him for making public a previous letter in which Smith had pointed to "the expediency of forming without much delay, an advanced republican party in England".[119] Smith stated that he would welcome the opportunity of expressing his views more coherently in the form of a pamphlet. As we have already seen, the formation of a united republican party was easier to advocate than to achieve.[120] Another letter to Howell a few months later indicates that from across the Atlantic, Smith had gained the impression that an English republic was imminent. He agreed that:

> What you say as to the growth of Republican opinion in England tallies with all that I can gather from other sources. The time is come. The difficulties of the conflict with the united aristocracy and the plutocracy of England will be immense ...

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118 Haultain, Goldwin Smith, 72.

119 Goldwin Smith to George Howell, 13 November 1870, Howell Collection, Microfilm 95922/20.

120 See above, 164-7.

> But the movement if conducted with wisdom, and so as not to provoke a general reaction against it in its infancy will gather strength, and in the end prevail.[121]

He added that a central council will be necessary to "combine and moderate local action, and at the same time to correspond with the Republican party in other countries".[122] In retrospect, it would seem that if Goldwin Smith had been in England at this time, his organisational ability may have helped to overcome some of the factionalism which pervaded the republican movement. Six weeks later, Smith wrote impatiently to Howell that:

> All that has been done has been done by a spontaneous Republican movement in some of the large towns which the Parliamentary leaders whoever they are (Jacob Bright I suppose is one) have not guided or even recognised.[123]

From his remote vantage point, Smith seriously overestimated the strength of republicanism in Parliament. There was little or no support for Dilke and his friends in the House: on the contrary, they met with a good deal of open hostility. Jacob Bright, in fact, would have nothing to do with organised republicanism.[124]

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121 Smith to Howell, 6 April 1871, Howell Collection, Microfilm 95922/20.

122 Ibid.

123 Smith to Howell, 19 May 1871, Howell Collection, Microfilm 95955/20.

124 See above, 291.

But as a relatively well off artisan and office holder in the labour movement, what was George Howell's position in all this? The Howell Collection includes all the records of the Reform League which, considering the involvement in the organisation of Bradlaugh, Odger, Boon, Weston, and Le Lubez, contains surprisingly little on republicanism. Edmund Beales was president of the League, and Howell was secretary, and it is notable that in official circulars they referred to "the Great Republic of America" where full political rights were enjoyed by all.[125] In May 1867, Howell attended a lecture by Dr. Parfitt on Cromwell so he was certainly interested in that period of English history which, of course, the republicans cherished so dearly.[126] But, at this time, Howell showed no more than academic interest in the subject, and complained that "Cooper. Odger and the Clerkenwellians seem determined to convert the League to Ultra-Republicanism".[127] As late as July 1870, Howell's notes and letters exhibit no trace of republicanism. On the contrary, he identified the republicans "as a dangerous and potent force".[128] However, his attitude changed remarkably when the French Republic was declared. He wrote to Charles Bartlett that

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125 George Howell and Edmund Beales, Reform League Circular, Howell Collection, Microfilm 95922/20.

126 George Howell's Diaries, 28 May 1867, Howell Collection, Microfilm 95922/9.

127 Ibid., 27 January 1869.

128 Howell to Charles Bartlett, 19 July 1870, Howell Collection, Microfilm 95922/15.

> ... the French Republic is on everyone's lips and at least some of us are determined to do all in our power to support it even to war. We have fought for Kings, Emperors and dynasties, now let us have one fight for a republic.[129]

He declared himself against Cremer and the "peace at any price" crowd jibing that the republicans would be slaughtered in the meantime. Howell had well and truly jumped onto the republican bandwagon. He concluded his letter by saying "good God have I not been dreaming of a republic for 20 years and shall I do nothing to aid it now?"[130] On the face of it, this is a complete contradiction of his earlier and later views. It is possible that Howell, with his early exposure to the ideas of Mazzini and other continental republicans,[131] had for some time possessed a fondness for republican institutions. These sentiments were merely stimulated and brought out into the open by events in France.

At the end of September, Howell wrote to Goldwin Smith informing him that "we are progressing very much towards a republic here, but someone must be found who will unfurl the flag, and then we shall find plenty of recruits".[132] It would appear that Howell believed England to be ripe for a major constitutional change if only strong united leadership could be found. The following month, Howell declared that he held it to be disgraceful "that our government should delay the

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129 Howell to Bartlett, 11 September 1870, ibid.

130 Ibid.

131 Howell stated that in the 1840's, Kossuth, Mazzini, Louis Blanc and Ledru-Rollin "were familiar to me as household words at that period". Howell, "Autobiography", Howell Collection, Microfilm 95922/1, 35.

132 Howell to Smith, 30 September 1870, Howell Collection, Microfilm 95922/15.

formal recognition of the Republic".[133] He put this down to the strong "German element" in the Royal House. Howell believed, though, that "one thing is likely to result from all this, namely the conversion of great numbers to Republicanism here".[134] Howell's diary entries for September 1870 mention republican meetings and his attendance at some of them. In a review of the year 1870 written on 1 January 1871, he proclaimed that "the French Empire founded on blood has expired in blood unregretted even by its friends".[135]

At the end of 1871, he informed Charles Bartlett that "the Republican movement lags; Bradlaugh and the Internationalists are at open war. Odger has cut adrift from his old friends".[136] He does not specify exactly who Odger was drifting away from. He implies that it was men such as himself but at that time Odger's main argument was with the International and he seemed to be becoming more moderate.[137]

The Howell Collection contains an intriguing memorandum headed "Working Men in Parliament" which refers to an unspecified conference which he says "represented the Trades Union politicians and those who had as a rule kept aloof from the recent republican exhibitions, in which Dilke and Odger, Bradlaugh and De Morgan have been the most aus-

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133 George Howell, memorandum, 22 October 1870, ibid.

134 Ibid.

135 George Howell, Diaries, Review of 1870 written 1 January 1871, Howell Collection, Microfilm 95922/9.

136 Howell to Bartlett, 29 December 1871, Howell Collection, Microfilm 95922/15.

137 See below, 315, 359-60.

picious lights". The piece goes on to maintain that "Republicans have their intention to start candidates in every borough where they have a branch".[138] This presumably refers to a proposed republican drive for parliamentary representation, probably in the 1874 General Election. Howell mentioned in his diary for 7 January 1874, a "Rep. Reform Meeting at James Beal's: Dilke, Broadhurst, Evans, Mottershead, Howell and Beal".[139]

It was virtually the turn of the century when Howell began work on his autobiography. Republicanism was most unfashionable at this time and Howell, always concerned for his reputation, chose to dismiss republicanism as

> ...a bogus movement, the outcome of discontent among the west London Trades People because the Queen kept in retirement for some time after the death of Prince Albert, and no court was kept at Buckingham Palace for a rather long period.[140]

The reader will by now be aware that the Republican movement of the 1870's was very much more than that. Yet in 1885, Howell's election address to the Bethnal Green voters stated that:

> There must be no more Royal Dowries, perpetual pensions must be abolished; and public grants must be curtailed. The nation is impoverished by pay and pensions to the wealthy for useless and inefficient services ... An Hereditary House of Lords is incompatible with Representative Institutions ... the veto of an hereditary body must be abolished; and if a second chamber is deemed to be requisite, it must be elective and responsible to the people.[141]

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138 "Working Men in Parliament", no date, Howell Collection, Microfilm 95922/16.

139 Howell Diaries, 7 January 1874, Howell Collection, Microfilm 95922/9.

140 Howell, "Autobiography", Howell Collection, Microfilm 95922/1, 4:8.

141 Howell, "Address to the Electors and Non-Electors of the North East Division of the Borough of Bethnal Green", in ibid., 95922/2, 5:3.

There were also sections advocating the disestablishment of the Established Church, the abolition of Church rates, and equality for all religious groups. Howell retained a modified version of this programme for the election of 1895. Thus, there was still a strain of radicalism left in our respectable Gladstonian. Dr. Leventhal's otherwise excellent biography of Howell is totally inadequate regarding any treatment of Howell's republicanism, and Royden Harrison has also been misled by Howell's cursory attitude to the creed before 1870 and after 1895. The documents quoted above prove without question that Howell was to some extent involved in the critical period between 1870 and 1874.

Several of Howell's Trade Unionist colleagues also flirted with republicanism for a while in the early seventies. Robert Applegarth denounced the Franco-Prussian conflict as a war of dynastic ambition. When the French Republic was proclaimed, he suggested that the Labour Representation League form a special committee to encourage it. This was done and Applegarth was made secretary. At a meeting of the body in Arundel Street, Howell moved a motion congratulating the French on founding a new republic, and calling on the British government to recognise it. Applegarth moved an amendment that the government should try to stop the war and to "protest against any dismemberment of France as likely to lead to future complications in Europe".[142] Applegarth's committee raised a "considerable sum" for the relief of French peasants whose crops had been destroyed by the war.[143] On 28 September 1870, representatives of over a hundred

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142 A.W. Humphrey, Robert Applegarth, Trade Unionist, Educationist Reformer (Manchester and London, 1913), 74.

143 See Appendix 22 for details of relief organisations.

working class organisations sent a deputation to Gladstone to protest against the government's failure to recognise the republic: Applegarth was one of the speakers. He was also friendly with some Communards, especially M. Legé, but did not support the Commune. When the International issued the first edition of Marx's defence of the Commune entitled The Civil War in France , Applegarth was the only member of the General Council who refused to attach his signature. It was customary for the names of all General Council members to appear on the organisation's official publications. By the third edition the names of Odger and Lucraft had also been deleted at their request. All three subsequently broke with the International.[144]

Applegarth's flirtation with republicanism was not a lengthy affair and like Howell, he seems to have come to the conclusion that such activities were not going to be of any immediate assistance to the trade union movement which was always his prime concern.[145] Even during their most enthusiastic republican period, trade unionists such as Howell, Applegarth and William Allan only paid lip service to the movement and would never countenance such cowardly and disreputable actions as opposing the granting of a dowry to Princess Louise or remaining seated during the national anthem and royal toast on public occasions.[146] Even George Potter, who in the sixties had acquired a reputation as one of the more demagogic trade unionists, was a theoretical republican of the most

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144 See below, 359-60.

145 See Briggs, Victorian People, 204.

146 See above, 116-17.

moderate kind.[147]

The theoretical republicans were all men who wished to see, in Britain, a more egalitarian society in which merit would be the sole criterion for advancement. They all accepted that such a system could most conveniently be attained by establishing a republic. But at the same time, they appreciated the deep attachment to the Monarchy in many areas of society, and realized that nothing short of civil war would be required to set up a republic. In the period 1870-1, when the Queen's popularity reached its lowest ebb, she was still more highly regarded than any other monarch since Elizabeth I. If another James II or George IV had been occupying the throne in 1870 then Dilke and his cronies, and maybe even Bright, would probably have thrown in their lot with the practical republicans. As it was, they felt they had more to lose than to gain by such action and thought it wiser to compromise their principles with political expediency.

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147 See above, 118-20.

CHAPTER 8

THE PRACTICAL REPUBLICANS

Those who have been designated as practical republicans were the men who genuinely wanted to establish a British republic, be it imminently or some years in the future. The category includes Bradlaugh and Odger and their respective followers, the more extreme social republicans, and the Positivists. The last named were, in many ways, a special case since their prime concern was their beloved France, and their attitude towards British republicanism was often rather condescending. Moreover, they always remained slightly aloof from the organisational side of the movement and failed to attend any of the national conferences.

The two most important leaders and organisers of the British Republican movement were George Odger and Charles Bradlaugh. A shoemaker by trade, Odger succeeded George Howell as secretary of the London Trades Council in 1862 and held the office for the next ten years. In 1864, he became a member of the first General Council of the I.W.M.A., and served as President for the year 1870. He was an avid supporter of the North in the American Civil War and closely followed the situation of the oppressed in Continental Europe. Odger was also involved in the Reform League and Howell remarked that he and his Clerkenwell friends introduced a republican element into the proceedings.[1]

[1] See above, 303.

W.H.G. Armytage has claimed that by 1868 "Howell and Applegarth seem to veer ... towards Liberal Radicalism, while Odger seems to be turning towards something like republicanism, yet dissociated from the extravagance of the foreign movements".[2]

Odger was greatly excited by the establishment of the French Republic. He helped to organise many of the numerous republican meetings in London and composed the "Address of the Workmen of England to the People of France". This he read to a meeting in Hyde Park on 10 September, and later travelled to France with William Trout to deliver it to Jules Favre.[3] Armytage suggests that he "looked, perhaps hopefully, to a rout of the Liberal party in this country, which he was beginning to consider the real obstacle to all reform".[4] In his unpublished doctoral thesis, D.R. Moberg expanded upon the possible connection between Odger's republicanism and his disillusionment with the Liberal party. Moberg maintained that "while most of his fellow labour leaders became ardent disciples of the Liberal party, Odger, always wary of middle class sincerity to working class questions, remained an advocate of an independent labour party".[5] In particular, Odger thought Republicanism "a possible remedy through which could be obtained the working class demands denied them by the reluctant Liberals".[6] Odger, therefore, should be added to

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2 Armytage, "George Odger", 74.

3 Lloyds' Weekly, 18 September 1870.

4 Armytage, "George Odger", 72.

5 D.R. Moberg, "George Odger and the English Working Class Movement 1860-1877", Ph.D. Thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science (London, 1953), 8.

6 Ibid., 327.

the list of those who saw republicanism as possibly providing the basis for a radical third party.

On 27 June 1871, George Howell mentioned to Charles Bartlett that "Odger is gone in mad for republicanism but on what principle or upon what policy I don't know".[7] However, the Manchester Guardian understood Odger's views perfectly: "Mr. Odger has raised the red flag, but with so mild a mien that no one except Mr. G. Bentinck is at all alarmed at the portent ..."[8] The Dundee Advertiser informed its readers that Odger and his friends did not expect to establish a republic in a couple of years, perhaps not in ten, or even in their lifetime, but nevertheless they would continue to work towards that end.[9] Many newspapers, however, regarded Odger as the main leader of the movement, or at least on a par with Bradlaugh.[10]

For the next twelve months, Odger toured the country giving lectures and helping to start republican clubs. In June 1872, he journeyed to Sheffield at the request of W. Garbutt, president of the Sheffield Republican Club. His talk there included a straightforward explanation of his republicanism in which he said that:

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7 George Howell to Charles Bartlett, 27 June 1871, Howell's Letter Books, Howell Collection, Microfilm 95922/15.

8 10 April 1871.

9 7 April 1871.

10 London Correspondent of the Leeds Mercury, quoted in the Birmingham Daily Mail, 5 August 1871.

> ... I go for republicanism because I know that England cannot afford to keep this luxuriant aristocracy drawing the fat of the land away from the people without giving anything in return.[11]

Odger elaborated on his position in two republican pamphlets, both of which were published as Odger's Monthly in 1872. The first of these was entitled Republicanism versus Monarchy and asserted that although "it has been the custom of historians to attribute all progress on the part of a nation to the reigning dynasty ... it is a well known fact that the measures which have led to the advancement have met the most deadly opposition from its supporters".[12] In addition, Odger maintained that monarchy simply could not bear the test of comparison and that the choice of rulers by selection had proved itself far more reliable than choice by hereditary descent. He claimed that "the latter system is opposed to nature, for is it not plain that genius ... is not of necessity transmitted from father to son".[13] Furthermore, he added that "the establishment of the hereditary system led to a series of unnatural marriages, and the consequences seemed at one time probable that we should have a race of royal idiots".[14] Referring to current trends of opinion he reported that "a good deal has been said of late respecting the absence of the Queen from the Court, and I have heard West-end tradesmen over and over again proclaim against Royalty on this ground".[15] He went on to

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[11] George Odger, speech at Sheffield, 19 June 1872, quoted in Sheffield and Rotherham Independent, 20 June 1872.

[12] George Odger, Odger's Monthly Pamphlets on Current Events, no 1, "Republicanism versus Monarchy", London, 7 Holywell Street (1872), 5.

[13] Ibid., 5-6. [14] Ibid., 6. [15] Ibid., 9.

compare the cost of the British Monarchy with that of the Swiss and American Republics and concluded that he must oppose royalty "on the general ground that it is false in theory and disastrous to the best interests of the state".[16]

Odger also made a shrewd thrust at the popular argument that Britain already possessed all the advantages of a republic and more.[17] The second pamphlet, entitled Crimes of the English Monarchy, was correctly judged by Moberg to be "badly written, and very superficial - merely being a list of the crimes, either political, economic, social or moral, of all the kings of England since Ethelred".[18]

Bradlaugh condescendingly acknowledged Odger's value to the republican movement. He told the New York World in an interview that:

> Odger is a very useful man in his way, and there is no antagonism between us. He exerts a certain influence over people whom I cannot reach - that is over the Trades Unions, and over the pious people who would be scared away from any movement with which they knew I (an avowed infidel) was concerned.[19]

That estimation was accurate to an extent, but Odger never really succeeded in winning over either the bulk of trade unionists or Christian republicans to Bradlaugh's movement. It is ironic that this failure was one of the main reasons for the eventual death of organised republicanism in Britain. Odger was also rather more willing than Bradlaugh to com-

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16 Ibid., 10. 17 Ibid., 15.

18 Moberg, "George Odger", 347.

19 Interview with Charles Bradlaugh in the New York World, quoted in Dundee Advertiser, 13 October 1871.

promise with those who perhaps did not share his opinions to the letter. In fact, he was the prime mover in attempting to promote co-operation between the different republican groups both in London and the provinces.[20] He, of course, got on very well with Dilke and organised several meetings of support for the baronet in London after the Newcastle Speech.[21]

But Odger was not always conciliatory for he was involved in one bitter personal feud with William Osborne, chairman of the London Patriotic Society. Odger accused Osborne of slandering the working classes and vowed to denounce him at every democratic meeting.[22] Odger broke with the International over the Paris Commune, but there is no evidence of hard feelings on either side.[23]

Odger's republicanism, combined with his stubborn pride, eventually led him into unnecessary difficulties. James Mortimer, the editor of the London Figaro, accused him of treason on account of some of his republican speeches, and Odger sued for libel. The case was tried before Mr. Justice Brett on 14 February 1873. Mortimer had no less a personage than the Attorney General to conduct his defence. In summing up, the latter advised Odger that if he

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20 See above, 159-61.

21 See above, 272-3. N.B. Dilke paid a large portion of Odger's election expenses at the Stafford by-election in 1869, and again at Southwark in 1874. Odger was defeated on both occasions.

22 Dundee Advertiser, 8 December 1871.

23 See below, 359-60.

> ... thought republicanism better than monarchy, let him say so in quiet, reasoned language, but don't let him go to the people in the parks and use those strong coarse expressions and say those things of the Queen, who herself respected the law. Such contempt could have no practical result, except to set one class against the other ... If a man did use these tactics, express these politics, live such a life, he could not complain if the jury said he had better have kept out of court.[24]

After two hours deliberation, the jury predictably gave the verdict to Mortimer. Odger appealed to the Court of Common Pleas that the verdict had been given against the weight of evidence, but this was turned down. His expenses amounted to £500 and he was forced to declare himself bankrupt with assets of fifteen shillings. Mortimer wrote in a sarcastic editorial that:

> Our compassionating soul pities Mr. Odger. We doubt not that the aspiring mender of soles believed in the twaddle he talked. It is probable he supposed that there was a republican fusion in England. Behold Mr. Odger in pecuniary distress and there are none to help him. The republicans are few in number and as a rule, not possessed of any estate, except the land they carry under their nails.[25]

Mortimer was obviously unaware that Odger's friends had already organised a defence fund.

Throughout the battle with Mortimer, Odger continued his republican activities. At a meeting of the London Republican Club on 6 January 1873 Odger said of the planned national republican conference that the

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24 The Times, 15 February 1873.

25 James Mortimer, editorial in the London Figaro, 17 December 1873.

time was ripe for "the practical union of all societies which support democratic principles and measures".[26] On 5 May, just one week before the conference, Odger declared that:

> Self reliance should be their watchword. No dependence should be placed upon the delusive support of monied people, who had ulterior purposes to serve.[27]

Curiously enough, Odger never attended that conference for which he had such high hopes: possibly he could not afford the train fare to Birmingham. Thereafter, he played an increasingly less active role in the organised republican movement but contrary to Moberg's contention, he did not drop out altogether. In September 1874, he was involved in the opposition to a £15,000 per annum increase in income for Prince Leopold.[28] He also spoke in favour of republicanism at a meeting of the Notting Hill Progressive Club in March 1875.[29]

George Odger died suddenly on 4 March 1877. The week's issues of the radical newspapers were edged in black and a glowing epitaph by Bradlaugh graced the columns of the National Reformer.[30] But perhaps the most convincing estimation of Odger's capabilities is to be found

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26 George Odger to the London Republican Club, 6 January 1873, quoted in National Reformer, 12 January 1873.

27 George Odger to the London Republican Club, 5 May 1873, ibid., 11 May 1873.

28 See below, 414.

29 National Reformer, 28 March 1875.

30 11 March 1877.

in a copy of the Dundee Advertiser from seven years before. A journalist who was not a close friend but merely an observer of his political activities judged him to be "a man abler, perhaps than three fourths of the monied and very worthy gentlemen who make up the British Parliament".[31] It is indeed a pity that George Odger was never given the chance to prove him right.

When people talked about republican leaders in 1870 the names of George Odger and Charles Bradlaugh[32] were invariably bracketed together. Odger himself recognised Bradlaugh's leadership: he wrote to his colleague that "no man has a greater right than yourself to advise on all democratic movements".[33] Aided and abetted by a handful of fellow secularists and journalists, Bradlaugh did an enormous amount to popularize republican and secularist principles in the 1860's. The National Reformer contained a constant stream of articles criticizing the Monarchy, and the secularists worked hard giving lectures to increasingly enthusiastic audiences. Bradlaugh was even bold (or perhaps foolish) enough to introduce republicanism into an election contest when he unsuccessfully stood for Northampton in 1868. Charles Watts stated in a review of Bradlaugh's campaign that he

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31 10 October 1870.

32 See above, 90-1, for details on Bradlaugh's early life and republicanism.

33 George Odger to Charles Bradlaugh, 29 January 1877, quoted in Tribe, President Charles Bradlaugh M.P., 132.

> went into the question of the cost of royalty, but it was not against the Queen he complained, but those German Princes who come over here to live in splendour at the expense of the labouring classes of this country, and against the Prince of Wales who has so much of the taxes of this country.[34]

Obviously, Bradlaugh was trying to appeal to the Victorian obsession with economy in the hope that it might prevail over loyalty to the Monarchy.

It is important to note that the government was, at this time, attempting to suppress the National Reformer and prosecute Bradlaugh for publishing sedition and blasphemy under one of the Six Acts 1819, 60 George III Ch. 69.[35] The Tories began proceedings and the new Liberal government continued them for a time before deciding that nothing of value was being achieved and repealing the act. J.S. Mill wrote to congratulate Bradlaugh saying that "you have gained a very honourable success in obtaining a repeal of the mischievous act by your persevering resistance".[36]

Thus, Bradlaugh did much to further the cause of radicalism and free expression in the sixties, but offsetting this there was a dictatorial element in his personality, and an unwillingness to compromise with those whose views differed from his own, which made him particularly prone to feuds with his fellow radicals. Throughout June 1860, Bradlaugh

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[34] Charles Watts, "Address in favour of Bradlaugh's Election for Northampton", National Reformer, November 1868.

[35] The Six Acts were passed late in 1819 to eliminate cheap democratic and free thought publications. Bradlaugh's resistance aroused Liberal opinion and on 22 April 1869, A.S. Ayrton introduced a Bill in the Commons to repeal the Act. The Bill was adopted by the Commons on 26 April and by the Lords on 21 June.

[36] Mill to Bradlaugh, April 1869, quoted in Hypatia Bonner Bradlaugh and John Robertson, Charles Bradlaugh, A Record of his Life and Work, 2 vols. (London, 1898), 1:149. See pages 137-49 for further details of the prosecution.

poured forth a torrent of abuse against the ex-Chartist Thomas Cooper on account of the latter's religious beliefs. He scorned Cooper's views saying "you will hardly acknowledge that you and your clerical portents are all inferior to the advocates of secularism".[37] A year later, he was involved in an unpleasant embroilment with Joseph Barker, the co-editor of the National Reformer, which resulted in Barker's departure.[38] More serious, though, was the rift with G.J. Holyoake in 1862.

Holyoake had graciously agreed to give up his own journal, the Secular World, so that there would be "One Paper and One Policy", on the condition that he be allowed to contribute three pages to each issue of the National Reformer. On 15 March 1862, Bradlaugh magnanimously offered Holyoake two columns. Since the original gentleman's agreement had been three pages in every issue for one year, Holyoake understandably regarded this as a breach of contract. He claimed payment up to 1 January 1863, the length of the original contract. Bradlaugh refused to compromise but eventually agreed to refer the matter to the arbitration of W.J. Linton and James Gordon Crawford. However, they could not agree, Linton deciding for Bradlaugh and Crawford for Holyoake. The umpire, Mr. William Shaen, was therefore obliged to make the casting vote which he did in favour of Bradlaugh. Each contestant was instructed to pay his own costs.[39] In 1870, Bradlaugh's friendship with French aristocrats such as Nina,

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37 National Reformer, 9 June 1860.

38 Ibid., 31 August 1861.

39 Bradlaugh Collection, Envs. 90-140.

Viscomtesse de Brimont-Brassac and Prince Jerome ("Plon Plon") Napoleon resulted in the first of several bitter quarrels with the International.[40] Some years later, Bradlaugh was involved in a feud with fellow republican secularist Charles Watts.[41]

But the most famous of Bradlaugh's altercations was the one with John De Morgan. David Tribe gives a blow-by-blow description of the conflict in his biography of Bradlaugh, and the reader should simply refer to that volume for further details.[42] However, Tribe was apparently unaware of a pamphlet published some years later, entitled Who is John De Morgan?, by "A Free and Independent Elector of Leicester". The author gave a rundown of De Morgan's career, absolving him from all the charges laid by Bradlaugh. He explained the conflict with the following statement:

> Mr. De Morgan had ever maintained that Republicanism meant freedom of conscience and therefore neither the extreme dogmatism of orthodoxy nor the extreme negation of atheism should be allowed to be part of a Republican programme, for this reason then, such men as Charles Bradlaugh - however sincere as a Republican he might be - would be injurious to the success of Republican propaganda. The enunciation of these views made Bradlaugh a bitter enemy of De Morgan.[43]

This was only half the story, however. It seems certain that Bradlaugh and his followers were using De Morgan as a scapegoat to weaken a rival

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40 See below, 330-1, and Bonner Bradlaugh, Bradlaugh, 1:331.

41 See Bradlaugh Collection, Env. 491.

42 See above, 164, and Tribe, President Charles Bradlaugh M.P., 134-143.

43 "A Free and Independent Elector of Leicester", Who is John De Morgan? A Few Words of Explanation, London, George Horne, 13 Booksellers' Row, Strand, 1877, 5.

republican organisation of whose activities and programme they disapproved.

It was patently obvious that the dispute was seriously damaging the credibility of the republican movement in the eyes of the public. The social republicans decided to terminate their efforts to co-operate with the secularists, and pursue their own line of policy. When canvassing for new affiliations to the Brotherhood, the International Herald urged republicans not to

> ... regard such matters as a question of following John De Morgan or Charles Bradlaugh, but of platform and principle. The National Republican Brotherhood is striving for a Social Republic. It will not be long before a second Conference is held, meantime let all Social and Democratic Republicans co-operate in preparing to make it a success. We shall be all the stronger for the separation as in France, of the conservative from the Social republicans.[44]

So while telling republicans to ignore the quarrel between the two leaders, the Herald was at the same time advising social republicans to break with Bradlaugh anyway. Five months earlier the Brotherhood had been more than willing to ally with the secularists, but the opportunity had been lost. Bradlaugh and his immediate followers must accept the greater part of the blame for this since it was they who created the issue over De Morgan. Moreover, Bradlaugh considered himself the leader of the British republican movement and saw the Brotherhood as little better than a set of impudent upstarts who were challenging his authority. Besides, their programme included a number of social reforms that were unpalatable to him.

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[44] Ibid., 26 April 1873.

In April 1873, the Birmingham Morning News printed a letter from "A Republican" accusing Bradlaugh and Cattell of splitting the movement by refusing to co-operate with the Brotherhood. He maintained that

> ... we shall never do any good till the Atheistic is separated from the Republican movement, and this can never be done so long as Charles Bradlaugh and other members of the Atheistic party hold such prominent positions in the Republican ranks. Here is the secret of the opposition to the N.R. Brotherhood. This new association wishes to embrace Christians as well as Atheists, but that will not suit "Iconoclast".[45]

Our friend was partly, but not entirely, correct. Bradlaugh had no objection to working with Christians, but he did have reservations about social republicanism. Most of all, he could not accept the challenge to his leadership and organisation. G.W. Foote sprang to his leader's defence asking:

> Who mixes his Atheism up with his Republicanism? Nobody in this country that I know of; and surely nobody will have the arrogance to ordain that a Republican may not be an atheist if he choose ...[46]

This was all very well, but it did not alter the fact that any Christian would think twice before joining an organisation that was dominated by Atheists.

Bradlaugh was a brilliant and fiery public speaker and many an audience was deeply moved by his oratory. On 9 April 1870, the Kidderminster

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45 12 April 1873.

46 National Reformer, 4 May 1873.

Shuttle related the amazing story of

> A POOR MAN, who lately arrived in London from Cheshire, went to hear a lecture by Mr. Bradlaugh, and soon afterwards burst out into threats of such violence towards Her Majesty that he was taken into custody as a dangerous lunatic.[47]

Thus, as John M. Robertson points out, it is not surprising that "Bradlaugh figured from the first to the average imagination as a violent politician". This was far from being the truth: people were simply misled by isolated incidents such as the one cited above. In reality "the political sanity which in Bradlaugh balanced the fieriest zeal, showed him from the first that Republicanism could only advance by way of culture and reason, never by way of violence".[48] W. Willis wrote a review of a speech by Bradlaugh at the New Hall of Science, in October 1868, stating that:

> The people, uneducated and untrained, do not understand their political position. They are not as yet ripe for Republicanism, and therefore Republican as Mr. Bradlaugh is, he would not advocate the establishment of a republic. It will come in the natural order of things, along with the growing intelligence and virtue of the people.[49]

This assessment of Bradlaugh's opinion was completely accurate. He remained committed to a policy of education and propaganda with no intention of trying to overthrow Queen Victoria. His strategy was simply to wait for Victoria to die and then prevent the Prince of Wales from succeeding her. Unfortunately, the Queen refused to pass on, and the longer

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47 9 April 1870.

48 Robertson, Bradlaugh, 2:166.

49 National Reformer, 11 October 1868.

she lived the weaker republicanism became.

But in 1871, Bradlaugh was so optimistic about the prospects for a British republic that he feared it might come before the majority of people were ready for it. He most revealingly told the New York World:

> I am strong enough today to pull down the Monarchy, but I am not strong enough to erect on its ruins a Republic. In five years from this time I shall be strong enough to build up as well as to pull down, and my hope is that the hour of action may not be unwisely hastened. There is no man in England today who has the power I possess. I can not only raise the storm but I can rule it. I now command in England and Scotland sixty-eight Republican Clubs and in these clubs not fewer than 30,000 men are enrolled. But that does not represent all the force at my back. There are probably 75,000 ardent Republicans outside of the Freethought Republicans in the kingdom.

These included, he said, mostly working men plus "some well-to-do tradesmen of the better class" in a few northern towns, but "as a rule the shopkeeping class have thus far held aloof". He also maintained that "the republican strength up to this time is wholly in the towns; nothing can be done with the agricultural class yet".[50] Bradlaugh did not seem to think he had many supporters among the middle classes. It should be noted that there is no evidence that sixty-eight republican clubs existed as early as October 1871. Probably Bradlaugh was counting secular and other societies that were republican in sentiment if not in name.

Immediately following the Birmingham republican conference, Bradlaugh set out for foreign parts. His first stop was Spain where

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[50] Charles Bradlaugh, Interview for the New York World, quoted in Dundee Advertiser, 13 October 1871.

civil war had been raging for five years. The conflict was originally over the succession to the throne but by 1873 it had developed into a struggle between the Carlists and the Republicans. The latter took Madrid and established a provisional government just before the Birmingham conference. That body passed a resolution of support for the Spanish Republic and called on the British government to recognize it. Bradlaugh was appointed by the Birmingham conference to travel to Spain with a message of goodwill. In Madrid he expressed the sentiment that there was "little doubt that within twenty years or less, we shall have the Republic in England".[51] In fact, the Spanish Republic was thoroughly disorganised with a tendency towards brutality, and Bradlaugh soon became disillusioned with it as he had with the French experiment.

Later that year, Bradlaugh embarked on a lecturing tour of the United States. The New York Herald announced "CHARLES BRADLAUGH. The future President of England at the Fifth Avenue Hotel".[52] The National Reformer for 2 November carried a report of a lecture given by Bradlaugh in New York in which he explained his creed by describing what it was not:

> ... our republicanism is not communistic for although we desire to cooperate with individuals, although we desire to bring together in purer unity and better equality all we can, all men and women in our land, yet we believe that all those who teach politics for the present time shall be as practical as they can ... Nor is our movement an international one ... We doubt that the possibility of carving one set of politics that can fit onto the whole world. (But) ... I am in favour of the communication of ideas between the people of every nation.

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[51] Adolphe Headingly Smith, The Biography of Charles Bradlaugh (London, 1880), 144.

[52] 18 September 1873.

He stressed as usual that "we do not seek to make our Republic by violence - we do seek to make our Republic at the hustings". He reiterated an opinion which he had expressed many times in England - that the English Republic would come too quickly, before the people were ready:

> ... and I will tell you what will bring it; the misery, the degradation, the poverty, the wretchedness of our agricultural and some of our labouring classes on the one hand, and the obstinacy and folly of our ruling classes on the other. This is what may bring it, and this is why I fear it.

However, one is at a loss to understand how Bradlaugh could cite the poverty of agricultural workers as a major cause of a premature republic, since that section of the working classes were barely represented in the movement. He also maintained that the British Monarchy stood "by the will of the people as expressed through their representatives in Parliament, and by no right of heirship other than that".[53] This brings us to Bradlaugh's controversial theories on the nature of the British constitution, and his attitude towards the members of the royal family.

At times, Bradlaugh came very close to making personal attacks on members of the royal family, particularly the Prince of Wales. In a controversial pamphlet entitled George Prince of Wales with Recent Contrasts and Coincidences,[54] Bradlaugh compared the exploits of George IV with those of the present Prince of Wales, much to the detriment of the latter. In the National Reformer for 22 October 1871 he expressed the hope that:

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53 National Reformer, 2 November 1873.

54 Charles Bradlaugh, George Prince of Wales with Recent Contrasts and Coincidences (London, 1870).

> ... if four or five years of political education are allowed to continue in this land, that worthy representative of an unworthy race will never be king of England ... I trust that he may never sit on the throne or lounge under its shadow.[55]

Here, at least, Albert Edward was referred to as "a worthy representative" of royalty, although Bradlaugh was very likely being sarcastic.

From a series of lectures delivered throughout 1871 was born Bradlaugh's major anti-monarchical statement, The Impeachment of the House of Brunswick. The work was published and went into several editions. The essential argument was that the present dynasty had been put on the throne by the people's representatives in Parliament. Thus, to deprive the dynasty of their throne, Parliament need only repeal the Act of Settlement. The pamphlet also contained a comprehensive list of all the shortcomings of the Monarchy, particularly Victoria's neglect of her duty in recent years. He reminded the public that "Parliament is usually opened and closed by a commission - a robe on an empty throne, and a speech read by a deputy satisfying the sovereign's loyal subjects".[56] The pamphlet drew a spirited reply from John Baker Hopkins in the Gentlemen's Magazine.[57]

But Bradlaugh's value to the republican movement was not so much in the realm of constitutional theory as in that of organisation. Just

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55 22 October 1871.

56 Charles Bradlaugh, Impeachment of the House of Brunswick (London, 1872).

57 John Baker Hopkins, "The Republican Impeachment", Gentlemen's Magazine, November 1872, 542.

prior to his American excursion, Bradlaugh gave the republicans some pertinent instructions for strategy during his absence. He advised that:

> Wherever possible, Republican Clubs should be formed, and as far as possible the rules of the Birmingham Republican Club should be adopted. All the clubs should make it a duty to correspond with each other, and no important political event should be allowed to pass without simultaneous action being taken upon it ... Care should be taken to avoid any sort of secret organisation, or any advocacy of physical force. All energy should be concentrated in making the Republican organisation effective at the next General Election.[58]

The statement is self-explanatory and further proof of the republicans' parliamentary ambitions. Yet there is evidence that not all republicans were in favour of independent political action. In December, "Vorley" announced in the Reformer that:

> I would have the Republican societies, while unflinchingly bearing their name, work loyally with the Liberal body of which they are really a part, ...[59]

Unlike Odger, Bradlaugh had no enthusiasm for the independent political action of labour on a strictly class basis. His family background was in that vague area where the upper-working class met the lower-middle class; "as close to classlessness as one could get in nineteenth century England".[60] This may well explain why he "always preferred 'popular' to 'working class' movements, on the grounds that the latter really

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58 National Reformer, 7 September 1873.

59 7 December 1873.

60 Tribe, President Charles Bradlaugh M.P., 13.

fossilised class divisions".[61] Socialist critics attributed this to snobbery and endeavoured to confirm it by constantly embarrassing him with his aristocratic acquaintances. But Bradlaugh never went out of his way to cultivate aristocratic friendships, and invariably used them to advance causes rather than personal interests. Bradlaugh considered that nations "were not to be made up of one class or of another class, but of the people which included all classes".[62] He wanted a republic but was not prepared to use class warfare to attain his goal.

With such abhorrence of class conflict, one might expect Bradlaugh's relationship with Marx and the I.W.M.A. to have been a little strained. The General Council of the International maintained that if Bradlaugh was a true republican, he would join the organisation because it was "the only society in existence that can cope successfully with the enemies of labour".[63] Marx, Hales and Serraltier then accused Bradlaugh of being a traitor to the cause and associating with Bonapartists. Bradlaugh replied that he would happily turn the matter over to a council of honour.[64]

Bradlaugh had purposely steered clear of the International because it was so obviously riddled with factionalism. Hales was too ambitious and Marx was an alien who openly advocated the type of red revolution that was unacceptable to the majority of British workmen. As Tribe points

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61 Ibid., 119.

62 Bonner Bradlaugh, Bradlaugh, 1:327.

63 Dundee Courier and Argus, 16 January 1872.

64 Bradford Weekly Mail, 3 February 1872.

out, "his image was too un-English insofar as he had an image at all in the country at large".[65] The Hackney Eastern Post printed an announcement by Hales that the Communard refugees were so indignant at Bradlaugh's criticisms of the Commune that they had resolved not to accept financial aid "from a man who had traduced and insulted them".[66]

There followed a series of unpleasant exchanges in the Eastern Post between Bradlaugh, Marx and Hales. Le Lubez came to Bradlaugh's defence saying that the language used by Hales and Marx against Bradlaugh, a man who "criticises fairly, openly, and in decent language ... (was) a disgrace to any cause".[67] Tribe thinks it unlikely that Marx and Bradlaugh could ever have co-operated on a joint programme for an English Republic but their feud, together with the progressive weakening of the International in Britain,[68] was not good for the democratic movement. This was perceived by Bradlaugh and some members of the I.W.M.A., like Le Lubez, who tried to patch things up. However, Marx and Hales were adamant about the necessity for an independent socialist labour party, which was something Bradlaugh could never accept.

But what of Bradlaugh's aides and followers, and the organisation through which they operated, the National Secular Society? Susan Budd informs us that the Secular and Freethought movement, composed primarily of upper working class atheists, was

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65 Tribe, President Charles Bradlaugh M.P., 129.

66 16 December 1871.

67 6 January 1872.

68 See below, 349-50.

> ... formed in the 1850's from the remains of Owenite, Chartist and Paineite groups; these were federated with varying success, under several central bodies, of which the National Secular Society, with its first president Charles Bradlaugh, was by far the largest.[69]

George Jacob Holyoake did much in the fifties to put the movement on its feet, but as time passed he became less involved in the organisational side of things. Throughout his life Holyoake adhered to republican principles, buttook little active part in the agitation of the 1870's. However, his younger brother Austin was, until his premature death in 1874, one of Bradlaugh's right-hand men.

Most of the leading secularist republicans, such as Charles Watts and G.W. Foote, shared Bradlaugh's views. They were non-socialist, gradualist but practical republicans who wanted

> ... the participation of the nation in the direction of its own affairs ... the rule of the many instead of the few ... government is only legitimate which has been chosen by the national consent, free from class distinctions and birth influence.[70]

Probably the most important secularist republican apart from Bradlaugh was Christopher Charles Cattell with whom the reader has already become acquainted.[71] Curiously enough, Cattell's background was one of Anglican Toryism. He came from the Warwickshire countryside but moved

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69 Susan Budd, "The Loss of Faith in England 1850-1950", Past and Present, 36 (April 1967) 106-7.

70 Charles Watts, "Republicanism and Monarchy", National Reformer, 2 April 1871.

71 See above, 157, 179-80, 188.

to Birmingham where he went to work in a small factory. He was apparently preparing lessons for his Sunday School class when he came across some biblical statements that converted him simultaneously to republicanism and freethought. Cattell was an exception because most secularist converts came from the ranks of nonconformity, especially Methodists, and Wesleyans in particular.

Miss Budd maintains that the secularists hailed principally from London and parts of northern England and Scotland with coalfields or heavy industry. There were also a goodly number from cloth industries of one kind or another in the 1870's. In addition, there was a more affluent group of small manufacturers and artisans from wealthy midland towns. Coal miners, though, were the largest single occupational group and it is notable that this was also true for republicanism. Budd states that the social range stretched from small self-made businessmen to the very poor, such as navvies, and builders' labourers.[72] Hugh McLeod disagrees with her on this score. He believes that among the residuum "Secularist doctrines were as effectively by-passed as Christian doctrines".[73]

The National Secular Society was not just a freethought organisation, it boasted a complete radical programme which advocated land reform and a restriction of hereditary aristocratic power, besides the abolition of Church privileges.[74] Each annual conference from 1871 to 1878 de-

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[72] Budd, "The Loss of Faith", 107.

[73] McLeod, Class and Religion, 55.

[74] See Appendix 23.

clared in favour of a republic. In the mid-nineteenth century, secularism was, for many people, "a temporary detour in their movement from religion to left wing politics".[75] But by the end of the century, as socialism became more established, the major denominations became less identified with political conservatism and "the movement out of Christianity in order to get to Socialism became less necessary".[76]

To conclude this section on Bradlaugh, secularism and republicanism, it must be said that in combining the propaganda of freethought with republicanism, Bradlaugh was continuing the work begun by Paine and Carlile. He held firmly to the conviction that the only logical form of government for free and rational men was a republic. Unfortunately, the great reaction against the French Revolution which had made Paine a hunted exile and forced Carlile to spend much of his life in jail, had not entirely dissipated by 1870. He could, by then, stand up for republicanism without incurring the extreme penalties that fell upon the heads of its former champions, but an avowed republican atheist was still "regarded with horror by the middle and upper classes".[77] But, by way of compensation, between 1867 and 1890 there was no politician more popular with the working classes than Bradlaugh.[78] The masses identified with his sense of alienation on the one hand, and drew hope from his fire and conviction of purpose on the other.

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75 Budd, "The Loss of Faith", 109.

76 Ibid., 115.

77 Robertson, Bradlaugh, 2:165.

78 McLeod, Class and Religion, 67.

Bradlaugh was not elected to Parliament until 1880, and when the republican movement was at its height in the early seventies there was really only one Member who could be considered a practical republican. Peter Alfred Taylor was born in London on 30 July 1819. His maternal great grandfather began the famous firm of Courtaulds the silk mercers. Taylor entered, and subsequently became a partner in, the family business. He was a friend of Mazzini, whom he met in 1845, and an enthusiastic supporter of republican struggles abroad. After two unsuccessful attempts to enter Parliament, he was returned for Leicester in 1862 and continued to represent that constituency until his retirement in 1884. Coming from an old Unitarian family, he was a staunch advocate of political nonconformity, unsectarian and national education, and complete freedom of the press. During the American Civil War he supported the North, acted as treasurer of the London Emancipation Society, and was the first Member of Parliament to associate himself with the federal party. He was also one of the pioneers of international arbitration and in fact took a keen interest in every movement designed to promote a more humane and egalitarian society.[79]

Taylor also turned his attention to more touchy subjects such as the House of Lords. In a letter to Bolton Republican Club he wrote that:

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79 Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sydney Lee, eds., The Dictionary of National Biography (Oxford, 1964), 19:455-6.

> We want as nearly as we can get it a perfect representation of the whole community, and having got the best machinery for government, we want no second best assembly to control the best.[80]

He led the Parliamentary opposition to Princess Louise's dowry and Prince Arthur's annuity, warning the government that such grants would strengthen republicanism among the working classes. Not that he objected to the spread of republican views, quite the contrary, but he considered such an argument to be an effective follow-up to his attack upon the principle of royal grants. Taylor was a political rather than social republican, but most important he was a practical republican. Like Bradlaugh, he did not want the republic to be premature but he was convinced of its inevitability. He told the London correspondent of the New York Times that a British republic

> is inevitable in the future, and that probably a not very distant future, while it is not a question we could wisely or profitably raise now - is a very common one amongst advanced politicians and thinkers generally.[81]

Taylor, like many republicans, had no specific ideology. He simply believed the abolition of monarchy to be a logical step towards achieving a more efficient and egalitarian society. It was the Positivists, more than any other group, who tried to give republicanism a valid intellectual framework. In 1849, Edward Spencer Beesly was admitted

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80 P.A. Taylor to Bolton Republican Club, quoted in the Leicester Guardian, 15 November 1871.

81 P.A. Taylor to the London correspondent of the New York Times, quoted in the Leicester Journal and Midland Counties General Advertiser, 17 January 1873.

to Wadham College Oxford where he became friendly with Frederic Harrison and John Henry Bridges. Their tutor, Richard Congreve, was a follower of the French philosopher Auguste Comte whose thinking, he believed, provided the basis for complete social reconstruction.

It would serve no purpose here to compose a treatise on Positivism, but it is necessary to briefly outline certain aspects of the creed in order to comprehend the republicanism of its adherents. The basis of Comte's philosophy was the famous evolutionary triad which stipulated that the human mind has an inherent tendency to pass from theological interpretations of experience to abstract or metaphysical ones, until finally it would progress to a positive or scientific understanding. The process was ultimately inevitable said Comte, but to help it along he devised a complete secular religion with appropriate liturgical and devotional forms.

The Positivists believed that the social and political problems of the age could be solved by organising an educated and powerful public opinion that would be guided by Positivist teachers who had a thorough understanding of the impersonal forces that shaped society. They contended that eventually the working classes would realize that the fundamental solution to its problems was a moral and social, rather than political, one. The workers would then acknowledge that only Positivism offered hope for the realization of their prime goals of secure employment, the right to education, and fair wages to be determined by moral criteria rather than market forces. The Comtists held that the corrupting influence of Protestantism had made least headway among the working classes,

and of all classes in contemporary society they were the most fitted to embrace all-encompassing principles and to grasp the truth of the proposition that wealth, which was social in its origins, should be used in socially beneficial ways. Their trade unions were the

> ... elementary schools of a higher morality and they would, in close conjunction with the Positivist teachers, help to "moralise" the capitalists and institute the new order in which private rights were subordinated to social duties.[82]

It is not hard to understand, therefore, how the Positivists became involved in the trade union movement, why they encouraged independent working class action, and how they could insist that the British Republic, which they saw as inevitable, must become social to be worthwhile. G.J. Holyoake quoted Beesly as saying, at a meeting of the National Reform League in 1852, that he would not cross the street to vote for a reform bill that made no provisions for the social improvement of the workers.[83]

The Positivists deemed republican institutions to be an integral part of the new Comtist society. Although they had some reservations about American republicanism, they rejoiced at the Northern victory and

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[82] Harrison, "Professor Beesly and the Working-Class Movement", 209. In addition to the above essay, further information on the Positivists may be obtained from Harrison, Before the Socialists, Chapter 6, H.W. McCready, "Frederic Harrison and the British Working Class Movement", Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis (Harvard, 1952), and Christopher Kent, Brains and Numbers: Elitism, Comtism and Democracy in Mid-Victorian England (Toronto, 1978).

[83] G.J. Holyoake, Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life, 2 vols. (London, 1906), 1:267-8.

did not hesitate to remind British workmen of the political rights enjoyed by their counterparts in the Union.[84] As followers of Comte, they eulogized French civilization and admired the progressive republican elements in French politics. They abhorred the régime of Napoleon III which they saw as shackling the most creative energies of the French people. Although they naturally felt impelled to promote their political theories in Britain, their prime concern was always France.

Initially, the Franco-Prussian War evoked a neutral response from the Positivist camp. Their hatred of Bonapartist imperialism was as great as their dislike of Prussian militarism, and they hoped that neither side would gain a conclusive victory which might inspire it to embark upon a path of conquest. Harrison commented that "Napoleon and Bismarck are two ruffians - one is as bad as the other".[85] The overthrow of Napoleon put a brand new complexion on the situation, although Harrison was not overly optimistic about the new government remarking that "that old villian Thiers will no doubt sell his country".[86] However, the Positivist neutrality was quickly replaced by fanatical support for France and the new republic. They worked with other British republican leaders in the promotion of a series of meetings to express sympathy with France. But more than this, the Positivists broadened the initial demand for recognition of the Republic into a cry for armed intervention on the side of France.

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84 See above, 92-3.

85 Harrison to Beesly, 25 July 1870, Frederic Harrison Papers, London School of Economics, Env. 1/16.

86 Harrison to Beesly, 27 October 1870, ibid.

The Anglo French Intervention Committee was formed with Congreve as president and including representatives from the Land and Labour League, the International Democratic Association and some leading trade unionists. Exactly how they presumed to compel the government to go to war for a republic it refused even to recognize is a mystery, and inevitably the cry for war was short-lived. Instead, they settled for requesting a guarantee that everything would be done to prevent any spoilation of French territory by the Prussians.[87] But the working men were by no means agreed as to the best policy to pursue. Three years later, Congreve wrote that, in retrospect, the British workmen had been

> ... practically unanimous in proclaiming the French republic and always insisted that the government should recognise it without delay. But when it came to the question of war, the division was fatal to the exercise of any serious influence upon the general politics of the country.[88]

If Congreve was disappointed by the apparent incapacity for unified action of the working classes, Beesly was downright contemptuous of the exuberant but shallow creed of British republicanism. Throughout the spring and summer of 1871, he published fifteen articles, mostly for the Eastern Post and Bee Hive,[89] in which he continually attacked the

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87 N.B. This position was essentially the one adopted in the Remonstrance of 17 January 1871 - signed by the Positivists and many labour leaders including Odger, Allan, Applegarth, Howell, Potter and Lloyd Jones.

88 Richard Congreve, "L'Union des Proletariats Anglais et Francais", Essays Political, Social and Religious, 2 vols. (London, 1874), 1:464.

89 See Royden Harrison, ed. and intr., The English Defence of the Commune 1871 (London, 1971), 64-117.

British workmen for their apathy and political immaturity. He told the English Left that if they wanted to make a revolution, they would be well advised to do some thinking and planning rather than "parading about with bands and banners".[90]

The preservation of the great new republic across the Channel was of paramount importance to Beesly. He advocated determined action on behalf of the French and urged the British working classes to emulate their example declaring that:

> ... if the London artisan finds himself not without importance in English politics, if he sees other classes fain to assume a respectful attitude towards his, if there is a growing belief that society will in the end be organised with a view to the greater happiness not of its richer but of its poorer members, let him remember that this is mainly due to the example French workmen have given, of what they have claimed, what they could do and what they could suffer.[91]

But not all British republicans saw things in the same light as Professor Beesly. His reasoning was challenged by Sidney Colvin [92] who stated that the German armies had done only what was militarily necessary, given that Napoleon started the war. Moreover, he said that in crushing the military power of the Empire, "Germany has given to France the Republic, which Frenchmen were for nineteen years unable to win for themselves".[93]

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90 Harrison, Before the Socialists, 237.

91 E.S. Beesly, "A Word for France - Addressed to the Workmen of London", quoted in Harrison, Commune, 49.

92 Sir Sidney Colvin: Fellow of Trinity College Cambridge: 1867-71 wrote for the Pall Mall Gazette and after 1871, for the Portfolio: member of Society of Dillettanti (Hon. Sec., 1891-6): member of New (later Savile) Club, Althaeneum and Burlington Fine Arts Club: 1876-1884 Director of Fitzwilliam Museum then Keeper of the Dept. of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum. Respected critic of art, literature and politics.

93 Sidney Colvin, A Word for Germany, from an English Republican - Being a Letter to Professor Beesly (London, 1870), 7.

He added that there was no reason to suspect that Germany was intent on dismembering France, and Beesly should remember that no one in authority in Germany "has, up to the hour at which I write, addressed a menace to the national integrity of France".[94] Finally, he showed considerable insight by saying to Beesly that "I think you mistake France as one is blind to the faults of his mistress, I think you mistake Germany as one believes evil of a stranger".[95]

The Positivists were fortunate in that by 1871 they did not experience any difficulty in getting their material published. However, six years earlier it had not been so easy. Most newspapers and journals were not at all anxious to contribute to the increasing interest in republicanism following the Northern success in the American Civil War. Thus, if they printed republican articles at all, it was only to seize the opportunity to refute the arguments contained therein. Harrison and Beesly discussed the possibility of founding their own republican journal as early as August 1865.[96] In May 1867, during the reform agitation, Harrison mentioned to Beesly that "the Republican ought to be established",[97] having earlier complained of the "toadying press".[98] The projected newspaper was discussed again in 1869,[99] and more seriously

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94 Ibid. 95 Ibid., 14.

96 Harrison to Beesly, 28 August 1865, Harrison Papers, 1/13.

97 Harrison to Beesly, May 1867, ibid., 1/14.

98 Harrison to Beesly, Easter 1867, ibid.

99 Harrison to Beesly, 3 October 1869, ibid., 1/15.

in October 1870. Harrison said that he was heartily sick of the Pall Mall Gazette, and other papers, printing sneering notes at the end of every Positivist letter. However, the projected "Republican" never did appear and the Positivists had to be content with existing publications: some of which, like the Eastern Post, had become less discouraging of republican contributions.

Frederic Harrison's ideas on republicanism and its application in Britain are especially fascinating and deserve to be examined in their own right. In an article entitled "The Monarchy" he contended that:

> This country is and has long been, a republic, though a most imperfect republic it must be allowed ... England is now an aristocratic republic with a democratic machinery and a hereditary grand master of ceremonies.[100]

Regarding the "grand master" he stated that "to any thoughtful mind hereditary monarchy as an active principle can present itself only as a conspiracy or a mummery".[101] The monarch's only functions, he said, were ceremonial. But at various times during her reign, Queen Victoria exercised more political power than Harrison imagined.[102] The article also contained Harrison's most precise definition of his understanding of a republic:

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[100] Frederic Harrison, "The Monarchy", Fortnightly Review (June 1872), reprinted in Harrison, Order and Progress (London, 1875), 300-47, 302.

[101] Ibid., 338.

[102] See below, 377-9, 419.

> The republic is that state, the principle of which is not privilege but merit, where all public power is a free gift, and is freely entrusted to those who seem able to use it best. In the republic no authority is legitimate but that which claims as its tenure capacity, working in the interest of all, with the active cooperation of all. These are the tests of the really republican system - (1) that power rests on fitness to rule (2) that its sole avowed object is the public good (3) that it is maintained by public opinion and not by force. Government then is a public function, and not a private property: it rests on consent, not on fear or right. Where this is the settled point of view of governors and governed, it is idle to deny a community the name of republic because it has not eliminated from govt. all notions of privilege and property; because in the midst of republican realities it retains a monarchic pageant.[103]

This certainly clarifies Harrison's viewpoint. It appears, then, that Britain was much nearer to Harrison's idea of a republic than it was to Bradlaugh's, since Harrison required the role of the populace to be one of consent rather than active participation. It was his opinion that

> ... if pure democracy means the direct management of public affairs by the people themselves, I confess myself no democrat. I prefer to call myself republican, by which I understand the devotion of the services of all citizens equally to the common welfare of the State. By republicanism I mean the most efficient governing power which the state can produce. By democracy the weakening of that efficiency by incompetent control.[104]

Harrison was most anxious to avoid any "meddling by a crowd of incompetent persons in affairs for which they are unfit".[105] However, for

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103 Harrison, "The Monarchy", in Order and Progress, 303.

104 Harrison, "The Political Function of the Working Classes", in Order and Progress, 227.

105 Ibid., 230.

Harrison those "incompetent persons" could just as easily include members of the upper and middle classes as uneducated labourers. In fact, Harrison's understanding of democracy led him to maintain that

> ... the spirit of the working classes is essentially, in the true sense of the word, less democratic than that of the capitalist class. They have less of the instinctive thirst for each man having his own way which is the true sign of democratic ideas. They are accustomed to act in masses and to act with conviction.[106]

Thus, Harrison identified democracy with mass participation in an individualistic way, and republicanism with collectivism. As a republican, therefore, he could wholeheartedly support social republicanism and the Paris Commune.[107] Bradlaugh, on the other hand, tended to see republicanism and democracy as being one and the same thing, and disliked collectivism because he thought is would swamp individual initiative.

Harrison decided that he might or might not be a socialist depending on one's definition of the term:

> If a socialist is one who looks forward to a reorganisation of society in the interest of the masses - what Comte calls "the incorporation of the proletariat into the social organism" - one who fervently desires such an end and labours to bring it about - then I am so far a socialist. If socialism means the abolition of personal appropriation of capital by force of law, then I look on such a dream as the era of social chaos and moral and material ruin.
>
> If this seems to be a paradox, I hold it to be reconciled by the combination of Comte's two correlative laws.

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106 Harrison, "Parliament After Reform", in Order and Progress, 195.

107 See below, 369-71.

> (1) Wealth is the product of society, and must be devoted to the interests of the social whole.
> (2) Moral evils can be cured only by moral and not material agencies.[108]

Adherence to the Comtist creed caused the other English Positivists to hold similar compromising positions on socialism, and as a result had, by the mid-eighties, been "completely out-distanced by the socialists".[109] However, Harrison's perception of the relationship between republicanism and democracy was peculiar to himself.

Richard Congreve, J.H. Bridges and Henry Crompton were all staunch social republicans and throughout the sixties endeavoured to popularize their principles. Bridges' conception of the transition to republicanism was of a more impatient and drastic nature than the rest. He stated in the Commonwealth in May 1866 that:

> The great changes which are necessary before England can be made in the true sense of the word Republican, cannot be effected by a huge assembly of talkers. There must be for a time a concentration of power in a very few hands. And if a single man arises, as will probably be the case, in whom the nation can place sufficient confidence to entrust him with dictatorial power, so much the better.[110]

One suspects a considerable admiration for Oliver Cromwell was behind this summation. Richard Congreve's republicanism was far less dramatic. He recommended that:

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108 Harrison, National and Social Problems (London, 1908).

109 Harrison, Before the Socialists, 331.

110 J.H. Bridges in the Commonwealth, 5 May 1866.

> ... as early, then, as it is possible to do so without violent infringement of the existing order, it is desirable to introduce the Republican form into our Government; and, as a preparation, we seek to spread the opinions and feelings favourable to its introduction.[111]

However, the Positivist leader, with his strong conception of Comtism as a secular religion rather enjoyed "playing at High Priest" and, complained Harrison, "injured the cause"[112] as a result.

The Positivists were the only middle class radicals who felt any sympathy with Marxism. In fact, Marx and Comte used many of the same raw materials to construct their respective sciences of society. They both drew heavily upon classical German philosophy together with French socialism, especially St. Simon. Royden Harrison states that

> Marx and Comte were at one, as against Utopian socialists, in viewing the proletariat not merely as the most suffering class, but as the one destined to play the decisive part in the transition to the new society. For Marx this transition would be marked by the dictatorship of the proletariat; for Comte merely by the dictatorship of a proletarian governor. Both saw the new society in terms of competition giving place to central planning and control.[113]

Comte saw this as being achieved by the rise of an omnipotent intellectual priesthood that would end intellectual competition and moralise existing property relations. For Marx it was necessary to put an end

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111 Richard Congreve, Two Addresses Delivered in London, 1 January 1869 and 1 June 1870, E.S. Beesly Papers, University College, London.

112 Frederic Harrison to John Morley, no date 1870, Harrison Papers, 1/52.

113 Harrison, Before the Socialists, 269-70.

to competition in the market and overthrow existing property relations. Thus, when Marx "called for the organisation of the proletariat into class, and Comte summoned it into a new church, the resemblances between what they were doing were no less striking than the differences".[114]

The Positivists, particularly Beesly, had worked closely with Marx since the early sixties. From September 1870 they cooperated in arousing sympathy for the French republic and the following spring combined to form the main caucus of support for the Paris Commune in England.[115] The only other group that consistently supported the Commune was the Universal Republican League.[116] Beesly made light of the differences between them on political and economic theory. For the present, it was enough that the International was republican. In fact, Beesly wrote to Marx in September 1870 regretting that

> ... you and I differ rather widely in our economic doctrines; but at least we agree in this that all our social arrangements have been made formerly by the non-workmen and will continue to be so until the workmen know their strength and use it.[117]

Marx and his followers were by no means uncompromising towards non-socialists. For example, a moderate like Applegarth held a seat on the General Council for a time,[118] and the Norfolk News tells us that the

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114 Ibid., 272.

115 See above, 129-30, and below, 359, 365, 367-8. Also Harrison, "E.S. Beesly and Karl Marx", 22-59.

116 See below, 361-2.

117 E.S. Beesly to Karl Marx, September 1870, quoted in Harrison, "E.S. Beesly and Karl Marx", 50.

118 See below, 359-60.

I.W.M.A. "paid to Sir Charles Dilke the high compliment of inviting him to become an honorary member ... as a recognition of his eminent services to the popular cause".[119] Dilke respectfully declined the offer.

Collins and Abramsky agree that the republicans took support from the International in Britain and this was a key factor in its demise in the early seventies. The two historians contend that:

> For those workers whose interests were more widely political, the Land and Labour League, set up a few weeks after Basle, and the new Republican movement led by Bradlaugh, tended to divert energy away from the General Council.[120]

By mid 1873, the split in the International, emanating from the Hague Conference, combined with the republican challenge to render the organisation increasingly impotent in Britain. One by one the provincial branches died out. For instance, in Leicester the Internationalists "were about to begin a joint propaganda campaign with the strong local Republican Club when a visit from Mottershead (a former I.W.M.A. General Council member) to the Republicans persuaded them to break off all relations".[121] Collins and Abramsky maintain that workers of radical views "were more likely to be attracted by republicanism than by a squabbling and leaderless International."[122]

But it was not only "Bradlaugh's Republican Campaign" that

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119 Norfolk News, 25 November 1871.

120 H. Collins and C. Abramsky, Karl Marx and the British Labour Movement: Years of the First International (London, 1965), 161.

121 Ibid., 276.

122 Ibid., 276.

"was attracting much needed support away from the International".[123] If one wished to join an organisation whose priority was a republic, while at the same time advocating the kind of social reform rejected by Bradlaugh, then there were a number of options. A social republican who resided in the North or Midlands might join a branch of the National Republican Brotherhood. Much has been said in previous chapters about that organisation and its leading members and there is nothing more to add here.[124] The Brotherhood never established itself in London, primarily because a social republican group had existed in the capital since 1869.

The International Democratic Association, formerly the International Republican Association,[125] was composed of a group of old disciples of Bronterre O'Brien [126] together with a number of disaffected members of the I.W.M.A.[127] The I.D.A., newly renamed the Universal Republican League, sent a deputation to the I.W.M.A. General Council meeting of 11 April 1871 requesting that body to support a demonstration of solidarity with the Commune. Engels inquired why the U.R.L. was not affiliated to the International and was answered by Samuel Oliver who explained that "they had formed part of the Reform League a few years ago which had proved a sham, and from what they had heard of the International they

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123 Ibid., 278.

124 See below, 366. For information on Thomas Smith, the celebrated treasurer of the National Republican Brotherhood, see below, Chapter 6.

125 See above, 141-3.

126 Some of the prominent O'Brienites were the bootcloser brothers Charles and James Murray, John Radford, Samuel Oliver, and John Rogers who, in 1873, defended De Morgan against Bradlaugh.

127 Victor Le Lubez, Lassallean Weber, John Weston and the ironmonger Martin James Boon, all became impatient of the capitalist/Liberal predilections of some of the Trade Union leaders on the General Council.

had not believed it went far enough".[128] Stan Shipley tells us that the General Council was divided on the question of giving wholehearted support to the Hyde Park demonstration. The O'Brienites George Harris, George Milner and William Townshend,[129] plus John Weston, an Owenite, were in favour, but they were outvoted. However, Weston attended the meeting as a private individual and was one of the main speakers. Thereafter, he became more involved with the U.R.L. whose uncompromising ebullience was more to his taste than the increasingly stagnant International.

One of the most intriguing members of the U.R.L. was the secretary John Johnson, known as "the Marat of Walworth Common". Johnson's personal history is something of a mystery but he did outline his views in a declaration "To The People of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales - The Humble Petition of John Johnson, Slave". He decried the monopoly of wealth and land in Britain held by a very small percentage of capitalists and aristocrats, and Monarchy was attacked as a useless and expensive "relic of the feudal ages". Moreover, Johnson called for an immediate National Assembly "to take into consideration the whole question of Government - whether it cannot be conducted on more efficient, more economic, more philosophic and more human principles".[130] On the fringe

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128 Documents of the First International, Moscow, n.d., 4:172, quoted in Shipley, Club Life and Socialism in Mid-Victorian London, 17.

129 Harris and Milner were tailors, Townshend was a shoemaker.

130 John Johnson, "To The People of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales - The Humble Petition of John Johnson, Slave", Republican, 1 January 1871.

of this group were the old Chartist Myles McSweeney, and James Finlen, a fiery speaker with Irish connections. The U.R.L. was not averse to co-operating with Fenians and organised a joint meeting on 18 June 1871.[131] Fenians were anathema to everyone in England except extreme Left-wingers, and were used as a convenient stick with which to beat the British republican movement as a whole. Consequently, the moderate republicans were often obliged to defend themselves against the charge of being associated with violent revolutionaries.[132]

These then were the most important of the practical republicans. Their views were diverse but they all genuinely looked forward to a British republic, be it in the very near future or in five, ten, or twenty years hence. Moreover, they all sympathised to some degree with the ideals and vision of the Paris Communards: and it is to the latter that we now turn our attention.

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131 Bradford Observer Budget, 24 June 1871. For other references to links between Fenianism and republicanism, see above, 174-5.

132 For example: "A.B.", "Republicanism v Fenianism", National Reformer, 16 February 1868.

CHAPTER 9

THE IMPACT OF THE PARIS COMMUNE

On 18 March 1871, the Republican government of France fled Paris and the Central Committee of the National Guard took over the Hôtel de Ville. The following day, it was announced that elections for a commune would be held. This was hailed by Frederic Harrison as "the most striking event as yet of the nineteenth century".[1] The Paris Commune was duly proclaimed from the Hôtel de Ville on 28 March: it was to endure just until 28 May.[2] Heretofore, the Commune has been considered of fundamental importance in the history of the labour movement, especially in Britain, and to a large extent this is justified. However, it may well be that the influence of the Parisian experiment on British republicanism has been misunderstood and exaggerated, particularly in its negative aspects.[3]

The Commune's programme of social reform[4] stunned British observers and was welcomed by few. The vast majority gained from the press

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1 Frederic Harrison to John Morley, 22 March 1871, Harrison Papers, 1/53.

2 See especially: Stewart Edwards, The Paris Commune of 1871 (London, 1971); Frank Jellinek, The Paris Commune of 1871 (Oxford, 1937); Edward S. Mason, The Paris Commune, an Episode in the History of the Socialist Movement (New York, 1967). For some interesting and entertaining insights into the Commune see Arnold Bennett, The Old Wives Tale (London, 1873), 417-22.

3 Royden Harrison has said of the Commune that: "With one stroke it exposed the hopelessly indeterminate nature of the demand for 'the Republic' and broke English Republicanism up, not along the lines of the two tendencies which had always been latent in it, but into a host of quarrelsome competing sects". - Harrison, Before the Socialists, 232.

4 See Appendix 24 and Edwards, The Paris Commune of 1871, 189-90, Chapter 8.

no more than a vague idea of what the Commune was all about. They were led to assume that it was something like Robespierre's Committee of Public Safety; and that spelled blood! Most British newspapers, with little regard for truth, unreservedly condemned the Commune and seized with relish upon any tales of blood letting and lawlessness. The Standard described the Communards as "convicts and assissins"[5] and the Daily News affirmed that "the most human amongst us would not be too scrupulous about the repressive measures that might be necessary to extinguish the revolution".[6] Even the Penny Illustrated Paper, which had been known to sympathize with moderate republicanism, poured forth a torrent of invective against the Communards and their British supporters.[7] However, there were exceptions to this pattern.

W.E. Adams in the Newcastle Weekly Chronicle did not attempt to "defend or even excuse the wild decrees which have lately emanated from the Hôtel de Ville", but at the same time declined to believe "all the odious stories ... of the men who have issued them".[8] In fact, he held that the Communards were guilty of "no worse crimes than the Government of Versailles itself".[9] The Weekly Dispatch was less sympathetic, claiming that the Commune's policy would split France into a federation of cities,

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5 21 March 1871.

6 25 March 1871.

7 Maccoby, English Radicalism 1853-1883, 71.

8 1 April 1871.

9 28 April 1871.

and perpetuating the myths of disorder.[10] Lloyds' criticised Thiers for shutting the door on conciliation and forfeiting any chance of a bloodless victory as a result. But the paper had little time for the Communards, accusing them of committing "a hundred follies and crimes in the once more outraged name of liberty".[11] The National Reformer disliked the fact that the Communards "set themselves up in opposition to the will of a sovereign assembly elected by universal suffrage". If the Commune persisted, said the Reformer, it would effectively cut off Paris from the rest of France and "we do not believe that the remedy lies in splitting nations into communes".[12] Yet some time later in October and November 1875, the Reformer ran a series of eye witness accounts of the Commune by Ellen Carroll.[13] The series provoked a number of letters from moderate republicans condemning Miss Carroll's justification of Communard violence.[14]

Thus, the Commune found few supporters in the world of journalism. One of the few was Reynolds' Newspaper which enthusiastically featured a number of editorials praising the high ideals and valiant struggles of the Paris revolutionaries.[15] The Republican, in its inimitable fashion,

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10 2 April 1871.

11 16 April 1871.

12 11 June 1871.

13 Ellen Carroll, "The Story of the Commune by One who Saw it", ran for 3 issues from 31 October 1875.

14 For example, H.M. Dymond, "Republicanism and the Commune", 14 November 1875.

15 9 April 1871 and 28 May 1871.

also defended the Commune. Stephen Peel Andrews informed his readers that the main aim of the Communards was to "secure political rights for each particular local demesne in respect of its local affairs", and to escape from the "centralised despotism" of the sham Versailles republic. The socialist aspect, claimed Andrews, was something new and secondary, indeed almost incidental.[16] It would appear that Andrews played down the social reforms of the Commune in order to gain more support from the English working men who for the most part found such radical change both incomprehensible and outrageous.[17]

However, two journalists who were not renowned for their support of red revolution, were distinguished by a desire to see fair play. Robert Coningsby travelled to France and reported that "the Commune may or may not be pursuing a wrong end; but history will absolve it from the charge of brigandism". He found the Communards thoroughly respectable and challenged anyone to "specify a single execution which has yet taken place under what has absurdly been called the reign of terror".[18] The editor of the London Echo, Arthur Arnold, also journeyed to Paris to discover the truth about the Commune. He concluded that the revolution had been woefully misinterpreted in Britain owing to Paris correspondents pandering to the appetite of the public for lurid details and

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16 Stephen Peel Andrews, "The Commune of Paris", Republican, 1 July 1871.

17 See below, 363.

18 Robert Coningsby in the Leeds Critic and West Riding Free Press, 5 May 1871.

writing only what the British upper classes wanted to read. Loyalty to a cause was a virtue that Victorians admired and Arnold spoke highly of the fidelity and courage with which the Commune was served. He confessed that he was utterly contemptuous of the Communards' principles insofar as he could not "understand socialism in a society higher than that of a rabbit warren". However, he appreciated "how tame and useless to these ignorant masses of Paris appears the merely political republicanism of Louis Blanc and his friends compared with the social republicanism advocated by their press".[19]

The British republicans were divided over the Commune. Bradlaugh's feelings were mixed. Some of their reforms he had long advocated himself, but as a civil libertarian there were some Draconian measures, such as the outlawing of Jesuits, that he could not agree with. Besides, he had many reservations about communes as a system of government. In addition, he detected a disturbing element of fanaticism among certain Communards. Thus, for the most part he stayed silent, "unable to approve but refusing to condemn".[20] However, after the fall of the Commune, he did join the campaign to assist refugees. But, at the same time he insisted on instructing the ex-Communards that government belonged to "all classes equally", pointing out that "Republicanism in France would have enough difficulties without class war".[21] C.C. Cattell softened

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19 Arthur Arnold, editorial in the Echo, reproduced in the Dundee Advertiser, 14 April 1871.

20 Tribe, President Charles Bradlaugh M.P., 124.

21 National Reformer, 24 December 1871.

his feelings towards the Commune after hearing a talk by Mr. R. Reid to the Birmingham Republican Club on his experiences in Paris. Cattell advised that Reid be "engaged by all the Republican clubs to explain and defend the Commune", and that anyone "full of horror and alarm at the very name of the Commune, should undergo two hours special treatment from Mr. Reid. If not entirely cured I can guarantee that their worst symptoms will be completely modified".[22]

Like Bradlaugh, Sir Charles Dilke found that he could not stand clearly on the side of the Commune. He thought many of its decrees quite outlandish and that some of its violent actions in the last days were "both criminal and useless". Nevertheless, he was "by no means... inclined to dismiss its cause out of hand ... nor to excuse all the acts of its opponents".[23] He once remarked when discussing the merits of Paschal Grousset, the Commune's Delegate for Foreign Affairs, that George Sheffield, private secretary to Lord Lyons the British Ambassador to Paris, used to declare that "of all the many French Governments he had known the Commune was the only one that knew how to behave itself in society".[24]

Odger's attitude towards the Commune was the most ambivalent of all the British republican leaders. A report of a London Patriotic So-

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22 Ibid., 26 August 1871.

23 Dilke, "Unpublished Memoir", Dilke Papers, BM., Add. MS. 43931, ff. 148-151.

24 Ibid., BM., Add. MS. 43934, ff. 148-9.

ciety meeting states that Odger "made a powerful speech in favour of the Commune",[25] yet at the same time he was involved in a conflict with the International regarding Marx's defence of the Commune. Although prepared almost entirely by Marx, The Civil War in France was credited to the entire General Council. It accused Thiers, "that monstrous gnome", of starting the civil war and excused the violent acts of the Commune as being merely retaliatory in the face of extreme provocation. The final paragraph declared that:

> Working Men's Paris, with its Commune, will be for ever celebrated as the glorious harbinger of a new society. Its martyrs are enshrined in the great heart of the working class. Its exterminators' history has already been nailed to that eternal pillory from which all the prayers of their priests will not avail to redeem them.[26]

A reproduction of the first edition was printed in Reynolds' Newspaper for 28 May and, as was customary with official I.W.M.A. publications, it was signed by all members of the General Council. The Englishmen on that body were Hales, Weston, Harris, Murray, Milner, Townshend, Stepney, Cowell, Mottershead, Lucraft and Odger. Only one name was missing, that of Robert Applegarth.[27]

It appears that at a meeting of the General Council on 2 May both Odger and Applegarth expressed concern at their names being appended to

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25 National Reformer, 24 December 1871.

26 The Civil War in France - Address of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association, E. Truelove (London, 1871).

27 28 May 1871.

an address in support of the Commune. Applegarth had spoken to Jung about the address "while Odger had apparently - the Minutes are not entirely clear on this - raised the same point with Eccarius".[28] Eccarius said that although it was customary for the names of all General Council members to be on official statements, in this case an exception could be made. There was strong opposition to this but it was finally agreed to let Jung and Eccarius resolve the matter with Odger and Applegarth. For some reason, Applegarth's name was omitted from the first edition while Odger's was not. However, subsequent editions did not include the name of Odger or Lucraft. But the damage had already been done. As the best known of the English working class leaders on the General Council, Odger and Lucraft were singled out for attack by the press. The bad publicity was sustained to a level where the two were forced to resign from the General Council in order to retain their credibility as recognized leaders of the labour movement as a whole. This they did at the meeting of 20 June. Collins and Abramsky comment that this was the "first notable secession of English working class representatives from the International and was greated with joy by the Spectator".[29] Yet it is important to note that "no trade union withdrew its membership after the International's defence of the Commune", and the Engineers, who were not members, continued to make use of its services "without the least inhibition".[30]

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[28] Collins and Abramsky, The First International, 197-8.

[29] Ibid., 213. [30] Ibid., 222.

Royden Harrison has astutely pointed out that political republicans like Odger and Bradlaugh "were not well placed ... to defend the Commune when they had so recently been giving unconditional support to the men who were to become the Commune's deadly enemies".[31] This may well go a long way to explaining their ambivalent attitude. The International Democratic Association had no such dilemna. At its weekly gatherings, the Association declared in favour of the Commune and organised a sympathy meeting in Hyde Park for Sunday 16 April. Notwithstanding the indifferent weather, a "great many people"[32] assembled on Clerkenwell Green at 3 p.m. and proceeded to Hyde Park collecting supporters on route. By the time the meeting opened, the muster had grown to over five thousand, and although "the rough element" predominated there were also "large numbers of the middle class". Whether the latter were present as friends or foes is unclear. Owing to the size of the crowd, there were "three platforms erected, and three distinct meetings held".[33] James Murray acted as chairman for the main group. Mr. Radford read a long address which was to be sent to "the members of the Commune, the Central Committee, the National Guards and the working classes of Paris".[34] The address constituted a full endorsement of the actions and principles of the Commune and promised to rectify "the impious lies concerning you and the motives of your enemies, promulgated by our venal and corrupt press".[35] A resolution: "That the address just read be

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31 Harrison, Commune, 11.

32 Reynolds' Newspaper, 23 April 1871.

33 Sheffield Times, 22 April 1871.

34 Reynolds' Newspaper, 23 April 1871.

35 Ibid.

forwarded to the Commune of Paris on behalf of this meeting" was carried "amid immense cheering", only three or four brave fellows voting against it. The speakers concluded by urging their audience to band together to obtain "Liberty in right, Equality in law and Fraternity in interest and to hoist the English Republican Flag on the tower of St. Stephen's".[36] The meeting closed at 6:45 p.m. with three cheers for the Universal Republic and the singing of the Marseillaise.[37]

None of the London dailies professed to take the demonstration seriously while devoting a good deal of space to its proceedings. The Times printed a report submitted by Murray but added its own sarcastic comments.[38] The Daily News predictably played the occasion down, feeling sure that "the social forces which produced the display in Hyde Park on Sunday are not sufficiently deep, widespread and powerful to cause the most apprehensive clergyman any harm".[39] The Morning Post welcomed the demonstration on the grounds that it had "exposed more completely than could have been done in any other way, the entire absence of sympathy felt by the masses in England either with the principles of the Parisian Commune or with its professors".[40] The pun was intended and of course referred to the Positivists.[41] The Daily Telegraph assured its readers

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36 Sheffield Times, 22 April 1871.

37 Reynolds' Newspaper, 23 April 1871.

38 17 April 1871.

39 17 April 1871.

40 17 April 1871.

41 See below, 367.

that if the demonstrators "ever try to copy the tactics of Bellville by raising barricades on Clerkenwell Green they would not be hanged by the law, but ducked by an enraged people. They are too extravagant to awaken any alarm".[42] The Penny Illustrated Paper declared the meeting to be "out of sympathy with any side of English Republicanism, if there be any other than a theoretical Republicanism in England".[43] This was a rather curious statement since the meeting obviously proved that there was a "side of English Republicanism", albeit a minority, who sympathized with the Commune. The Penny Illustrated also had the effrontery to claim that only three hundred people were present.

All these reports basically maintained that the majority of British working men had no sympathy with the Commune and so property owners need not be alarmed by the demonstration. To the exasperation of the Commune's supporters, this judgement was essentially correct. A good example of the general attitude among respectable trade unionists was an article in the Bee Hive by T.J. Dunning, the Bookbinders' Secretary. Dunning spoke for the trade union oligarchy when he announced that economic categories were immutable and that the Communards must be insane to contemplate the abolition of rent.[44] While the British workmen were organising a fund to help their French brethren get their tools out of pawn, the Communards were preparing to abolish the pawn shops. Most respectable British workmen

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42 17 April 1871.

43 22 April 1871.

44 T.J. Dunning, "The Commune in Paris", 8 April 1871.

could not comprehend the idea of a proletarian dictatorship, thinking that such egalitarianism must result in the skilled and thrifty supporting the idle and profligate. Lloyds' told the ruling classes to be thankful for the moderation of most British workmen and warned that if reasonable reforms were not granted they would not remain moderate forever:

> If the great body of English working men are not led away by such doctrines as those which have plunged the capital of France into a bloody and ruinous civil war; men so temperate in thought, and calm in resolve, under such a class régime as ours, surely deserve better treatment.[45]

However, some working men did respect and sympathize with the Communards as courageous patriots and republicans, even if they were mystified by their political and social theories. This was doubtless what Thomas Wright meant when he said that "the working classes of this country did sympathise with the Commune, though not upon strictly Communistic grounds".[46] Wright pointed out that the British workers' political education was much shallower than their French counterparts and they knew little of the theory behind the Commune. Yet, they were sufficiently aware to see through the sensationalism of the upper and middle class press. In fact, anyone who could have

> ... penetrated into working class circles ... would have found from the talk of the men that newspaper public opinion was the opinion of a section only; that as we have been pointing out,

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45 23 April 1871.

46 Thomas Wright ("Journeyman Engineer"), "The English Working Classes and the Paris Commune", Frazer's Magazine, July 1871, reprinted in Our New Masters, 194.

> the sympathy of the people was with the Communists.[47]

Wright went on to maintain that his article was "no mere expression of individual opinion; it is the generalised opinion of working men as expressed among themselves".[48] He concluded with a recommendation that serious attention be devoted to the political education of the working classes lest they fall prey to extreme and violent doctrines. These, he said, were "spreading among the working classes" and the rulers must bear the responsibility "if ever we see such wild work in England as there has lately been in France".[49]

In fact, few steps were taken to emulate the Parisians. On 11 June Lloyds' featured an article from the I.W.M.A. entitled "The Criminals are Organising Themselves", which claimed that support for red revolution in London was growing rapidly. Lloyds' refuted the claim, asserting that:

> The English workman is a steady man, in politics as well as in his shop, and he knows how much liberty loses by disorder. He has settled certain reforms in his mind, which he means to have, and the certainty that he will have them lies in the calm and method with which he will agitate for them.[50]

There was no chance, said Lloyds', of a "Cockney Commune" becoming a reality. Almost two years later, William Harrison Riley put forward a plan for a commune in the International Herald. However, Riley's blueprint was more reminiscent of Owenite communitarianism than the

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47 Ibid., 203. 48 Ibid. 49 Ibid., 209.

50 Blanchard Jerrold, "A Cockney Commune", 11 June 1871.

Parisian model.[51]

Another working man who wrote on the Commune was Thomas Smith, founder of the Nottingham Branch of the I.W.M.A., and later treasurer of the National Republican Brotherhood. Unlike Wright, Smith was totally behind the Commune and its principles and would have liked France, and indeed England, to become a federation of communes. His defences of the Parisian experiment were both eloquent and well informed and stand as the most significant works of their kind by a contemporary English working man. They have been reproduced in Royden Harrison's compilation, The English Defence of the Commune 1871,[52] which hails Smith as "one of the few workers in the nineteenth century who sought, not merely to master a complex intellectual tradition, but to promote its further development".[53]

The majority of progressive thinkers were at least prepared to seek out the truth behind the Commune. Lord Amberley believed that there was a "good and sound cause for the Communard revolution"[54] and declared that the "awful crimes committed by the party of order are more than enough to inspire me with some sympathy with those who resisted the government of such abominable people".[55] Captain Maxse and John Ruskin felt the same, and George Whalley, M.P. for Peterborough, wrote to the Echo recommending

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51 William Harrison Riley, "Our Commune", 18 January 1873.

52 Harrison, Commune, 239-77.

53 Ibid., 240.

54 Lord Amberley to Laura Russell, 20 June 1871, B. and P. Russell, eds., Amberley Papers, 2:473.

55 Amberley to Arthur Russell, 24 July 1871, ibid., 2:476.

that "mercy and moderation" be shown to the Communards as their crimes had been grossly exaggerated.[56] Kate Amberley offered to help some of the refugees,[57] as did Dilke and Cowen. Frederic Harrison mentioned in a letter to Cowen that "Sir Charles Dilke tells me that he has communicated with you about the French refugees and that you have asked for a list".[58] Since these people had been ostracized by their peers for embracing or sympathizing with republican principles, they had little to lose. In fact, the most enthusiastic British supporters of the Commune were part of the same intellectual circle as the aforementioned personages: I refer of course, to the Positivists.

E.S. Beesly defended the Commune in some eleven articles published in the Bee Hive between 25 March and 24 June, all of which are included in the Harrison compilation.[59] Beesly implored the readers of the Bee Hive not to be "swayed by the malignant calumnies published in ... the middle class press". What Beesly saw as important about the Commune was that the workers "are at the present moment the dominant class in Paris, and that is a fact at which the workmen of London must needs be gratified, until they see overwhelming reasons for regarding it differently".[60] Thus, Beesly sympathized with the Commune primarily on

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[56] George Hammond Whalley to the Echo, 27 May 1871.

[57] Kate Amberley to Henry Crompton, 17 February 1872, B. and P. Russell, eds., Amberley Papers, 2:487-8.

[58] Harrison to Cowen, 8 January 1872, Cowen Collection, A923.

[59] Harrison, Commune, 64-106.

[60] E.S. Beesly, "The Paris Revolution", 25 March 1871.

the grounds that it was a giant step taken by the working classes of Paris towards the realization of their full potential in society. At the same time, he dissociated himself from the doctrines of Communism, advocating Positivism as the only practical alternative. As a Positivist he believed private property to be "bound up with civilization" and that it could never be completely abolished. But the moral pressure put upon property owners by Positivism would eventually force them to administer it "not for their own selfish enjoyment ... but for the good of society". When that was achieved, said Beesly, "communistic agitation would cease, not before".[61]

But, as we have seen, the British workmen were confused by the Commune, and although some were willing to give it moral support they were reluctant to go any further than that. This sparked off another of Beesly's periodic outbursts on the political immaturity of the British working classes. He charged that:

> The intellects of our workmen are cramped and their sympathies narrowed. With all their advantages of free public discussion, a free press and right of association, they are less thoughtful, less informed, less earnest and less united than the artisans not only of Paris and Lyons but of Berlin and Vienna.[62]

Beesly was pilloried for his defence of the Commune by J.S. Storr who described the Positivist's articles as "pestilential heresies".[63] James

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61 E.S. Beesly, "The Communists", 25 March 1871.

62 Idem., "London Republican", ibid., 24 June 1871.

63 J.S. Storr, "The Late Revolution and the Comtists", 3 June 1871; "The English Workmen and Their Friends", 19 October 1871; "Modern Revolution", 10 June 1871; "Infamous", 17 June 1871.

Aytoun[64] and Christopher Neville[65] also wrote in the Bee Hive against Beesly and the Commune.

Even Beesly's enthusiasm was surpassed by Frederic Harrison. In fact, Beesly warned Harrison that he was using "rather exaggerated language about the Commune".[66] Harrison's articles on the Commune took the form of political essays in contrast to the more journalistic approach employed by Beesly.[67] Harrison argued that the French people were being betrayed by the Thiers government which he claimed would eventually "set up a king, or keep the republic only as a disguise". He stated that since "the interests favoured by the government are those of the proprietory classes; there you have not a republic but a disguised aristocracy". The workmen of Paris soon perceived this fact and "resolved to secure a true and real republic" which would exist "solely for the sake of the people".[68] Harrison also pointed out that since the French provinces were in a numerical majority and fearfully conservative, "Paris needs a democratic commune, that is, a republican local government which it can trust to protect it from the usurpation of the provinces which might at any time bring back Napoleonism".[69] Harrison, like Thomas Wright,

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64 James Aytoun, "Trade Unions versus Communism", 1 July 1871.

65 Christopher Neville, "The Commune", 27 May 1871.

66 Beesly to Harrison, 13 March 1872, Beesly Papers, Env. 3.

67 R. Harrison, Commune, 168-238.

68 F. Harrison, "The Revolution of the Commune", ibid., 186-7.

69 Harrison to Morley, 22 March 1871, Harrison Papers, 1/53.

believed many Englishmen privately sympathized with the Commune but preferred to keep quiet about it. He wrote that "half the people I meet here (7 New Square, Lincoln's Inn) ... secretly (but very secretly) sympathise with the Commune".[70]

There was a good deal of correspondence between Harrison and John Morley on the subject of the Commune. Morley asked Harrison to write an article for the Fortnightly Review.[71] On receipt of the manuscript he wrote back saying that

> ... your paper on the Commune is really admirable ... But there will be mild squalls for you. No more enthusiasm from your Tory worshippers of December, mon ami. The fine ladies, the old parsons, the political nincompoops, who adored the vituperation of Bismarckism, will now turn you out of their hearts and doors.[72]

On another occasion, Morley told Harrison that "I am with you now to the extent of seeing that the sympathies of an English Republican ought to go warmly with the Commune".[73] But F.W. Hirst maintains that Morley "assumed the air of a Terrorist in order to get Harrison to modify the language of his article".[74] Morley, says Hirst, supported the Communards on the basis of their having more moral qualities, such as patriotism,

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70 Harrison to Morley, 9 June 1871, ibid.

71 F. Harrison, "The Revolution of the Commune", Fortnightly Review, (May 1871).

72 Morley to Harrison, 26 April 1871, Harrison Papers, 1/78.

73 Morley to Harrison, no date, ibid.

74 Hirst, Morley, 1:185.

discipline and high ideals, than the other French parties. Harrison disagreed with such a moralistic standpoint arguing that

> ... we must always look at the end as it affects civilisation as a whole and must not side with any set of men because they show valuable qualities - but because their efforts may influence for good human society.[75]

In other words, the end justified the means as far as Harrison was concerned. Hirst states that though Morley was moved by his friend's fervour, "his own more cautious faith in popular government allowed him to remain distrustful of the Paris Commune".[76]

The other leading Positivists joined Beesly and Harrison in endeavouring to rouse support for the Commune,[77] and later to assist the refugees. They co-operated with Marx and the Internationalists in setting up a fund for the refugees, finding them work and shelter and vigorously defending their right of asylum. Morley contributed to the funds and duly received a thank-you note from Harrison reassuring him that "I give money with the greatest care ..."[78] Harrison himself kept an open house and made considerable personal sacrifices to help his charges. The British government eventually took steps to stem the flow of refugees into the country, stipulating that those already in Britain could stay, but no

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75 Ibid., 186.

76 Ibid., 183.

77 See Harrison, Commune, for articles by J.H. Bridges, 121-130, and Richard Congreve, 29-36.

78 Harrison to Morley, 13 February 1872, Harrison Papers, 1/53.

more would be allowed in. The Bolton Evening News suggested that the refugees should not be refused asylum but if the French government asked for their extradition then the request should be complied with.[79] This would have amounted to taking away with one hand what had just been given with the other, and thankfully the suggestion was ignored by the authorities.

The government became perturbed about the presence of the Communards when the revolutionary Manifesto, written by certain refugees, began to be distributed on the streets of London. The Manifesto contained a vicious attack on MarshallMacMahon and openly advocated tyrannicide.[80] Superintendant Williamson brought the pamphlet to the attention of the Home Office and Robert Lowe submitted it to the Attorney General for a ruling as to whether or not proceedings should be taken. Lowe was of the opinion that "no remedy that the law affords should be neglected to prevent the abuses by the French Communists ... of the asylum which this country gives them".[81] The Attorney General recommended proceedings against the bookseller which he said would at least "have the effect of stopping the public sale of a very disgraceful publication".[82] H.B. Poland was

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79 31 May 1871.

80 The Manifesto was described in the Morning Post, 16 December 1873.

81 A.F.O. Liddell to Thomas Henry, Solicitor to the Treasury, 17 December 1873, Regarding the publication of a Manifesto by certain French Communists residing in London, R.R.O., H.O. 9355 29553.

82 Statement by Henry James to the Home Office, 20 December 1873, ibid.

given the job of pursuing the case but, having hunted down the major distributor, a M. Foucauld, discovered some discrepancies in the law on such matters.[83] Foucauld was neither publisher nor printer of the pamphlet, just the retailer, and the only charge that could be brought against him was one of libel against Marshall MacMahon. To pursue that charge would have been most troublesome and complex. However, Detective Sargeant George Greenbaum managed to trace the printer,[84] A. Darson, but curiously enough there is no record of any further proceedings being taken. Probably, the Home Office decided that it was better not to give publicity to such revolutionary doctrines.

The Paris Commune, then, had a considerable impact on British society. It was anathema to the propertied classes and bewildering to the workers. But if the latter were perplexed and found they could not wholeheartedly support the Commune, they at least did not display the rabid anti-Communard hysteria of the rest of British society.

John M. Robertson suggested, like Harrison, that the British republican movement suffered badly from repulsion to "the horrors of the Commune",[85] but this judgement appears false in view of the evidence presented in this chapter. The people who were violently antagonistic to the Commune were invariably antagonistic to any kind of republicanism. Most republicans, and indeed many liberal-minded people who were not re-

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83 H.B. Poland to Thomas Henry, Solicitor to the Treasury, 31 December 1873, ibid.

84 Statement by Henry James to the Home Office, 1 January 1874, ibid.

85 Robertson, Bradlaugh, 2:167.

publican, took the trouble to ferret out the truth behind the Commune and its alleged crimes. They came to the conclusion that such crimes had been grossly exaggerated and paled into insignificance beside those of the Versailles troops. Whatever was believed of the Commune in high society is irrelevant: there is no evidence that any republican left the movement because of it, or that it was a factor in the quarrel between the two major republican organisations. It should be noted that those respectable labour leaders who spurned the Commune were far from being the most active of republicans. Moreover, it is doubtful whether existing divisions in the republican ranks were more than temporarily exacerbated by the Commune. Certainly, British republicanism was not shattered overnight into "a host of quarrelsome, competing sects".[86] In fact, it was the Commune that attracted future socialist leaders such as H.M. Hyndman and E. B. Bax to republicanism and left-wing politics in general.[87]

H.M. Hyndman stated that in 1871 he was "an out and out Radical and Republican",[88] and abhorred the "positive blood lust" that "seized upon the possessing classes here and elsewhere".[89] E. B. Bax was deeply moved by "the martyrs of the Commune who died, as one of them expressed it, 'pour la solidarité-humaine ...", and this was only intensified by

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86 Harrison, Before the Socialists, 232. See also Torr, Tom Mann, 1:313.

87 See below.

88 H.M. Hyndman, The Record of an Adventurous Life (London, 1911), 110.

89 Ibid., 159.

the "foul abuse and lies with which the 'bourgeois' press assailed the Commune and all those connected with it".[90] He stated that the Commune "had a strong influence upon the whole course of my thought on things social and political, and led ultimately to my becoming a convinced Socialist". But let us leave the Paris Commune with a fitting epitaph from an "Old Radical" that appeared in the Edinburgh Reformer:

> It has made its mark on history and will not be forgotten. It has shown how men, animated by a great idea, are raised above common everyday crime, and are inspired with courage. It has sown and watered with its blood, seed which will bear harvest in the future.[91]

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[90] E.B. Bax, Reminiscences and Reflections of a Mid and Late Victorian (New York, 1920), 30.

[91] Anon. ("Old Radical", pseud.), "The End of the Commune", 13 May 1871.

CHAPTER 10

THE MONARCHY

J.A. Farrer said of Queen Victoria that "much as she loved her country, she loved the Monarchy more", and she "accepted rather than assented to, representative Government".[1] It is clear that Victoria was determined to hand on to her successors, unimpaired and undiminished, all the rights and privileges which she had acquired at her accession. She told Gladstone in no uncertain terms that she would not "be the Sovereign of a Democratic Monarchy".[2] The Queen never seemed to grasp that her lack of understanding of the masses, and more important, the lack of any attempt to rectify that, was liable to lead to a decrease in her popularity. She disliked Gladstone not only because of a personality conflict but also because she could always detect democratic tendencies in his policies. But ironically, Gladstone "worked far harder than the Queen to win for her the good opinion of the masses".[3]

In 1839, two years after the Queen's accession, Peter Wilkins wrote that the Monarch was merely "the nominal executive of laws enacted by the consent of all", and was as much restrained by those laws as any of her subjects.[4] However, as Walter Bagehot pointed out, the preroga-

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1 J.A. Farrer, The Monarchy in Politics (London, 1917), 175.

2 Queen Victoria to Gladstone (draft), ca. 1870, quoted in Sir Frederick Ponsonby, Sidelights on Queen Victoria (London, 1930), 171.

3 F. Hardie, The Political Influence of Queen Victoria (Oxford, 1935), 200.

4 Peter Wilkins, A Letter from Peter Wilkins to Isaac Tomkins (London, 1839), 11.

tives of the British Monarchy were broader than many people realized. In fact, the Queen, if she wished, "could by prerogative upset all the action of civil government".[5]

At the start of her reign, the Queen was immensely popular[6] but this slowly began to wane, particularly after she married Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg Gotha in February 1840. Albert was "un-English, unfashionable, serious, academic, humourless",[7] which made him a perfect target for derision in the press. As a result, he never really captured the imagination of the British people. But it was not until the early fifties that Albert was openly attacked by the left-wing press. Encouraged by Baron Stockmar, the Prince's old tutor and advisor, the royal couple were becoming actively involved in foreign policy. They objected to Palmerston's promotion of liberalism and nationalism on the continent, and his friendly reception of foreign political refugees. Such objections were not at all popular in Liberal and radical circles. In 1851, Palmerston was dismissed for sending dispatches abroad without allowing Victoria and Albert the privilege of objecting to them. This gave rise to the notion that the British Court was conspiring with continental reactionaries to halt the march of liberalism. When Palmerston resigned on the eve of the Crimean War, it was widely believed that he had again been dismissed by the Crown. There was an outcry in the press of such violence that the Queen half threatened to abdicate. She wrote

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5 Norman St. John-Stevas, ed. and intr., The Collected Works of Walter Bagehot, 12 vols. (London, 1974), 5:182.

6 See above, 53.

7 Martin, The Magic of Monarchy, 34.

to Aberdeen that:

> Were the Queen to believe that these unprincipled and immoral insinuations really were those of any but a wicked and despicable few, she would LEAVE a position which nothing but her domestic happiness could make her endure, and retire to private life.[8]

Although the public were convinced that Albert was in league with the Tzar, he was actually trying to prevent a fruitless and bloody conflict. However, his patriotism during the Crimean War eventually won him the respect, if not the affection, of many Englishmen.

The main point of dispute, of course, was how much, if any, royal prerogative was Albert entitled to. But this inevitably led on to questions about the prerogatives of the Queen herself. These questions were revived when a biography of the Prince Consort, by the royal historian Sir Theodore Martin, was published in 1878. Henry Dunkley, better known as "Verax" of the Manchester Examiner, wrote a series of letters criticizing the view of royal prerogative presented in the work. Dunkley stated that Martin gave the impression that the Cabinet's function was not to advise the Queen but "to do what they are told".[9] In fact, short of rejecting the advice of the Cabinet when finally offered, "there is no amount of interference with the Cabinet which is not assumed ... to be perfectly constitutional".[10]

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8 Ibid.

9 Henry Dunkley ("Verax", pseud.), The Crown and the Cabinet (Manchester, 1878), 18.

10 Ibid.

According to Dunkley, Stockmar was consulted by the Queen and Prince on virtually every issue. Moreover, Stockmar persuaded them that the Sovereign was the Permanent Premier of the government and could dismiss any member of the Cabinet without giving a reason, besides being entitled to preside at all Cabinet meetings. He also maintained that the Whigs, even men of the stamp of Lord Aberdeen, were "consciously or unconsciously preparing the way for a Republic, and that the personal popularity of the Queen should be developed as a counterpoise to the democratic development of the House of Commons".[11] Of course, at the very time Dunkley was writing, the Queen was again taking an active role in government, and he was quick to point out that the foreign affairs of the country were currently being settled "between her and the Earl of Beaconsfield".[12] Dunkley complained that to denounce royal interference in governmental processes had throughout the reign been condemned as "latent republicanism",[13] despite the fact that the "Bill of Rights and the Act of Settlement, the title deeds of the reigning dynasty, are the monuments built up on the grave of prerogative".[14] But the ill-defined nature of the British constitution allowed great elasticity in its interpretation.

Prince Albert died of typhoid fever in December 1861: he was only forty-two years old. Reynolds' Newspaper commented that the "un-

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[11] Ibid., 49.

[12] Henry Dunkley ("Verax", pseud.), The Crown and the Constitution - Reply of "Verax" to the Quarterly Review (Manchester, 1878), 66.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid., 51.

expected demise of the Prince Consort has furnished the flunkeys with a pretext for the outpouring of torrents of the most sickening and indiscriminate eulogy on the departed Prince".[15] But it seems that by this time Albert had consolidated the respect he gained during the Crimean War because Reynolds' refrained from saying anything against him personally. On the contrary, it was stated that "Prince Albert, for a Prince, was beyond all question or cavil, a most estimable man".[16] This radical organ was not, it seems, unaffected by Victorian middle class reverence for the family. The article extolled the domestic virtues of the Royal Family praising Albert as a husband and father, and Victoria as a wife and mother who "had a just claim to the respect and affections of her subjects".[17] But the Queen was deeply affected by the premature death of her husband and retired from public life. A few weeks, or even months, of seclusion would have been quite acceptable, but after several years had passed, people began to wonder whether they still had a queen or not.

In 1864 John Bellows, a Quaker, remarked that certain newspapers were spreading "petty rumours against the Queen, on account of her prolonged retirement from public life, which they alleged to be prejudicial to the national weal".[18] Bellows also pointed to the irony in the accusation that the Queen was simultaneously taking too active a part in

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15 22 December 1861.

16 Ibid. N.B. This issue of Reynolds' was not edged in black like virtually every other paper.

17 Ibid.

18 John Bellows, Remarks on certain anonymous articles designed to render Queen Victoria unpopular: with an exposure of their authorship (Gloucester, 1864), 1.

foreign affairs, particularly in matters relating to the war between Prussia and Denmark.[19] It was indeed a characteristic of many republicans to criticize the monarch for excessive interference in public affairs one moment, then dismiss her as a useless puppet the next.[20]

Two years later at a reform meeting in St. James' Hall, the Rt. Hon. A. Ayrton stated that "he thought it was one of the duties of Royalty to show a feeling of sympathy for the living as well as affectionate reverence for the memory of the dead".[21] But because of her seclusion, the Queen never learnt of this and other criticisms at the time and continued to neglect her public duties. She declined to open Parliament in person and took little or no part in the entertainment of important foreign visitors. After the Chinese delegation of 1869 had been given a particularly cool reception, Reynolds' Newspaper stated that "when slight, discourtesy or inhospitality is displayed by the individual (monarch), the discredit is reflected upon the entire people".[22] During these years, the Queen spent most of her time at Balmoral or Osborne, and occasionally Windsor:

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19 Ibid.

20 See above,

21 A. Ayrton, Speech at St. James' Hall, 4 December 1866, quoted in G.E. Buckle, ed., The Letters of Queen Victoria, ser. 2, 3 vols. (London, 1925), 2:227. John Bright was the chairman of that meeting and took it upon himself to defend the Queen although admitting that he was "not accustomed to stand up for those who are possessors of crown". Rev. J.B. Hutchinson, John Bright "The Tribune of the People" (London, 1877), 14-15. When in 1872, the Queen learnt of the speech, she immediately objected to Ayrton being given government office. See: Queen Victoria to W.E. Gladstone, 11 August 1872, quoted in Buckle, ed., Letters of Queen Victoria, ser. 2, 2:227.

22 Anon., "The Royal Recluse", 14 February 1869.

Buckingham Palace, though, remained untenanted.

The Franco-Prussian War brought the unpopularity of the Monarchy into even sharper focus. Republicans accused the Royal Family of over-friendly communications with the Prussians and suspected that "Court influence had prevented the English Government from vigorously opposing"[23] the Prussian cause. In their enthusiasm for the new French republic, British workmen were highly susceptible to such suggestions and it is almost certain that in the winter of 1870-1 their growing doubts about the Monarchy were heightened.

It cannot be denied that the Queen's views on current political questions put her in the opposite camp to many of her working class subjects. Family connections placed the Queen firmly on the side of Germany in the war against France, although she retained a sentimental attachment to Napoleon III. The majority of working men took precisely the opposite standpoint; supporting France while loathing Napoleon III. The latter found sanctuary in Britain after the Republic was declared and received visits from the Queen which were not at all approved of by the workers.[24] And it was not only working men and middle class radicals who disliked Napoleon. Sir Henry Ponsonby declared that:

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23 Maccoby, English Radicalism 1853-1886, 169. In fact, those suspicions were justified. See Memorandum by Queen Victoria, 9 September 1870; Memorandum by Queen Victoria, 11 January 1871 and the Queen's Journal 8, February 1871, quoted in Buckle, ed., Letters of Queen Victoria, ser. 2, 2:62-3, 107, 119.

24 National Reformer, 8 April 1871.

> He has dragged down his nation to ruin, plunged them into an awful war when it was his duty to have known they were unfit for it ... I can't conceive who can say a word for him.[25]

When Louis Napoleon died in June 1873, Ponsonby received a note from the Queen informing him that she "feels the poor Emperor's death very much and she rejoices to see the feeling of regret and sympathy felt in England".[26] In actuality, it is doubtful if anyone but a few Tory aristocrats cared one jot about the death of Louis Napoleon.

The Queen was by no means inclined to keep her opinions to herself. She warned the government "most solemnly and positively against the danger of alienating Germany from us".[27] Foreign Secretary Granville agreed with her "as to the importance of a consistent observance of neutrality in action and in language on the part of the Ministry", but added that it would prove impossible "to check discussions in Parliament which may have a bad effect". He also pointed out that it was inevitable that "the bombardment of Paris and the misery of the French people should ... create sympathy".[28]

In 1871, the Queen opened parliament in person for the first time in ten years,[29] and this seemed to augur well for the future. However,

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[25] Sir Henry Ponsonby to Lady Emily Ponsonby (His Mother), 9 September 1870, in A. Ponsonby, Henry Ponsonby: His Life From His Letters (London, 1943), 41-2.

[26] Queen Victoria to Ponsonby, 14 June 1873, ibid., 41.

[27] Memorandum by Queen Victoria, 9 September 1870, quoted in Buckle, ed., Letters of Queen Victoria, ser. 2, 2:63.

[28] Lord Granville to Queen Victoria, 12 January 1871, ibid., 107.

[29] Manchester Guardian, 10 February 1871.

Victoria was not yet ready to end her retirement completely, and declined to attend any other public functions. Indeed, in August Gladstone made a determined but futile effort to persuade the Queen to delay her departure for Balmoral and personally prorogue a rather lengthy parliamentary session.[30] For the remainder of the year, the press was full of articles condemning the Queen for her overly long period of mourning. The Weekly Dispatch proclaimed that "the seclusion of the Queen has imperilled the institution of the monarchy",[31] and Reynolds' declared that "the Queen is perhaps the most practical Republican in the Country".[32] The paper also argued that if the sovereign had duties to fulfil then "she should make some sacrifice in order that they may be performed without impeding the transaction of public business, or inconveniencing the public servants of the nation".[33] However, if the monarch was a mere dummy with no voice in the government of the country then "it is quite time all idle and useless forms and ceremonials were ... abolished, as well as a large portion of her annual stipend".[34] Since none of the latter had been spent on ceremonial requirements for a decade, radicals began to suspect that the Queen must be amassing a considerable private fortune and therefore questioned the need for further grants to her children.

But, it was not only the radical press that was aroused by

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30 Magnus, Gladstone, 208-9.

31 Anon., "Secluded Royalty", 8 October 1871.

32 28 May 1871.

33 7 August 1870.

34 Ibid.

Victoria's indifference. Newspapers who did not want to see the end of the Monarchy urged the Queen to take heed of the criticisms levelled against her and act accordingly. Walter Bagehot wrote in that staid publication The Economist that "the Queen has done almost as much injury to the popularity of the monarchy by her long retirement from public life as the most unworthy of her predecessors did by his profligacy and frivolity".[35]

Gladstone was very much aware of the Queen's growing unpopularity and never lost an opportunity of urging her to "stay in London, and to perform public and ceremonial duties".[36] Her Majesty did not feel inclined to comply with the Prime Minister's wishes but nevertheless began to keep a watchful eye on the progress of British republicanism. She recognized the expediency of "leaving alone speeches of a violent character made by persons of little weight", but Sir Charles Dilke's speech at Newcastle put a whole new complexion on the matter. A republican shoemaker or atheist was one thing, a republican baronet was quite another. The Queen informed Gladstone that she did not "feel entirely satisfied with the disclaimer of participation in such sentiments as made by Mr. Gladstone, and wishes to put it to him whether he or at least some of his colleagues should not take an opportunity of reprobating in very strong terms such language". Continuing, the Queen chastised Gladstone for the fact that

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35 Walter Bagehot, "The Monarchy and the People", The Economist, 22 July 1871, quoted in St. John-Stevas, Bagehot, 5:431.

36 Magnus, Gladstone, 208.

> ... these revolutionary theories are allowed to produce what effect they may in the minds of the working classes. Gross mis-statements and fabrications, injurious to the credit of the Queen, and injurious to the Monarchy, remain unnoticed and uncontradicted ... She does not for a moment doubt the sentiments of the Cabinet on the subject, and only wishes that they should be expressed.[37]

Gladstone wrote back to point out that a denunciation by him of Dilke's speech "though it doubtless would have gratified many, would have tended to exasperate and harden such persons as composed the Newcastle meeting". He said that the current wave of republicanism was "a matter of grave public importance" and the best way of coping with it was to "deal as lightly as maybe with the mere signs, but seriously with the causes of the distemper". He did not stipulate exactly what he understood those causes to be or how exactly he intended to deal with them. Gladstone also maintained that if any Cabinet members were to enter into an argument with Dilke, the effect might be "to widen, and so to speak, establish the controversy".[38] This by no means satisfied Her Majesty who immediately wrote back reiterating her demand that "the Government take a firm stand against revolutionary and extreme views". Such action, she said, "would rally round them all their best and truest supporters".[39] Gladstone, of course, was well aware that such action would also alienate large numbers of potential Liberal voters at the next election. It must

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37 Queen Victoria to Gladstone, 19 November 1871, quoted in Buckle, ed., Letters of Queen Victoria, ser. 2, 2:164.

38 Gladstone to Queen Victoria, 22 November 1871, ibid., 2:165-9.

39 Queen Victoria to Gladstone, 4 December 1871, ibid., 2:172.

be said that the Queen was really a thorn in Gladstone's side throughout his first two ministries, as she complained constantly of the "want of respect and consideration of her views".[40]

Queen Victoria may have been more willing to listen to Gladstone's warnings had she occasionally glanced at a newspaper other than The Times. For instance, the Sheffield Daily Telegraph was convinced that if British republicanism really gained momentum, "those institutions which have ceased to cause any lively enthusiasm may go to the wall more quickly than anybody expects ..."[41] In October 1871, the National Reformer reported that "it is positively stated in the very highest circles that the question of the Queen's abdication has been seriously discussed". The article went on to claim that the royal family was "too weak to make much resistance, it has no hold on the affections of the people, and is too much disliked by its immediate supporters".[42] The continuing security of the Monarchy was in large measure due to Gladstone. His strategy of neutralizing the republicans by alternately belittling them and ignoring them was fundamentally successful, and he himself remained thoroughly loyal. Yet the Queen's offhanded treatment of Gladstone hardly deserved such loyalty. Mary Ponsonby wrote to her husband, the Queen's private secretary, that "if they don't take care Gladstone will show his teeth about Royalty altogether, and I wouldn't answer for its lasting long after that".[43]

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[40] Queen Victoria to Ponsonby, 27 May 1882, quoted in A. Ponsonby, Henry Ponsonby, 194.

[41] 4 February 1871.

[42] 1 October 1871.

[43] Mary Ponsonby to Sir Henry Ponsonby, 27 September 1871, quoted in Magdalen Ponsonby, ed., Mary Ponsonby, A Memoir (London, 1927), 68.

If the Queen forfeited some popular devotion during her retirement it was because of what she did not do rather than what she did. At no time did she inspire active hatred. John Bellows commented that even those who loathed the Monarchy as a system of government, "have yet too sincere a respect for the private character of our widowed sovereign to revile her as an individual".[44] After meeting the Queen in 1867, John Bright wrote in his diary that:

> I am not a 'courtier', but I can respect an ancient Monarchy, and can reverence a Monarch whom Monarchy has not spoiled; and I have always held a true sympathy with the Queen in her deep sorrow.[45]

Even many sincere republicans were affected by that deeply ingrained attachment to England's ancient monarchy, which could probably be shaken only by the presence of a tyrant on the throne. James Aytoun wrote to the Daily News that although he favoured a "pure republic" over constitutional monarchy, he considered that

> ... no sensible Liberal ought in any way or form to agitate the question of Republicanism as long as we have on the throne of England a sovereign so constitutional and conscientious as Queen Victoria has proved herself during the whole course of her reign.[46]

The hard core of republicans would not have agreed, but it was a point

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44 Bellows, Remarks, 44.

45 J. Bright, Diaries, with a forward by P. Bright (London, 1930), 337. See above, 291-8.

46 James Aytoun to the Daily News, reprinted in the Newcastle Weekly Chronicle, 6 April 1872.

of view held by many members of the middle class and largely responsible for depriving the republican movement of their practical support. Even the advanced Dundee Advertiser occasionally talked with fondness about the domestic virtues of the "widowed mother".[47] Disraeli worked hard to strengthen the cult of monarchy, even before he returned to power in 1874. Speaking at Manchester Free Trade Hall in April 1872, he observed that:

> England is a domestic country. Here the home is revered and the hearth sacred. The nation is represented by a family - the royal family; and if that family is educated with a sense of responsibility and a sentiment of public duty, it is difficult to exaggerate the salutory influence they may exercise over a nation.[48]

Bagehot, too, thought that royalty in its ideal state should be a noble family with whom the people could identify and look up to for example.[49]

It was the middle class who particularly identified with the domesticity of the Queen, but in this, as in other things, they were joined by some of the more prosperous working men. Lloyds' Weekly and the Bee Hive taught that respectable working men did not show disrespect to the Queen. In 1862, the British Miner and General Newsman spoke of "our gracious Queen"[50] and consistently gave all members of the royal family, even

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47 11 July 1871.

48 Disraeli, Speech at Manchester Free Trade Hall, 3 April 1872, quoted in St. John-Stevas, Bagehot, 5:86.

49 Ibid., 229.

50 13 September 1862.

the unpopular Duke of Cambridge, a good press. It is noteworthy that three cheers were given for the Queen at several reform meetings in 1866. However, a year later such occurrences had become much rarer and by the summer of 1867 the Commonwealth, a descendant of the Newsman, had begun to attack The British Monarchy, a major organ of royalist propaganda.

As early as July 1867, The British Monarchy made the important admission that there was an undercurrent of republicanism among the British working classes. However, the paper maintained that essentially loyal subjects were being led astray by a few self-seeking agitators.[51] Conservative Working Men's Associations were keenly promoted as the type of organisations that would civilize "drunken rowdies" and turn them into good royalists.[52] However, as we witnessed earlier, those two conditions were not necessarily incompatible.[53] Another monarchist publication, The Queen's Messenger, agreed that a "disloyal spirit is just now abroad".[54] The Messenger was passionately loyal to the Queen but anxious to expose corruption and inefficiency among civil servants, court officials and aristocratic hangers-on. Its readers were assured that "it is to the many virtues of the Queen of England that we owe much of our national happiness and prosperity as well as our pre-eminence among the nations of the Earth".[55] Other papers, besides the major right-wing dailies, which espoused the cause

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51 6 July 1867.

52 10 August 1867. Also see below, 423.

53 See above, 225, 235-40, 243.

54 1 April 1869.

55 28 January 1869.

of royalty were the deferential British Workman and the Illustrated London News. The latter reported every trivial action of members of the royal family and was pro-German during the Franco-Prussian War. The working classes were depicted as clean, healthy and mostly happy with their lot. Being only too well aware of the growing tide of republicanism the News endeavoured to convince its readers that the Queen was passionately interested in Metropolitan affairs:

> It would be easy to name a few of the instances in which she has personally encouraged schemes of the highest social utility. We may refer to her opening of the Lincoln's Inn Hall in 1845; that of the Great Exhibition in 1851; and that of the new building of London University in May 1870, ...[56]

This was hardly an impressive tally over thirty years.

The most ardent defenders of the Monarchy in the seventies were naturally the Conservative and Constitutional Associations. Lord John Manners and Lord George Hamilton instructed the Westminster Conservative Working Men's Association in the horrors and treason of republicanism.[57] In June 1872, the conference of the National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations at Crystal Palace launched an all out attack on republicanism spearheaded by Disraeli himself.[58] This became known as Disraeli's "New Course" which exalted the Crown as the focus of a new imperialism designed to appeal to Britain's middle class. It is interesting

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56 2 March 1872.

57 Dundee Advertiser, 20 November 1871.

58 Aberdeen Weekly Free Press, 29 June 1872. See below, 423.

though, that one loyalist meeting at Wellington Barracks was actually invaded by five thousand republicans. They expelled the chairman and committee, overturned tables and chairs, turned off the gas and left the building. But the streets around the area were occupied until midnight when the crowd began to disperse: no one was injured. Before the disturbance, an address to the Queen pledging allegiance was signed by several hundred "loyal inhabitants of Chelsea".[59] At the fourth anniversary of Tower Hamlets Constitutional Association, the chairman stated that republican agitation had done good service to the Throne by proving that at no time had it been more secure.[60] Actually, the prestige of the Monarchy was lower than it had been for half a century.

The editor of the Midland Free Press, was just one observer who believed the current republican trend could be reversed quite easily. He recommended the friends of monarchy to "bring out the Queen and all disturbance will cease".[61] There was much truth in the statement. On the few occasions when the Queen did appear in public in these years, the spectacle certainly helped to retrieve some, if not all, of her lost popularity. The Thanksgiving celebrations occasioned Her Majesty's first major public appearance in many years.[62] The following August, she was so well received in Edinburgh that a special letter was presented to the Lord Provost expressing the Queen's gratitude.[63] While visiting the estates of

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59 Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, 20 January 1872.

60 Ibid., 10 February 1872.

61 2 March 1872.

62 See below, 399-402.

63 Aberdeen Weekly Free Press, 24 August 1872.

the Duke of Sutherland, the Queen went to watch the sinking of a new mine shaft. During the proceedings, it began to rain and Her Majesty gave a rug to a miner whose clothing was inadequate. The loyalist press, of course, made much of this gesture of common human kindness.[64]

It may be that the republican conference of December 1872 and the one proposed for May 1873, influenced the Queen's decision to visit the East End of London in April 1873. She must surely have begun to realize that the best way to combat republicanism was to tap the deep-rooted sentimentality of the British public. Thus, on 2 April 1873, Queen Victoria "simply and trustingly went into the midst of myriads upon myriads of her metropolitan subjects", and met with "no demonstration but one of respect and attachment".[65] The Queen was accompanied by several other ladies, including the Princess Beatrice, and had only a nominal guard of three or four outriders. The lack of escort was exploited to the full as a weapon of propaganda by the right-wing press. The London correspondent of the Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian described the following incident:

> 'No escort sir!' said a man who was standing next to me. 'No escort' replied a hard-fisted carpenter, whose paper cap betokened his calling,'the people is her guards! the people is her guards!'[66]

However, Home Office records confirm that police and troops were standing

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64 Norwich Mercury, 2 November 1872.

65 Illustrated London News, 5 April 1873.

66 5 April 1873.

by at strategic but inconspicuous points, and the apparent lack of escort was simply a propaganda ploy.[67] This is confirmed by an entry in the Queen's journal which states that "troops, Life Guards and Foot Guards" were on hand.[68]

Most sources agree that the Queen's reception was a good one. She was presented with addresses from the inhabitants of Hackney, Shoreditch and Bethnal Green who declared themselves to be "law-abiding people faithfully attached to the person of your Majesty and loyally devoted to the interests of your Royal House".[69] The enthusiasm of the crowd could not be denied, but while royalists rejoiced Lloyds' found it "most remarkable".[70] The sincerity of the multitude was doubted by J.L. Wildbore who wrote in Reynolds' that

> ... ninety-nine persons out of a hundred of the brainless boobies who bawled till they were black in the face, have about as much regard for her Majesty as they have for the person of 'Jack-in-the Green' at May-Day.[71]

It is impossible to accurately judge the dominant political affiliations of a crown at such an event. Possibly, some borderline republicans may

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67 Queen Victoria's Visit to Victoria Park, H.O., 9338/21260, P.R.O.

68 Queen's Journal, 2 April 1873, in Bickle, ed., Letters of Queen Victoria, 253-4.

69 Address to the Queen from the inhabitants of Hackney, Shoreditch and Bethnal Green, H.O., 9338/21260, P.R.O.

70 6 April 1873.

71 25 May 1873.

have been impressed by the Queen's apparent affection for her poorer subjects. There is no way of estimating how many of those present were sincere royalists, or republicans just there for the show. However, what can be said is that a Queen who went out to meet her people was infinitely more popular than one who did not.

It is important to note that during Victoria's reign, there were seven attempts on her life and two serious threats.[72] The most famous of these occurred on 28 February 1872. Arthur O'Connor, described by the Newcastle Weekly Chronicle as a "half witted youth",[73] pointed a pistol at the Queen through her carriage window and then aimed a blow at her head. The blow was warded off by Prince Arthur and John Brown apprehended O'Connor until the police arrived. Apparently, the assassin wanted the Queen to use her influence to obtain the release of certain Fenian prisoners. The pistol, incidently, turned out not to be loaded. The Queen was thoroughly shaken and a lengthy entry in her journal testifies to the fact, besides crediting John Brown with saving her life.[74] Six years later, an interpreter by the name of Edward Byrne Madden threatened to shoot the Queen unless he was paid £1000.[75] On 27 May 1881, the Queen received an anonymous letter warning of threats against her life by "persons of rank". She evidently wrote to Sir William Harcourt that "she did not see who could be meant 'unless it were Lord Randolph Churchill'".[76]

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72 See Appendix 25.

73 2 March 1872.

74 Queen's Journal, 29 February 1872, quoted in Buckle, ed., Letters of Queen Victoria, Ser. 2, 2:198.

75 Reynolds' Newspaper, 15 December 1878.

76 Dilke Papers, BM., Add. MS. 43935, f. 101.

It was not only the attitudes and activities of the Queen which influenced the development of republicanism. The career of the Prince of Wales was followed just as closely by republicans, who were quick to turn all his indiscretions to their advantage. Yet the Prince did possess many attributes. His genial character enabled him to communicate easily with people of all classes and to be cordial with those whose political opinions he did not share: two virtues his mother lacked. Moreover, he was one of the few aristocrats who was suspicious of Germany. He overcame a natural mistrust of republicanism, or at least of the moderate theoretical variety, and during the eighties was on good terms with Dilke and Maxse who habitually tried to persuade him that a republic was the only decent form of government.[77] But in the sixties and seventies Albert Edward was far from popular with many people. The radical press criticized his irresponsibility constantly and even some of the more moderate journals were often hard pressed to find something praiseworthy to report. Of course, Englishmen have traditionally had more respect for royal females than males and it was with this in mind that Reynolds' predicted that:

> With the life of the Queen will cease the security with which Christian sentimentalism has invested state delinquency. With the accession of the Prince of Wales, or any other man, will recommence the rigorous supervision and the wholesome jealousy with which Englishmen have been want to regard the occupant of the British throne.[78]

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77 Hirst, Morley, 1:252.

78 Anon., "The Prince of Wales, - His Perils, His Prospects and His Duties", 29 December 1861.

In April 1870, the paper printed a letter condemning the royal family's lack of interest in public affairs and requested that "any noble action" of genuine importance be reported in full as "it will have novelty to recommend it".[79] The writer expressed disgust at the trivial facts about royalty constantly being printed in some newspapers.

Bradlaugh was particularly contemptuous of the Prince and his oratory and journalism contributed much towards the Prince becoming a figure of active antipathy. The National Reformer proclaimed in May 1871 that "the heir apparent to the throne has neither the intelligence nor the virtue, nor the sobriety, nor the high sense of honesty or truth which might entitle him to take a front rank in this great nation".[80] The fact that the Prince was called as a witness in the Mordaunt divorce scandal was gleefully seized upon by his critics and "gave a lift to republicanism".[81] W.E. Adams commented in the Newcastle Weekly Chronicle that even if the Prince was innocent, the affair was "not without its moral", namely that the "lounging classes" should occupy their time more productively.[82] Some months later, the Chronicle noted with interest that the conservative Standard and Saturday Review had both protested against the appointment of the Prince to a command in the autumn army manoevres, on the grounds that he was keeping a better qualified man from his rightful position.[83]

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79 "Anglo Saxon", 3 April 1870.

80 12 May 1871.

81 Reynolds' Newspaper, 28 May 1871.

82 W.E. Adams ("Ironside"), "The Mordaunt Scandal", 5 March 1870.

83 23 September 1871.

However, in December 1871, the Prince inadvertantly gave royalty a tremendous boost by catching typhoid fever. Telegrams of sympathy poured in from all parts of the kingdom in sufficient numbers to move the Queen to issue a public letter of thanks to her people. As a result, the middle class press became totally preoccupied with eulogizing the Queen's domestic virtues. The Leeds Critic described the letter as "one of the most touchingly beautiful epistles ever addressed to the British nation ... so free from the pomps and vanities of a Court Life, so heartfelt and motherly, as to cause a thrill of pleasure throughout our home loving country".[83a]

Some commentators, though, were more cynical. Sir Sydney Lee, in his biography of the Queen, mentioned that John Richard Green wrote at the time that such "domestic loyalty" would not settle the question of republicanism. He was as sorry as anyone when a mother lost a son of only thirty years but the drooling of newspapers and town councils over telegrams from the sick bed was simply ludicrous.[84] Reynolds' Newspaper was unmoved also, and pointed out that for every aristocrat who died of typhoid there were hundreds from the lower classes.[85] The comforts available to the sick prince were compared to the bundle of rags on a damp floor which was the lot of a sick pauper.[86] In contrast, Lloyds' caught a bad attack of "typhoid loyalty" stating that:

83a 1 January 1872

84 Sir Sydney Lee, Queen Victoria - A Biography (London, 1903), 415-16.

85 3 December 1871.

86 17 December 1871.

> To the mass of the people, the Prince's pleasant social qualities, his kindly warm heart and quick sympathies, his unaffected gaiety, his gallant manly bearing, and his frank cordiality, have made him especially dear, and of this, the gloom that has hung over the whole nation for the last ten days is ample evidence.[87]

But such panegyrics appeared light beside those that hailed the Prince's recovery. On 27 February 1872, a National Thanksgiving Service was held at St. Pauls to which the Queen and Prince drove in procession through scenes of great enthusiasm. It is noteworthy that Dilke, like all M.P.'s was sent two tickets for the ceremony, but stayed away:[88] an act which made him even more unpopular in high society than he was already. The Queen issued a public letter of gratitude for "the reception she and her dear children met with ... from millions of her subjects on her way to and from St. Pauls".[89] Large numbers of normally rational newspapers declared the Prince to have been plucked from the jaws of death by divine providence, and repeated previous statements about how the royal family was "so thoroughly constitutional, wise, discreet, and genuinely domestic".[90] Many advanced Liberal newspapers that had previously been sympathetic towards moderate republicanism rationalized their ambiguity in the manner of the Leeds Evening Express which reasoned that:

> A man who is sober, intelligent, faithful to himself and to the laws of his country, is a thoroughly loyal subject, even though he believe that the Monarchy is not the best form of

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87 17 December 1871.

88 See Illustration.

89 Illustrated London News, 9 March 1872.

90 Leeds Evening Express, 28 February 1872.

> government for England; whilst the drunken bigot who proclaims abroad that he loves his Queen and curses all those who would continue to reform our constitution, may be regarded as a dangerous and disloyal citizen ...[91]

But by no means all newspapers compromised their credibility in such a curious manner. The National Reformer complimented the normally right-wing Northern Echo for printing the following passage:

> It is certainly to be hoped that the sublime spectacle of a nation in suspense and in prayer round the sick bed in Sandringham, may have awakened in the Prince a sense of his responsibilities and his position, which hitherto, he has not evinced.[92]

Reynolds' welcomed the Prince's recovery out of common humanity but said that he must mend his ways if the Monarchy was to survive. The paper and its correspondents showed nothing but disgust for the vast, unnecessary expense of the Thanksgiving celebrations.[93] Lloyds' instructed the upper classes to be profoundly thankful for the loyalty of the masses, but warned that if they continued to resist demands for working class legislation, "the noisy upstarts who dub themselves the representatives of Labour may become the real representatives of Labour".[94] Lloyds' only criticism of the Thanksgiving celebrations was that all the best vantage points were reserved for the rich and "the most generously and loyally disposed people in the world" were not properly catered for.[95]

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91 Ibid.

92 Passage from the Northern Echo, quoted in the National Reformer, 10 March 1872.

93 "Gracchus" (pseud.), "Thanksgiving Twaddle", 10 March 1872.

94 25 February 1872.

95 Ibid.

The Dundee Advertiser praised the republicans for having the "decency, while the shadow of death seemed resting upon the nation to leave off making speeches".[96] Even Bradlaugh remained quiet during the crisis and cancelled a number of lectures. Although he did organise a meeting to protest against the over-reaction to the Prince's recovery. At a meeting of the London Republican Club, he justifiably denied that the royal illness had sounded the death knell of republicanism. A few waverers may have been lost but the movement as a whole stood firm.[97] New clubs continued to spring up and the Lancaster Republican Club held its inaugural meeting on the very eve of the Thanksgiving.[98]

W.E. Adams, as always, proved to be one of the most analytical and objective of observers. He detected a dinstinct lack of principle in the thoughtless trend-following that went on, and condemned the hypocrisy of former critics of the Prince who were suddenly maintaining that England's happiness and prosperity depended on his recovery.[99] Vorley, in the National Reformer, complained about the "blundering admiration of the Queen, because she is not destitute of the feelings of a mother; or of the Princess of Wales, because she has the ordinary affections of a wife". He correctly observed that "this does not touch the question of greatness or fitness".[100] Another commentator composed the following verse on the

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96 27 February 1872.

97 Newcastle Weekly Chronicle, 2 November 1872. See above, 8-9.

98 See above, 234.

99 Newcastle Weekly Chronicle, 13 January 1872.

100 "Vorley" (pseud.), "Reflections on the Visit of a Prince", 14 July 1872.

subject of typhoid loyalty:

> Remember how England, deprived of her wits,
> When a loyalty fever began;
> Appeared with her children prostrated by fits
> At the probable loss of a man.[101]

The author said that he felt sympathy for the Prince as a fellow human being, but actually felt more for the man killed in the Bolton Riots.

It was another three years before the Prince was in the centre of the stage again. In the spring of 1875, he planned to visit India in an unofficial capacity but applied to Parliament for his expenses.[102] The result was a public meeting in Hyde Park which the National Reformer described as

> ... one of those genuine Republican demonstrations and earnest protests against Royal exaction and Whig and Tory misrepresentation, that must afford unmistakable proof to the Government that the working classes of the metropolis are in earnest in their opposition to any more of their money being voted for the gratification of the whims of members of the Royal Family.[103]

Estimates of the numbers present ranged from five thousand in some right-wing dailies to one hundred thousand in the National Reformer. The meeting declared its unreserved support for the action of Taylor, Burt and MacDonald who had spoken out against the proposed grant and denounced Gladstone and Bright as traitors along with Disraeli. Messages of sym-

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101 "An Old Author" (pseud.), Reformation or Revolution - The Coming Question, 22.

102 National Reformer, 27 June 1875.

103 Ibid., 25 July 1875.

pathy were received from republicans in seventeen provincial towns.[104]

However, that summer did witness a demonstration in favour of the Prince which surprisingly took place in the old republican stronghold of Sheffield. The National Reformer was most shocked and commented that:

> Perhaps Sheffield may best redeem its honour by rejecting Mr. Mundella at the next election: he appears to be irretrievably committed to the Court party, and his rejection would do something towards reinstating Sheffield in the eyes of English and continental Republicans. It is, of course, possible that the Sheffield Republicans may have made some protest, which has not been recorded in the newspapers. If so it could be well to make it as public as possible through the radical papers.[105]

Because of the India trip, the Prince cancelled a scheduled visit to Cornwall. One Cornishman, at least, was not at all disappointed and wrote to Reynolds' Newspaper that "they got on better without him in every way and ... came to the sensible conclusion that he was just a national encumbrance".[106] The radicals continued their protest while the Prince was in India, criticizing him for allowing brutal spectacles to take place.[107]

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104 Messages of support were received from Edinburgh, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Bedlington, Tynemouth, Manchester, Stalybridge, Bradford, Leicester, Oldham, Derby, Crewe, Huddersfield, Reading, Birmingham, Leeds, Hull, Kidderminster and Lower Spennymoor.

105 29 August 1875.

106 23 January 1876.

107 23 April 1876.

The outcry against the taxpayers having to finance the Prince of Wales' non-official visit to India was just one of many examples of widespread public indignation at the excessive cost of maintaining a monarchy and all its trappings. This, in turn, was just one aspect of the Victorian obsession with fiscal economy. With the Queen continuing to neglect her official duties throughout the 1860's, the question was increasingly raised as to whether she should be so well paid for work she was not doing. Lloyds' Weekly which, as we have seen, was not the most rabidly republican of newspapers, observed in April 1868 that:

> When it is published far and wide that, in addition to the liberal grants of parliament, the sovereign enjoys enormous private wealth - people who are suffering by diminished incomes will not be apt to discuss patiently the policy of increasing the taxation - even by a few thousand pounds for royal show.[108]

In the light of this statement, it is ironical that very little money had been spent on "royal show" since the death of Prince Albert. In 1837, the Civil List had been fixed at £385,000 per annum on the assumption that, like William IV, she would find it necessary to spend £131,260 per annum on Household salaries and pensions, and £172,500 each year on Household expenses. Particularly after 1861, Queen Victoria spent a good deal less than that, and the savings had been transferred to the Privy Purse. The latter had subsequently grown from £60,000, as fixed by the Civil List, to £160,000 a year. This, stated one critic, was certainly "contrary to the spirit, if not the letter of the act settling the Civil List".[109]

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108 26 April 1868.

109 G.O. Trevelyan ("Solomon Temple-builder", pseud.), "What Does She Do With It", Tracts for the Times, no. 1 (London, 1871), 17.

The question of the Civil List and the Queen's accumulation of a private fortune was analyzed in a pamphlet, issued in 1871, entitled What Does She Do With It. The work was signed "Solomon Temple-builder", but according to David Tribe, the author was George Otto Trevelyan.[110] The latter maintained that "there is not a lady in Christendom who is better able, out of her own resources, to provide for every one of her family than our Queen".[111] Moreover, he insisted that if there was any truth in the widely held belief that Civil List money had not been used for the purposes for which it was intended, then it was "the duty as well as the right of Parliament to interfere".[112] But Trevelyan was a theoretical rather than active republican and his pamphlet was not specifically aimed against the Queen, but rather some of her servants. He declared that:

> ... the Lords of the Treasury are the persons responsible for this impairment of the prestige of the Crown of England. They who signed the annual warrants, transferring the savings to purposes for which the Civil List was never granted, are legally and constitutionally responsible.[113]

Of course, the Lords of the Treasury were not only following their own inclinations but complying with the Queen's wishes. This revived the old seventeenth century controversy as to whether the Monarch or his advisors were responsible for co-operative misdemeanours. Trevelyan stipulated that the question of the Civil List must be brought out into the open because all the mysteries were "breeding disaffection between

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110 Trevelyan, "What Does She Do With It", 3.

112 Ibid., 7.

113 Ibid., 33.

the Queen and the People".[114] He warned that "there is a setting of the current in the English mind towards Republicanism ... The English are a practical people. They do not like to pay for Royal State and not have it".[115]

This pamphlet was naturally welcomed by republicans but parts of it also appealed to men like Bagehot who thought that if the Monarchy was to be retained, then it should inspire awe and reverence. He claimed that:

> There are arguments for not having a court, and there are arguments for having a splendid court; but there are not arguments for having a mean court. It is better to spend a million in dazzling when you wish to dazzle, than three-quarters of a million in trying to dazzle and yet not dazzling.[116]

Bagehot would have preferred more money to be spent on court splendour and less on aristocratic pensions. Reynolds' Newspaper printed a useful breakdown of the comparative costs of the British Monarchy and the American Republic. The article concluded that "the Duke of Cambridge alone costs this country much more than does the entire executive government of America".[117] The Republican Herald noted that the master of the Royal Buckhounds, "the most brutal, degrading, cruel, devilish sport", was paid £1,700 a year but "we cannot pay labourers on Royal estates enough to find them a sufficiency of bread and bacon".[118] But the man who really made a political issue out of the cost of the Crown and the Civil List was Sir Charles Dilke.

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114 Ibid., 19.

115 Ibid., 18.

116 St. John-Stevas, Bagehot, 5:238.

117 12 February 1871. See Appendix 26.

118 D.B., "Our King to be -- Perhaps", 16 May 1874.

In his Newcastle Speech, Dilke had drawn attention to certain irregularities in the financial arrangements of the Crown and accused the Queen of not paying income tax. Dilke modified his position slightly in a speech at Chelsea the following year. He acknowledged that since Newcastle he had been privately informed that the Queen had paid some income tax, but added that if this was true then it was

> ... an exception to the general rule of the exemption of the Crown from taxes - the King pays no rates upon the palaces of his private residences (shame); and certain members of the Royal Family have at one time and another claimed exemption (shame, shame). I think this unwise I repeat, and at a future time I will give my reasons for thinking so in the House of Commons.[119]

Dilke was as good as his word. On Tuesday, 19 March 1872, he introduced a motion on the Civil List which essentially demanded that auditors' reports on the royal accounts for every year of the current reign be placed before Parliament for inspection.[120] Viscount Bury answered Dilke, maintaining that professions of republicanism were contrary to his oath of allegiance and that his motion was "a deplorable method of repeating, under the authority of the House, the statements to which I have referred". Auberon Herbert rose to second the motion but was shouted down. The Speaker eventually managed to restore order and declared that:

> I apprehend that it is no part of my duty to say what is consistent or what is not consistent with that oath. Looking at the terms of the Motion of the hon. Baronet the member for Chelsea, I see in them no violation of the rules of this House.[121]

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[119] Dilke, Speech at Chelsea, 1872, Dilke Papers, BM., Add. MS. 43943, f. 90.

[120] See Appendix 27.

[121] Civil List Motion for Returns, 19 March 1872, Hansard, ser. 3, CCX:254-317.

Dilke quoted motions by Chatham in 1770 and Dunning in 1780 to back up his claim that the Commons had a perfect right to examine and correct abuses in the expenditure of the Civil List, at times other than at the start of a new reign.

Gladstone answered Dilke by ignoring his main points and finding fault with minor ones about which he had found information to which Dilke did not have access. In fact, Dilke had tried to obtain information earlier in the week but met with some difficulty. W.E. Baxter, the Secretary to the Treasury, had promised to get this for him but was told that it could not be divulged unless Gladstone gave permission, which he did not.[122] It seems that Gladstone indulged in some highly adept, if slightly underhanded, manoeuvering here. Dilke accused Gladstone of manipulating figures, to which only he had access at the time, to support his case. With regard to the Royal savings, Gladstone declined to go into the Exchequer accounts on the ground that he had not been given enough notice to prepare a proper answer. In fact, said Dilke, "I had given him eight days notice".[123] This was absolutely correct. The records of the Cabinet meeting on 6 March clearly show Dilke's projected motion on top of the agenda. Gladstone was obviously taking the matter very seriously and had ample time to do the necessary research if he wished.[124] In fact, Gladstone, had made some

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122 Dilke Papers, BM., Add. MS. 43931, ff. 215-16.

123 Ibid., f. 220.

124 Gladstone Papers, BM., Add. MS. 44640, Cabinet meeting memo., 6 March 1872.

inquiries about the Civil List, particularly with regard to the payment of income tax, after Dilke's Newcastle speech. He discovered that income tax payments by the Queen had been irregular although her servants paid the normal rate like everyone else.[125]

Gladstone concluded his attack on Dilke by saying that to pass such a motion would "raise an apprehension and open a multitude of controversies between the Sovereign and Parliament of the most painful character and I must say of no good omen to the institutions of this country".[126] Dilke was particularly disappointed by the fact that he received no support from Fawcett. The latter, in one of his more obtuse moods, stated that he thought the day might come when a republic would replace the Monarchy but he disapproved of "the question of Republicanism being raised upon a miserable haggle over a few pounds". If they were going to raise the question "let them properly estimate the great issues involved in a change of the form government - let it be treated as a great moral and social question ... and not be degraded to a huckstering and quibbling over the cost of the Queen's household".[127] He felt that Dilke had done the cause of republicanism more harm than good and that he would mislead the working classes into believing that poverty was somehow caused by extravagance at Court. Dilke thought Fawcett was splitting hairs and being somewhat hypocritical since twelve months earlier he had voted against the Princess Louise's dowry.[128] As it was, the motion went

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125 Ibid., BM., Add. MS. 44617, f. 139(a).

126 19 March 1872, Hansard, Ser. 3, CCX:254-317.

127 Ibid.

128 See below, 413.

down by 276 to 2. The minority was comprised of Sir Wilfrid Lawson and George Anderson of Glasgow, Dilke and Herbert acting as tellers.[129]

Motions of this nature certainly did not enhance Dilke's reputation with the Queen. Gwynn and Tuckwell pointed out that Victoria's objection to Dilke "was based not merely on his avowal of abstract Republican theories but also on his very concrete proposals to assert control over the Civil List".[130] In fact, the Queen expressed in no uncertain terms her "determination not to accept Sir. C. Dilke as a minister of any future Liberal Govt."[131] After endless negotiations, the Queen was persuaded to accept Dilke, initially as Under Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs and then as President of the Local Government Board, but she did not do so willingly. However, Dilke was on much better terms with the Prince of Wales. He even wrote to the Prince in 1885 suggesting that Albert Edward "should himself suggest a Committee on the position of his younger children in respect of grants".[132] This proposal was agreed to in principle in 1885 and a committee was scheduled to sit in February 1886. However, the government fell and the committee did not meet until 1889.

Roy Jenkins states that notwithstanding the Queen's disfavour, Dilke never changed his basic beliefs about the Civil List or about monarchy

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129 Ibid. See also Dilke, Unpublished Memoir, Dilke Papers, BM., Add. MS. 43931, f. 318.

130 Gwynn and Tuckwell, Dilke, 1:303.

131 Memorandum to the Liberal Party by Queen Victoria, 12 March 1880, in A. Ponsonby, Henry Ponsonby, 181.

132 Dilke, Unpublished Memoir, Dilke Papers, BM., Add. MS. 43936, f. 107.

in general, and even when he became a Cabinet Minister, he was "pedantically careful not to vote for proposals against which he had committed himself a decade earlier".[133] But never again did he take the issue to the public as in 1871. Throughout his career, Dilke continued to propose committees of inquiry into various aspects of the Civil List. Not a great deal was achieved, but in 1910, David Lloyd George, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, asked Dilke to sit on a Civil List Committee since he would be so "acceptable to the House of Commons generally".[134]

Radicals would not have been so concerned about the Queen's savings from the Civil List had she used them to provide for her children and their offspring. Instead, Parliament was continually being asked to supply annuities, dowries and various miscellaneous grants for the royal brood. The first and most controversial of these grants in the seventies was the dowry of £30,000 for the Princess Louise on the occasion of her marriage to the Marquis of Lorne.[135] It was unfortunate for the prestige of the Monarchy that the request for the dowry came at the very moment when republican fervour was reaching its peak. The Newcastle Weekly Chronicle explained that:

> The spectacle of so much misery endured by the people, of so much cowardice and cruelty exhibited by kings, has had the natural effect on the working classes of exciting their distrust of monarchical institutions altogether. It is probably this distrust of the monarchical principle that led to the agitation against the dowry ...[136]

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133 Jenkins, Sir Charles Dilke, 77.

134 David Lloyd George to Sir Charles Dilke, 6 June 1910, Dilke Papers, BM., Add. MS. 43922, f. 100.

135 See above, 154, 181-2, 200, 210, 253, Appendices 9 and 20 for details of demonstrations against the dowry.

136 W.E. Adams, "The Dowry Question", 11 February 1871.

But many opposed the dowry on much more basic grounds. For example, "Kirklington" of Carlisle wrote to Reynolds' Newspaper that "working men both young and old look with abhorrence at the impudence of the Marquis of Lorne attempting for one moment to take unto himself a wife without intending to support her".[137] Several members of Parliament, including Dilke, Taylor, Fawcett, White, and Rylands, pledged themselves to vote against the dowry.[138] Mr. Brogden, M.P. for Wednesbury, spoke in favour of the dowry and was promptly told by his constituents that "if you vote for it, you will no longer represent us".[139] Mr. Locke, the member for Southwark was booed by his constituents when he announced that he would vote for the dowry.[140]

In the Commons, the opposition to the dowry was led by Peter Taylor. He regretted that the motion had been persisted with when members "could not fail to have observed that at many large public meetings which had recently been held throughout the country there was a strong and bitter feeling against this grant".[141] The poorer taxpayers, he alleged, were particularly outraged at the cost of monarchy generally.[142] Taylor's speech was punctuated throughout by cries of derision. The dowry

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137 25 December 1870.

138 Newcastle Weekly Chronicle, 4 February 1871. N.B. Rylands was M.P. for Warrington.

139 Weekly Dispatch, 12 February 1871.

140 Leeds Evening Express, 9 February 1871.

141 P.A. Taylor, Speech on the Dowry for the Princess Louise in the House of Commons on Thursday 16 February 1871 (London, 1871), 4.

142 Ibid., 8.

was eventually granted by a majority of 352 votes to 3. The minority consisted of Taylor, Fawcett and Dilke, the other members who had promised their support having drawn back at the last minute.

By midsummer, the "royal begging box" was rattling once again, this time to request an annuity for Prince Arthur on his coming of age. Two public meetings were organised to protest against the proposed grant. The first was held in Hyde Park on 31 July,[143] and on 1 August fifteen thousand gathered in Trafalgar Square. The multitude was addressed by Bradlaugh, Odger, Weston and McSweeny: then, waving red flags and singing the Marseillaise, the demonstrators marched through the centre of London.[144] Fifty-three M.P.'s representing about 766,000 voters, supported George Dixon, one of the members for Birmingham, in his proposal to reduce the annuity: eleven voted against any grant whatsoever.[145] Gladstone tried to explain to the Queen that although the annuity had passed the Commons safely enough, many members

> ... take credit to themselves for their ready and zealous support ... as the votes of many of them in its favour are stated to have been given with a full knowledge or belief that they would be unacceptable to, and perhaps resented by, considerable bodies of their constituents.[146]

The issue was raised again just two years later when the Duke of

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143 Weekly Dispatch, 6 August 1871.

144 Ibid. See also Norfolk News, 5 August 1871.

145 Dundee Advertiser, 10 November 1871.

146 Gladstone to Queen Victoria, 9 August 1871, quoted in P. Guedella, The Queen and Mr. Gladstone (London, 1933), 1:297.

Edinburgh was about to marry and the government proposed to increase his income by £10,000 a year. Twenty thousand people gathered in Hyde Park to protest. Precisely one year later, the Queen applied to the House for an increase in income of £15,000 per annum for her fourth son, Prince Leopold. G.W. Foote commented that the only good thing about these applications was that, in recent years, they had brought the Monarchy into disrepute. Several thousand people attended a special meeting of the London Republican Club at the New Hall of Science on 10 September. Odger, Bradlaugh, G.J. Holyoake and Charles Watts spoke, the latter passing "a sharp criticism on the increase in the Civil List" and bringing a "terrible array of accusations against the House of Brunswick".[147]

In September 1875, the National Secular Society began a "Monster Petition" against any more grants to royalty, at least until the accounts of each member of the royal family had been audited in the House of Commons.[148] Two months later, it was reported in the National Reformer that the response had been particularly good in Yorkshire and the North East, and that several Leicester Trade Unions were actively promoting the petition.[149] On Friday 16 June 1876, Thomas Burt presented to the House a petition, signed by 104,330 people, requesting that no more grants be made to the royal family until the Commons received from the Queen an account of the funds already at her disposal.[150] In April 1882, Henry Labouchère

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147 National Reformer, 27 September 1874.

148 5 September 1875.

149 21 November 1875.

150 18 June 1876.

presented to the House a petition of fourteen thousand signatures, collected by The Republican League,[151] protesting against a marriage grant of £10,000 per annum to Prince Leopold.[152]

An anonymous, undated broadsheet among the Gladstone Papers asks Englishmen how long they will "suffer a horde of German Princes and a legion of followers to roll in luxury at your expense, whilst thousands of your countrymen are in want of the common necessaries of life?"[153] Certainly by the mid 1880's these royal grants did not receive quite the support in Parliament that they had in earlier times. On 14 May 1885, a £6,000 post-marriage annuity for the Queen's youngest child Beatrice was obtained only after a division of 337 to 38, and a £30,000 wedding portion by a majority of 153 to 32.[154] Obviously, in the latter case, many members must have abstained. As the decade progressed, there were continual arguments regarding provision for the Queen's younger grandchildren. Dilke maintained that "none of the precedents of the century warranted provision for children in infancy".[155] In these instances, the rest of the Cabinet were as unhappy as Dilke about the continual demands for money. When in 1889, the question of provision for the Prince of

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151 See below, 432-3, for details of The Republican League.

152 Standring, ed., The Republican, April 1882.

153 Anonymous broadsheet, "Englishmen", Gladstone Papers, BM., Add. MS. 44759.

154 Maccoby, English Radicalism 1853-1886, 172.

155 Dilke, "Unpublished Memoir", Dilke Papers, BM., Add. MS. 43938, f. 117.

Wales' children was raised, even the Conservatives advised the Queen to accompany her request with an assurance that she would not ask for incomes for her daughters' children. Due to pressure from the Liberal Front Bench, this stipulation was expanded to include the children of the Queen's younger sons.[156]

After the Conservative's return to office in 1874, the republicans began to lose ground, and this was partly due to Disraeli's determination to "inscribe the Throne as a new watchword on the banner of his party".[157] Radicals watched with dismay as he coaxed the Queen out of retirement, but they would have been outraged had they "guessed that she was being told every day that she was the real ruler of England".[158] In February 1876, the Queen was persuaded to open Parliament in person once again. George Howell was impressed[159] but Reynolds' Newspaper sarcastically remarked that the Queen

> ... did not condescend to meet the gaze of her subjects. With windows closed she passed along hidden from view, as if the task in which she was engaged was done on sufferance against her will, and as an irksome matter to be got through as easily as possible ... The thousands whom I could see maintained a dead silence ... Let the sycophants of the press strive how they will to make out that the Queen's reception was cordial, the reverse was the fact. Many will confirm this.[160]

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156 Maccoby, English Radicalism 1853-1886, 172. See also Lady Gwendolen Cecil, Life of Robert Marquis of Salisbury, 4 vols. (London, 1932), 4:152-3.

157 Martin, Magic of Monarchy, 39.

158 Ibid., 42.

159 George Howell wrote in his diary for 8 February 1872: "Parliament opened on the 8th - Queen's Speech - Great ostentation and immense concourse of people", Howell Collection, Microfilm 95922/9.

160 20 February 1876.

R.J. Kendall watched the procession of Queen Victoria from Marlborough House to Westminster and mentioned that two non-republican friends of his were most shocked at the cool reception. He concluded that loyalty was still at a low ebb and urged republicans to "renew their working for a Republic".[161] But Disraeli had yet to play his trump card: or at least what he thought was his trump card.

Sir Henry Ponsonby wrote to Lord Granville in January 1873, remarking that the Queen "enquired today how it was that the title of Empress of India, which is so frequently used in reference to her Majesty has never been officially adopted".[162] Disraeli learned of the Queen's desire and immediately sought to make political capital out of this, by using it to enhance his cult of royalty. He prepared a Bill which would confer upon the Queen her coveted title: the radical world was indignant in the extreme. The Manchester Republican Club condemned the "despotic designation of 'Empress' as being inconsistent with the traditions of the English Commonwealth and directly hostile to the principles and procedure of free government".[163] Reports appeared in Reynolds' Newspaper of public meetings up and down the country declaring against the proposed Royal Titles Bill. In both Oxford and Middlesborough the protest was actually led by the mayor and town council.[164] Reynolds' echoed the opinions of most radicals

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161 R.J. Kendall, "The Queen and the People", National Reformer, 27 February 1876.

162 Ponsonby to Granville, 26 January 1871, in Buckle, ed., Letters of Queen Victoria, ser. 2, 2:238.

163 National Reformer, 26 March 1876.

164 2 April 1876.

by claiming that the title of "empress" was "more or less synonymous with absolutism. It has an ugly sound in English ears".[165] A letter to the Newcastle Weekly Chronicle stated that the Tories, "in their clumsy attempt to heighten the power and dignity of the throne, are surely bringing it into well deserved contempt".[166]

Less extreme, if more well known, radicals than the above were also outraged by the Bill. Joseph Cowen Jr. made his mark in the Commons with a memorable speech against the third reading of the Bill. Cowen maintained that Britain was "emphatically a limited Monarchy" and that to fasten on to the constitution "a military and autocratic figurehead may not be contrary to the letter of the Act of Settlement, but it is certainly contrary to its spirit". The Monarchy, he argued, did not rest on "soldiers' bayonets or policemen's batons" or even on law, but rather on the "good sense and right feeling of the population". Moreover, said Cowen, there would initially be confusion over the two titles and then "the historic title of 'Queen of England'" would be supplanted by the "tawdry, commonplace, and vulgar designation of 'Empress'", with all its "despotic" connotations. Nevertheless, the Bill was read for the third time by a majority of 209 to 134.[167]

In the course of his speech, Cowen had observed that "we can not be too jealous of royal encroachment upon popular power and influence".[168]

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165 12 March 1876.

166 P.W., "Republic or Empire Which?", 2 April 1876.

167 E.R. Jones, The Life and Speeches of Joseph Cowen (London, 1885), 282.

168 Ibid.

In fact, just three years later Llewellyn Dillwyn, the radical member for Swansea, introduced an ill-fated motion against too much influence by the Crown in politics. Chamberlain commented that the motion had "excited a good deal of interest and is certainly a popular one", but it would be "very difficult to treat in the House of Commons ... we know so little, whatever we might suspect, of the facts of the case". He went on to say that the Queen's interference took the form of co-operation when the Conservatives were in power, but when a Liberal government was in office, she was always most obstructive. She complained about ministers' speeches, grumbled about the inclusion of radicals in the cabinet, protested against bills and often delayed them for the purpose of consulting persons whose opinions she knew in advance would be unfavourable. However, said Chamberlain, "it is very doubtful how far her interference is unconstitutional, and it would be quite impossible to prove it, unless Mr. Gladstone, for example, were to publish her letters - a not very likely supposition".[169] In fact, Kingsley Martin maintained that Gladstone could have revived republicanism any time he wished, but he "was a devout Royalist and an unusually scrupulous politician. He held his tongue".[170] After her beloved Lord Beaconsfield left office in 1880, the Queen continued to correspond with him and exchange confidential information. In 1885-6, she tried to obtain support for Salisbury from anti-Home Rule Liberals and to persuade Goschen to form a government.[171] The remarkable elasticity of the British consti-

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169 Chamberlain to Dilke, no date, quoted in Dilke, "Unpublished Memoir", Dilke Papers, BM., Add. MS. 43934, ff. 42-6.

170 Martin, Magic of Monarchy, 43. See also Thomas J. Spinner, George Joachim Goschen (Cambridge, 1973), 116-20.

171 See Buckle, ed., Letters of Queen Victoria, ser. 2, 2:712-14.

tution allowed her to pursue such enterprises with impunity.

Let us, then, recap the main points arising out of this chapter. In the fifties, Victoria and Albert courted a degree of unpopularity owing to their insistence in taking an active part in foreign policy. Thereafter, Queen Victoria was always suspected by radicals of overstepping her lawful constitutional powers. Certainly, she could be most troublesome when Liberal governments proposed legislation or made appointments with which she disagreed. But the Queen's major period of unpopularity arose not from her taking too much interest in ministerial affairs, but her total neglect of public duties for over ten years after the death of her husband. Yet regard for her sex and domestic virtues allowed Victoria to keep her throne at a time when many people thought her vast salary, along with those of other members of the royal family, might be put to better use. The dissolute life of the Prince of Wales contributed a great deal to the unpopularity of the Monarchy. Although his illness undeniably sparked a wave of rather shallow loyalty, it did not in any way affect the strength of the republican movement, which continued to expand until 1874.

Active republicanism waned steadily after 1874, but the conviction that an unduly high price was paid for the "advantages" of monarchy remained fully alive for large sections of the population. The expense and extravagance of the Jubilee Celebrations in 1887 and 1897 revived these sentiments temporarily. However, there was much popular sympathy with the Queen in a series of personal losses which

occurred at a time when other factors were dampening republican fervour.[172] With the exception of those brief republican revivals during the Jubilees, veneration for the Queen increased as her reign progressed, and a new and powerful faith grew up that the veteran Queen symbolized in her own person the unity and strength of the British Empire.

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172 1878 - death of Princess Alice, Grand Duchess of Hesse.
1879 - death of the Prince Imperial in the Zulu War.
1881 - death of Lord Beaconsfield.
1883 - death of John Brown, the Queen's Highland Servant.
1884 - death of the Queen's youngest son Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany.
See below, Chapter 11, for the decline of republicanism in the 1880's and the revivals during the two Jubilees.

CHAPTER 11

THE DECLINE OF VICTORIAN REPUBLICANISM (1847-1900)

For three major reasons, the year 1874 marks the crisis point in the history of British republicanism. In the first place, there was no reconciliation of the National Republican League and the National Republican Brotherhood: personal and ideological rivalries remaining as bitter as ever. But the demise of the I.W.M.A. in Britain weakened the social republicans, most of whom turned away from republicanism to begin socialist societies, leaving Bradlaugh's group more or less in control. However, the increased secularist domination of the movement made it ever more difficult for Christians to join organised republicanism. Secondly, the new republics in France and Spain, which had given the British movement such a strong stimulus, failed to live up to their ideals and became a source of disillusionment for British republicans. Moreover, once the excitement in France died down, the Positivists lost interest in British republicanism at least as regards practical organisation. Lastly, the Conservatives returned to power in February 1874, which had a severe dampening effect on all left-wing activity.

The republicans had failed to organise themselves into a third party embracing the entire democratic movement as they had aimed to do by the 1874 General Election. As a result, their major influence on that election was to lose the Liberals a number of seats by abstaining.[1]

[1] See above, 127, 165, 184, 230. See Appendix 30.

However, the Tories had not forgotten the republicans. In a letter to the Republican Chronicle, S.J. Miott, secretary of the London Republican Club, remarked that "having found that the legality of Republican Clubs is beyond question" the Conservatives were "energetically organising Conservative associations for the planting and preservation of that delicate and uncertain exotic, the 'Conservative working-man' as a counter acting influence to the Republican and Democratic feeling".[2] In fact, the campaign had begun as early as 1872 as part of Disraeli's "New Course". Yet despite all these factors, half a dozen new republican clubs were founded during 1874.[3] As we saw in the last chapter though, the Queen was gradually persuaded to play a more active role in public life. After a few years "in Disraeli's warm sun Victoria was blossoming anew" and the upper classes "gladly drew nectar from its source".[4]

In an attempt to halt the decline of republicanism, George Standring, "a studious nineteen year old printer",[5] began the Republican Chronicle in April 1875. The paper was non-theological, moral force, and took as its motto: "Republican should be the name to cover the whole ground of Political and Social Reform".[6] This slogan was coined by

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2 January 1878.

3 See Appendix 19.

4 Republican Chronicle, January 1878.

5 Tribe, President Charles Bradlaugh M.P., 162.

6 April 1875.

Cattell who became a regular contributor. In the first issue, he appealed for "one powerful organisation" to assume all reformist work, and maintained that the chief function of republican clubs was "still education in liberty, intelligence and truth".[7] The following month, Standring severely criticized the apathy of the British republicans. He stated that although there was "a great body of the English nation" who desired a British republic, "the great majority of them do not take part in the movement which endeavours to realise their aspirations".[8]

Reynolds' Newspaper and the National Reformer both remained true to the republican cause in the late seventies but were unable to prevent the waning of popular support for the movement. Thomas Cooper, who was never very fond of Bradlaugh,[9] blamed him for the decline. He wrote to G.J. Harney that "politics seem asleep, except brawling, swaggering Bradlaugh and his set - who profess to be real Republicans! and are protesting against the £140,000 which the Prince of Wales is to have for his Indian trip".[10] This was perhaps unfair since Bradlaugh was working as hard as anyone to keep the movement on its feet. The National Reformer for 26 November 1876 contained an announcement "to London Republicans" calling on them to attend a forthcoming lecture by Bradlaugh and "form an association to carry out our views".[11] The notice

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7 Ibid.

8 Standring, "The Republic and How to obtain it", May 1875.

9 See above, 320.

10 Thomas Cooper to G.J. Harney, 20 July 1875, quoted in Black and Black, eds., The Harney Papers, 191.

11 26 November 1876.

was signed by J.S. Miott as "former secretary of the London Republican Club". Obviously that body had already fallen apart and this was an attempt to put it back together. The attempt was unsuccessful, however, and by the following year, the only republican activity reported in the National Reformer was the occasional lecture to one of the secular societies. During the winter of 1877-78, G.J. Holyoake lectured on "Neglected Republican Agitation".[12]

In July 1878, the annual National Secular and Freethought Conference was held at Sheffield. Dr. Allbutt gave a paper in which he urged that new republican clubs be founded "in every town and village" which should make "great efforts to drive the wedge of Republicanism deep down into the hearts of the people". Republicans should not rest, he said, "until England can boast that she has flung off the fetters of monarchy". He concluded by advising that they "send no men to Parliament but those who are pledged to support a Republican form of government". Mr. Holmes, representing Southampton and Newport, said that it would prove impractical to elect republican Members of Parliament and suggested that republicans vote for the best candidate in their area, which would invariably be the Liberal.[13]

In fact, Gladstone was riding on the crest of a new wave of popularity with the masses owing to his outspokenness on the Eastern Question. Even the National Reformer praised his "magnificant oration"[14]

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12 Tribe, President Charles Bradlaugh M.P., 184.

13 National Reformer, 7 July 1878.

14 8 December 1878.

on the Bulgarian atrocities. There was tremendous popular interest in foreign policy at this time which undoubtedly diverted attention from republicanism. The next conference of the National Secular Society, held at Newcastle-upon-Tyne in June 1879, did not discuss republicanism at all.[15]

By the end of 1878, the Republican Chronicle was dead. Standring then took over the ailing Secular Chronicle, but three months later he was obliged to bury that as well. However, Standring was not lacking in perseverence and in January 1880, appeared the first issue of a new monthly journal entitled The Republican. The final phase of Victorian republicanism had begun. The editorial policy of the new journal was orthodox radical but Standring announced that besides moderate republicans "'Red' Republicans, Communists, Social Democrats, Nihilists - all are at liberty to express their opinions here, provided the method of doing so is commendable to reason and good taste".[16] Christian republicans were also encouraged by Standring to contribute to his publications and this helped to strengthen the Christian element in republicanism.

A major problem for the republicans throughout the seventies and eighties was how to attract Christians to a movement increasingly dominated by Atheists.[17] Tribe remarks that "piety was still atypical in a movement which had been closely associated with freethought from at least the time of Carlisle".[18] In fact, one might argue that the link went much further back.[19] However, there were some Christian re-

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15 8 June 1879.

16 January 1880.

17 See above, 321, 323.

18 Tribe, President Charles Bradlaugh M.P., 155.

19 See above, 18, 25.

publicans scattered around and letters appeared in the radical press from time to time testifying to this fact. Reynolds' Newspaper received a letter from a "Lay Preacher", who unfortunately did not state his denomination, but maintained that there was a fair proportion of republicans among his fellow ministers.[20] The Republican Herald for 11 April 1874 featured an article on "Christian Republicanism",[21] and the Republican was especially fond of searching for links between primitive Christianity and democracy,[22] besides launching regular attacks on the secularists. These publications were against the visible but not the invisible church. Of course, the majority of such letters were to be found in the non-secularist republican journals, but Charles Watts reported in the National Reformer for 29 October 1871 that "several Christian Republicans had become subscribers" to the paper.[23]

Members of the Church of England would be unlikely to support a movement that advocated the disestablishment and disendowment of their church, and it is therefore not surprising to find that most Christian republicans were nonconformist. In fact, the secularists gained most of their converts from the ranks of nonconformity, particularly Methodism,[24] so it is only logical that those sects would contain the highest proportion

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20 30 April 1871.

21 "A Christian Republican", "Christian Republicanism", 11 April 1874.

22 Anon., "The Bible and the Commune", 11 November 1871. This was one of a number of articles of this nature.

23 29 October 1871.

24 See above, 333.

of Christian republicans. For example, Joseph Symes stated in a letter to the Wesleyan Conference of July 1872, that he was "a Republican" who believed that his views "would be likely to bring me often into disagreeable antagonism with ministers and others".[25] Symes subsequently turned to secularism and contributed to the National Reformer and Freethinker. Rev. P. Clarke of Newcastle delivered a speech with republican overtones to the Primitive Methodist Annual Missionary Meeting of 1872.[26] George Standring commented in The Republican on the prevalence of republicanism in a debating class of young men at a dissenting chapel,[27] and the following month, W.H. Timbs of Northampton reported that the local Baptist Mutual Improvement Society was predominantly republican.[28] Even a highly respected dissenting newspaper like The Nonconformist had some sympathy with republican principles in the abstract. The paper did not wish to see the Monarchy abolished, however, but advocated "substantial reforms" which would allow the workers to enjoy "the advantages of Republican institutions under a constitutional Monarchy".[29] It is noteworthy that for a time in 1871-72, there was an uneasy alliance between Edward Miall's Liberation Society and the republicans. On 6 January 1872, the Bradford Weekly Mail printed the Address of the London Working Men's

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25 The Republican, August 1833.

26 The Primitive Methodist, 9 May 1872.

27 April 1886.

28 May 1886.

29 15 February 1871.

Council to their bretheren of Great Britain on the Disestablishment of the Church of England. The document instructed

> ... the loyal working men of Great Britain, to show to the world that in allying himself to Republicanism and democracy, with the disciples of Messrs. Odger and Bradlaugh and Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Miall instead of strengthening has weakened his cause - has made a false step which must inevitably draw upon him the reprobation of all loyal men.[30]

But more than this, a newspaper clipping among the Bradlaugh papers which lists a mock republican government has Miall as President of the Board of Trade.[31] However, the alliance does not appear to have lasted for very long.

It has been pointed out that the dilemma facing Christian republicans was that if they wished to participate in organised republicanism they must either co-operate with infidels or subscribe to the more extreme social policies of the non-secularist groups. A moderate political republican who was also a devout Christian was left with an impossible choice and this certainly prohibited the number of republican recruits from that section of society. It may seem ironic that one of the few clerics who was able to co-operate with the secularists was also a member of the established Church. However, this becomes more comprehensible when one realizes that Rev. Frederick Verinder was a Christian Socialist. Verinder was secretary of the Guild of St. Matthew

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30 6 January 1872.

31 "The New Republican Government", London, Hole in the Wall, Tuesday, Midnight, 18 October 1871?, Bradlaugh Collection, 223. See Appendix 28.

and the English League for the Taxation of Land Values. In July 1882, he assured a meeting of The Republican League that a large and influential section of the established clergy sympathized with extreme radical views and supported the progress of republicanism. He added that the republicans should be careful not to offend the clergy, but rather should cultivate their friendship and make use of their influence in society.[32] However, if some of Verinder's colleagues were indeed republican, they never found the courage to declare their opinions publicly. But there is evidence that some members, if not officials, of the Church of England supported republicanism during the build-up to the Jubilee celebrations of 1887. Reynolds' Newspaper observed that:

> In some churches the name of the Queen has been hissed. All this has made some clergymen and churchwardens very angry and warrants have been issued for the arrest of the men who have taken a leading part in disrupting the services.[33]

Despite the fact that in the 1880's republicanism received more support from the Christian community than ever before, the movement was in a sorry state. In February 1880, an advertisement appeared in the Manchester Guardian proposing that republican clubs be re-formed, but nothing came of it. The Republican did not attempt to gloss over this situation but stated that some consolation might be drawn from the fact that there were "many societies doing Republican work, though disclaiming that advanced and unpopular appellation".[34] Some months later, Francis

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32 The Republican, August 1882.

33 Anon., "Social Democrats at Church", 6 February 1887.

34 April 1880.

Neale expressed the opinion that if the "great industrial centres were now canvassed" on the subject of republicanism, it would be revealed that "the number of individual Republicans had immensely increased". He argued that "the decay, and in some cases, death of local Republican Clubs, is explainable by very different and much less improbable suppositions than the loss of popular interest and belief in republican principles". Neale explained that the country had just passed through a period of "exceptional excitement in regard to current politics" and many republicans saw the necessity of redirecting their energy to the "immediate accomplishment of various reforms, all of which are contributions, in one way or another, to that ultimate condition of national affairs which Republicans specially desire to see brought about". He regarded the slump as a "temporary diversion of attention - perfectly justifiable under the circumstances" - which had affected not so much the number, or individual determination, of republicans but their association in republican clubs. In conclusion, Neale assured his readers that

> ... when the political atmosphere becomes more tranquil, when, for instance, Ireland ceases to trouble us and land leagues are at rest, Republicans will return to their own distinctive and special propaganda and Republican Clubs will again spring up in various parts of the country.[35]

Neale certainly overstated his case, but at the same time, there was still some interest in republicanism among the country's progressive thinkers. Henry Prince informed The Republican that at a meeting of the

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35 January 1881.

Brighton Literary Society he proposed that "the monarchical form of government is wrong in principle, and a republic would be preferable for Great Britain and Ireland". After a fierce fight, lasting over two hours, the resolution was carried by a majority of two, to the surprise of some and horror of many. This caused "considerable talk in gay and fashionable Brighton".[36] G.J. Holyoake was at this time residing in Brighton having apparently become a thoroughly respectable Liberal, much to the disgust of the radical world. However, by 1889 the old man seemed to have regained some of his youthful fire. He outraged the town "by beginning to publish an 'occasional magazine' with the title (anticipating Mr. H.G. Wells) The Universal Republic!"[37] Mr. J.F. Davidson, a republican butcher from Edinburgh, was reported as being persecuted by the monarchists of his trade.[38]

On 15 October 1881, eighty people met at the Minor Hall of Science and set up a provisional committee to establish a new London Republican Club.[39] In December, George Standring announced the foundation of The Republican League, the first serious attempt to organise British republicanism on a national basis since 1873. The new organisation was founded to

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36 Ibid.

37 Joseph McCabe, George Jacob Holyoake (London, 1922), 107.

38 Standring, "A Republican Butcher", July 1881.

39 November 1881.

> ... organise and concentrate the Republican feeling of this country, in order that its united influence may be brought to bear upon the political and social questions of the day; to further the progress of Republican views by literary and platform propaganda; and to encourage and aid the formation of local societies for the same end.[40]

Among the objects of The Republican League were the repeal of the Act of Settlement, the consolidation of republican thought and activity throughout the country, the education of the people to a complete knowledge of their rights and duties as citizens, and the promotion of all political and social movements tending in the direction of republican principles.[41]

An important meeting of The Republican League was held at the Patriotic Club in Clerkenwell on 5 July 1882, the proceedings of which provide a useful insight into the fortunes of republicanism in the late seventies and early eighties. During a discussion on the disappearance of so many republican clubs, it was pointed out that the Conservative reaction after 1874 "disgusted a great many republicans who were a little impatient, and caused them to retire from the propagation of their principles, when their energy was most needful". Ironically, the Liberal victory of 1880 weakened republicanism further because the inclusion of several radical politicians in the government "led people to think that an active Republican propaganda was unnecessary". Unfortunately, said Standring, office had tempered the radicalism of these

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40 Standring, "The Republican League", December 1881.

41 Ibid. For details of the provincial branches of The Republican League, see above, 198, 261.

men.[42] Eight months later, Standring welcomed the return of John Morley as one of the representatives for Newcastle as an event over which republicans might rejoice. Morley, he exclaimed, was "a Radical of a very advanced type, and may be trusted to do good Republican work under the now fashionable designation of Radical".[43] However, Morley was certainly no more radical than Dilke or Chamberlain.

As early as August 1873, Morley had believed that Chamberlain's programme of free land, labour, schools and church could unite all sections of radicalism including republicans. He wrote that "the great thing now is to form a third party".[44] The Radical Programme of 1885 was drawn up by Morley and revised in concert with Dilke and Chamberlain for the purpose of promoting their policies at the next General Election. F.W. Hirst states that they remained academic republicans but now recognised that a new loyalty prevailed which was based on "respect for tradition (and) a blameless sovereign". Thus, any suggestion of republicanism was carefully omitted from their programme of 1885. They agreed that an attack upon the Crown at this time would be "impetuous and rash". Yet, at the same time, they expressed the belief that "if the monarchy were proved to be the cause of real political mischief ... no Radical, and probably no large class of Englishmen, would exercise themselves to retain it". The nature of such political mischief was

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42 August 1882. N.B. He was referring in particular to Dilke, Chamberlain and Fawcett.

43 March 1883.

44 John Morley, Memorandum, 21 August 1883, quoted in Hirst, Morley, 1:281-2. N.B. Chamberlain's proposals formed the basis of his Unauthorised Programme a decade later.

defined as any attempt to "minimise or to endanger the freedom of popular government", or go to war on the grounds of dynastic rather than national interest".[45] This, however, did not occur.

The anti-republican trend in public opinion which the parliamentary radicals perceived was eventually acknowledged by Standring. In May 1885, he wrote that "we do not at this moment know of a single Republican Organisation in the United Kingdom",[46] all branches of The Republican League having died out. In his editorial notes for January 1886, he was forced to admit that "in a purely party aspect, Republicans have, in 1885, drawn an unmistakable blank". He lamented that the public did not appear to "consider the principle of monarchy in this country as one yet to be called into question". He pointed out that in the last general election, it was "quite the fashion for candidates to declare themselves in favour of restricting royal grants; and for this very small mercy we must be truly thankful". On the other hand, said Standring, defences of monarchy were numerous. Only one candidate was reported as contesting the election on a strictly republican ticket and this was a Mr. Billany in Hull: he finished bottom of the poll.[47]

By August 1886, Salisbury was back in power and The Republican contained an important announcement that the name of the paper would be changed to The Radical. The editor explained that it was

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45 Ibid., 2:236-7.

46 The Republican, May 1885.

47 Standring, "Editorial Notes", January 1886.

> ... useless to disregard the fact that the title of the paper has always been a stumbling block in its path ... Many people associate Republicanism with violent revolution, and refuse to heed the voice of its preachers; while a very large number of Radicals regard it as an academic subject of comparatively little importance ...[48]

This was indeed a significant compromise: supposed republicans who no longer possessed the conviction to use the appellation of their faith. There is no doubt that Standring made this decision for the good of the radical movement as a whole. Radicalism was undoubtedly suffering from its association with a creed that had become unfashionable. The positive vision of a new society based on republican principles had slowly been eroded since 1874. Republicans resigned themselves to the fact that the political and social framework of the country could not be overthrown without a violent upheaval which they were not prepared to contemplate. Thereafter, the British labour movement was on the defensive, content to agitate for piecemeal reforms within the existing system of government, rather than working to transform the system itself.[49]

Yet, the British republican movement was not completely defunct. The year 1887 marked the golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria. The press was crammed with eulogies of the Queen and monarchy, and elaborate celebrations were prepared. The financial extravagance and incessant royalist propaganda provoked a considerable response from republicans, and the radical press rallied once more to the cause. The Radical despaired

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[48] August 1886.

[49] See Gareth Stedman Jones, "Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics in London, 1870-1890; Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class", Journal of Social History, 1:1974.

of the masses who had caught Jubilee fever, stating that "they are politically children, pleased with a rattle, tickled by a straw", and asked:

> ... why should THE PEOPLE rejoice? what have the Queen and the royal family done that the working classes should join in the servile chorus of the Jubilee? In vain do we search the lengthy annals of the Victorian reign to find the record of one useful public deed initiated and carried through by a Guelph.[50]

These sentiments were echoed by the National Reformer and Reynolds' Newspaper. The latter even went so far as to refer to the Queen as an "ugly, parsimonious German Frau",[51] who "is niggardly to an extreme degree".[52] The radical press featured a good deal of amusing, yet sincere, anti-Jubilee poetry,[53] and many readers' letters ridiculing the ostentatious celebrations. Reynolds' Newspaper remarked that the one-hour Jubilee service in Westminster Abbey would cost £17,000, and added that the Lord Chamberlain, "rightly gauging the number of working men who have any faith in royalty, has put aside sixty out of ten thousand tickets for 'representative working men'." The writer recommended that the sixty who took the tickets ought to wear on their backs the label "soapy sycophants".[54]

In fact, there were many examples of working men who were far

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50 February 1887.

51 19 June 1887.

52 26 June 1887.

53 See Appendix 29.

54 29 May 1887.

from impressed by the Jubilee. A public meeting in Walthamstow, which had been called by the local Tories for the purpose of making arrangements to celebrate the Jubilee, passed a resolution calling upon the Queen to surrender a year's salary to the people.[55] Paddington Vestry voted against spending £100 on decorating the streets for the Queen's visit.[56] Rev. Verinder gave a lecture on Kingsland Green entitled "The Queen's Jubilee and the People's Jubilee". There was a "large audience and the lecture was loudly cheered throughout".[57] When the Queen visited the East End, there was a singular lack of enthusiasm and some hissing, particularly in the Holborn area.[58] In March, a republican demonstration was held in Edinburgh,[59] and when the Queen visited Birmingham, there was "deep discontent in the hearts of the workpeople". The report in Reynolds' Newspaper maintained that the "loyalty" exhibited by the crowd was simply "a display of the vanity of the upper crust of society". The working classes, particularly those that were hungry, "have little cause to be loyal, and to flaunt royal processions, lavish luncheons and wanton waste before their eyes is at once an insult and a torture".[60] The shoemakers of Northampton voted to ignore the town's

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55 The Radical, April 1887.

56 Reynolds' Newspaper, 15 May 1887.

57 National Reformer, 15 May 1887.

58 The Radical, June 1887.

59 Reynolds' Newspaper, 13 March 1887.

60 27 March 1887.

Jubilee preparations and the town council itself was said to be none too enthusiastic.[61] A letter from "F.G.W. of Cornwall" expressed delight at the fact that "there is evidently a widespread disinclination on the part of the democracy, at least - to suscribe anything towards making the Queen's Jubilee a success". He added that in his own district the "efforts of the collections have so far been to a great extent a failure".[62] Annie Besant was happy to report in the National Reformer that

> the people of South Wales are rebelling against this Jubilee Folly ... The mention of Her Majesty's name was received with groans and hisses at a public meeting at Llanelly on Saturday ... and an amendment to the effect that no local celebration should be made was carried by a large majority.[63]

The Jubilee inspired John Robertson and G.W. Foote to issue new anti-monarchical pamphlets.[64] Howard Evans, Randal Cremer's lieutenant in the peace movement, wrote a treatise entitled Our Old Nobility under the pseudonym of "Noblesse Oblige". The work contained a short chapter on each of Britain's noble families, illustrating how often their estates had been built up by "legal robbery" and "high handed cruelty".[65]

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61 12 February 1887.

62 20 March 1887.

63 20 March 1887.

64 John Robertson, Royalism: A Note on the Queen's Jubilee (London, 1887); G.W. Foote, Royal Paupers (London, 1888).

65 Howard Evans ("Noblesse Oblige", pseud.), Our Old Nobility (London, 1887), 23.

The golden Jubilee even inspired a final attempt to organise republicanism in Britain. In August, a provisional committee, consisting of "a number of well known Radicals", was formed for the purpose of starting a British Republican League. The National Reformer announced that:

> Mr. J.H. Dalziel, President of the Walworth Radical Club, is acting as hon. sec. of the provisional committee. Mr. Andrew Carnegie (author of 'Triumphant Democracy') and a number of influential Republicans have expressed their cordial sympathy with the movement.[66]

A month later the organisers reported that they had

> ... received very gratifying encouragement from all parts of the kingdom. A number of applications have been received from the provinces for permission to form branches in connection with the League, but it has been thought advisable to defer this until the League has been formally inaugurated, which will take place at a public meeting early in October, at which it is expected a number of influential Republicans will be present. It is intended that the programme of the League shall be of a comprehensive character, and its operations will be devoted to the advocacy of advanced Radicalism.[67]

On 17 November, J.H. Dalziel stated in the National Reformer that "the executive committee met on Sunday last when it was decided to draw up rules and issue a manifesto. The support already received is considered very encouraging".[68] But despite such optimism, the British Republican League had disappeared by the new year. Presumably, the expected support

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66 28 August 1887.

67 25 September 1887.

68 27 November 1887.

failed to materialize. It may be, as Reynolds' Newspaper suggested, that everyone was so tired of the Monarchy after the "Jubilee hoo hah" that people could not even be bothered to criticize it.[69]

A more significant reason for the declining support for republican organisation in this period was the growing competition of socialism. The socialist movement in London is generally considered to have begun with the formation of the Social Democratic Federation in 1881, but as Shipley points out:

> ... the initial spadework was done by workers from a club in Soho which held a pivotal position in metropolitan clubland between English artisans and foreign exiles. This was the Manhood Suffrage League.[70]

The Manhood Suffrage League materialized in 1875 when the Democratic and Trades Alliance, which had been formed the previous year, changed its name and moved further to the Left. The association was formed by London's leading social republicans including the Murray brothers, William Townshend, John Rogers, William Morgan,[71] and the young Frank Kitz. Charles Murray

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[69] 21 August 1887.

[70] Shipley, Club Life and Socialism in Mid-Victorian London, 76.

[71] William Morgan was President of the Amalgamated Shoemaker's Society and sometimes took the chair at meetings of the London Trades Council. He was also honorary chairman of the Labour Protection League, a general union of 30,000 members which united skilled and unskilled workers from London's riverside. He was a founding member of the International and his wife was one of the few women ever to sit on the General Council. Morgan was blacklisted by the masters in 1874 "for the active part he had taken ... in trade and political matters" (National Reformer, 19 April 1874), and took over the "Bull's Head" Tavern in Crown Street. Morgan soon opened a room for Sunday evening political discussions, and out of these discussion groups evolved the Democratic and Trades Alliance. See Shipley, Club Life and Socialism in Mid-Victorian London, 51-52.

and Townshend had been prominent members of the lately defunct First International and they were soon joined by fellow refugees Harris, Milner and Eccarius. Some of the early meetings were attended by Odger, Shipton and Mottershead, but these trade unionists dropped out when the rest of the group moved to a more extreme socialist position. In fact, the League persisted until 1890 during which time the mainstays were Charles Murray and Townshend.[72]

While not denying that the Manhood Suffrage League built the foundations of the organised socialist movement, E.P. Thompson thinks it is "misleading to describe as 'Socialist' the activities of Kitz and the Murrays in the 1870's".[73] He says they were closer to Owen and O'Brien than modern socialism because they attracted attention only to the robbery of the people by means of the private ownership of the land and raw materials, and distracted workers from the far greater crimes resulting from private ownership of the means of production and exchange. The transition to the latter position, he maintains, was not achieved until the 1880's.

But it was not only the social republicans who were turning to socialism. A carter by trade, Joseph Lane played an active role in the republican agitation of the early 1870's. He accompanied Dilke on one of his tours and earned the nickname of "Dilke's boy".[74] But from 1878

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72 See ibid., 50-76.

73 E.P. Thompson, William Morris - Romantic to Revolutionary (London, 1955), 325.

74 Ibid.

onwards "he was associated with every move to set an organised Socialist propaganda afoot".[75] He joined the Manhood Suffrage League and was later a leading figure in the Socialist League. In 1878, the Birmingham Republican Association, run by John Sketchley, changed its name to the Midland Social Democratic Association. Thompson contends that this body "can almost certainly claim to have been the first English society of the modern Socialist movement".[76] It is significant that Sketchley became the first secretary of the Birmingham branch of the Democratic Federation and was later active in both the S.D.F. and the Socialist League. By the late seventies, says Shipley, "impatience was developing within the National Secular Society" and the movement "already contained the seeds of the later Marxian and Socialist breakaways".[77] Shipley illustrates this point by referring to the development of the Stratford Dialectical and Radical Club directly out of the Stratford branch of the National Secular Society in 1880. The Radical and Dialectical Club moved steadily to the Left, helping to form the S.D.F. in 1881, and staying with that organisation when two years later it "shed its radicals and turned in a decisively socialist direction".[78]

Throughout 1880, The Republican, although by no means an avowedly socialist journal, featured a series of articles on "Modern Socialism". The author of the series, who signed himself "S.S.Jr.", talked of "the great cause which binds us all so closely together namely, Socialism".

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75 Ibid.

76 Ibid., 322.

77 Ibid., 40.

78 Ibid., 41.

He stated also, that "the Nihilism of Russia, the communism of France, the Socialism of Germany, and the Republicanism of England are all most unlike each other in appearance and political acceptance, whilst they are fundamentally identical". In fact, what he was trying to say was that they were all fighting the cause of the oppressed and should unite under the banner of socialism.[79] With this end in mind, William Harris advocated the founding of a new social republic by all supporters of international socialism.[80] The topic was the most popular subject of debate in the paper for several months. Henry L. Cose suggested that a suitable site could probably be found in South America.[81] Reynolds' Newspaper gradually moved in a socialist direction, recommending that its readers embrace the principles of socialism while retaining their republicanism.[82]

However, Charles Bradlaugh was still the country's leading republican and he was no socialist. Annie Besant tells us that after her conversion to socialism, Bradlaugh "never again felt the same confidence in my judgement". Bradlaugh in fact "never lost a chance of speaking against Socialism which he liked to ridicule as 'chimerical utopianism'".[83] In April 1884 at St. James' Hall, he engaged in a public debate with

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79 June 1880.

80 June 1882.

81 October 1883.

82 Gracchus (pseud.), "Republicanism and Socialism", 20 February 1887.

83 Annie Besant, An Autobiography (London, 1893), 306.

the young socialist H.M. Hyndman: Professor Beesly was in the chair. Bradlaugh's experience won the day and The Republican commented that "it is clear that socialism must reckon with Mr. Bradlaugh; and if its advocates hope to see it make headway amongst the British people they must find some champion able to 'pulverise' the member for Northampton".[84] But the victory was hollow. One after another, the republicans deserted Bradlaugh and joined the socialists. Most notable among the defectors were Annie Besant, Edward Aveling, Dr. Pankhurst, William Morris[85] and John Robertson. The latter, however, did not join the procession until after Bradlaugh's death.

Bradlaugh, the one time radical hero, was even attacked by Reynolds' Newspaper for his opposition to socialism.[86] Yet, he was by no means completely isolated, and not the least among those who stood by him was George Standring who maintained that:

> The Radical regards his Socialist friend as a visionary enthusiast; while the latter accuses the former of cleaving to the old Adam of individualism. In truth there is no common basis of action.[87]

Standring criticized the socialists for being too vague and having no

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84 May 1884.

85 William Morris (1834-96) - poet, artist, typographer, republican, utopian socialist. Joined the S.D.F. in 1883 - left to found the Socialist League and edit its weekly journal, the Commoweal.

86 21 August 1887.

87 Standring, "Radicals and Socialists", The Radical, October 1886.

concrete plan for the reorganisation of society. He attacked William Morris who at a recent Fabian conference, made it clear that he "regarded Mr. Bradlaugh as a heretic no less damnable than Lord Hartington", and had done much to widen the gulf between Radicals/Republicans and Socialists.[88]

In the 1880's, therefore, disillusioned republicans were moving in one of two directions. Either they settled for a quiet life in the Liberal fold or they turned to socialism. The South Shields branch of The Republican League, for example, collapsed "after the secession of some of its members to the Socialist body".[89] If one consults the "Reports of Meetings" column in the National Reformer, it becomes apparent that political societies which had discussed republicanism in the seventies turned to socialism in the eighties.[90] Moreover, many of the old hallmarks of republicanism, such as the Phrygian cap of liberty, and red sashes, could be observed at socialist meetings during the 1880's. It was also common to hear the name of the Queen or Prince of Wales hissed, and the Marseillaise was still the most popular song in left-wing circles.[91] But despite all this, a republic was not officially advocated by any socialist group. John Robertson wrote in 1887 that:

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88 Standring, "What Socialism Is", The Republican, June 1886.

89 Ibid., May 1885.

90 See "Reports of Meetings" column in the National Reformer throughout the 1880's.

91 Reynolds' Newspaper, 6 March 1887 and 6 November 1887.

> The only Socialist programme before the British public makes no specific mention whatever of royalism. It can hardly be supposed that this means attachment to the throne, or even a willingness to retain the monarchy as part of the constitution; it can only signify a feeling that to agitate for the abolition of the monarchy at present would be useless ...[92]

Robertson was referring here to the programme of the S.D.F. It is true that their programme avoided any mention of the Monarchy by name, but the sixth point did recommend the "Abolition of the House of Lords and all Hereditary Authorities".[93] It would appear that republicanism had become unfashionable enough to cause the socialists to steer clear of it, at least in official publications, even if their sympathies had for many years lain in that direction.

H.M. Hyndman stated that at the first conference of the S.D.F. on 8 June 1881, "my friend Dr. Clark in his eagerness to overturn the Monarchy, insisted upon having a pronouncement in favour of the Republicanism, which I ruled out of order".[94] G.D.H. Cole and Edward Royle have both noted that although many members of the Independent Labour Party favoured a republic, they purposely avoided making statements on the topic.[95] James Keir Hardie was "certainly a republican",[96] but like most socialists he regarded the Monarchy as simply "an appenage [sic] of the

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92 Robertson, Royalism: A Note on the Queen's Jubilee, 28.

93 The Republican, January 1883.

94 Hyndman, Record of an Adventurous Life, 250.

95 G.D.H. Cole, British Working Class Politics 1832-1914 (London, 1941), 143 and Royle, Radical Politics, 81.

96 William Stewart, J. Keir Hardie, intr. Ramsay MacDonald (London, 1921), 89.

political and social system, which would disappear as a matter of course when the system disappeared".[97] He never, at any time "went out of his way to attack the Monarchy, but simply availed himself of the opportunities to do so as they arose".[98] Such an opportunity occurred in June 1894. On 23 June, 260 miners were killed in an explosion at Albion Colliery in Cilfynydd, South Wales. On the same day, the Duchess of York gave birth to a son. The following day, M. Carnot, the French President, was assassinated, and the day after that seventy thousand Scottish miners came out on strike against a reduction in wages.

On 25 June, in the House of Commons, Sir William Harcourt gave notice of his intention to move a vote of condolence with the French people for the loss of their President. Hardie inquired whether a vote of sympathy would also be moved to the relatives of the victims of the Welsh colliery disaster. Harcourt replied "Oh no, I can dispose of that now by saying that the House does sympathise with these poor people".[99] Hardie then put down a notice of an addition to the motion in which the Queen was to be asked to express sympathy with the miner's relatives, and the House to be requested to acknowledge its detestation of a system which made the periodic sacrifice of miners' lives inevitable. This amendment was ruled out of order. The following day in the Commons, Harcourt moved "that an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty to congratulate Her Majesty on the birth of a son to His Royal Highness the Duke and Her Royal Highness the Duchess of York". A.J. Balfour seconded the motion. Keir Hardie then rose and made the following state-

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97 Ibid. 98 Ibid. 99 Ibid., 89.

ment:

> Mr. Speaker, on my own behalf and those whom I represent, I am unable to join in this public address. I own no allegiance to any hereditary ruler - (interruption) - and I will expect those who do to allow me the ordinary courtesies of debate. The resolution ... seeks to elevate to an importance, which it does not deserve, an event of everyday occurrence.

He stated that the vast majority of the common people were disgusted that the House should waste time with motions of this nature and therefore "it seems to me that a protest of some kind ought to be made". Hardie then asked "what particular blessing the Royal Family has conferred upon the nation" and went on to relate the grossly unfair advantages that this child would have throughout its life. He concluded by lamenting that:

> The Government will not find an opportunity for a Vote of Condolence with the relatives of those who are lying stiff and stark in a Welsh Valley, and, if that cannot be done, the motion before the House ought never to have been proposed either.

No one rose to second Hardie, the Speaker put the question and the ayes were unanimous except, of course, for the member for West Ham South.[100]

What then, may be concluded about the decline of Victorian republicanism? By 1874, several factors had combined to seriously weaken the republican movement. In the first place, the two major republican factions were irrevocably divided after the quarrel between Bradlaugh

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[100] 25 June 1894, Hansard, ser. 4, 26:460-4.

and De Morgan. Secondly, the republics of France and Spain, which had provided so much inspiration for the British movement, failed to live up to expectations. Thirdly, the secularist dominance of political republicanism made it difficult for Christians to join that section of the movement. Lastly, Disraeli's "New Course", which since 1872 had worked hard to combat the growth of republicanism, was victorious in the 1874 General Election. Despite their earlier aspirations, the republicans failed to organise a credible election campaign, but they refused to vote Liberal and the Conservatives romped home. This dealt a terrific blow to republican morale and shattered their vision of a new society almost overnight.

By 1880, all the old republican clubs had disappeared. Most social republicans, being quicker to read the writing on the wall than the secularists, had by this time turned to socialism. Bradlaugh, Standring and their followers struggled to preserve a republican/radical tradition which looked more anachronistic every day. Standring engineered a brief revival of organised republicanism in 1881 with The Republican League, but it did not last for more than a year or two, primarily because of mass defections to the socialist ranks. The two groups combined to attack the ostentation of the Queen's golden Jubilee but while Bradlaugh lived that was as far as co-operation would go. His opposition to socialism was strengthened by vicious personal attacks from the socialists. When he replied in kind the resolve of his opponents was also hardened until an alliance became impossible.[101] When Bradlaugh died in 1891, his re-

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101 Besant, An Autobiography, 302.

maining followers either made the transition to socialism or settled for a less hectic existence with the Liberal Party.

Notwithstanding the rise of socialism, why should the attempts to reorganise republicanism in 1881 and 1887 have failed so dismally, and why were the socialists so reluctant to advocate the abolition of the Monarchy? John Robertson explained in 1898 that "there has been little or nothing in the annals of the past twenty years to set up a new stress of feeling against the monarchy in England, while there has been much that has tended to put the republican ideal in the background".[102] Figuring prominently among such diversions was the increased interest in foreign policy and imperialism, the build up to a new reform bill in the early 1880's and most important of all, the Irish Question. Moreover, working men decided that the system of government could not be overthrown peacefully and that most of the reforms they desired would have to be achieved within the existing political and social framework. Robertson maintained that devotion to the Monarchy had "almost completely passed away among the more intelligent workers, and now subsists only among their weaker brethren, and in the middle and upper classes".[103] But if they had no love for the Monarchy, they did respect the Monarch and a movement already weakened by a "want of unity and purpose" could make little headway against the "vast forces of habit and prejudices which buttress the throne".[104] Robertson concluded that

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[102] Robertson, Bradlaugh, 2:167.

[103] Ibid., 166.

[104] Ibid., 167.

> ... barring any new and special cause for outcry against the Throne, its abolition in this country will only result from the slow accumulation of indifference and educated aversion to the snobbery which cherishes and is cherished by it. This certainly cannot take place during the lifetime of the reigning sovereign, whose age and popularity alike go to silence serious agitation. It may or may not come about in the next generation.[105]

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105 Ibid.

CHAPTER 12

CONCLUSIONS

Writing in 1911, H.A.L. Fisher judged the British republican movement to have been "an eddy rather than a current".[1] Twenty-seven years later, Simon Maccoby's research caused him to disagree with Fisher and conclude that the movement "possessed much genuine vitality".[2] Over the last few decades, Fisher's opinion has received more support from historians than Maccoby's. However, the few serious modern appraisals of the subject, most notably by Tribe and Harrison,[3] have been closer to Maccoby. Yet, it must be remembered that neither Tribe nor Harrison were writing specifically on republicanism: it was simply that their respective main themes demanded some treatment of the topic.

From the evidence presented in this thesis, one can only conclude that for at least four years, republicanism was the most significant trend in British radicalism. Moreover, there is much to suggest that although few were prepared to publicly declare themselves republican in the period between the passing of the Second Reform Act and the declaration of the Third French Republic, anti-Monarchical sentiments were quietly but steadily spreading among that section of working men who

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1 Fisher, The Republican Tradition in Europe, 256.

2 Maccoby, English Radicalism 1853-1886, 172.

3 Tribe, President Charles Bradlaugh M.P., ch. 6 and Harrison, Before the Socialists, ch. 5.

concerned themselves with political affairs. Although the organised republican movement declined rapidly after 1874, many republicans played an important part in putting the fledgling socialist movement on its feet.

British republicanism was far from being a carbon copy of the French variety, but was part of a native tradition dating back to the Interregnum. The foundations of the 1870's movement, though, were essentially laid by three generations of republicans during the first half of the nineteenth century. The first of these was inspired by Thomas Paine, the second by radical journalists such as Carlisle, Hetherington and Lorymer, and the third by the latter-day Chartists Harney, Jones, O'Brien and Linton. The types of republicanism that emerged by 1870 owed much to those three generations of agitators. They in their turn were indebted to the small groups who had preserved the ideas of the Civil War through the Restoration, Augustan and Hanoverian ages.

Throughout the history of British republicanism, two principle strains were evident. Some people would be content with a political republic, or as it came to be known, "the republic pure and simple". But others believed that social reform must follow immediately upon the heels of political reform, otherwise the structure of society would remain basically the same with no benefits accruing to the lower classes. An aristocratic republic was no better than a monarchy. For most political republicans in the Victorian period, the United States was the model to be emulated. But, as early as 1850, social republicans condemned the

Americans for betraying republican principles and creating a monied oligarchy to assume the privileged role of Britain's landed aristocracy. The social republicans looked always to France for their inspiration.

The demand of Harney and company for "the Charter and something more" was a major factor in the ultimate break-up of Chartism. Feargus O'Connor and his compatriots in the Manchester Council found they could not subscribe to republican principles, let alone the comprehensive social reforms which Harney wished to add to the political demands of the Charter. The quarrel split Chartist leadership at a crucial time when many of the rank and file were drifting away to join friendly societies, co-operatives and trade unions. Thus, instead of working together to reverse this trend, the feuding leaders succeeded only in accelerating it. W.J. Linton, though, was of the opinion that Chartism should be allowed to die peacefully and he endeavoured to replace it with a national republican organisation. However, the intellectual demands of Linton's rather exclusive societies were too high for the average working man to meet, and there was never any chance of a real mass movement developing. Although Linton failed, he was the first to seriously try to create a national republican movement based on local branches. In addition to this, many of his ideas were adopted by the republicans who followed him.

The republicanism of 1870, therefore, was much more than a reaction to events in France: it was part of a long British tradition that reawoke, after a period of dormancy, in the late 1860's. The renaissance occurred for a number of reasons. The victory of the North in the Ameri-

can Civil War, the disillusionment of many workers with the Second Reform Act, the retirement of the Queen and the profligacy of the Prince of Wales, all combined to kindle a republican revival several years before the declaration of the Third French Republic. The latter acted as a catalyst, speeding up the process appreciably, while not being responsible for initiating the phenomenon.

The majority of republicans in the late 'sixties and early 'seventies were undoubtedly from the working classes, but this does not mean that republicanism was a rallying cry for class warfare. The social republicans, who would have liked it to become so, were always in a minority, and the Bradlaughites, who were by far the most numerous faction in the movement, advocated the co-operation rather than confrontation of classes. Moreover, it would be a mistake to divide republicans simply into political and social categories, and even more misguided to see the former as consisting of middle class people and the latter as being predominantly working class. Most of the more prosperous artisans were political republicans, while the middle class supplied some of the most enthusiastic social republicans in the form of the Positivists. It is also especially important to divide the republicans into theoreticians and practicians. Men such as Dilke, Cowen and Chamberlain, who were thought by some contemporaries and later historians to have been leading figures in republican organisation, were far more interested in theory than practice. Having made this distinction, the practical section may then be divided into social and political groups.

It would appear that there was some connection, if not an over-

whelmingly important one, between economic conditions and republicanism. Political republicanism was to some extent, a product of the mid-Victorian boom. Artisans who no longer had to fight for survival could devote more time to educating themselves and their children and afford to indulge in political speculation. They had no wish to completely overturn a society which had finally started to reward them for their labours, and recognize them as responsible citizens. Instead, they looked forward to a meritocratic republic which would provide their children with a better chance to make something of their lives. Political republicans were invariably to be found in areas where trade was lively and industrial relations were good. Social republicans, on the other hand, tended to come from districts where economic and industrial conditions were poor. Both types of republican were represented in London, which is only to be expected since the economic climate was so diverse. It should be noted that the presence of numerous foreign refugees served to strengthen the social element in the capital. Almost without exception, the provincial towns, being far more homogeneous in their industrial composition, adhered to just one form of republicanism.

The major provincial centres did not simply follow the lead of the capital. Their republican societies were formed and developed quite independently of metropolitan influence. However, there were some groups founded as the direct result of a visit to the town by a leading figure from London such as Odger or Bradlaugh. But the republican movement was by no means exempt from the traditional rivalry between London and the provinces. The crucial split between the social republicans of Sheffield

and the London political republicans was not merely ideological or even the result of the personal feud between Bradlaugh and De Morgan, it also contained a strong element of north-south rivalry. The Paris Commune, it should be noted, was not a significant factor in the split.

The view has been firmly expressed in this work that the influence of the Paris Commune on the divisions in the republican ranks has been very much exaggerated. Debates over the Commune undoubtedly contributed to the prevailing factionalism in London republicanism during the spring of 1871, but by the end of 1872, the Londoners had resolved a good many of their differences. The really important division in republicanism did not occur until early 1873 and it had nothing directly to do with the Commune. There is no evidence that any genuine British republican forsook his principles because of the Commune: the trade union leaders who attacked it were only half-hearted republicans anyway. Most reasonable people were aware that much sensationalism and few facts about the Commune had been promulgated by the press. Those who believed the tales of blood and brutality did so because they had already made up their minds.

Few aristocrats or upper-middle class industrialists and financiers had any sympathy with even the mildest political republicanism, let alone the Paris Commune. This is quite understandable since they naturally felt that their privileged position in society was being threatened. People like Dilke and the Amberleys, who believed that national efficiency depended upon a shift towards a meritocracy, found almost no like-minded people in their own class. Many aristocratic

families had flirted with republicanism a couple of centuries earlier, but that was the classical oligarchic variety which had held sway in late medieval Venice and pre-Caesarian Rome. Dr. Pankhurst maintained in 1874 that England was actually an "aristocratic" republic which should be replaced by a "popular" republic.[4] Pankhurst was arguing here on the assumption that the Monarch had virtually no power left and that the country was in reality being governed by a few aristocratic families. Ironically, the Queen could still influence affairs a great deal more than Pankhurst suspected.

Baron Stockmar had warned the young Queen Victoria to be constantly on the look-out for republicans and for the most part she heeded him well. Yet in the winter of 1870-71, Gladstone experienced great difficulty in trying to convince her that consistent refusals to make public appearances were doing irreparable damage to the prestige of the Crown.[5] She was annoyed but not unduly worried by the growing wave of republicanism among British working men. It was not until Sir Charles Dilke attacked the cost of the Crown and declared his preference for a meritocratic republic that she began to appreciate the gravity of the situation. Like many Tories, she urged Gladstone to take action against the republicans which the Prime Minister seemed disinclined to do. Ironically, the Queen failed to realize that Gladstone was probably the best, and certainly the wisest friend she had in these years. Gladstone

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4 Pankhurst to Manchester Republican Club, National Reformer, 1 February 1874.

5 Magnus, Gladstone, 203-23.

took the republicans seriously enough but he did not want them to know that. He rightly believed that the best way of dealing with the problem was not to attack the republicans, or even assert the Cabinet's loyalty as the Queen requested,[6] but to belittle them and be careful not to provide their cause with any martyrs. To challenge the republicans would be to harden them and risk dividing the nation into two opposing camps. A.J. Mundella was just one Liberal who did not rule out the possibility of civil war if either side were pressed too hard.[7] Some Tories as we have seen, were just itching for such a conflict.[8]

Gladstone's strategy, although it succeeded in dulling the edge of the republican blade, probably helped to lose the 1874 General Election. The Tories claimed that since the Liberals refused to suppress republicanism, then they must surely hold, or at least sympathize with, such principles. The fact that certain Liberal M.P.'s were known to do just that added considerable weight to these arguments. By 1872, therefore, the Conservative Party had begun an active anti-republican campaign of which a fundamental part was burdening the Liberals with the stigma of republicanism. This was maintained right through to the General Election of 1874.[9] Such a plan could hardly fail since the Tories were

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6 See above, 385-6.

7 See above, 286.

8 See above, 247.

9 A good example of this is the way in which the Tories of Newcastle-upon-Tyne tried to use Cowen's republican sympathies against him. See above, 195.

unlikely to lose any votes and stood to gain many from middle class loyalists. The Conservative position was strengthened by the fact that many republicans grew impatient with the Liberal reluctance to adopt all or part of their programme. The republicans originally planned to contest the 1874 election as a third party but their powers of organisation proved inadequate. In the event, most republicans who had the franchise seem to have abstained from voting and so assisted in the Liberal downfall. David Tribe has astutely argued that:

> However diverse the personal interests within the British ruling classes, in moments of stress or in the face of a common foe they stick together. The working classes, on the other hand, have never been able to resist the luxury of histrionic in-fighting.[10]

The Conservative victory came at an unfortunate time for British republicanism. The movement was already reeling from internecine strife and growing disillusionment with the prospects of republicanism. Consequently, the right-wing reaction dealt it a crippling blow from which it never recovered. Disraeli's cult of monarchy and imperialism captured the imagination of the middle classes and indeed some of the working classes. British prestige abroad was made to appear far more important than exploitation and financial waste at home. But more than this, the Monarchy was deemed to be an essential part of that prestige.

Most social republicans were quicker than their political coun-

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10 Tribe, President Charles Bradlaugh M.P., 156.

terparts to recognize that republicanism was a lost cause. Of course, one must remember that it was a short step from social republicanism to socialism. But for individualist libertarians like Bradlaugh and his friends, the alternatives were to revive republicanism, turn to Liberalism, or settle for a future of political anonymity. By the 1880's, a good many political republicans had ended up in those last two categories, but the hard core endeavoured to continue producing republican propaganda.

By the end of the century, the political and social committment of the working classes had been eroded by the appeal of jingoism and alarmist propaganda regarding the increase of the industrial and military strength of rival continental powers. The result was an attempt to preserve working class culture by becoming apolitical.[11] Late Victorian and Edwardian socialism was essentially defensive and lacked the vision of a brave new world which had been cherished by so many republicans.

Yet to discover the most important reason for the failure of Victorian republicanism, we must return once more to the Queen herself. Let us refer to the writings of two very different political thinkers for suggestions as to why the British Monarchy continued into the twentieth century. When the Queen died, Keir Hardie wrote that notwithstanding all her faults, the Queen survived the storm of the seventies

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11 Jones, "Working Class Culture".

to become the most popular monarch in history because she was "the embodiment of the virtues upon which the middle-class matron bases her claim to be considered the prop and mainstay of the race".[12] When Hardie opposed the new settlement of the Civil List for Edward VII, the Leeds Mercury commented that Hardie "delivered a speech on frankly republican lines" which drew cheers from the Tories by "admitting that the working classes were now favourable to Royalty, and provoked their laughter by adding that this was because the working man did not know what Royalty meant".[13] The Conservatives may have found that statement amusing, but there was much truth in it. Walter Bagehot had many pertinent comments to make on the subject of Monarchy and he sincerely believed that as the people became more educated, Monarchy would be made redundant.[14] He did not specify exactly when he anticipated such a level of education would be achieved. However, he did explain in a brilliant statement his opinions as to why the Monarchy persisted:

> ... royalty is a government in which the attention of the nation is concentrated on one person doing interesting actions. A republic is a government in which that attention is divided between many who are all doing uninteresting actions. Accordingly, so long as the human heart is strong and the human reason weak, royalty will be strong because it appeals to diffused feelings, and republics weak because they appeal to the understanding.[15]

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12 Stewart, J. Keir Hardie, 176.

13 Ibid., 179.

14 Bagehot, "The Thanksgiving", The Economist, 24 February 1872.

15 Bagehot, "The English Constitution", in St. John Stevas, ed., Works of Bagehot, 5:229-30.

464

NATIONAL REPUBLICAN BROTHERHOOD

ESTABLISHED 1872.

OBJECTS.

Adult suffrage, a pure ballot, equal electrol districts, no state church, free secular education, nationalization of the land, repeal of game-laws, reform of the currency, shorter parliaments, payment of members, and the establishment by legal means of a Republican form of government.

PROPAGANDA.

That the country be divided into districts, each district having a local council in correspondence with the Central Executive. The meetings to be held in the villages and towns in those districts as often as possible: that tracts be issued by the Central Executive, to be supplied at cost price to the district councils for house to house distribution; that no publication or tract issued by the Central Executive shall contain anything likely to offend the religious convictions of any: that no religious or anti-religious subject be discussed on our platforms, or in our club meetings; that the Central Executive act as a lecture bureau, arranging for a constant supply of lectures to all branches. That the Executive issue illuminated cards of membership, subscription books, and rules to be supplied to Societies at cost price.

RELATION TO OTHER COUNTRIES.

That, as Republicans, we recognise the right of every nation to choose its own form of government.

EMBLEM.

A tricolor flag—green, white, and blue colors placed horizontally—the green forming the base, on the blue ground a white star with five points. The emblem signifying—green, fertility; white, purity; blue (with the white star of freedom), the sky under which all men are equal; the five points of the star representing the five divisions of the earth, and typifying the universal brotherhood of man.

MEMBERSHIP.

All persons are eligible as members who agree with the objects, and who pay not less than one shilling per year. Societies can affiliate by payment of not less than 5/- per annum.

GOVERNMENT.

The N.R.B. to be governed by an executive of seven, including Secretary and Treasurer—elected half-yearly at conference. The next conference to be held in Birmingham in June.

Societies and individuals are invited to give in their adhesion to the N.R. Brotherhood, and so strengthen the hands of the Executive, and enable them to carry out an active propaganda. All subscriptions to be forwarded to the Treasurer.

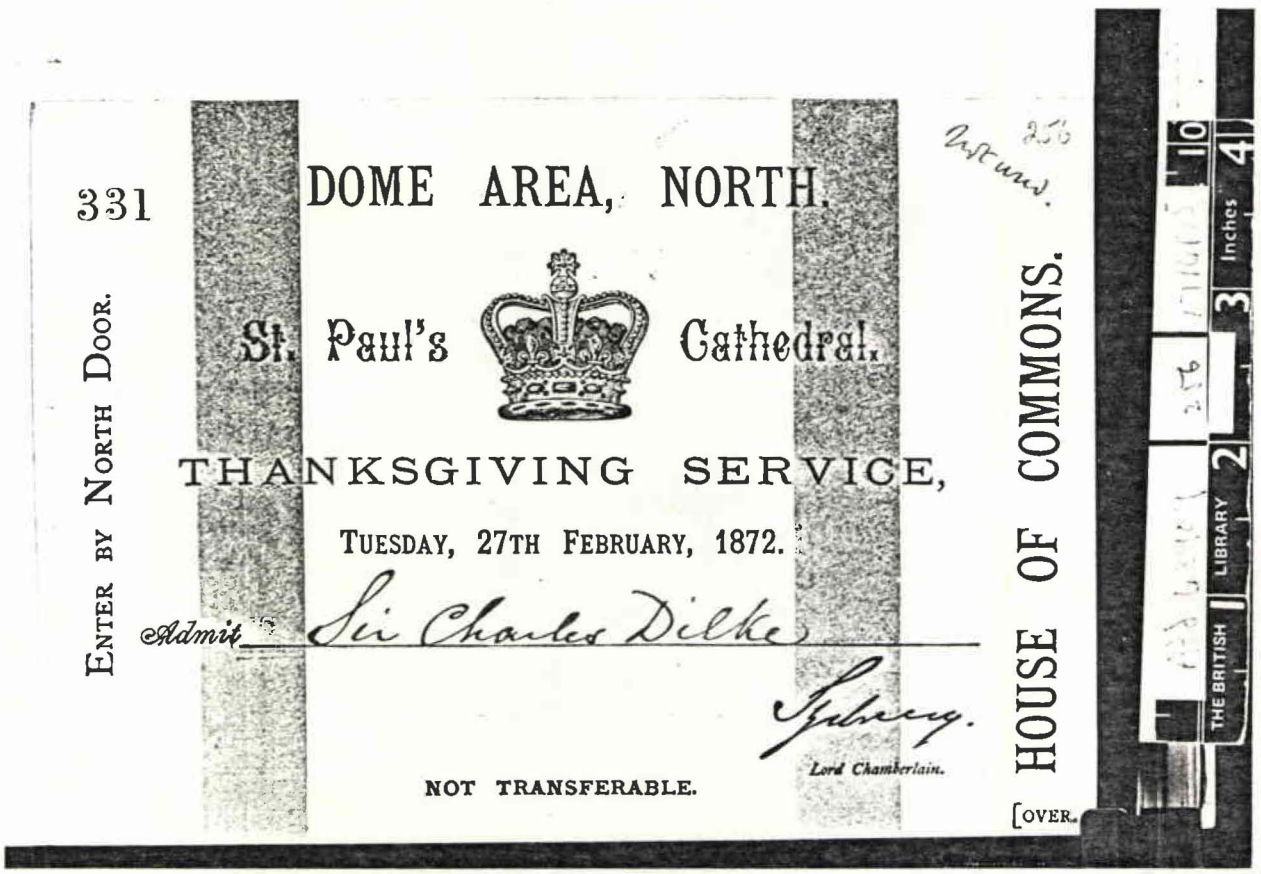
HON. TREASURER:

THOMAS SMITH, 15, Houndsgate, Nottingham.

HON. SECRETARY:

JOHN DE MORGAN, 19, Vaughan-street, Middlesbrough.

P.S.—The Reports of the N.R. Brotherhood appear from time to time in the *International Herald*, the only paper in England devoted exclusively to the advanced Political and Social Movements.



331

ENTER BY NORTH DOOR.

DOME AREA, NORTH.

St. Paul's Cathedral.

THANKSGIVING SERVICE,

TUESDAY, 27TH FEBRUARY, 1872.

Admit Sir Charles Dilke

Spencer.

Lord Chamberlain.

NOT TRANSFERABLE.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

[OVER.

"We trust that the Prince of Wales may get fair play. If he does, he will most certainly never be King of England."

—CHARLES BRADLAUGH, *N. R.*, *30th Oct.*, 1870.

"*Neither the King nor his heirs shall prosper.*"—HENRY VIII., i., 2.



"*Inspired with the spirit of putting down kings and princes.*"

—HENRY VI., pt. ii., iv., 2.

"If ever I waver from the programme I have put before you—a bold and defiant programme—which aims at the destruction of class-government, which aims at turning out Marquises and Viscounts out of the Cabinets they disfigure—I will lay the trust you have reposed in me again in your hands."

—C. BRADLAUGH, *Northampton Election*. *N. R.*, *4th Oct.*, 1868.



O'CONNOR'S ATTACK ON THE QUEEN: JOHN BROWN TO THE RESCUE.

THE PENNY ILLUSTRATED PAPER. SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 1872.



FIRE AND SMOKE.

FRENCH COMMUNIST.—"ALLONS, MON AMI, LET US GO BURN OUR INCENSE ON THE ALTAR OF EQUALITY."
BRITISH WORKMAN.—"THANKS, MOSSOO, BUT I'D RATHER SMOKE MY 'BACCY ON THE HEARTH OF LIBERTY."

*** The Paris Internationalists had issued a Manifesto to working-men everywhere, declaring that their Society alone could lead them to emancipation. They boldly "accepted the responsibility of the conflagration of Paris."

The Republican

EDITED BY GEO. STANDRING.

VOL. VII., NO. 11.] FEBRUARY, 1882. [PRICE ONE PENNY.



Royalty "Raising the Wind."



THE QUEEN'S "SEVENPENCE."

'.* Sir Robert Peel's Budget, which included an income tax of sevenpence in the pound, was carried both in the Commons and the Lords. The Queen volunteered to subject her income to the tax.



QUEEN HERMIONE.

PAULINA (*Britannia*) UNVEILS THE STATUE.—"'Tis time! Descend; be stone no more!"

Winter's Tale, Act V., Scene 3.

*** Since the death of the Prince Consort, Queen Victoria had remained in almost absoluto retirement. The cartoon breathes a loyal wish that her Majesty would again resume her public duties.



"NEW CROWNS FOR OLD ONES!"

(ALADDIN ADAPTED.)

*** Mr. Disraeli's measure for adding to the Royal titles that of Empress of India was not very popular with the country.

The Republican

EDITED BY GEO. STANDRING.

PUBLISHED ON THE FIRST THURSDAY IN THE MONTH.

VOL. XI., NO. 3.] JUNE, 1885. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

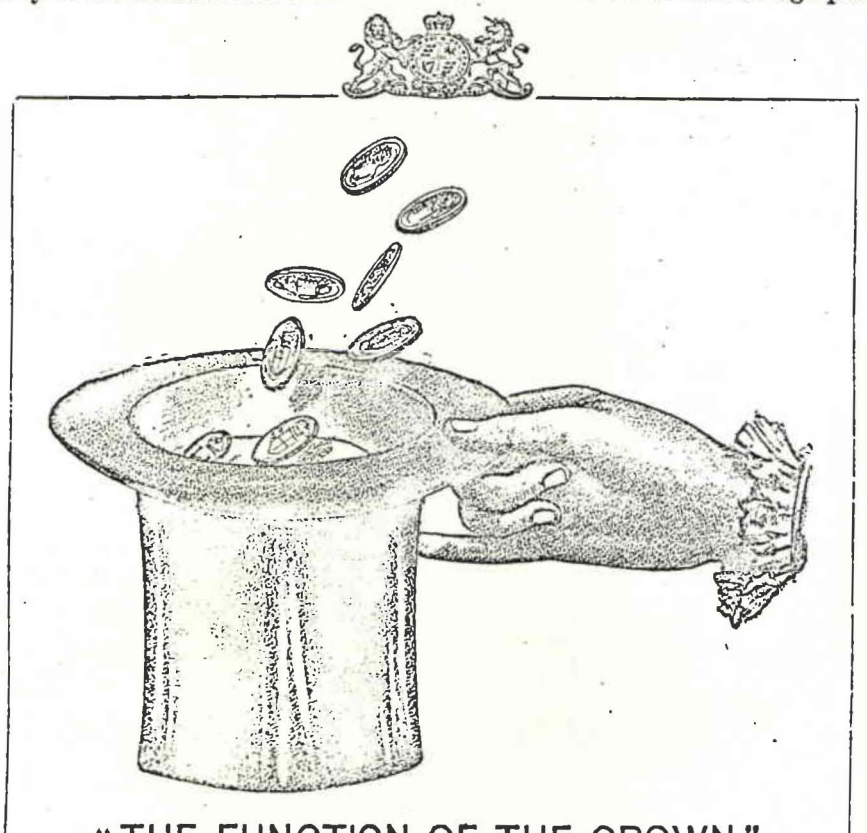
"For the Last Time of Asking."

ON the 15th of May, the House of Commons was asked by the Prime Minister, on behalf of the Crown, to "make provision" for the youngest daughter of Her Majesty, Princess Beatrice. An annual sum of £6,000 was granted out of the Consolidated Fund, to be settled on the Princess for life, such annuity to commence from the date of her marriage with the penniless German, Prince Henry of Battenburg.

As this was, we may hope, "the last time of asking," it is well for the British tax-payer to review the royal family and the charges which this multitude of mediocrities entail upon his purse.

In 1843, the Princess Augusta of Cambridge, cousin of the Queen, was voted £3,000 per annum on her marriage to the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz—a potentate deriving from his ducal revenues an income of at least half-a-million annually.

Seven years later—in 1850—Parliament was called upon to make "provision for the family of the late Duke of Cambridge," and an annuity of £14,000 was voted to the gallant soldier who now "commands" the Imperial forces; whilst his sister, Princess Mary of Cambridge, was favored with an income of £3,000.



"THE FUNCTION OF THE CROWN."

Lord Palmerston, in 1857, introduced a bill to settle £3,000 per year upon the Princess Royal, who in the following year married the future Emperor of Germany. Next, Prince Louis of Hesse came a-wooing the Princess Alice, and, with her, secured a dowry of £30,000 and an income of £6,000—not provided, of course, by the mother-in-law, but by the English people.

In 1863, the Heir Apparent led to the altar the daughter of the King of Denmark, and this interesting ceremony involved a further annual payment by the nation of £50,000. Three years later, two annuitants were added to the roll—the Duke of Edinburgh with £15,000, and Princess Helena with the usual £30,000 dowry and £6,000 income. Eleven years afterwards, when h married the Grand Duchess Marie of Russia, the Duke of Edin burgh again posed as an humble suppliant for out-door relief and, though his wife brought him a marriage-portion of nearl £400,000 and a life annuity of £11,250, an obsequious Parlia ment voted an additional £10,000 a year to the royal fiddle As a useless naval officer of high rank, the Duke also draws salary of £1,396, and has besides received various sums to enabl him to undertake several foreign pleasure-trips.

In 1871, the Hous was besought of it charity to provide th wherewithal for Princes Louise and the Marqui of Lorne to set up house keeping. Again th marriage-bells rang ou the old chime—£30,00 dowry, and £6,000 an nuity. The Marquis o Lorne has, we believe slightly added to hi income by publishing volumes of his ow verses and selling then at reduced prices t buttermen. The thick ness and excellent qual ity of the paper render it especially useful fo the safe carriage o "prime Dorset."

Later on in the sam year, the begging-bo was again shaken up o behalf of the Duke Connaught, and th Queen relied, as usual upon the affection of he faithful Commons to d the proper and gracefu thing. The House di the p. and g. t. by votin Arthur £15,000 per an num; and in 1878, when he married the third daughter o Prince Frederick Charles of Prussia, a further sum of £10,00 was added to the endowment.

In 1874, the intellectual and philosophical Leopold knocked a the door of St. Stephen's, and plaintively asked: "What have done?" The pathetic appeal softened the hearts of legislator whose heads apparently had already softened; and Mr. Disrae moved that the invalid and recluse Prince should be granted a annuity of £15,000. This, of course, was done; and when i 1882, he married Princess Augusta, he received an additiona £10,000 per year as the reward of matrimonial merit. Sinc Leopold's death his widow has enjoyed an annuity of £6,000.

APPENDIX 1

The Republicanism of William James Linton

In 1867 Linton published, in New York, a pamphlet entitled: "Ireland for the Irish, Rhymes and Reasons against Landlordism with a Preface on Fenianism and Republicanism". This contains the best description of Linton's republicanism. He stated that by the republic:

> We mean not only the displacement of a particular form of government; but, believing that presidents are but slightly improved constitutional sovereigns, we mean the abolition of class government, which is monarchy, under whatever name. We mean not merely giving the land to the people, and enfranchising them from their thraldom under the priesthood; we mean not only this or that remedial measure, however just or needful; but we mean a radical reorganisation of government and of society, a reorganisation whose principles we accept as a faith, defend with our reason, and dare to maintain and promote with our lives.
>
> By the one word REPUBLIC we mean the equal right of all men to well-being and well doing, and the ordering of all the powers and capabilities of society for the bettering of every member toward the perfecting of the whole.
>
> We mean that there shall be none uneducated, none without property, none shut out by legislative enactment or social hindrance, from the people's land, or from whatever the commonwealth can furnish for their spiritual and material advantage.
>
> We mean the abolition of the tyrannies of rank and wealth, the abolition of all arbitrary distinctions and artificial disabilities calculated to prevent any individual from reaching the fullest growth and perfection of his or her nature. We mean the protection of the weak against the strong. We mean the assurance of every member of society against tyranny or accident. We mean the equal care of State embracing every individual as part of the whole.
>
> We mean also that the State should maintain its rights to the service of all its members. We mean that each should be dutiful to all. We mean that duty shall be no more a vague

or an idle word; that it shall really express the relation of the parts to the whole, the relation by which a man or a woman becomes the servant of the actual time or the surrounding society - of family, of country, of the world - bound to help to the utmost in the progressions of Humanity, with no limits except the possibilities of the individual's particular sphere.

We mean by The Republic a form of government in which all may participate; a government not to be surrendered to rulers or 'representatives', but to be directly exercised by the people themselves, originating, discussing, and enacting their own laws, deputing only their officers to carry out the popular will, the expression of the people's intellect and conscience.

We mean also by that word Republic to express the connection not only between the State and the individual, but between States or nations, and the community of nations - the whole of Humanity. We mean that, as individuals are component parts of the State or body politic, so State or nation are component parts of the Universal Republic, the body politic of Humanity, bound in duty toward that, and entitled to the protection of that against all interference or encroachment.

We mean by that word Republic the oneness of Humanity, the equality of all peoples and of all people. We mean that there is one common object and purpose in all times and among all races of mankind, the progress from improvement to improvement, through successive discoveries and applications of the laws of human life, of which law the whole people, and no priestly class whatever, are the interpreters; and that it is the duty of every human being to aid in this progress.

This is our meaning of the word REPUBLIC![1]

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[1] W.J. Linton, "Ireland for the Irish, Rhymes and Reasons against Landlordism with a preface on Fenianism and Republicanism" (New York, 1847), quoted in Kineton Parkes, "William James Linton", Bookman's Journal and Print Collector, 8 July 1921.

APPENDIX 2

The Inaccurate Newspaper Version of the Terms of the New Social Alliance: October, 1871

1. Something like the United States Homestead Law but with improvements by which workers' families may be removed from overcrowded areas of towns and given detached homesteads in the suburbs.
2. The Commune to be established so far as to confer upon all counties, towns and villages a perfect organisation for self-government, with powers for the acquisition and disposal of lands for the common good.
3. Eight hours of honest and skilled work shall constitute a day's labour.
4. Schools for technical instruction shall be established at the expense of the State in the midst of the homesteads of the proletariat.
5. Public markets shall be erected in every town, at the public expense for the sale of goods of the best quality, in small quantities at wholesale prices.
6. Establish places of public recreation, knowledge, and refinement.
7. Railways to be purchased and conducted at public expense and for the common good, i.e. nationalised.

Reynolds' Newspaper, 15 October 1871.

APPENDIX 3

Russell's Seven Evils of English Society

1. The want of family homes, clean, wholesome, and decent, out in pure air and sunshine.
2. The want of an organised supply of wholesome, nutritious, cheap food.
3. The want of leisure for the duties and recreation of family life, for instruction and for social duties.
4. The want of organised local government to secure the well-being of the inhabitants of villages, towns, counties and cities.
5. The want of systematic, organised teaching to every skilled workman of the scientific principles and most improved practice of his trade.
6. The want of public parks, buildings and institutions for innocent, instructive and improving recreation.
7. The want of the adequate organisation of the public service for the common good.

Lloyds' Weekly Newspaper, 19 November 1871.

APPENDIX 4

Programme of the "London Republicans"

N.B. This programme was published in a Welsh newspaper as "The Programme of the London Republicans". Since it could not have been issued by those advocating "the republic pure and simple", its point of origin must have been the U.R.L. whose original programme is also listed below.

Overall Objective:

> "The attainment of the highest standard of political and social rights for man, and the promotion of the intellectual moral and material welfare of mankind".

To achieve this they proposed:

1. Application of the Federation principle to all non-Republican States.
2. Abolition of aristocratic titles and privileges.
3. Suppression of all monopolies.
4. Abolition of standing armies.
5. Compulsory, gratuitous, secular and industrial education.
6. Obligation of the state to provide suitable employment for all citizens able to work, and sustenance for the incapacitated. None to live on the labour of others.
7. Nationalisation of the land.
8. Direct legislation by the people - Unity of Republicans, establishment of Republican Clubs and diffusion of Republican principles -

establishment of a High Court of Republican equity under the name of the Republican Areopagus which shall judge all violations of all the laws of humanity and the rights of men committed by crowned heads, statesmen, Parliaments, law courts, etc.

North Wales Press, 13 September 1871.

Original Programme of the Universal Republican League

1. Suppression and abolition of ecclesiastic and aristocratic titles and privileges.
2. Abolition of standing armies.
3. Compulsory, gratuitous, secular and industrial education, with State assistance for poor parents.
4. Provision by the State of suitable employment for all citizens able to work, and sustenance for those not able to work.
5. Nationalisation of the land.
6. Abolition of all monopolies arising out of the possession of private property.
7. Universal suffrage.
8. Sectional (not local) constituencies in the proportion of 1 member for every 10,000 electors.

Overall objective:

"To promote the intellectual, moral and material welfare of mankind by uniting Republicans of all countries and establishing branches of the League and Republican Clubs all over the world".

Weekly Dispatch, 23 April 1871.

APPENDIX 5

Programme of the Land and Labour League

1. Land nationalisation.
2. Home colonisation.
3. National, secular, gratuitous and compulsory education.
4. Suppression of private banks of issue - State only, to issue paper money.
5. A direct and progressive property tax in lieu of all other taxes.
6. Liquidation of the national debt.
7. Abolition of standing armies.
8. Reduction in hours of labour.
9. Equal electoral rights plus payment of M.P.'s.

Programme ratified - August, 1870.

See Harrison, Before the Socialists, 217.

APPENDIX 6

Aims of the Anglo-French Intervention Committee

1. The official recognition of the de facto Republican Government of France.
2. That our Government be requested to express its disapprobation of the present aggressive action of Prussia.
3. That should Prussia persist in her present aggressive action a strictly defensive alliance be concluded with France.
4. That Her Majesty's Government be called upon to convoke at once a special meeting of Parliament to consider the duty of the British nation at the present crisis.
5. That the various constituencies of the kingdom be requested to urge upon their representatives to support in Parliament the policy embodied in the previous resolutions.
6. That the friends of humanity in all political centres be requested to co-operate with this committee, and to convene public meetings in their respective localities, and to take such steps as they might think expedient to awaken the opinion and action of the people at this crisis.

Republican, 1 November 1870.

APPENDIX 7

Societal Evils Listed by London Republican Club

1. The huge increase in Imperial taxation plus diminution of national prestige plus the overwhelming burden of national debt.
2. The large increase in rents paid to a few landed proprietors, and widespread pauperism.
3. The unfairness of the present landed system - the large quantity of uncultivated land - the decreasing number of landowners and the deplorable condition of agricultural labourers.
4. The mischievous character of the House of Lords and its paralysing effect on national legislation.
5. The limitation of high office (with a few exceptions) to aristocrats.
6. The leaving of the occupancy of the throne to a family remarkable neither for virtue, intelligence, decision of character, nor devotion to national interests.

National Reformer, 21 May 1871.

APPENDIX 8

Republican Clubs and Societies in London 1869-1887

Where available exact foundation dates are given. Otherwise the date of the issue of the National Reformer (N.R.), or other source, containing club inauguration announcements is indicated; (n.d.) indicates no date available.

A. Bona Fide Republican Clubs

International Republican Association	4 July 1869, changed to:
International Democratic Association	11 July 1869, changed to:
Universal Republican League	9 April 1871
Stratford Republican Club	16 April 1871 (N.R.)
London Republican Club	12 May 1871
Southwark Republican Club	28 May 1871 (N.R.)
West Central Republican Club	14 April 1872 (N.R.)
Lambeth Republican Club	19 May 1872 (N.R.)
Marylebone Republican Club	2 June 1872 (N.R.)
Canning Town Republican Club	1873
The Republican League (London branch)	December, 1881 (Standring's Republican)
British Republican League (London branch)	27 November 1887 (N.R.)

B. Other Societies that were Republican in Sentiment

N.B. Most branches of the National Secular Society were republican in their political beliefs.

International Working Men's Association	28 September 1864
Land Tenure Reform Association	22 July 1869
East London Secular Society	1869
Land and Labour League Central Council	13, 20, 27 October 1869 (Harrison, Before the Socialists, 215)
Land and Labour League, Oak Branch	1870 (N.R.)
Land and Labour League, Mile End Branch No. 1	1870 (N.R.)
Land and Labour League, Sir Robert Peel Branch	1870 (N.R.)
South London Secular Society	n.d.
Paddington Secular Society	n.d.
Marylebone Electoral Reform Association	n.d.
Marylebone Radical Association	n.d.
Marylebone Central Democratic Association	n.d.
Holborn Patriotic Society	n.d.
London Patriotic Society	n.d.
Tower Hamlets Radical Association	n.d.
Deptford and Greenwich Secular Society	n.d.

Deptford and Greenwich Radical Association	n.d.
Eleusis Club, Chelsea	1870
Radical Club	1870 (Dilke Papers)
Hackney Secularist Association	n.d.
Westminster Democratic Club	1874 (N.R.)
Progressive Club, Notting Hill	1874 (N.R.)
Democratic and Trades Alliance	19 April 1874 (N.R.), changed to:
Manhood Suffrage League	9 September 1876 (N.R.)
British United Improvement Society	n.d.
Kingston and Surbiton Progressive Society	1875 (N.R.)
Kildwich Parish Secular Society	n.d.
Wellington and District Secular Society	2 May 1875 (N.R.)
Hammersmith Radical Club	n.d.
Lambeth Reform Union	n.d.
Walworth Freethought Institute	n.d.
Social Democratic Club, Soho	1879 (Shipley)
Federal Workmen's League	n.d., 1879?
Rose Street Club	n.d.
Labour Emancipation League	n.d.

A list of working men's clubs in London may be found in: Stan Shipley, Club Life and Socialism in Mid-Victorian London (Oxford, 1972), 77-80. However, further research would be necessary to determine how many of these sympathized with republicanism.

APPENDIX 9

Calendar of Republican Events in London 1860-1890

Although not all the meetings listed below were called for specifically republican purposes, they have been included because there is evidence that republican sentiments were expressed. (w.e. denotes "week ending".)

26 March 1863	St. James' Hall, Beesly on U.S. Civil War.
28 September 1864	St. Martin's Hall, founding of I.W.M.A.
15 December 1865	St. Martin's Hall, Reform Meeting, a great enthusiasm for U.S. Republic.
29 June 1866	Trafalgar Square, 20,000, Reform Demonstration, republican overtones.
19 April 1867	Hyde Park, 1,000, Reform and right of meeting in the park, republican overtones.
10 March 1867	London, crowded meeting to commemorate struggles of French republicans in 1848.
26 May 1867	Clerkenwell Green, 300, Reform and Fenian Prisoners.
16 June 1867	Clerkenwell Green, 200, Republicanism.
10 August 1867	Clerkenwell Green, 300, Royal Parks Bill.
16 November 1867	Clerkenwell Green, 800, Fenian prisoners, speakers included Bradlaugh, Odger, Lucraft, Finlen.
11 May 1868	Clerkenwell Green, 500, Irish Church.
31 May 1868	Clerkenwell Green, 700, Michael Barrett's execution.
21 June 1868	Clerkenwell Green, 150, People's Rights.
12 July 1868	Clerkenwell Green, 70, House of Lords.

15 June 1869	Clerkenwell Green, 1,000, House of Lords' opposition to Irish Church Bill, speakers included Bradlaugh, Weston, Johnson.
20 June 1869	Clerkenwell (waste ground), House of Lords' opposition to Irish Church Bill.
21 June 1869	Clerkenwell Green, 1,000, Irish Church Bill.
27 June 1869	Farringdon Road (waste ground), 200, Irish Church Bill. "Osborne and Finlen abused each other, the Queen, the Peers etc." ("Summary of Police Reports...", Gladstone Papers, BM, Add. MS. 44617, ff. 95-104.)
28 June 1869	Clerkenwell Green, 1,000, Irish Church Bill, seditious speeches from Osborne and Finlen.
11 July 1869	Clerkenwell Green, 300, Liberation of Fenian prisoners and the dismissal of the Government and both Houses of Parliament, speakers: Johnson and Finlen.
3 January 1869	East London Secular Society, Republican meeting.
18 July 1869	Clerkenwell Green, 2,000, I.D.A., Fenian Prisoners.
? July 1869	Conference to found Land Tenure Reform Association.
8 August 1869	Farringdon Road (waste ground), 300, Fenians.
5 September 1869	Clerkenwell Green, Republicanism.
12, 19, 26 September, 3 October 1869	Clerkenwell Green, Fenianism and Republicanism.
18 October 1869	I.D.A. March, Finsbury Square to Hyde Park.
13, 20, 27 October 1869	Bell Inn, Old Bailey, 70, Land and Labour League founded.
9 December 1869	Winchester Hall, Pentonville, 300, the unemployed.
12 December 1869	A Pub in Clerkenwell, the unemployed.

Throughout 1869 regular Republican meetings were held at the New Hall of Science and at many of London's secular societies. At least one meeting a week on topics related to republicanism was held in Clerkenwell during the year.

n.d. 1870	Democratic Club, Frederic Harrison on Republicanism.
6 February 1870, 13 March 1870	Clerkenwell Green, Emigration Question. " " " "
27 March 1870	Clerkenwell Green, 150, Irish Coercion Bill, speakers: Blyth, Hennessy.
Good Friday 1870	Trafalgar Square, Unemployment.
3 May 1870	Republican banquet for Flourens and Tibaldi.
13 May 1870	Hall of Science, 600, sympathy for French republicans, speakers: Holyoake, Le Lubez, Bradlaugh.
15 May 1870	Hyde Park, 400, Socialism.
22 May 1870	Hyde Park, I.D.A., Republicanism.
September 1870	London, Workmen's Peace Society rally.
10 September 1870	Hyde Park, 8,000, sympathy with French Republic, speakers: Beesly, Owen, Hennessy, Weston, Odger, Shipton, Merriman.
10 September 1870	St. James' Hall, French Republic.
13 September 1870	Arundel Hall, French Republic.
19 September 1870	Hall of Science, French Republic.
19 September 1870	Trafalgar Square, 20,000, sympathy with French Republic, red caps and banners displayed, Applegarth and Trade Union leaders present.
24 September 1870	St. James' Hall, French Republic.
25 September 1870	Hyde Park, 30,000-40,000, French Republic.

27 September 1870	Trade Union deputation to Gladstone to demand recognition of French Republic.
2 October 1870	Hyde Park, "a few hundred", I.D.A., French Republic.
2 October 1870	Clerkenwell Green. "The usual speakers appear to have been unusually profane in their abuse of the Queen and Premier, who were designated respectively 'Mrs. Brown and Coercion Bill'." ("Summary of Police Reports....", Gladstone Papers, BM, Add. MS. 44617, ff. 95-104.)
3 October 1870	Obelisk, Blackfriars Road, 1,000, to protest British Government's failure to recognize French Republic.
7 October 1870	Bell Inn, Old Bailey, sympathy with French Republic.
7 October 1870	Clerkenwell Green, sympathy with French Republic.
7 October 1870	Bell Inn, Old Bailey, Land and Labour League and I.D.A., meeting to consider ways of persuading the Government to change their attitude to the French Republic.
8 October 1870	Above meeting continued at 2 Poets' Corner, Westminster, Anglo-French Intervention Committee founded.
18 October 1870	Trafalgar Square, Government's attitude to French Republic.
19 October 1870	Palace Yard, 1,000, Demand for English intervention on behalf of France, speakers: Weston, Le Lubez.
8 December 1870	Land and Labour League, Protest against Princess Louise's Dowry.
18 December 1870	Trafalgar Square, procession to French Embassy.
5 January 1871	New Hall of Science, sympathy with French Republic.
9 January 1871	Greenwich, attack on Gladstone, sympathy with French Republic.
10 January 1871	St. James' Hall, regarding possible territorial spoilation of France.

13 January 1871	Meeting of Republican leaders in London to reconcile differences.
14 January 1871	Amalgamation of Working and Middle Class Relief Funds.
23 January 1871	Trafalgar Square, sympathy with French Republic.
21 March 1871	Wellington Music Hall, Central Republican Association formed.
3 April 1871	Meeting of London republican clubs to discuss Government repression.
4 April 1871	St. James' Hall, quarrel between social and political republicans.
5 April 1871	Meeting of General Council of Central Republican Association to discuss the split referred to above.
14 April 1871	Trafalgar Square, Land and Labour League, 400, to protest Princess Louise's Dowry.
14 April 1871	Clerkenwell Green, declaration of I.D.A. against private property.
16 April 1871	Hyde Park, 5,000, sympathy with Paris Commune.
23 April 1871	Announcement of Conference to solve differences between London republicans, called by Universal Republican League.
12 May 1871	New Hall of Sciences, Inauguration of London Republican Club.
14 May 1871	Kennington Park, Republicanism.
w.e. 28 May 1871	Issue of "The Civil War in France" by I.W.M.A. defending Commune.
11 May 1871	St. James' Hall, Republicanism.
2 June 1871	Trafalgar Square, U.R.L. Support for Commune and refugees.
18 June 1871	Clerkenwell Green, Republicanism.

20 June 1871	Division among London democrats between Protestants and Catholics. Catholics opposed Commune's execution of Archbishop of Paris and other clergy.
25 June 1871	Clerkenwell Green, defence of Commune.
27 June 1871	Parks Regulation Bill received Royal assent.
31 June 1871	Hyde Park, against annuity for Prince Arthur.
1 August 1871	Trafalgar Square, 1,500, against annuity for Prince Arthur.
w.e. 20 August 1871	Hyde Park, against suppression of peaceful political meetings in Ireland.
24 September 1871	St. James' Hall, Republicanism.
6 October 1871	George Potter's six-point reform programme published.
W.E. 16 October 1871	New Hall of Science, London Republican Club, to discuss Disraeli's statement that Queen "... morally and physically incapable..." of governing.
20 October 1871	Dialectical Society, Republican paper presented by Moncure Conway.
23 October 1871	London Patriotic Society, Odger condemned New Social Alliance.
29 October 1871	U.R.L. condemned New Social Alliance.
2 November 1871	Dialectical Society, debate on republicanism.
20 November 1871	Patriotic Society, meeting of London democrats to discuss differences.
w.e. 25 November 1871	I.W.M.A. offered to make Dilke an honorary member, Odger resigned.
9 December 1871	Anti-Republican Association formed in London.

6 January 1872	Address of London Working Men's Council condemned link between Liberation Society and Republicanism.
January 1872	Rift between Bradlaugh and I.W.M.A.
16 January 1872	Wellington Barracks Chelsea, 5,000 Republicans invaded loyalist meeting.
5 February 1872	Trafalgar Square, 18,000, support for Dilke, condemnation of Bolton Riot.
20 February 1872	Vestry Hall Chelsea, Dilke and Hoare spoke.
28 February 1872	O'Connor's attempt on Queen's life.
3 March 1872	Hyde Park, Parks Regulation Bill.
18 March 1872	St. George's Hall, Celebration of Anniversary of Commune.
19 March 1872	House of Commons, Dilke's motion on the Civil List.
16 June 1872	Kingston-on-Thames, 2,000, Republicanism.
24 June 1872	Crystal Palace, National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations, Republicanism attacked.
10 August 1872	New Reform Movement, Samuel Morley tried to create a broad Left and Centre alliance against the Conservatives.
3 November 1872	Hyde Park, 30,000, In favour of Fenian amnesty.
2nd meeting	Clerkenwell Green, 7 of the speakers prosecuted.
w.e. 17 November 1872	Meetings around the country to protest the Government's conduct over Hyde Park and Clerkenwell meetings.
2 April 1873	Queen's visit to Victoria Park.
3 August 1873	Hyde Park, 30,000, protest against increase in income of Duke of Edinburgh.
29 July 1874	Trafalgar Square, protest against proposed pension for Prince Leopold.
10 September 1874	Hall of Science, Civil List.

19 July 1875	Hyde Park, 100,000, Against any further Royal grants.
w.e. 18 April 1876	Southwark, Public meeting to protest Royal Titles Bill.
16 June 1876	House of Commons, Presentation of "Monster Petition" against Royal Grants, by Thomas Burt.
w.e. 28 July 1878	House of Commons, 33 supported Dilke in a motion to limit grants of public money to the Crown.
15 December 1878	Queen Victoria assassination threat - Edward Bryne Madden.
May 1879	"Address to the Heroes and Martyrs of the Commune", signed by 6 London radical clubs.
18 April 1880	Public Meeting to commemorate 1848 Revolution in France and Paris Commune.
15 October 1881	Minor Hall of Science, 80, formed a provisional committee to revive London Republican Club.
5 July 1882	Patriotic Club Clerkenwell, meeting of The Republican League.
17 April 1884	St. James' Hall, debate between Bradlaugh and Hyndman.
21 July 1884	Hyde Park, Reform,Republican overtones.
August 1884	Victoria Park, 50,000, against House of Lords.
26 October 1884	Hyde Park, against House of Lords.
8 February 1886	Trafalgar Square, D.S.F., Unemployment.
9, 10, 11 June 1886	Fabian Conference, Bradlaugh attacked by William Morris.
18 January 1887	St. James' Hall, Republicanism.
w.e. 30 January 1887	Republicans disrupting church services.
27 February 1887	S.D.F. March, Republican flavour.
11 April 1887	Hyde Park, Coercion Bill for Ireland, Republican overtones.

15 May 1887	Kingsland Green, Republic lecture by Rev. F. Verinder.
w.e. 28 August 1887	Walworth Radical Club, provisional committee set up to establish a British Republican League.
31 August 1887	Walworth Radical Club, further meeting in the above connection.
20 November 1887	Meeting to draw up rules and manifesto for British Republican League.
w.e. 6 November 1887	Trafalgar Square, Unemployment, red flags in evidence, Marseillaise sung.

APPENDIX 10

Rules of the Birmingham Republican Club

1. That this be called "The Birmingham Republican Club".
2. That the object shall be to unite all Republicans in this town and neighbourhood; to correspond with all Republicans in this and other countries; to collect books, papers, and information on Republicanism and Republican doings and institutions in all ages and countries; to promote all efforts in Parliament, on platforms and in the press, which have a tendency in the direction of Republicanism, or which are in harmony with Republican principles. The object of all action taken by the club shall be to teach the best principles of civil government amongst mankind.
3. That the word Republic shall be used by the members to signify a Commonwealth, a State or a unity of States in which public affairs shall be managed by persons appointed by the people; and in which the exercise of the sovereign power shall be placed in the representatives freely elected by the people.
4. That this club shall consist of active, passive and honorary members present at any ordinary meeting of the club, and they shall be elected by ballot. The form of application being duly signed shall be taken as the nomination of the member, and he shall be eligible for election (whether present or absent) at the meeting when the form is received.

5. That active and passive members pay a subscription of not less than sixpence a year.
6. Forms of application for membership: - I, the undersigned, desire to become a member of the Birmingham Republican Club, and hereby pledge myself, if elected, to promote its objects, conform to its rules, and act in concert with its members. Name--, Address--, Trade or Profession--. On the receipt of a paper filled up as above, and a subscription of not less than sixpence, the name will be given to the members, and the result of the ballot will be communicated by the secretary. The book of names will not be seen by anybody outside the Club, nor will names of members be published in any form without the consent of the members in question.
7. That the officers shall consist of a President, and Vice-President (to be elected quarterly, in March, June, September and December), a Treasurer, Librarian and Secretary (to be elected half yearly, in June and December), and such others as the members may from time to time appoint. The members shall have power to remove any officer and appoint another in his place, if circumstances require it, between the times of election herein specified.
8. That on all questions there shall be absolute freedom of discussion.
9. That all proceedings of the Club, and all public acts of its members approved by the Club, shall be recorded in a book, which shall be accessible to members only, and which shall be in the club-room at every meeting; and all proposals of whatever character shall be made in writing, and hung up in the club-room, or be otherwise brought before the notice of every member present at any meeting when such proposals are made - and whether adopted or not shall be presented,

on a file or otherwise, for the use of the members.

10. That the decisions arrived at or proceedings undertaken by a majority of the members shall be binding upon and supported by the minority; and no pecuniary liability shall be incurred until funds for the same shall have been guaranteed.

11. That the objects of this Club shall be promoted by intellectual, legal and moral means; and that no rule shall be construed to mean anything to the contrary.

12. That these rules shall not be altered or amended except at a meeting of two-thirds of the members present at a meeting of which they shall have notice, through the post, at least two meeting nights before such alteration shall be discussed or made.

APPENDIX 12

Platform of the National Republican League

1. That this Conference declares the Republican form of government to be the only form worthy of the support of a civilised people, meaning by a Republic, a commonwealth, a State, or a unity of States, which guarantees the fullest individual liberty compatible with general security, and in which the sovereign power resides in deputies elected by the people, according to equitable principles of representation, to the complete exclusion of all hereditary or class privileges, which are absolutely contradictory of every principle of justice and reason.
2. That every human being should have the legal right to vote for the election of all public representation, unless incapacitated by nonage or privation of reason.
3. That the special affairs of England, Scotland, and Ireland should, if the local people of those countries so desire, be managed by separate local parliaments, and that all imperial questions should be decided by the Federal government.
4. That all persons should be equal before the law, and that, therefore, justice should be so administered as not to cause invidious distinctions between rich and poor through the costliness of its operations.
5. That the furthest extension of local government is desirable, as conducive to political education and integrity.

6. That the tenure of land should be subjected to considerations of general utility, and that no supposed right of private ownership in land should be allowed to stand against the economical and social requirements of the nation: and that all legal causes of land monopoly should be at once removed, and the land tax be equitably apportioned, as a first step in the direction of land tenure reform.
7. That the present electoral system is extremely faulty, and should give place to a distribution of representation according to population, so that an adequate national representation may be secured.
8. That the House of Lords being a mere antiquated relic of feudalism, and founded on an exploded hereditary principle, should as soon as possible be abolished.
9. That State Churches are antagonistic to principles of religious equality, and a standing insult to all outside their pale, and ought, therefore, to be assailed as such, with a view to their ultimate disestablishment and disendowment.
10. That standing armies are inimical to the moral and industrial welfare of the State, and a perpetual menace to its safety, and ought therefore to be abolished.
11. That the various colonial dependencies should become, as soon as possible, self-governing, and bound to the mother-country only by a federative tie.

These were the resolutions submitted by the promoters of the meeting, but an education "plank" was added to the platform by the meeting.

12. That this conference urges the establishment of a national system of compulsory, free, secular and technical education.

National Reformer, 18 May 1873.

International Herald, 24 May 1873.

The National Republican Brotherhood commented that such a programme was "no better than constitutional monarchy". International Herald, 31 May 1873.

APPENDIX 13

List of Republican Principles sent by G.H. Holyoake to the Miners of Bedlington

1. A Single chamber Parliament to be known as the "Supreme Parliament of the nation".
2. This Parliament to abolish the hereditary head of state.
3. End of hereditary nobility with the right of legislation.
4. End of class distinctions except those which may be awarded for public merit.
5. A President to be appointed liable to removal by a vote of no confidence in Parliament.
6. The creation of a chamber of peers to be elected for eminent national services, whose duty it shall be to revise bills agreed to by Parliament, with power to remit them for a second consideration on reason given, after which Parliament alone should pass them - This chamber is necessary to reward men of genius.
7. Universal education.
8. Encourage habits of self respect and personal civility and consideration to others.
9. Revision of property laws to favour equality of fortune rather than inequality as is the case at present.
10. All must work that the labour of each be lessened and an equality of leisure come to prevail.
11. Aim for efficiency in public service - "The means of moderate competence must be secured for all" - The poor and ignorant must be transformed.

12. If Royalty is to be superceded it must be done in a magnanimous, reasoning, intelligent way - no chaos or violence.

Leeds Evening Express, 8 March 1871.

APPENDIX 14

Republican Meeting at Mexborough of Sheffield Area Clubs, to Discuss Plans for a National Conference at Sheffield

Delegates were present from republican clubs in: Barnsley, Borough Green, Birdwell, Hoyland, Wombwell, Sheffield, Bingham Close and Brayford, Rotherham and Masborough, Normanton, Nostell and Sharlston, and Mexborough.

National Reformer, 3 November 1872.

APPENDIX 15

Resolutions of the National Republican Brotherhood

1. That an association be formed called the National Republican Brotherhood.
2. Instructions on how to obtain membership of the Brotherhood.
3. The Society is to be governed by an Executive Council of five members, elected every six months including the Treasurer and Secretary.
4. No President or Vice-President to be elected.
5. Executive Council to meet in Nottingham for the next six months.
6. A Republican Flag to be adopted.
7. A Tricolour to be adopted of green, white and blue - Linton's old flag.
8. Voluntary subscriptions to be frequently solicited from Members and Non-members.
9. Our platform shall be adult suffrage, a pure ballot, equal electoral districts, no State Church, free secular education, nationalisation of the land, shorter Parliaments, payment of members, and the establishment by legal means of a Republican form of government. The words "legal means" were the subject of fierce dispute.

Sheffield and Rotherham Independent, 7 December 1872.

See illustration.

APPENDIX 16

Programme of Nottingham Republican Club

1. Universal suffrage.
2. Vote by ballot.
3. Equal electoral districts.
4. Disestablishment and disendowment of all state churches.
5. Abolition of primogeniture and entail.
6. Nationalisation of the land in England so that waste land might be cultivated, natural resources better developed, trade revived and our independence of foreign supplies established.
7. Triennial Parliaments.
8. Payment of members.
9. A Triennial President.
10. To oppose any other occupation of the throne at the demise of our present Queen.

Nottingham Daily Express, 20 March 1871.

APPENDIX 17

Programme of Leicester Democratic Association

1. Election of the Prime Minister by the people.
2. Forcible sale of uncultivated lands.
3. Universal suffrage.
4. Vote by ballot.
5. Triennial Parliaments.
6. Disestablishment of the State Church.
7. Abolition of royal grants and the hereditary House of Lords.

National Reformer, 12 March 1871.

On 10 January 1872 the Association changed its name to the Leicester Republican Club and added several points to its programme.

1. Payment of M.P.'s.
2. Equal electoral districts.
3. Repeal of the Game Laws.
4. Abolition of primogeniture and entail.
5. Substitution of direct for indirect taxation, and a national poor rate.
6. Establishment of a republican form of government by means of our representative system.

Midland Free Press, 13 January 1872.

APPENDIX 18

Programme of Dundee Republican Club

1. Adult Suffrage.
2. Equal Parliamentary Representation.
3. Shorter Parliaments.
4. Abolition of the House of Lords and all hereditary distinctions.
5. Payment of parliamentary representatives by the State, and election expenses by the constituencies.
6. All voting for national, county, or municipal representatives, to be by a pure and unrestricted ballot.
7. Disendowment and Disestablishment of the State Church.
8. Total abolition of the Game Laws, and a thorough and equitable settlement of the land question.
9. A system of free, compulsory, and unsectarian education.
10. The repeal of all acts that interfere with the natural rights and liberties of the citizen.
11. The speedy repeal by Parliament of the Act of Settlement.

Reynolds' Newspaper, 7 December 1873.

APPENDIX 19

A. Provincial Republican Clubs 1855-1885

Where available exact foundation dates are given. Otherwise the date of the issue of the National Reformer (N.R.), or other source, containing club inauguration announcements is indicated: (n.d.) indicates no date available.

Republican Brotherhood of Newcastle	March 1855
Cambridge Republican Club	31 December 1870
Birmingham Republican Club	22 January 1871 (N.R.)
Newcastle and Gateshead Republican Club	26 February 1871 (N.R.)
Middlesborough Republican Club	26 February 1871 (N.R.)
Leicester Democratic Association Leicester Republican Club	1 March 1871, changed to: 11 January 1872
Sheffield Republican Club	26 March 1871 (Reynolds')
Jarrow-on-Tyne Republican Club	26 March 1871 (N.R.)
North Shields Republican Club	26 March 1871 (N.R.)
Bedlington Republican Club	26 March 1871 (N.R.)
Nottingham Republican Club	26 March 1871 (N.R.)
Blyth Republican Club	2 April 1871 (N.R.)
Oxford University Republican Club (Wadham College)	April 1871
Northampton Republican Club	3 April 1871
Doncaster Republican Club	23 April 1871 (N.R.)

Liverpool Republican Club	23 April 1871 (N.R.)
Warrington Republican Club	23 April 1871 (N.R.)
Wolverhampton Republican Club	May 1871
Sunderland Republican Club	3 May 1871
Nottingham West End Club	7 May 1871
Dundee Republican Club	14 May 1871
Edinburgh Republican Club	28 May 1871 (N.R.)
Grimsby Republican Club	11 June 1871 (N.R.)
Altrincham Republican Club	18 June 1871 (N.R.)
Bolton Republican Club	18 June 1871 (N.R.)
Tynemouth Republican Club	18 June 1871 (N.R.)
Reading Republican Club	13 August 1871 (N.R.)
Hull Republican Club	23 August 1871 (N.R.)
Stourbridge Republican Club	22 October 1871 (N.R.)
Walsall Republican Club	29 October 1871 (N.R.)
Norwich Republican Club	13 November 1871
Chatham, Rochester and Strood Republican Club	17 December 1871 (N.R.)
Preston Republican Club	17 December 1871 (N.R.)
Guernsey Republican Club	24 December 1871 (N.R.)
Glasgow Republican Club	9 January 1872
Halifax Republican Club	27 January 1872
Myrthyr Tydvil Republican Club	28 January 1872 (N.R.)
Stockton-on-Tees Republican Club	25 February 1872 (N.R.)
Normanby Republican Club	26 February 1872

Lancaster Republican Club	26 February 1872
Lincoln Republican Club	28 February 1872
Northfleet Republican Club	3 March 1872
Newmilns (Ayrshire) Republican Club	31 March 1872 (N.R.)
West Bromwich Republican Club	31 March 1872 (N.R.)
Felling (Nr Gateshead) Republican Club	6 April 1872
Kidderminster Republican Club	5 May 1872
Wombwell Republican Club	Spring 1872
Chester Republican Club	12 May 1872 (N.R.)
Leeds and District Republican Club	12 May 1872 (N.R.)
Barnsley Republican Club	7 July 1872 (N.R.)
Hoyland Republican Club	4 August 1872 (N.R.)
Great Yarmouth Republican Club	11 August 1872 (N.R.)
Cardiff Republican Club	28 September 1872
Mexborough Republican Club	20 October 1872 (N.R.)
Aberdeen Republican Club	November 1872
Birdwell Republican Club	3 November 1872 (N.R.)
Borough Green Republican Club	3 November 1872 (N.R.)
Bingham Close and Brayford Republican Club	3 November 1872 (N.R.)
Rotherham and Masborough Republican Club	3 November 1872 (N.R.)
Normanton Republican Club	3 November 1872 (N.R.)
Nostell and Sharlston Republican Club	3 November 1872 (N.R.)

Bristol Republican Club	11 December 1872
Pudsey and Stanningsby Republican Club	1873
Salford Republican Club	5 January 1873
Paisley Republican Club	9 February 1873
Kettering Republican Club	16 February 1873 (N.R.)
Bath Republican Club	16 February 1873 (N.R.)
Daventry Republican Club	16 February 1873 (N.R.)
Plymouth Republican Institute	23 March 1873 (N.R.)
Bradford Republican Club	30 March 1873 (N.R.)
Huddersfield Republican Club	11 May 1873 (N.R.)
Birmingham All Saints Republican Club	18 May 1873 (N.R.)
Stalybridge Republican Club	15 June 1873 (N.R.)
Dewsbury Republican Club	15 June 1873 (N.R.)
Keighley Republican Club	6 July 1873
Nantwich Republican Club	29 March 1874, became:
Nantwich and Crewe Republican Club	16 August 1874
Bridgewater and Wellington Republican Club	11 April 1874
West Auckland Republican Club	17 May 1874
St. Helens Republican Club	17 May 1874
Wodehouse (Leeds) Republican Club	8 November 1874
Edinburgh branch of The Republican League	January 1883 (Republican)
Glasgow branch of The Republican League	January 1883 (Republican)

South Shields branch of The Republican League	November 1883 (Republican)
Seaham Harbour branch of The Republican League	September 1884 (Republican)

84 Republican Clubs

B. Other Provincial Societies that were Republican in Sentiment

N.B. Most branches of the National Secular Society were republican in their political beliefs.

Newcastle Secular Union	n.d.
Birkenhead Radical Club	n.d.
Bristol Secular Society	n.d.
Bristol Radical Association	n.d.
Maidstone Working Men's Institute	n.d.
Coventry Democratic Association	? October 1871
Lancaster Secular Society	n.d.
Ipswich Patriotic Society	n.d.
Brighton Radical Association	n.d.
West Hartlepool Secular Society	n.d.
Doncaster Political Union	n.d.
Glasgow Home Rule Association	n.d.
Kettering Secular Society	n.d.
South Staffordshire and East Worcestershire Secular Union	n.d.
Edinburgh Secular Society	n.d.
Manchester Queen's Park Eclectic Society	n.d.

Huddersfield Secular Society	1873
Nottingham Secular and Propagandist Society	n.d.
Spennymoor Secular Society and Political Reform Union	n.d.
Midland Social Democratic Association	1879

20 other societies

C.

There were a number of towns and districts known to contain republicans, but without an organized society. Bilston, Birstal, Bishop Auckland, Blackheath, Burton-on-Trent, Chesterfield, Counden, Derby, Gloucester, Guildford, Hastings, Heywood, Hinchley, Leek, Lower Spennymoor, Middleton, Mossley, Oldham, Perth, The Potteries, Portsmouth, Rochdale, Shilden, Shipley, Stafford, Stockport, Tamworth, and Wakefield.

28 other towns

APPENDIX 20

Calendar of Republican Events in the Provinces 1860-1885

1870	Free Trade Hall, Manchester, Frederic Harrison lectured on Republicanism.
September 1870	Bradford, Public meeting to welcome the Third French Republic.
14 September 1870	Birmingham Town Hall, sympathy with French Republic.
1870-1871	Nottingham, Regular Republican meetings in Sneiton Market Place.
6 January 1871	Sheffield, Cannon Street Hotel, sympathy with French Republic.
12 January 1871	Birmingham, sympathy with French Republic.
24 January 1871	Birmingham Town Hall, full, sympathy with French Republic.
26 January 1871	Birmingham, Sympathy Committee met with M.P.'s Dixon and Muntz.
26 January 1871	Birmingham, St. George's Hall, to form a Republican Club.
28 January 1871	Birmingham, Labour Representation League declaration against Princess Louise's Dowry.
3 February 1871	Hoyland Nether, visit and lecture from Charles Watts.
4 February 1871	Manchester Free Trade Hall, Reform Union, support for government's policy of non-intervention.
21 February 1871	Birmingham Town Hall, Labour Representation League, anti-Dowry meeting.
27 February 1871	Nottingham, Great Market Place, 10,000, republican demonstration.
28 February 1871	Sheffield, Temperance Hall, anti-Dowry meeting.

March 1871	Foundation of Sheffield Republican Club.
3 April 1871	Northampton, public meeting to found a Republican Club.
8 April 1871	Nottingham, Republican address by Auberon Herbert.
18 April 1871	Sunderland, Republican meeting, crowded.
3 May 1871	Sunderland, Republican meeting.
w.e. 5 May 1871	Dundee, Republican meeting, resulted in foundation of Dundee Republican Club.
July 1871	Edinburgh and Newcastle, lectures by Odger.
1 July 1871	Newcastle and Gateshead Republican Club, public inauguration.
9 July 1871	Birmingham, Labour Representation League, opposition to annuity for Prince Arthur.
25 July 1871	Leeds, Music Hall, lecture by Odger.
20 August 1871	Huddersfield, lecture by Bradlaugh.
30 August 1871, 2, 10 November 1871	Norwich, lectures by Odger.
6 November 1871	Newcastle, Dilke's speech.
8 November 1871	Sheffield, Bradlaugh's "Morally and Physically Incapable" speech.
13 November 1871	Norwich, crowded public meeting to form a Republican Club.
15 November 1871	Letter from Peter Taylor to Bolton Republican Club advocating abolition of the House of Lords.
20 November 1871	Bristol, lecture by Dilke.
23 November 1871	Bolton, lecture by Odger.
23 November 1871	Leeds, lecture by Dilke.
27 November 1871	Middlesborough, lecture by Dilke.

30 November 1871	Bolton, lecture by Dilke, Bolton Riot.
6 December 1871	Derby, visit from Dilke and Odger, trouble.
6 December 1871	Birmingham Liberal Association, Masonic Hall, on reform of House of Lords, Dilke and Bradlaugh present.
10 December 1871	Reading, Odger attacked by a mob of 300 after a lecture.
9 January 1872	Glasgow, meeting to found a Republican Club.
27 February 1872	Hull, Republican Thanksgiving Day Demonstration.
6, 7 March 1872	Perth, lecture by Charles Watts, 800 present.
12 March 1872	Dundee, Thistle Hall, two lectures by Charles Watts.
2 April 1872	Glasgow, City Hall, lecture by Bradlaugh, trouble.
2 April 1872	Newcastle, Republican Conference, foundation of the Northern Republican League.
19 June 1872	Sheffield, Paradise Square, lecture by Odger.
14 August 1872	Leicester, open-air republican meeting, "numerous attendance".
22 September 1872	Sheffield, joint meeting of the Sheffield Republican Club and I.W.M.A.
30 September 1872	Glasgow, lecture by Dilke.
last week in September	Mexborough, meeting of South Yorkshire Republican Clubs preliminary to calling a national conference at Sheffield.
1 December 1872	Sheffield, Paradise Square, 2,000, republican demonstration, followed by the first National Republican Conference, National Republican Brotherhood established.
6 December 1872	Leicester, Republican demonstration, M.P.'s Taylor and Harris spoke.

7 January 1873	Derby, lecture by Dilke, fighting in the crowd.
w.e. 9 March 1873	Salford, Public meeting under the auspices of Salford Republican Club to congratulate Spain on the establishment of a republic.
30 March 1873	Sheffield, Meeting of the National Republican Brotherhood.
10 April 1873	Kidderminster, Meeting ot the National Republican Brotherhood.
12 April 1873	Newcastle, Republican meeting at the Mechanics Institute under the auspices of Newcastle Republican Club, lecture by Dr. Mollen.
19 April 1873	Newcastle, Manhood Suffrage Demonstration, 200,000.
26 April 1873	Birkenhead Radical Club, lecture by Bradlaugh.
11, 12 May 1873	Birmingham, Republican Conference, National Republican League established.
14 May 1873	Manchester, Temperance Hall, meeting organized by Dr. Pankhurst to form a Republican Club, 100 members enrolled.
10 August 1873	Newcastle, Bradlaugh addressed 20,000 miners, unanimously adopted a petition against the proposed increase in income for the Duke of Edinburgh.
15 September 1873	Nottingham, Second Conference of the National Republican Brotherhood.
w.e. 19 October 1873	Kidderminster, Republican dinner.
20 October 1874	Birmingham Town Hall, public meeting against paying for the Prince and Princess of Wales' visit to the town out of the rates, Petition signed by 700 ratepayers.

December 1875	"Address to the People" from Birmingham Republican Association.
w.e. 18 April 1876	Oxford, Middlesborough, public meetings, organized by town councils, to petition their M.P.'s to oppose the Royal Titles Bill.
24 February 1878	Open letter to Reynolds' Newspaper from Birmingham Republican Association.
3 March 1878	Open letter to Reynolds' Newspaper from Birmingham Republican Association.
Summer 1878	Birmingham Republican Association became the Midland Social Democratic Association.
July 1884	South Shields, Market Square, public meeting, under the auspices of the Republican Club, against House of Lords and hereditary legislation.

APPENDIX 21

The Questions of Public Policy on Which Birmingham Republican Club Asked John Bright to State His Views

1. The representation of labour in the House of Commons.
2. Payment of candidates' election expenses out of the rates or taxes.
3. Reduction of British military expenses.
4. Abolition of payments, grants and allowances except to persons who have earned them by adequate and valuable public services.
5. Disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of England.
6. Shorter Parliaments.
7. Extension of the suffrage in the counties, and redistribution of seats in proportion to population.
8. Equitable legislation for both employers and employed.
9. National, compulsory, free, secular education.
10. Absolute and unconditional repeal of the Game laws.
11. The Land Laws: abolition of primogeniture and entail; reform that will make the transfer of land cheap, secure and easy, so as to allow the acquisition of small holdings as well as large ones.
12. Mr. Chamberlain's platform, free church, free land, free labour, free schools.

National Reformer, 19 October 1873

APPENDIX 22

Relief Funds To Help French Workmen

Initially there were two relief funds. One was organized by working men, in which Applegarth, Howell and Lloyd Jones (Secretary of the Labour Representation League) were prominent. The second was an upper class organisation called the Mansion House Relief Fund which was founded in London on 18 January 1871.

On 14 February 1871 a meeting was held between leaders of the two groups and an amalgamation took place. There was some opposition from the workmen to co-operation with the upper classes, so a special working men's branch of the fund was established. In the Bee Hive Lloyd Jones urged the workers to give more practical aid to France. Although many had little to spare they responded generously and on 6 February "fifty railway wagons laden with provisions arrived in Paris ... bearing the ... inscription: 'Gifts from the City of London to the City of Paris'..." (Bee Hive, 11 February 1871). By the end of March £120,000 had been raised ("Report of the Mansion House Relief Fund", 18 March 1871).

The Republican was not impressed. The paper commented on 1 March that

> If the Applegarth's, Howells, and Co., have a super abundance of philanthropy - more than can be compensated for by Mansion House patronage - we recommend them to use it by witholding their spurious begging sheets from the workshops of the poor of London.

The article then referred to a meeting of the unemployed at the Mission Hall in Great Arthur Street to discuss the best means of relieving distress in the locality.

APPENDIX 23

Objects of the National Secular Society

"The Executive of the National Secular Society, finding that the power of the Freethought body in the State is specially recognised in connection with the political and social changes now taking place, points out to its members and friends the following matters as deserving of their earnest and active attention:

1. To obtain the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws as a special matter affecting its members.
2. The disestablishment and disendowment of the State Church, and the placing of all religions and forms of speculative opinion on a perfect equality before the law.
3. Specially the improvement of the condition of Agricultural classes, whose terrible state of social degradation is at present a fatal barrier to the formation of a good state of society.
4. A change in the Land Laws, so as to break down the present system by which enormous estates are found in few hands, the many having no interest in the soil, and to secure for the agricultural labourer some share of the improvement in the land he cultivates.
5. The destruction of the present hereditary chamber of Peers, and substitution of a Senate containing Life Members, elected for their fitness, and therewith the constitution of a National Party intended to wrest the governing power from a few Whig and Tory families.
6. The investigation of the causes of poverty in all old countries, in order to see how far unequal distribution of wealth or more radical causes may operate. The discussion in connection with this of the various schemes for social amelioration, and the ascertainment if possible of the laws governing the increase of population and produce, as affecting the rise and fall of wages."

Taken from The Secularist's Manual of Songs and Ceremonies, 1870, 6, Holyoake Papers, quoted in Royle, Radical Politics, 124.

APPENDIX 24

DECREES OF THE PARIS COMMUNE

1. Suspension of the sale of objects in the State pawnshop.
2. Decree forbidding any evictions due to arrears of rent - liquidation of outstanding rents for the last three quarters.
3. Suspension of payments on overdue bills.
4. Abolition of fines and stoppages of pay for factory workers.
5. Abolition of bakers' night work.
6. Decree entitling Trade Unions to take over any abandoned workshops - to form co-operative associations to start up production again - Ten factories were occupied. N.B. This was a co-operative measure, not nationalisation, and the owners who had "cowardly abandoned" workshops were promised compensation if and when they returned. However, the Engineers' Union did suggest taking over the Barriquand Works, one of the biggest engineering factories in Paris, which had been the scene of violent strikes in the 1860's.
7. Plate from Churches and palaces was melted down with ingots from the Bank of France to make 40,000 5 Franc coins.
8. Decree separating Church and State - Jesuits expelled.
9. Secularisation of schools - Particular attention given to women's education - Establishment of "professional" schools for science.

APPENDIX 25

Assassination Attempts on Queen Victoria

1.	10 June 1840	Edward Oxford, a barman in his teens
2.	30 May 1842	John Francis
3.	3 July 1842	John William Bean
4.	19 May 1849	William Hamilton, a labourer
5.	25 May 1850	Robert Pate, an ex-army lieutenant
6.	27 June 1850	No details
7.	28 February 1872	Arthur O'Connor

Leeds Evening Express, 1 March 1872.

8.	9 December 1878	Edward Byrne Madden, an interpreter - threatened to shoot the Queen unless he was paid £1,000.

Reynolds' Newspaper, 15 December 1878.

APPENDIX 26

The Cost of the Crown

Comparative cost of the English Monarchy and American Republic:

England

Cost of Queen and Royal Family:	£600,000 p.a.
Salaries of Ministers:	£95,000 p.a.
Pensions List, exclusive of grants to the Royal Family:	£3,263,000 p.a.
Total:	£3,958,000 p.a.

America

Salary of President	£5,000 p.a.
Salaries of Ministers	£13,000 p.a.
Pension List:	£27,000 p.a.
Total:	£45,000 p.a.

Reynolds' Newspaper, 12 February 1871

List of annuities to Royalty:

Duchess of Cambridge	£6,000 p.a.
Princess Augusta	£3,000 p.a.
Duke of Cambridge	£12,000 p.a.
Princess Mary of Cambridge	£5,000 p.a.
Princess Royal	£8,000 p.a.
Princess Alice Maud Mary	£6,000 p.a.
Duke of Edinburgh	£15,000 p.a.
Princess Helena	£6,000 p.a.
Princess Louise	£6,000 p.a.
Other Royal Pensions	£21,600 p.a.
Total:	£88,600 p.a.

Republican, 5 August 1871

Estimate of the Queen's Private Fortune:

£ 50,000 p.a. saved out of Class 2 of the Civil List for twenty years	:	£ 1,000,000
£ 50,000 p.a. saved out of Class 3 - Tradesmen's bills for thirty years	:	£ 1,500,000
Legacy left to the Queen by Mr. Nield	:	£ 1,500,000
Property left by the Prince Consort	:	£ 1,000,000
	Total:	£ 5,000,000

N.B. The current Civil List was £385,000 p.a.

Trevelyan, "What Does She Do With It?", 33.

APPENDIX 27

Extract from Dilke's Motion on the Civil List

"To call attention to the Civil List: and move for returns showing the duties of the auditor (or deputy auditor) of the Civil List to whom he makes his reports, and a copy of such reports for each year since the accession of Her Majesty. Of the direction or warrants issued by the Treasury under section 9 of the Civil List Act, specifying the classes from which the savings arose, and the classes to which they were transferred, for each year since the accession of Her Majesty. Showing the income and expenditure of the Civil List from the accession of Her Majesty to the present time. Of all offices held in connection with the Court which have been abolished since the date of the report of the committee of 1837-38. List of all charges formerly borne by the Civil List or hereditary revenues which have been transferred to the Consolidated Fund or yearly estimates since the accession of Her Majesty. Returns showing the amounts charged on estimates since the commencement of the present reign for fees on installation, robes, collars, and badges. Royal presents, passages, or conveyance of "distinguished personages", funerals of members of the Royal Family, the coronation, journeys of Her Majesty, building, draining, repairing, furnishing, and fitting up of palaces, ceremonials connected with the Court, allowances and clothing for trumpeters, fees to waterman, payments to the Marshal of the ceremonies and to the Lord Chamberlain. Of the services of the Royal yachts during the last ten years. Showing for each year since the succession of Her Majesty and the gross amount of the income arising from the Duchy of Lancaster, and also the amount in each year paid over to the Keeper of Her Majesty's Privy Purse. And showing for each year since the accession of Her Majesty, the gross amount of the income arising from the Duchy of Cornwall, and also the amount in each year paid over for the use of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales..."

Sir Charles Dilke - Civil List - Motion for Returns,
Hansard, ser. 3, CCX, 254-317.

APPENDIX 28

The New Republican Government, London,
Hole-in-the-Wall, Tuesday Midnight
- Probably 18 October 1871

"The following appointments have been made in the new Provisional Government:

President: Citizen Dilke
Vice President: Citizen G.F. Train
Lord Chancellor and Keeper of the National Conscience:
Citizen C. Bradlaugh
Chancellor of the Exchequer: Citizen Scott Russell
Secretary at War: Citizen G. Odger
Home Secretary: Citizen G. Potter
Foreign Secretary: Citizen Lloyd Jones
Minister of Education: Citizen J. Finlen
Minister of Public Worship: Citizen G.J. Holyoake
First Lord of the Admiralty: Citizen G. Dixon
Commander-in-Chief: Citizen Jacob Bright
Colonial Secretary: Citizen P.A. Taylor
Irish Secretary: Citizen G.O. Trevelyan
Indian Secretary: Citizen Goldwin Smith
President of the Board of Trade: Citizen E. Miall
President of the Poor Law Board: Citizen Auberon Herbert
Postmaster General: Citizen J.S. Mill
Chief Commissioner of the Works: Citizen Beesly."

Anonymous newspaper cutting, Bradlaugh Papers, env. 223.

It is interesting that many of those included were not involved in republican organisation, while some practical republicans were omitted.

APPENDIX 29

Jubilee Poetry

The Golden Jubilee of 1887 resulted in the publication of a great many republican poems in the radical press. The following are a few examples:

A Jubilee version of "God Save the Queen"

Lord help our precious Queen,
Noble, but rather mean,
Lord help the Queen.
Keep Queen Vic Toryous
From work laborious
Let Snobs uproarious
Slaver the Queen.

(Anon.)

Reynolds' Newspaper, 19 June 1887

The Jubilee

When Coburg meaness, Hanoverian Greed
Meet in a queen, why should we speak profane
By utterance of warmest loyalty?
What hath this woman done that we should feed
Her vanity by cant about her reign?
She helps to empty England's treasury,
And German louts to gorge with English spoil;
She lives a life of luxury and ease;
She is an alien on the English soil,
Aims ever German dynasties to please.
Half hypocrites, half toadies, Englishmen
Profess with slavish tongue, more slavish pen,

This commonplace old woman to adore
But in their hearts they think the Jubilee a bore.

William Maccall

The Radical, July 1887.

The Jubilee Craze

Sycophants with each other vie
In loud and rampant glee,
To raise the idiotic cry
About the Jubilee.

For fifty years the monarch's reigned
But still we fail to see
What benefit the people's gained
That they should Jubilee.

To take a retrospective view
Of kings, all must agree
That none of all the royal crew
Deserved a Jubilee.

England is in a wretched state -
Much worse it could not be
'Twill mock the poor to celebrate
A Royal Jubilee.

"R.S." - 9 more verses

Reynolds' Newspaper, 24 April 1887.

APPENDIX 30

The General Election of 1874

No candidate stood as a Republican. Mottershead (Preston) stood as a Trade Unionist, and there were four Working Men's Candidates: Odger (Southwark), William Morris (Cricklade), D.W. Heath (Nottingham) and Maltman Barry (Marylebone). Barry withdrew and none of the others was elected. MacDonald and Burt stood as Liberals and were elected; Bradlaugh, Lucraft, and Captain Maxse also stood as Liberals but were not elected.

The Conservatives gained seats in twenty-five constituencies where some degree of republican activity had been observed (see appendix 19): Brighton, Cambridge, Chatham, Chelsea, Cheltenham, Glasgow, Grimsby, Guildford, Ipswich, Kidderminster, Leeds, Lincoln, Manchester, Marylebone, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Nottingham, Norwich, Oldham, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Stalybridge, Stoke-on-Trent, Tower Hamlets.

The Liberals made only five gains in republican areas: Bolton, Coventry, Hartlepool, Hull, Stafford, Stockport.

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The political affiliation of each newspaper is indicated as follows:

(R) Republican

(AL) Advanced Liberal

(L) Liberal

(W) Whig

(C) Conservative

(M) Monarchist: more so than the average Conservative paper

(I) Independent, indifferent or concentrating on local issues

(S) Secularist

Aberdeen Weekly Free Press (C)

Accrington Times (C)

Aris's Birmingham Gazette (C)

Atheist and Republican (S-R)

Auckland Times and Herald (L)

Barrow Pilot' (I)

Barrow Times, Iron Trade Journal and Furness and North Lancashire Advertiser (I)

Bee Hive (AL-R)

Birmingham Daily Gazette (C)

Birmingham Daily Mail (L)

Birmingham Daily Post (L)

Birmingham Morning News (AL)

Birmingham Weekly Post (L)

Bradford Observer Budget (AL)

Bradford Weekly Mail (C)

Bradford Weekly Telegraph (W)

Bridport News and Dorsetshire, Devonshire and Somerset Advertiser (M)

Brighton Examiner (L)

Bristol Mercury (L)

British Miner and General Newsman (L)

Bristish Monarchy (M)

British Workman (C-M)

Burnley Advertiser (C)

Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian (C)

Cardiff Times (W)

Cardiff Weekly Mail (C)

Cardigan Herald (C)

Castleford Star and Free Press (L)

Chelmsford Chronicle (C)

Chester Chronicle (M)

Clerkenwell News and London Daily Chronicle (L)

Colliery Guardian (C)

Commonwealth (AL-R)

Cornish Telegraph (I)

Counsellor (S, R)

Cumberland Pacquet (I)

Daily Chronicle (London) (C)

Daily News (L)

Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser (L)

Dundee Advertiser (AL)

Dundee Courier and Argus (AL)

Eastern Post (London) (AL-R)

Eastern Weekly Press (Norwich) (C)

Echo (London) (C)

English Republic (R)

Evening Chronicle (London) (C)

Evening Standard (London) (C)

Examiner (London) (C)

Ferret (South Wales Ratepayer) (C)

Fors Clavigera (Ruskin) (AL)

Freethinker (S-R)

Friend of the People (R)

Galloway Express (AL)

Gloucester Mercury (W)

Graphic (L)

Hackney and Kingsland Times (AL)

Halifax Courier (C)

Hinchley News (W)

Holborn and Bloomsbury Journal (AL)

Huddersfield Chronicle (I)

Hull News (AL)

Illustrated London News (M)

International Courier (R)

International Herald (R)

Isle of Wight Chronicle (C)

Jersey Independent (R)

Keighley News (AL-R)

Kidderminster Shuttle (AL-R)

Leeds Critic and West Riding, Free Press (L)

Leeds Evening Express (AL)

Leeds Mercury (L)

Leeds Times (C)

Leeds Weekly Express (AL)

Leicester Guardian (AL)

Leicester Journal and Midland Counties General Advertiser (C-M)

Leigh Times (C)

The Liberator (AL)

Liverpool Daily Albion (C)

Liverpool Weekly Mercury (C)

Lloyds' Weekly Newspaper (AL-R)

London Daily Telegraph (C)

London Tablet (Catholic)

Lowestoft Observer (C)

Malton Messenger and North and East Ridings Advertiser (I)

Manchester City News (L)

Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser (C)

Manchester Daily Examiner and Times (L-AL)

Manchester Evening News (AL)

Manchester Guardian (L)

Manchester Weekly News (L)

McDouall's Chartist and Republican Journal (R)

Methodist Recorder (C)

Midland Free Press (AL-R)

The Miner (changed to: The Miner and Workman's Advocate) (AL)

Morning Advertiser (London) (C)

The Movement (R-S)

National Reformer (R-S)

National Secular Almanac (S-R)

Newark Advertiser (C)

Newcastle Courant (L)

Newcastle Daily Chronicle (R)

Newcastle Weekly Chronicle (R)

The Nonconformist (AL)

Norfolk Chronicle and Norwich Gazette (C-M)

Norfolk News (L)

Northampton Herald (I)

Northampton Mercury (L)

Northampton Radical (R)

North Cheshire Herald (I)

North Devon Advertiser (C)

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Red Republican (R)

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The Republican (Carlile) (R)

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The Republican (Harding) (R)

The Republican (Standring) (R)

The Republican Chronicle (R)

The Republican Herald (R)

The Round Table (I-Charity)

Reynolds' Newspaper (R)

St. Austell Weekly News and Advertiser (AL)

St. Helens Standard (L)

Salford Weekly News (L)

Saturday Review (London) (C)

The Scotsman (C)

Secular Chronicle (S-R)

Secular World (S-R)

Sheffield Daily Telegraph (C)

Sheffield and Rotherham Independent (C)

Sheffield Times (C)

Shepton Mallet Journal (M)

Shoreditch Advertiser (AL)

Shoreditch Observer (AL)

South Durham and Cleveland Mercury (L)

South Kent Gazette and Blyth and Sandgate News (C)

South London Chronicle (C)

The Spectator (London) (C)

Staffordshire Sentinel (W)

Stockport and Cheshire County News (I)

Sunderland Times (L)

Swansea and Glamorgan Herald (C)

The Times (London) (C)

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