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The Development of Provincial Toryism  
in the British Urban Context, c.1815-1832

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

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## Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed by me and is my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

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January 2016

## Abstract

This thesis analyses the development of provincial Toryism during the period from the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 to the passage of the Reform Acts in 1832, examining the beliefs, organisations, and actions of local Tories particularly in some large British towns. In the early nineteenth century, the existence of two parties, Tory and Whig, became a major feature of parliamentary politics, and local political associations supporting each of them were gradually organised and became powerful and influential in urban centres. Local Tories expressed their opinions and acted together in order to support the Tory party in Parliament. They found support in different regions, and developed a recognisable network and identity in various British towns. Like parliamentary Tories, however, they were not completely coherent in their ideology nor entirely agreed in what policies to pursue. They were ‘issue-oriented’ associations, which were loosely connected with each other. They sometimes acted independently and flexibly, lacked complete unity, and were not controlled by the national party at Westminster. Taking these circumstances into consideration, this thesis attempts to reveal how national and local politics were connected, and some of the most important aspects of local Tory politics particularly in terms of identity and organisation.

Chapter One examines the political ideology of local Tories, by looking at the provincial Tory press published in Bristol, Colchester, and Edinburgh in particular. Chapter Two investigates Tory clubs and societies, such as the Pitt Clubs, the True Blue Clubs, the King and Constitution Clubs, the Brunswick Clubs, and the Orange Lodges, which were widely and deeply entrenched in British urban communities. Chapter Three examines Tory electoral politics in three large, open, freeman boroughs: Liverpool, Bristol, and Colchester. It analyses the political opinions and actions of the electors and non-electors and investigates the extent and the ways in which national issues impacted on these urban constituencies. Chapter Four also examines the impact of national issues on local Tory politics, but does so by presenting a case study of the involvement of local Liverpool Tories in such significant provincial political arenas as Corporation politics, mayoral elections, and public meetings. The Conclusion stresses the importance of the diverse and flexible reactions of provincial Tories to various political events occurring in the localities as well as at Westminster.

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## Abbreviations

<i>Blackwood's</i>	<i>Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine</i>
<i>BJ</i>	<i>Felix Farley's Bristol Journal</i>
BRO	Bristol Record Office
<i>CG</i>	<i>Colchester Gazette</i>
CUP	Cambridge University Press
<i>ES</i>	<i>Essex Standard</i>
HoP, <i>Commons 1715-1754</i>	<i>The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1715-1754</i> , ed. Romney Sedgwick (2 vols., London: History of Parliament Trust, 1970)
HoP, <i>Commons 1754-1790</i>	<i>The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1754-1790</i> , eds. Sir Lewis Namier and John Brooke (3 vols., London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1964)
HoP, <i>Commons 1790-1820</i>	<i>The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1790-1820</i> , ed. R.G. Thorne (5 vols., London: Secker & Warburg, 1986)
HoP, <i>Commons 1820-1832</i>	<i>The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1820-1832</i> , ed. D.R. Fisher (7 vols., Cambridge: CUP, 2009)
<i>LC</i>	<i>Liverpool Courier</i>
LRO	Liverpool Record Office
<i>LM</i>	<i>Liverpool Mercury</i>
<i>MP</i>	<i>Morning Post</i>
MPC records	Greater Manchester County Record Office, GB127.MS ff 367 M56 (Collection Manchester Pitt Club records 1813-1831)
NRS	National Records of Scotland
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> (online)
OUP	Oxford University Press
Poll book, Bristol, 1818	Bristol Record Office, 06620, Bristol Election Poll Book (1818)
<i>Poll book, Colchester, 1812</i>	Anon., <i>The Poll for Members to serve in Parliament, for the Borough of Colchester, taken on Tuesday the 6th of October, 1812, and Five following Days, (Sunday excepted), before John Bridge, Esq. Mayor. Candidates.</i>



- Robert Thornton, Esq. Hart Davis, Esq. Daniel Whittle Harvey, Esq. (Colchester: W. Keymer, [1812]).*
- Poll book, Colchester, 1818* Anon., *The Poll for Members to serve in Parliament, for the Borough of Colchester, taken on Tuesday the 16th Day of June, 1818, before Edward Clay, Esq. Mayor. Candidates. James Beckford Wildman, Esq. Daniel Whittle Harvey, Esq. Peter Wright, Esq. (Colchester: W. Keymer, [1818]).*
- Poll book, Colchester, 1820* Anon., *The Poll for Members to serve in Parliament for the Borough of Colchester, taken on Tuesday, the 9th of March, 1820, and Five following Days, Sunday excepted, before Francis Tillett Abell, Esq. Mayor. Candidates. James Beckford Wildman, Esq. Daniel Whittle Harvey, Esq. Sir Henry Russell, Bart. (Colchester: Swinborne and Walter, [1820]).*
- Poll book, Colchester, 1830* Anon., *The Poll for Members to serve in Parliament for the Borough of Colchester: taken on Friday, July 30th, 1830, and Five following Days, (Sunday Excepted), before Edward Clay, Esq. Mayor. Candidates. Daniel Whittle Harvey, Esq. Andrew Spottiswoode, Esq. William Mayhew, Esq. (Colchester: Swinborne, Walter, & Taylor, [1830]).*
- Poll book, Colchester, 1831* Anon., *The Poll for Members to serve in Parliament for the Borough of Colchester: taken on Monday, May 2, 1831, and 3 following Days; before William Smith, Esq. Mayor. Candidates. Daniel Whittle Harvey, Esq. William Mayhew, Esq. Richard Sanderson, Esq. (Colchester: Swinborne, Walter, & Taylor, [1831]).*
- Poll book, Liverpool, 1812* Anon., *A Correct Account of the Poll for the Election of Members of Parliament, for the Borough and Corporation of Liverpool, taken between the Right Hon. George Canning, Lieut.-Gen. Isaac Gascoyne, Henry Brougham, Esq., Thomas Creevey, Esq. and Gen. Banastre Tarleton, begun and held in the Hustings, in front of the Town-Hall, on Thursday the 8th, and ended on Friday the 16th day of October, 1812, before the*

- Worshipful John Bourne, Esq. Mayor; Edward Pearson and Thomas Corrie, Esqrs. Bailiffs* (Liverpool: Wright and Cruickshank, [1812]).
- Poll book, Liverpool, 1816* Anon., *The Poll for the Election of a Member of Parliament, (the Right Hon. G. Canning having accepted the Presidency of the Board of Controul,) for the Borough and Corporation of Liverpool, taken between the Right Hon. George Canning, and Thomas Leyland, Esq., begun and held in the Hustings, in front of the Town-Hall, on Friday the 7th and ended on Wednesday the 12th of June, 1816, before the Worshipful Sir William Barton, Knt. Mayor, Richard Bullin and J. Blundell Hollinshead, Esqrs. Bailiffs* (Liverpool: J. Gore, [1816]).
- Poll book, Liverpool, 1818* Anon., *The Poll for the Election of Members of Parliament for the Borough and Corporation of Liverpool, taken between the Right Honorable George Canning, Lieut.-Gen. Isaac Gascoyne, and the Right Hon. the Earl of Sefton, begun and held in the Hustings, in front of the Town-Hall, on Thursday the 18th and ended on Thursday the 25th day of June, 1818; before the Worshipful Thomas Case, Esq. Mayor, Richard Golightly & William Wallace Currie, Esqrs. Bailiffs* (Liverpool: J. Gore, 1818).
- Poll book, Liverpool, 1830* Anon., *The Poll for the Election of a Member of Parliament, for the Borough of Liverpool, taken between William Ewart, Esq. and John Evelyn Denison, Esq. in front of the Town Hall, from Tuesday, November 23d to Tuesday, November 30th, 1830, before the Worshipful Thomas Brancker, Esq. Mayor, Anthony Monyneux and Thomas Foster, Esqrs. Bailiffs. To Which are Added, a History of the Election, List of the Unpolled Freeman, &c. &c.* (Liverpool: J. Gore & Son, 1830).
- Speeches of Canning in Liverpool* George Canning, *Speeches of the Right Hon. George Canning Delivered on Public Occasions in Liverpool.*

- With a Portrait of Mr. Canning* (Liverpool: Thomas Kaye, 1825).
- Squib book, Liverpool, 1812* Anon., *An Impartial Collection of Addresses, Songs, Squibs, &c. Published during the Election of Members of Parliament, for the Borough of Liverpool, October, 1812* (Liverpool: Timothy Herring, 1812)
- Squib book, Liverpool, 1816* Anon., *The Squib-Book, Containing the Addresses, Songs, and Other Papers, Issued during the Liverpool Election, 1816* (Liverpool: William Bethell, 1816).
- Squib book, Liverpool, 1818* Anon., *The Squib-Book, Being a Collection of the Addresses, Songs, Squibs, and Other Papers Issued during the Contested Election at Liverpool, in June, 1818* (Liverpool: W. Bethell, 1818).
- Squib book, Liverpool, 1820* Anon., *The Squib-Book, Being an Impartial Account of the Liverpool Election, March, 1820, Containing the Addresses, Songs, Squibs, and Speeches, of Each Party during the Contest* (Liverpool: Taylor and Willmer, 1820).
- Squib book, Liverpool, 1830* Anon., *Bethell's Liverpool Squib Book, Being A Correct and Impartial Collection of the Addresses, Songs, Squibs, and Other Papers, Issued during the Contested Election, November, 1830* (Liverpool: W. Bethell, 1830).
- THSLC* *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*
- Wheeler's* *Wheeler's Manchester Chronicle*

## INTRODUCTION

This study is about the development of provincial Toryism in the British urban context from the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 to the passage of the Reform Acts in 1832. It aims to reveal the diverse and flexible reactions of provincial Tories to various political events occurring in the country as well as at Westminster in this seventeen-year period. It has two specific purposes. In the first place, focusing on Tory politics, it will examine the extent and the ways in which national politics at Westminster impacted on local politics. Second, it will consider some of the most important aspects of local Tory politics particularly in terms of identity and organisation.

In the early nineteenth century, a 'new' Tory party was gradually formed in Parliament among the friends and disciples of William Pitt the Younger and the supporters of his political principles and policies. The 'new' Tory party was substantially different from the 'old' Tory party in the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries. It identified itself with the conservative supporters of the Old Whig constitution, which was based on the existing political and social order led by the propertied elite and which incorporated the protestant monarchy, the balanced and mixed form of government, the supreme authority of King-in-Parliament, and the ascendancy of the Established Churches, all believed to have developed since the Revolution Settlement of 1688-89. It was a broad union of the 'Old Pittites' and the conservative Whigs opposed to the French Revolution and the British radicalism influenced by it, who feared the destruction of the existing establishments.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce Coleman, *Conservatism and the Conservative Party in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London: Edward Arnold, 1988), chapter 2; H.T. Dickinson, *Liberty and Property: Political Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Methuen, 1977), chapter 8; Frank O'Gorman, 'Pitt and the "Tory" Reaction to the French Revolution, 1789-1815', in H.T. Dickinson (ed.), *Britain and the French*

From shortly before the death of Pitt in January 1806, the Old Pittites began to fragment into four groups: the Pittites, the Addingtonians, the Grenvillites, and the Canningites. Under the long-lived administration of the Earl of Liverpool (June 1812-April 1827), however, they were successfully re-united. One of the most important reasons for this reunification was the energetic efforts which Prime Minister Liverpool made to convince the Old Pittites to return to the fold. Lord Castlereagh and Viscount Sidmouth (the former Henry Addington) returned with their followers in 1812, and Canning, one year after dissolving his own faction, joined the government in 1814. By the end of the Napoleonic wars, the Old Pittites had virtually become a new 'Tory' party.<sup>2</sup> The return of the remaining faction, the Grenvillites, took longer, but was completed in 1821. They had established a short-term coalition ministry 'of all the talents' with the Whigs in 1806 and, after the collapse of this ministry the following year, they had remained in alliance with them. In the early 1810s, however, they came to support efforts made by the government to defeat Napoleon and to attack British popular radicalism. After they organised themselves as a 'third' party in the aftermath of the final separation from the Whigs in 1817, they began to seek a chance to open

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*Revolution, 1789-1815* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1989), 21-37; David Wilkinson, *The Duke of Portland: Politics and Party in the Age of George III* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). With regard to the 'old' Tory party, see Geoffrey Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne* (revised edn., London and Ronceverte: Hambledon Press, 1987); W.A. Speck, *Tory and Whig: The Struggle in the Constituencies 1701-1715* (London: Macmillan, 1970); Geoffrey Holmes and W.A. Speck, *The Divided Society: Party Conflict in England 1694-1716* (London: Edward Arnold, 1967); Daniel Szechi, *Jacobitism and Tory Politics, 1710-14* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1984); Linda Colley, *In Defiance of Oligarchy: The Tory Party 1714-60* (Cambridge: CUP, 1982); J.C.D. Clark, *The Dynamics of Change: The Crisis of the 1750s and English Party Systems* (Cambridge: CUP, 1982); *idem.*, *English Society, 1660-1832: Religion, Ideology and Politics during the Ancien Regime* (2nd edn., Cambridge: CUP, 2000); Eveline Cruickshanks, *Political Untouchables: The Tories and the '45* (London: Duckworth, 1979); HoP, *Commons 1715-1754*, 'Survey, V. The Tories', online, accessed on 19 July 2015. When I refer to a series of *The History of Parliament* hereafter, the date of access is the same.

<sup>2</sup> Frank O'Gorman, *The Emergence of the British Two-Party System, 1760-1832* (London: Edward Arnold, 1982), chapter 2; Arthur Aspinall, 'The Canningite Party', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4th ser., 17 (1934), 177-226.

negotiations for an alliance with the ministry.<sup>3</sup>

Along with the formation of the Tory party at Westminster, groups supporting it were gradually organised out-of-doors. Throughout the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the rise of public opinion and the politicisation of the British people were greatly accelerated through an enormous increase in the frequency and quantity of public meetings, petitions, and popular protests as well as through the rapid growth of political clubs and newspapers. This acceleration was a result of the series of wars in which the British state was heavily involved between the beginning of the War of Jenkins' Ear in 1739 and the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815. The British people took a great interest in these wars and had a strong concern with the ways in which the government managed them. Clubs and societies, public meetings, and the print media helped the British people to express their own opinions about the wars. When great frustration at massive debts and moral deterioration was created by the American War of Independence, various reformers in Britain energetically demanded different types of reform, such as economical reform, parliamentary reform, and moral reform. The almost continuous wars with France between 1793 and 1815 helped British public opinion to be roughly, but broadly, divided between opposition and government. On the one hand, local Whigs and radicals supported the French Revolution on principle, pursuing peace policy and, even if to a different extent, demanding parliamentary reform. On the other hand, ardent government supporters and moderate Whigs, groups which would coalesce to become the new Tory party outside of Parliament, strongly opposed the French Revolution and vigorously supported both the war policies and the restrictive measures against radical reformers at home which were adopted by the

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<sup>3</sup> J.J. Sack, *The Grenvillites, 1801-29: Party Politics and Factionalism in the Age of Pitt and Liverpool* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979), chapter 8.

government.<sup>4</sup> This division was clearly seen in large towns in particular, where national issues debated in Parliament and in the country at large were very important. Focusing on provincial Toryism in the years 1815 to 1832, this thesis attempts to understand the ways in which local Tories in urban communities developed their political beliefs, organisations, and actions by reacting to various national issues raised in this period.<sup>5</sup>

## I

### HISTORIOGRAPHY

With regard to party politics in the localities in the early nineteenth century, the existing literature, focusing on parliamentary elections, has particularly considered the extent and the ways in which parliamentary politics were connected to local politics. It has revealed that national issues of a party character had a significant impact on many constituencies. Especially in open, large boroughs, partisan voting influenced by the two parties at Westminster was more pervasive than in the eighteenth century. Oligarchical

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<sup>4</sup> John Brewer, *Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III* (Cambridge: CUP, 1976); H.T. Dickinson, *The Politics of the People in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Macmillan, 1994); Robert R. Dozier, *For King, Constitution, and Country: The English Loyalists and the French Revolution* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983); Michael Duffy, 'Contested Empire, 1756-1815', in Paul Langford (ed.), *The Eighteenth Century, 1688-1815* (Oxford: OUP, 2002), chapter 6; Peter Jupp, *The Governing of Britain, 1688-1848: The Executive, Parliament and the People* (London: Routledge, 2006); Nancy D. LoPatin, *Political Unions, Popular Politics and the Great Reform Act of 1832* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999); Katrina Navickas, *Loyalism and Radicalism in Lancashire, 1798-1815* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2009); Nicholas Rogers, *Crowds, Culture, and Politics in Georgian Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995). With regard to popular politics in Scotland in the post-war period, see Gordon Pentland, *Radicalism, Reform and National Identity in Scotland, 1820-1833* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008).

<sup>5</sup> Stephen M. Lee's work on George Canning's commitment to public opinion is very significant and highly suggestive, but my interest lies in a broad political movement involving provincial Tories, rather than the political role of an individual. Stephen M. Lee, *George Canning and Liberal Toryism, 1801-1827* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008).

influence exerted by patrons on the electors was conditional, and national issues and party considerations played a formative role in electoral politics under particular circumstances. On the other hand, local initiative remained paramount in electoral politics. Local political behaviour connected to parliamentary parties emerged only occasionally and temporarily especially during contested elections. Local men and organisations were the main agents at every stage of the elections, and they adopted particular national issues, but for their own purposes.<sup>6</sup> They were also strongly sceptical of the notion of ‘party’, because it was considered harmful to local independence. Neither official and permanent party organisation nor fixed party identity had yet been formed in the constituencies.<sup>7</sup> These suggest that, while many historians have pointed out that the label ‘Tory’ had re-emerged at the 1807 general election, its meaning was not always stable or consistent. This study roughly defines provincial Toryism as the ‘political movements of local people supporting the Tory party at Westminster’, but it is cautious about the ambiguity of its definition.

More recent scholarship on local party politics in this period has expanded analytical perspectives by looking at other important political battlegrounds besides the elections. William Anthony Hay has paid attention to the important role of Henry Brougham, a strongly reform-minded Whig MP, who ‘pioneered a new style of parliamentary opposition through “petition and debate” tactics that combined local

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<sup>6</sup> John A. Phillips, *Electoral Behavior in Unreformed England: Plumpers, Splitters and Straights* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); *idem.*, *The Great Reform Bill in the Boroughs: English Electoral Behaviour 1818-1841* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); David Eastwood, ‘Toryism, Reform and Political Culture in Oxfordshire, 1826-1837’, *Parliamentary History*, 7 (1988), 98-121; Frank O’Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties: The Unreformed Electoral System of Hanoverian England, 1734-1832* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

<sup>7</sup> James Vernon, *Politics and the People: A Study in English Political Culture, 1815-1867* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993), chapter 4; Jon Lawrence and Miles Taylor, ‘Introduction: Electoral Sociology and the Historians’, in Jon Lawrence and Miles Taylor (eds.), *Party, State and Society: Electoral Behaviour in Britain since 1820* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), 16.



petitioning meetings with press reports and debates in the House of Commons to create a cycle linking provincial opinion with the political contest at Westminster'.<sup>8</sup> Two PhD dissertations by Peter Brett and T.E. Orme have also looked at political clubs and dinners organised by provincial Whigs as well as examining the Whig press published in the localities.<sup>9</sup> They have shown that not only parliamentary elections, but also public meetings, political clubs, and the press played a vital role in conveying national political issues to the localities and planting partisan loyalties into provincial politics to a considerable extent. On the other hand, Brett has pointed out that the serious strain existing between the Whig party at Westminster and the middle-class Whigs in the constituencies often appeared, and Orme has emphasised that different types of Whiggism developed in different regions of Scotland.<sup>10</sup>

A significant weakness in the existing literature is the failure to pay as much attention to provincial Tories as Hay, Brett, and Orme have paid to the Whigs in the localities. Recent scholarship has offered important insights into extra-parliamentary Tory politics in the pre-1832 period. James Sack has discussed various intellectual currents of Toryism by examining the 'Right-Wing' press mainly published in the capital.<sup>11</sup> Richard Gaunt and Edwin Jaggard have focused on the role of 'Ultra-Tory' aristocrats in the localities.<sup>12</sup> These contributions have emphasised that two aspects of

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<sup>8</sup> William Anthony Hay, *The Whig Revival, 1808-1830* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 2. For a critical assessment of Hay's work, see Peter Jupp's review article in *Parliamentary History*, 25 (2006), 288-290. In addition, it seems that Hay is not as careful of the differences between the Whigs at Westminster and their middle-class followers in the country, as Brett is.

<sup>9</sup> Peter Brett, 'The Liberal Middle Classes and Politics in Three Provincial Towns – Newcastle, Bristol, and York – c.1812-1841' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Durham, 1991); T.E. Orme, 'The Scottish Whig Party, c.1801-20' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2013), chapters 1 and 3.

<sup>10</sup> Brett, 'The Liberal Middle Classes', 4; T.E. Orme, 'Toasting Fox: The Fox Dinners in Edinburgh and Glasgow, 1801-1825', *History*, 99 (2015), 588-606.

<sup>11</sup> J.J. Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative: Reaction and Orthodoxy in Britain, c.1760-1832* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993).

<sup>12</sup> *Unhappy Reactionary: The Diaries of the Fourth Duke of Newcastle-under-Lyne, 1822-50*, ed. Richard

Tory politics, one at Westminster and the other outside Parliament, were linked. Using these studies as a springboard, this thesis seeks to reveal the wider political movement of provincial Tories, which developed in various regions beyond the capital and involved different social classes beyond the landed elite.

This study is closely connected to a new trend in British history: the history of ‘popular conservatism’, or what has been occasionally called ‘popular Toryism’. The study of ‘popular conservatism’ has mainly focused on the late eighteenth and the late nineteenth centuries. In the 1960s, paying attention to conservative or loyal reaction against the French Revolution and the British radicalism influenced by it, historians, such as E.C. Black and E.P. Thompson, insisted that such reaction had been provoked merely by the panic-stricken ruling elite.<sup>13</sup> Recently, however, many historians have acknowledged that such a loyalist reaction was actually very positive and pervasive and that a large majority of British people, regardless of gender or social class, were willingly involved in the patriotic movement to preserve the British constitution.<sup>14</sup>

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A. Gaunt (Nottingham: Thoroton Society, 2003); *Unrepentant Tory: Political Selections from the Diaries of the Fourth Duke of Newcastle-under-Lyne, 1827-38*, ed. Richard A. Gaunt (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006); Richard A. Gaunt, ‘The Fourth Duke of Newcastle, the ‘Mob’ and Election Contests in Nottinghamshire, 1818-1832’, *Midland History*, 33 (2008), 196-217; Edwin Jaggard, ‘Lord Falmouth and the Parallel Political Worlds of Ultra-Toryism, 1826-32’, *Parliamentary History*, 33 (2014), 300-320.

<sup>13</sup> Eugene C. Black, *The Association: British Extraparliamentary Political Organization 1769-1793* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1963), chapter 7; E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1980 edn., London: Penguin, 1980; 1st edn., published in 1963), 122-123.

<sup>14</sup> H.T. Dickinson, ‘Popular Conservatism and Militant Loyalism 1789-1815’, in H.T. Dickinson (ed.), *Britain and the French Revolution, 1789-1815* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1989), 103-125 and in his book, *The Politics of the People*, chapter 8; *idem.*, ‘Popular Loyalism in Britain in the 1790s’, in Eckhart Hellmuth (ed.), *The Transformation of Political Culture: England and Germany in the Late Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: OUP, 1990), 503-533; John Dinwiddy, ‘Interpretations of Anti-Jacobinism’, in Mark Philp (ed.), *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), 38-49; Dozier, *For King, Constitution, and Country*; Donald E. Ginter, ‘The Loyalist Association Movement of 1792-93 and British Public Opinion’, *Historical Journal*, 9 (1966), 179-190; Mark Philp, ‘Vulgar Conservatism, 1792-3’, *English Historical Review*, 110 (1995), 42-69. General overviews of loyalism in the 1790s and thereafter have been offered by Frank O’Gorman: ‘English Loyalism Revisited’, in Allan Blackstock and Eoin Magennis (eds.), *Politics and Political Culture in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1850: Essays in Tribute to Peter Jupp* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2007), 223-241; *idem.*, ‘Origins and Trajectories of Loyalism in England, 1580-1840’, in Frank O’Gorman and Allan Blackstock (eds.), *Loyalism and the Formation of the British World, 1775-1914* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2014), 19-41. The following works are also important. Alan Booth, ‘Popular Loyalism and Public Violence in the

Historians have also focused on ‘popular conservatism’ in the late nineteenth century. Before the 1970s, when Marxism was still influential, a dominant historiography emphasised that the working classes or those who were not expected to engage in official politics tended to support those extra-parliamentary political groups which attempted to achieve various types of reform or even a revolution. In the 1990s, however, this historical approach began to be widely reviewed, because of the rise of Margaret Thatcher, who had established a Conservative government in 1979 and thereafter kept executive power for more than a decade with the aid of many working-class voters, and because of the end of the Cold War. Reviewing the Marxist approach to British popular politics in the late nineteenth century, historians have revealed wide and long-term support for the Conservative party during the period of mass democracy after the 1880s.<sup>15</sup> Several studies of ‘popular conservatism’ have also emphasised that the Conservatives maintained a considerable influence in the localities between 1832 and 1880 when the Conservative party only twice won a majority in the House of Commons.<sup>16</sup> Historians of ‘popular conservatism’, offering significant insights into British party politics, have generally argued that a social class was not

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North-West of England, 1790-1800’, *Social History*, 8 (1983), 295-313; Michael Duffy, ‘William Pitt and the Origins of the Loyalist Association Movement of 1792’, *Historical Journal*, 39 (1996), 943-962; Austin Mitchell, ‘The Association Movement of 1792-3’, *Historical Journal*, 4 (1961), 56-77.

<sup>15</sup> Pioneering research has been done by Martin Pugh: *The Tories and the People 1880-1935* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985); *idem.*, ‘Popular Conservatism in Britain: Continuity and Change, 1880-1987’, *Journal of British Studies*, 27 (1988), 254-282. Frans Coetzee, *For Party or Country: Nationalism and the Dilemmas of Popular Conservatism in Edwardian England* (Oxford: OUP, 1990); Neal R. McCrillis, *The British Conservative Party in the Age of Universal Suffrage: Popular Conservatism, 1918-1929* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998); Sandra O’Leary, ‘Re-thinking Popular Conservatism in Liverpool: Democracy and Reform in the Later Nineteenth Century’, in Michael J. Turner (ed.), *Reform and Reformers in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Sunderland: Sunderland University Press, 2004), 157-174; Matthew Roberts, ‘“Villa Toryism” and Popular Conservatism in Leeds, 1885-1902’, *Historical Journal*, 49 (2006), 217-246; Alex Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism in Imperial London, 1868-1906* (London: Royal Historical Society, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> John Belchem, ‘Protectionism, Paternalism and Protestantism: Popular Toryism in Early Victorian Liverpool’, in his *Merseypride: Essays in Liverpool Exceptionalism* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), chapter 6; Matthew Roberts, *Political Movements in Urban England, 1832-1914* (Basingstoke; Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), chapters 6 and 7, esp. 99.

necessarily linked to a particular political attitude and that provincial Tories/Conservatives were influential even in the period between 1780 and 1850, regarded as the ‘Age of Reform’, or when the national party which they supported was in a minority at Westminster.<sup>17</sup>

The study of ‘popular conservatism’ has many links to the ‘new political history’. Since the 1990s, many historians, influenced by the ‘linguistic turn’, have adopted a new approach to British politics, seriously considering how words, symbols, and visual materials operated in a particular context.<sup>18</sup> A fundamental intellectual source is Gareth Stedman Jones,<sup>19</sup> who has offered three lessons: ‘the autonomy (to varying degrees) of politics from society; the role of language in shaping political behaviour; and the danger of reducing that behaviour to expressions of underlying socio-economic divisions’.<sup>20</sup> The ‘new political history’ has also, ‘in contrast to the conventional stress on change, ... highlighted continuities ... (and) “flattened out” the chronological terrain of nineteenth-century popular politics’.<sup>21</sup> These demonstrate that the ‘new political history’ was born at a similar time to, and with a similar interest in the history of, ‘popular conservatism’. Such an emphasis on the uneven relationship between class and language suggests why this new trend is called ‘popular conservatism’, and not

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<sup>17</sup> Arthur Burns and Joanne Innes (eds.), *Rethinking the Age of Reform, Britain 1780-1850* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003); Asa Briggs, *The Age of Improvement, 1783-1867* (2nd impression with corrections, London: Longman, 1960).

<sup>18</sup> Mark Baer, *The Rise and Fall of Radical Westminster, 1780-1890* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); James A. Epstein, *Radical Expression: Political Language, Ritual, and Symbol in England, 1790-1850* (Oxford: OUP, 1994); Vernon, *Politics and the People*; *idem.* (ed.), *Re-Reading the Constitution: New Narratives in the Political History of England's Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996); Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class: The Political Representation of Class in Britain, c.1780-1840* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995).

<sup>19</sup> Gareth Stedman-Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History 1832-1982* (Cambridge: CUP, 1983), esp. chapter 3.

<sup>20</sup> Roberts, *Political Movements in Urban England*, 5-6. The introduction of this book has offered a general discussion of the ‘new political history’. See also Dror Wahrman, ‘The New Political History: A Review Essay’, *Social History*, 21 (1996), 343-354.

<sup>21</sup> Roberts, *Political Movements in Urban England*, 7.

‘working-class’ conservatism: ‘many political ideas were not peculiar to one class or another but were trans-class’.<sup>22</sup> Looking at local politics from the angle of ‘popular conservatism’, historians flexibly define popular politics as something that involved people with different social backgrounds.

Despite such an increasing interest in ‘popular conservatism’ from the 1790s to the early twentieth century, a detailed analysis of ‘popular conservatism’ between 1815 and 1832 has not yet been made. David Walsh’s work can be regarded as one of the few exceptions briefly touching on it. He has emphasised the unpopularity of the Tories in the country as well as at Westminster in this period. Insisting that operative conservatism did not emerge until the post-1832 period, he has asserted that the Tories were too exclusive to establish a close relationship with the middle and working classes in the localities before 1832.<sup>23</sup> This interpretation is in tune with a major narrative of the Tory party at Westminster that emphasises its growing unpopularity: a large majority of the party, while pursuing pragmatic and liberal policies in terms of domestic economy and overseas diplomacy, showed less tolerant attitudes towards religion and slavery than the Whigs and were not so flexible as to share the hopes of many for parliamentary reform.<sup>24</sup>

By contrast, Rohan McWilliam has given a more positive evaluation. While insisting that an alliance between the Tories and the working classes became closer with

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<sup>22</sup> Rohan McWilliam, *Popular Politics in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Routledge: 1998), 1. In chapter 8 of this book, he has paid attention to ‘popular conservatism’ as one of the new directions in the recent scholarship on the history of nineteenth-century Britain.

<sup>23</sup> David Walsh, ‘Working Class Political Integration and the Conservative Party: A Study of Class Relations and Party Political Development in the North-West, 1800-1870’ (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Salford, 1991), chapters 3 and 5; *idem.*, *Making Angels in Marble: The Conservatives, the Early Industrial Working Class and Attempts at Political Incorporation* (London: Breviary Stuff Publications, 2012), chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>24</sup> Clark, *English Society*, chapter 6; Frank O’Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century: British Political and Social History 1688-1832* (London: Edward Arnold, 1997), chapter 12.

the emergence of ‘radical Toryism’ in the 1830s, he has maintained that ‘popular conservatism’ or ‘popular loyalism’ was so influential in the localities that ‘the Tory government of Lord Liverpool could command considerable popular support’ in the decade after the end of the Napoleonic wars.<sup>25</sup> Two more books, challenging the dominant narrative relating to Toryism in the early nineteenth century, have attempted to regard Tory/conservative culture as vital for the stable development of society. Anna Gambles, focusing on protectionism by looking at parliamentary debates and London-oriented magazines and pamphlets in particular, has critically reviewed the common understanding that Ricardian *laissez faire* theory was ‘modern and progressive’, and its critics were, by contrast, ‘retrogressive and negative’. She has challenged ‘the pervasive assumption that British Conservatism can be wholly understood as a journey towards Gladstonian Liberalism’, and has stressed instead that ‘many Conservatives rejected the assumptions of economic liberalism and replaced them with an alternative set of arguments about the foundations of stable economic advance and the role of government in securing it’.<sup>26</sup> Looking in the romantic period between 1790 and 1832 at such ‘counterrevolutionary’ theorists as Hannah More, Robert Southey, and S.T. Coleridge, Kevin Gilmartin has maintained that:

The anti-radical arguments and print forms of expression ... were often not simply retrospective nor committed to preserving “things as they are,” but were instead involved in a more enterprising and potentially compromised

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<sup>25</sup> McWilliam, *Popular Politics*, 91.

<sup>26</sup> She has further maintained that protectionist Conservatism was robust and resilient, and was also consistent in the post-1832 period and even after 1846 up to the late Victorian and Edwardian periods. Anna Gambles, *Protection and Politics: Conservative Economic Discourse, 1815-1852* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999), introduction, esp. 1, 2, 4, 7. Challenging Jonathan Clark’s work, which has emphasised the connection of ‘Ultra’ Toryism with the ‘confessional state’ fractured between 1828 and 1829, Richard Gaunt has also pointed out ‘the relative durability of the ultra-tories’ and ‘the richer, more nuanced interpretation of ultra-toryism’. Newcastle, *Repentant Tory*, ed. Gaunt, xii-xv.

literary-political project that itself contributed to the transformation of the established order, in part by systematically engaging a subversive enemy on its own compromised literary and public terrain. They were counterrevolutionary in the sense that they were unapologetically committed to a project of social renovation, and to intervening in present conditions even to the point of adjusting inherited arrangements, in order to block revolutionary designs.<sup>27</sup>

By making a careful and detailed analysis of provincial Toryism in 1815-1832, this thesis will test the validity of these arguments and reveal how robust and resilient provincial Tory politics was in this period.

## II

### METHODOLOGY AND STRUCTURE

This thesis will approach provincial Toryism in the British urban context. Between the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Britain witnessed a remarkable growth of urban society beyond the capital. More and more people, regardless of social class or gender, began to live in provincial towns, in many of which manufacturing, commerce, and culture flourished. Along with these developments, provincial towns increasingly assumed profound significance in politics. Among them, large, open constituencies were particularly important, because the results of the elections in these constituencies were regarded as ‘a barometer of respectable public opinion’.<sup>28</sup> Such an overwhelming focus

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<sup>27</sup> Kevin Gilmartin, *Writing against the Revolution: Literary Conservatism in Britain, 1790-1832* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 3. This argument is close to Robert Dozier’s conclusion about the Reeves’ Association in the 1790s. He claimed that ‘the essential nature of the loyal movement ... was not a conservative reaction, nor the beginnings of a White Terror, but an attempt to maintain the most liberal constitution in Europe’. Dozier, *For King, Constitution, and Country*, 82-83.

<sup>28</sup> Jupp, *The Governing of Britain*, 244. With regard to urbanisation in this period, see Peter Clark, (ed.),

on urban politics makes this study omit an analysis of various important battlefields for provincial political parties: for example, rural politics. While conscious of this limitation, this study agrees with Harry Dickinson, who has emphasised the importance of urban politics, maintaining that:

All historians interested in the politics of the people must pay particular attention to urban communities. After all, it was in the towns, especially the larger towns, that popular politics in all its manifestations flourished most vigorously and most persistently. It was in the larger urban constituencies that parliamentary elections were most frequently contested and where the voters and even the non-voters were most often drawn into partisan activities. The activities of both popular radicalism and popular conservatism, whether they involved distributing propaganda, organising petitions, forming associations or holding public meetings, were mainly based in urban communities. The overwhelming majority of riots and crowd demonstrations also occurred in urban settings.<sup>29</sup>

By examining Tory politics in urban societies, and in large towns in particular, this study will consider how provincial Toryism developed as local communities were becoming highly politicised.

This thesis is composed of four chapters. Except for Chapter Two, it will examine provincial Tory politics in selected towns: Bristol (Chapters One and Three), Colchester (One and Three), Liverpool (Three and Four), and Edinburgh (One). These were all large towns, and were also parliamentary constituencies. The first three were large, open, freeman English boroughs, which made control by a handful of oligarchic patrons

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*Cambridge Urban History of Britain Vol. 2: 1540-1840* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000); Penelope J. Corfield, *The Impact of English Towns 1700-1800* (Oxford: OUP, 1982); Joyce M. Ellis, *The Georgian Town 1680-1840* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); Rosemary Sweet, *The English Town, 1680-1840: Government, Society and Culture* (Harlow: Longman, 1999).

<sup>29</sup> Dickinson, *The Politics of the People*, 93.



impossible. This type of borough occupied less than ten per cent of the 215 English and Welsh boroughs, which shows that they were not representative of urban politics in general. In these three boroughs, however, two-party politics appeared frequently. The electors and even the non-electors showed a strong political consciousness during the frequently contested elections.<sup>30</sup> By contrast, Edinburgh was a very closed burgh. This did not mean that politics in this town remained calm, however. Rather, Edinburgh witnessed strong party rivalry and was a major centre for the press, which created an informed and influential public opinion.<sup>31</sup> These four towns therefore can be regarded as good examples to understand the distinctive nature of provincial Toryism.

Various differences between these towns are also important in considering the different developments of Tory politics in the localities. First, they were regionally diverse: Bristol in the south-west of England; Liverpool in the north-west; Colchester in the south-east; and Edinburgh in the south-east of Scotland. Second, they were different in terms of socio-economic functions. Bristol and Liverpool were port towns prospering from trade and commerce from the eighteenth century. Colchester, whose textile industry had experienced a huge decline, was an inland agricultural market town by the early nineteenth century. Edinburgh was the capital of Scotland and an administrative and cultural centre. In the third place, the population of each town, according to the census taken in 1821, differed widely: 52,889 in Bristol, 14,016 in Colchester, 118,972 in Liverpool, and 112,235 in Edinburgh. Finally, the number of the voters in each constituency was also different. In the general election of 1830, the number of voters in Bristol was 6,385, that in Colchester was 1,382, and that in Liverpool was 4,435. In

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<sup>30</sup> O’Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 55-58, 349-358.

<sup>31</sup> Orme, ‘The Scottish Whig Party’; William Brydon, ‘Politics, Government and Society in Edinburgh, 1780-1833’ (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Wales, Bangor, 1988).

Edinburgh, only the thirty-three men who were members of the Town Council had the right to vote.

The four chapters of this study will look at provincial Toryism from different perspectives. Chapter One will examine it from the viewpoint of one of the most important features of urban development, namely the role and activities of the press.<sup>32</sup> Paying attention to the close relationship between the provincial press and local public opinion, it will reveal the political ideology of the provincial Tory press published in such large towns as Bristol, Colchester, and Edinburgh. Chapter Two, looking at clubs and societies, which developed significantly in urban society and prompted local people with various social backgrounds to engage in local politics, will examine various political movements made by the Tory clubs and societies of Britain.<sup>33</sup> Chapter Three will focus on the ‘traditional’ political battleground in the localities that connected centre and periphery: parliamentary elections. Focusing on three selected constituencies where provincial Toryism was fairly strong, Liverpool, Bristol, and Colchester, it aims to reveal the diverse development of Tory electoral politics. Chapter Four will investigate the commitment of the Tories in Liverpool to local governance from such viewpoints as Corporation politics, mayoral elections, and public meetings. Paying exclusive attention to Liverpool may suggest a weakness in this chapter. It is worth concentrating on Liverpool, however, because of the relative richness of sources. This

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<sup>32</sup> Hannah Barker, *Newspapers, Politics, and Public Opinion in Late Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); *idem.*, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society, 1695-1855* (Harlow: Longman, 2000); Aled Jones, *Power of the Press: Newspapers, Power and the Public in Nineteenth-Century England* (Aldershot: Scolar, 1996); Bob Harris, *Politics and the Rise of the Press: Britain and France 1620-1800* (London: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>33</sup> Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000); Robert J. Morris, *Class, Sect and Party: The Making of the British Middle Class, Leeds 1820-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990); *idem.*, ‘Clubs, Societies and Associations’, in F.M.L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750-1950, vol. 3: Social Agencies and Institutions* (Cambridge: CUP, 1990), 395-443.

chapter thus aims to provide a case study, which might lead the way to the understanding of local Tory governance in other urban centres.

### III

#### ‘PARTY’ AND ‘TORY’

The recent historiography has challenged the interpretation offered by Sir Lewis Namier and his disciples that political parties did not exist in Parliament in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>34</sup> Acknowledging that these historians were justified in denying organised parties as a main feature in Parliament in the 1760s, historians have agreed that there were very organised parties in the earlier eighteenth century and that, in the late eighteenth century, the Rockinghamite and the Foxite Whigs in opposition were the only, but fairly organised, political party in Parliament. In the early nineteenth century, with the formation of the Tory party, ‘a two-party system’ gradually re-emerged in Parliament.<sup>35</sup> These two parties put forward opposing views on several constitutional issues, such as the influence of the crown and parliamentary reform, and disagreed over

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<sup>34</sup> Namier’s major works on political history are: Sir Lewis Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III* (2nd edn., London: Macmillan, 1957); *idem.*, *England in the Age of the American Revolution* (2nd edn., London: Macmillan, 1961). He also claimed that the party system had not developed to a full extent until the later nineteenth century. *Idem.*, *Crossroads of Power: Essays on Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1962), esp. 13-38. D.G. Barnes has applied Namier’s view to the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries. D.G. Barnes, *George III and William Pitt, 1783-1806: A New Interpretation Based upon a Study of their Unpublished Correspondence* (Oxford: OUP, 1939). Reviews of the Namierite interpretation of eighteenth-century British politics include: Harvey C. Mansfield, ‘Sir Lewis Namier Considered’, *Journal of British Studies*, 2 (1962), 28-55; Henry R. Winkler, ‘Sir Lewis Namier’, *Journal of Modern History*, 35 (1963), 1-19.

<sup>35</sup> O’Gorman defines the ‘party system’ as ‘a regime in which a majority party in the Lower House forms the government, although not necessarily exclusively from its own members. In this regime, the government is confronted by an opposition which differs on certain key and fundamental constitutional and/or political questions and which takes active steps to attempt to replace it. Both parties have generally agreed policies to which their members are expected to be positively committed’. O’Gorman, *British Two-Party System*, 61-62, fn. 1.

the conduct of the war. Frank O’Gorman and other historians, examining divisions in the House of Commons between 1812 and 1826, have revealed that most MPs, more than eighty per cent of them, voted along party lines. About three fifths of MPs cast ‘constant’ votes for one of the two parties, and among the rest were many who showed a ‘general’ tendency to vote along party lines.<sup>36</sup>

The ‘cult’ of the deceased political leaders, Pitt and Fox, was significant in binding each of the parties. The period after the death of Pitt and Fox in 1806 was marked by a lack of strong leadership, but the cult around them provided both parties with an effective way to make up for some of this deficiency. Members of each party, as we shall see, were not in complete agreement on all policies. The cult, however, provided a collective ethos which served to unite them, and gave them an important direction in politics. By mentioning the name of Pitt or Pitt’s principles, the Tories could unite to fight against revolution abroad and radicalism at home and support the British constitution in church and state. On the other hand, the Whig party, loosely relying on Foxite principles, supported different measures, such as peace with France, parliamentary reform, Catholic Emancipation, and the abolition of slavery.<sup>37</sup>

Two-party politics in Parliament developed in the context of a significant decrease in the numbers both of the King’s Friends and of independent MPs. The former were

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<sup>36</sup> Austin Mitchell, *The Whigs in Opposition, 1815-1830* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 64-67, 254, and Appendix; HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, ‘Survey, VIII. Politics and Parties’; Frank O’Gorman and Peter Fraser, ‘Party Politics in the Early Nineteenth Century’, *English Historical Review*, 102 (1987), 73-75. One weakness of the analyses provided by Mitchell, O’Gorman, and Fisher is that they have intentionally omitted division lists concerning Catholic Emancipation. For example, see O’Gorman and Fraser, ‘Party Politics’, 68. G.I.T. Machin has stated that this religious question was a cross-party one. G.I.T. Machin, *The Catholic Question in English Politics 1820 to 1830* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 1-2.

<sup>37</sup> Boyd Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People?: England 1783-1846* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 195-209; J.J. Sack, ‘The Memory of Burke and the Memory of Pitt: English Conservatism Confronts its Past, 1806-1829’, *Historical Journal*, 30 (1987), 623-640; John Dinwiddy, ‘Charles James Fox and the People’, *History*, 55 (1970), 342-359; L.G. Mitchell, *Holland House* (London: Duckworth, 1980); N.B. Penny, ‘The Whig Cult of Fox in Early Nineteenth-Century Sculpture’, *Past & Present*, 70 (1976), 94-105.

distinguished by their support for any ministry of the king's choice. Their number is estimated to have been about 180 in 1805.<sup>38</sup> Over the ten years of the reign of George IV, however, this number declined sharply by 1830 to thirty-seven, just 5.6 per cent in the total of 658 MPs, which demonstrates that such men had lost considerable influence over politics.<sup>39</sup> In addition, the number of placemen and pensioners in the House of Commons also declined from approximately 200 in 1760 to fewer than fifty in 1821.<sup>40</sup> Such a decline in the influence of the crown was marked in the House of Lords as well. The disappearance of independent aristocrats was slower, but they were as rare as independent MPs by the 1830s.<sup>41</sup> These changes in the composition of the membership of both Houses helped increase the presence and influence of the two parties in Parliament. These changes mainly resulted from economical reform or what was sometimes called retrenchment.<sup>42</sup> They may have made it difficult for the Tory government to maintain a stable parliamentary majority, but at the same time they eventually helped to turn the Tories into a self-made party.<sup>43</sup>

With regard to independent MPs in the House of Commons, the convention that politicians preferred to call themselves 'independent', especially when they needed to make an appeal to their constituents, remained unchallenged. The number of independent backbencher MPs, however, diminished significantly under the impact of the increase in ideological differences in the aftermath of the French Revolution and the

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<sup>38</sup> Charles James Fox to Lord Lauderdale, 12 July 1805 in Arthur Aspinall and E.A. Smith (eds.), *English Historical Documents, vol. 11, 1783-1832* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1959), 255.

<sup>39</sup> Richard Pares, *King George III and the Politicians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), 189.

<sup>40</sup> Robert Stewart, *The Foundation of the Conservative Party 1830-1867* (London: Longman, 1987), 16.

<sup>41</sup> David Large, 'The Decline of the Party of the Crown and the Rise of Parties in the House of Lords, 1783-1837', *English Historical Review*, 78 (1963), 669-695; O'Gorman, *British Two-Party System*, 117; Stewart, *Conservative Party*, 61-63.

<sup>42</sup> Philip Harling, *The Waning of 'Old Corruption': The Politics of Economical Reform in Britain, 1779-1846* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), esp. chapters 4 and 5.

<sup>43</sup> Crown influence decreased dramatically between 1780 and 1832, which was a vital condition of 'the development of cabinet government and the two-party system in modern form'. Archibald S. Foord, 'The Waning of 'the Influence of the Crown'', *English Historical Review*, 62 (1947), 507.

French wars. The number of these independents had been about 300 in the mid-eighteenth century, but reduced afterwards to at most seventy to eighty by the turn of the nineteenth century.<sup>44</sup>

Moreover, contemporaries' understanding of parliamentary politics also demonstrated that a two-party polarity had developed in Parliament. The Tory MP for Suffolk, George Chetwynd, for example, offered his analysis of parliamentary politics in 1820, stating that, 'It was almost grown into a maxim, that a Member who does not attach himself to one of the two great parties that divide the House of Commons, can be of no use there'.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, in terms of contemporary evaluations of the concept of party, some Britons, as in the eighteenth century, still regarded a party as a group of factious and self-interested men who neglected the national interest and undermined national unity and political stability. This representation of party, however, as O'Gorman has suggested, was much less common by the early nineteenth century. Before 1832, the opinion that the balance of the constitution was secured within the House of Commons by the existence of two parties, one in government and one in opposition, otherwise called Tory and Whig, was widely accepted by parliamentarians.<sup>46</sup> In 1830, for example, John Wilson Croker, the Tory Irish MP and propaganda activist, showed that contemporaries viewed party in a positive manner. He claimed that, 'I am one of those who have always thought that party attachments and consistency are in the *first* class of a statesman's duties, because without them he must be incapable of performing any

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<sup>44</sup> O'Gorman, *British Two-Party System*, 53. In another place, he has provided a different estimate of the number of independent MPs in the early nineteenth century: 100-120. O'Gorman and Fraser, 'Party Politics', 71.

<sup>45</sup> HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, 'Survey, VIII. Politics and Parties'.

<sup>46</sup> O'Gorman and Fraser, 'Party Politics', 64. With regard to the gradual acceptance of party and opposition, see J.A.W. Gunn, *Factions No More: Attitudes to Party in Government and Opposition in Eighteenth Century England: Extracts from Contemporary Sources* (London: Cass, 1972), introduction, esp. 27-30; *idem.*, 'Influence, Parties and the Constitution: Changing Attitudes, 1783-1832', *Historical Journal*, 17 (1974), 301-328.

useful service to the country'.<sup>47</sup>

These changes all demonstrate the growth of two-party politics in this period, but this should not be overestimated for three reasons. First, neither of the parties was completely united on all policies. The Tories showed more diverse opinions than the Whigs. They disagreed particularly over the economy, slavery, and religion. It is useful to adopt a distinction between 'Liberal Toryism', which supported freer trade, abolitionism, and religious toleration, and 'High Toryism', which upheld protectionist, anti-abolitionist, and high Anglican views. The mainstream Pittites and the Addingtonians were generally 'High Tories', but the latter opposed slavery. The Grenvillites had 'High-Tory' views on the economy, but supported Catholic Emancipation and abolitionism. On the other hand, the Canningites, most of whom advocated freer trade and Catholic Emancipation, can be categorised as the most liberal group among the four, whereas they, and Canning and Huskisson in particular, opposed the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts and were divided on abolition.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, members of each group did not entirely share the same political views. Among the mainstream Pittites, some of them, such as Peel and Liverpool, tended to support freer trade, whereas others such as Lord Melville supported Catholic relief measures. Two of the Canningites, Thomas Bernard and Robert Holt Leigh, opposed Catholic Emancipation in the 1812 Parliament, and two of the former Canningites, Edward Bootle Wilbraham and William Ralph Cartwright, were very active anti-Catholic

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<sup>47</sup> About this letter, the date and the addressee are unknown. John Wilson Croker, *The Croker Papers: The Correspondence and Diaries of John Wilson Croker from 1809 to 1830*, ed. L.J. Jennings (3 vols., London, 1884), II, 82.

<sup>48</sup> O'Gorman, *British Two-Party System*, 53; D.G.S. Simes, 'The Ultra Tories in British Politics 1824-1834' (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1974), 238-239; HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, 'William Huskisson'.

campaigners in the late 1820s.<sup>49</sup> One of the Grenvillites, the Marquess of Chandos, became a leader of the ‘Ultra’ anti-Catholic Tories during the 1820s.<sup>50</sup>

Second, there is a problem with the definition of the labels ‘Whig’ and ‘Tory’, and that of the latter in particular. Historians have regarded MPs who constantly supported the administrations led by Pitt, Liverpool, and Wellington as Tory. In this period, however, the concept of ‘Tory’ was ambiguous. This term was still not commonly used for self-labelling, but it was used mainly to criticise, or diminish the credibility of, the friends of Pitt by their opponents. Pitt regarded himself as an independent Whig. In 1812, ministers in Liverpool’s government called themselves ‘a Whig administration’. It has been pointed out that literary and church figures of a conservative mind and part of the ‘Right-Wing’ press published in London referred to the term in a positive way by the early 1820s. Many parliamentary politicians, however, hesitated to call themselves Tory and only gradually adopted it for self-labelling between 1827 and 1832. Their hesitation came from its links with the Tory party of the earlier eighteenth century, some of whose members had supported the restoration of the Stuart dynasty.<sup>51</sup> In December 1823, Sir John Nicholl, MP for Great Bedwyn, claimed that:

The old distinctions of Whig and Tory, so far as principles are concerned, no longer exist. Divine right, passive obedience and non-resistance are doctrines quite extinct. We are all old Whigs. Political parties are now divided rather into men and measures than any great differences by principles.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Aspinall, ‘The Canningite Party’, 218-219 and Appendix; HoP, *Commons 1790-1820*, ‘Thomas Bernard’, ‘Robert Holt’, ‘Edward Bootle Wilbraham’, and ‘William Ralph Cartwright; HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, ‘Edward Bootle Wilbraham’ and ‘William Ralph Cartwright’.

<sup>50</sup> Sack, *The Grenvillites*, 196.

<sup>51</sup> D.E.D. Beales, *The Political Parties of Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London: Historical Association, 1971), 4-5; Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People*, 195-197; Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 64-74.

<sup>52</sup> HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, ‘Survey, VIII. Politics and Parties’ and ‘Sir John Nicholl’.



In this sense, J.C.D. Clark is right in arguing that four governments formed from 1757 to 1827 and led by the Newcastle-Pitt coalition, Lord North, the Younger Pitt, and Liverpool were ‘all whig’ ones.<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, Derek Beales is right too in claiming that:

The Tories were *de facto* a party. But it was part of their common cant to deny it, or to assert that everyone was a Whig nowadays. Modern historians, however, need feel no compunction in using the words Whig and Tory, as they were widely employed at the time, as convenient designations for the main political groups.<sup>54</sup>

Admitting the problem around the definition of ‘Tory’, this study, like others, carefully uses it as a partly analytical and partly contemporary term.

Third, party organisation did not develop fully in the early nineteenth century. Before and during the sessions, party leaders held meetings to sound out the situation in Parliament. Each party had a leader in the House of Commons and its own whips to canvass votes for its significant measures.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, party discipline was weak. Party meetings were not always successful. Members of each party occasionally held different opinions. On the divisions, there were no official restrictions on their voting behaviour; and MPs voted for their party only when they believed that they agreed with it on principle. In elections, they hardly relied on party financial support, but depended

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<sup>53</sup> J.C.D. Clark, ‘A General Theory of Party, Opposition and Government, 1688-1832’, *Historical Journal*, 23 (1980), 295-325, esp. 307, 314. I accept Clark’s idea about the problem around the label of ‘Tory’, but disagree with him when he argues that, from 1757 to 1827, the basic pattern of parliamentary politics appeared in battles between the non-party government and the opposition of the Whig party, and that those four governments ‘were non-party coalitions’. I am also sceptical of his argument that, ‘Only the crisis of 1827-32 created both a tory party and the need among the politicians *and* the public to apply to it a party’. As Sir John Nicholl’s words quoted above suggest, MPs supporting Pitt’s and Liverpool’s governments could recognise themselves as a party. As shown above too, some contemporaries already used the term ‘Tory’ in the early 1820s.

<sup>54</sup> Beales, *The Political Parties*, 6.

<sup>55</sup> O’Gorman and Fraser, ‘Party Politics’, 67.

more on their patron's aid or their own efforts. Peter Jupp has claimed that 'these years, particularly those from 1822 to 1841, were marked by a growth in the size and cohesion of the two parties, but not to the point where they represented two monolithic blocs of members commanded to oppose each other at every step'.<sup>56</sup> Each party was loosely connected in terms of organisation and identity. The parliamentary parties thus remained poorly organised and unsophisticated compared to the standard of the 'modern' party system reached in the late Victorian period.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Peter Jupp, *British Politics on the Eve of Reform: The Duke of Wellington's Administration, 1828-30* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 242.

<sup>57</sup> With three major reforms of the electoral system to the House of Commons in 1832, 1867 and 1884, 'modern' two-party politics gradually emerged at Westminster and in the constituencies. In the mid-Victorian period, 'parliamentary government' was established. Political parties in Parliament, and in the Commons in particular, proclaimed their policies, had a considerable influence on a national political agenda, and played an important part in making and unmaking governments. In the 1830s, they formed the first permanent central organisations, such as the Carlton Club for the Conservatives and the Reform Club for the Whigs and radicals. Like party politicians in the pre-1832 period, however, they were still flexible associations of like-minded politicians without imposing unconditional obedience or creating a bureaucratic party management. Their relations with the constituencies were loose, irregular, and unofficial. Parliamentary elections were fought under local initiative rather than central direction from Westminster. At the end of the nineteenth century, however, the age of 'party government' had arrived. Political parties were more consolidated and played a central and bureaucratic role both in Parliament and the constituencies. Under the cohesive leadership of the prime minister, the cabinet gained a strong initiative of the legislature, which was called the 'nearly complete fusion of the executive and legislative powers' (or the 'efficient secret' of English government by Walter Bagehot). Party discipline developed fully in Parliament, and party voting was extremely common with a coherent whipping system. In the constituencies, with the establishment of the National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations and the National Liberal Federation, party electoral organisations were more sophisticated and non-party voting greatly reduced. Party labels were commonly used. In elections, the popularity of the party leadership and party policy was vital. The electors cast their votes according to the candidate's party affiliation, rather than his personality or local connections. Gary W. Cox, *The Efficient Secret: The Cabinet and the Development of Political Parties in Victorian England* (Cambridge: CUP, 1987); John Hogan, 'Party Management in the House of Lords 1846-1865', *Parliamentary History*, 10 (1991), 124-150; Angus Hawkins, *British Party Politics, 1852-1886* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998).

## CHAPTER ONE

### *The Political Ideology of the Provincial Tory Press, 1815-1832:*

#### *Bristol, Colchester, and Edinburgh*

This chapter analyses the political ideology of provincial Toryism in the years 1815 to 1832 by examining the local Tory press published in three British towns: Bristol, Colchester, and Edinburgh. During the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries, the press, which was mainly composed of newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, and books, grew remarkably in provincial towns as well as in London, in terms of volume and regional circulation. The rise in the sales figures of the press made the business profitable and, more important, it meant that subsidies from national political institutions, such as the parties and the government, were limited or reduced. This growing independence of the press, and of newspapers in particular, was underpinned by the ambivalent relationship of most parliamentary politicians to the press. In this context, the provincial press served as a vital organ not only to influence, but also to represent, local public opinion. It provided provincial partisan opinions regarding national as well as local issues with information in order to influence readers. In this sense, the provincial press is highly useful and vital for examining the development of political attitudes and public opinion in local communities.<sup>58</sup>

In order to uncover provincial Tory ideology, this chapter will mainly investigate three weekly Tory newspapers: the *Colchester Gazette*, the *Bristol Journal*, and the

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<sup>58</sup> Arthur Aspinall, *Politics and the Press c.1780-1850* (London: Home and Van Thal, 1949), chapters 2, 3, 10, 15, 16; Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society*, chapters 1-5; Brett, 'The Liberal Middle Classes', chapter 4; R.M.W. Cowan, *The Newspaper in Scotland: A Study of its First Expansion, 1816-1860* (Glasgow: George Outram, 1946), introduction and chapter 1; Jupp, *British Politics on the Eve of Reform*, chapter 8; *idem.*, *The Governing of Britain*, 255-261.

*Edinburgh Weekly Journal*. These three have been selected, because they were remarkably influential and longlasting, compared to other Tory newspapers in the regions. The first one, officially called the *Colchester Gazette, and General Advertiser for Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, and Herts*, was launched on 1 January 1814 by the Tory printers of Colchester, Swinborne and Co, to support the principles of the ‘Immortal Pitt’. In the post-war period, it retained its importance as the only Tory newspaper published in Essex. From the end of 1829, it began to abandon its Tory attitudes and to support pro-Reform causes, because the passage of the Catholic Emancipation bill deprived the newspaper of political confidence in local Tories and because of the appointment of the new editor, E.J. Ward, who supported liberal causes. Taking into consideration this shift in the newspaper’s political stance, this chapter will also look at the new Tory/Conservative *Essex Standard, and Colchester and County Advertiser*, which was successfully launched in September 1831 by Messrs. Swinborne, Walter, and Taylor. It provided a vital platform for local Tories in the post-1832 period.<sup>59</sup> Next, *Felix Farley’s Bristol Journal*, which had originally been established in 1768, was edited by the talented Tory editor, J.M. Gutch, in the early nineteenth century. Under this influential editor, who would be the first president of the Provincial Newspaper Society founded in 1836, the newspaper was very successful. The number of stamps put on the newspapers issued from July 1835 to April 1836 was stable and high, 6,000-7,000, by comparison to the fluctuating number of issues of the Whig *Bristol Mercury*, from 3,000 to 8,000 in these nine months.<sup>60</sup> Last, the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*, founded in January 1798, was owned and edited by James Ballantyne with the

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<sup>59</sup> M.E. Speight, ‘Politics in the Borough of Colchester 1812-1847’ (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1969), 200-207. Perhaps, the Swinborne (sometimes called Swinbone) who launched the *ES* might have been, or might have been related to, the founder of the *CG*.

<sup>60</sup> Brett, ‘The Liberal Middle Classes’, 121, 143. From 9 May 1829, the newspaper was co-edited by J.M. Gutch and J. Martin, but its political stance did not change.

financial aid of Walter Scott. The fact that this newspaper was highly popular can be seen from its estimated sales of 2,000 in January 1820. This was remarkable, for the sales of the *Scotsman*, a radical Whig newspaper founded in 1817, reached only 900 in this year.

In addition to these newspapers, this study will also consult *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* and local Tory pamphlets published in the three selected towns. The former was a local periodical launched in 1817, but quickly gained pan-British fame. It was published monthly by William Blackwood, and the efforts of a series of influential editors, such as George Croly, David Robinson, William Johnston, Thomas De Quincey, Archibald Alison, and Alfred Mallalieu, made this periodical hugely popular. It gradually increased its sales, from 6,000 in 1818 to 8,000 in 1831 and, in the post-1832 period, it played a significant role in the development of local and national forms of Conservatism.<sup>61</sup>

Using these examples of the provincial Tory press, this chapter aims to develop its analysis by focusing on five important political issues. First, it will enquire into the ways in which the provincial Tory press tried to address serious problems resulting from the post-war provincial radicalism of the late 1810s. Second, it will examine how the provincial Tory press reacted to the protectionism found in the Corn Law Bill of 1815. Third, it will investigate the political discussion developed in the provincial Tory press regarding the basically non-party-political, but pan-British, humanitarian movements over the abolition of slavery, which drew wide public attention especially in 1823 and 1830. Fourth, it will consider the reaction of the provincial Tory press towards Roman

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<sup>61</sup> J.M. Milne, 'The Politics of *Blackwood's*, 1817-1846: A Study of the Political, Economic and Social Articles in *Blackwood's*, and of Selected Contributors' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1984), chapters 1 and 9.

Catholic Emancipation, an issue which provoked heated public debates between late 1828 and early 1829. Finally, it will focus on the parliamentary Reform Bills, which became of central political importance between 1831 and 1832.

The analysis presented in this chapter helps to make good the deficit in the historiography which has almost ignored the Tory press published in the localities in the early nineteenth century.<sup>62</sup> Whenever recent historians have paid attention to the Tory press, they have primarily looked at the national titles published in London, such as the *Morning Post* and the *Quarterly Review*.<sup>63</sup> An unpublished PhD dissertation written by J.M. Milne on political ideas in *Blackwood's* is not really an exception, because this periodical, while published in Edinburgh, was influential at the national level. Contrary to the existing literature, this study looks intensively at the provincial Tory press from a comparative viewpoint and seeks to discuss its political attitudes towards a range of specific issues as well as examining its general ideological position.

While this study offers a definite addition to the existing literature, it will adopt an approach to the press that is similar to James Sack's work on what he has called the 'Right-Wing' press. His book has investigated political opinion in a number of 'Right-Wing' newspapers and periodicals mainly published in London from 1760 to 1832, by analysing thematically how the press reacted to issues concerning the monarchy, parliamentary reform, humanitarianism and political economy, Protestantism

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<sup>62</sup> The existing literature has overwhelmingly paid attention to the Whig/liberal and radical sides of press activities. Donald Read, *Press and People, 1790-1850: Opinion in Three English Cities* (London: Edward Arnold, 1961); Kevin Gilmartin, *Print Politics: The Press and Radical Opposition in Early Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996); Biancamaria Fontana, *Rethinking the Politics of Commercial Society: The 'Edinburgh Review', 1802-1832* (Cambridge: CUP, 1985); Brett, 'The Liberal Middle Classes and Politics', chapter 4; Ivon Asquith, 'The Whig Party and the Press in the Early Nineteenth Century', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 49 (1976), 264-83; Ellis Archer Wasson, 'The Whigs and the Press, 1800-50', *Parliamentary History*, 25 (2006), 68-87; Orme, 'The Scottish Whig Party', chapter 1.

<sup>63</sup> Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*; Jonathan Cutmore, *Contributors to the Quarterly Review: A History, 1809-25* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008); *idem* (ed.), *Conservatism and the Quarterly Review: A Critical Analysis* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007).

and Catholicism.<sup>64</sup> While this chapter adopts a similar thematic approach, it expands on his research by pointing out significant similarities and differences in political attitudes between the London and the provincial Tory press.

There are some drawbacks to the selected newspapers. First, the issues of the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* published in 1828 have not survived. Because of this, this newspaper's attitudes and opinions towards Catholic Emancipation in that year cannot be investigated. Second, the *Bristol Journal* offered very limited editorial comment concerning the Corn Law of 1815. The lack of these sources, however, does not significantly impair the results of this analysis. Another drawback is that, since this study focuses on the press published in a restricted number of towns, it does not claim to discuss the political ideology of all the regional Tory press in Britain. Despite this, however, it can be claimed that the selected newspapers provide an important cross section of the provincial Tory press that will allow conclusions to be reached that might apply nationally.

This chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part, the general attitudes towards society and government in the provincial Tory press, which can be called a 'Tory worldview', will be revealed. A Tory worldview was composed of three basic elements: the preservation of the political and social establishments, gradual and moderate reform within the framework of the British constitution, and paternalism. It clearly emerged during the period of post-war radicalism. The second part, on the other hand, focuses on the diverse Tory political attitudes towards specific issues. It points out that provincial Toryism was composed of a wide spectrum of ideological elements, which were occasionally contradictory, but it also stresses that such a variety of attitudes was

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<sup>64</sup> Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, introduction.

formed within the same matrix, namely a Tory worldview.

## I

### A TORY WORLDVIEW

The main aim of this section is to reveal basic elements of a Tory worldview in the provincial Tory press. It can reasonably be claimed that Toryism was not very 'ideological', because it was an unsophisticated amalgam of various thoughts expressed by supporters of the established social hierarchy and the government. This might be true, especially when it is compared to Whiggism, which, largely held by those in opposition, needed to advance a more stable, coherent, and consistent ideology. None the less, it should not be neglected that there were some core ideas expressed in the provincial Tory press. They developed particularly in the process of its opposition to post-war provincial radicalism. All of the selected Tory publications showed an anti-radical attitude, and so did every Tory pamphlet. Reacting to the provincial radical campaign, Toryism was largely united.

#### *Preserving the Establishment*

One of the fundamental elements forming the Tory worldview was the desire to preserve existing establishments, such as the limited monarchy, the balanced and mixed form of government that was represented by a legislature composed of the king, the House of Lords and the House of Commons, and the Protestant constitution. For the Tories, these three pillars had been gradually consolidated with timely and moderate corrections and



reached its excellence at the time of the Glorious Revolution of 1688-89. The provincial Tory press feared that radicalism would commit a violent assault on these three establishments, replacing the monarchy with a republic, the balanced constitution and mixed form of government by a democratic Parliament and annual elections, and Protestantism by atheism or Catholicism. The *Bristol Journal* regarded radicals as those who expressed ‘a stronger feeling towards a republican form of government than any other’, warning that ‘in order to accomplish their scheme of bringing the Parliament into subjection, and to triumph by democratical intrigues, ... they wish to make elections substantially popular’.<sup>65</sup> It also maintained that, ‘Rebels and Atheists ... defy the Laws, the Church, and the Throne’.<sup>66</sup> The provincial Tory press seldom claimed that Catholics engaged in the radical movement, but it linked radicalism to Catholicism by emphasising that both were a threat to and subversive of the British constitution.<sup>67</sup>

The main reason why the provincial Tory press objected to radical reformers was that it apprehended that they would not only cause serious damage to the constitution, but might also bring about a civil war and an anarchical revolution. For instance, in December 1816, the *Colchester Gazette* referred to radical reform measures as ‘this torch of rebellion against the laws’.<sup>68</sup> This threat of chaos and anarchy was not an imaginary one, but was closely connected to their memory of events in the recent past, particularly during the French Revolution.<sup>69</sup> The provincial Tory press feared that a disaster similar to the French Revolution could happen in Britain too if radicalism were not defeated. In February 1817, for instance, the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* insisted that

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<sup>65</sup> *BJ*, 15 March 1817.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 September 1819.

<sup>67</sup> S. Bridge, *The Panorama; or, a Peep into the Temple of Discord: An Anti-Radical Olio* (Colchester: E. Lancaster, 1821), 11-12.

<sup>68</sup> *CG*, 7 December 1816.

<sup>69</sup> It seems that the Gordon Riots, in 1780, also provided an element to construct a fearful image of demagogues. *Ibid.*, 1 April 1820.

‘we have no doubt that had we been living under a timid and wavering system, such as that of Louis XVI, we might have seen the same scenes repeated in London as those which the world have already witnessed in Paris’.<sup>70</sup>

As one of the practical methods of protecting the constitution, the provincial Tory press supported the use of physical force in certain circumstances. The *Colchester Gazette* insisted that ‘nothing but the most active vigilance of the Civil Power prevents them [radical reformers] from open rebellion’. The provincial Tory press attempted to justify the deployment of military force, and the use of yeomanry cavalry in particular.<sup>71</sup> It also supported the range of repressive measures provided by the Tory government to suppress the activities of radical reformers, such as the Seditious Meetings Act of 1817, the suspension of Habeas Corpus of 1817, and the Six Acts of 1819.<sup>72</sup>

The provincial Tory press considered that radical reformers were ‘demagogues with visionary ideas’, who resorted to ‘the violence of party’.<sup>73</sup> It represented them as selfish, fanatic, factious, and seditious agitators enraged by dangerous passions and party spirits, and so it tried to exclude them from constitutional politics. The label ‘party’ frequently appeared as this language of exclusion over the issue of provincial radicalism in the post-war period.

On the other hand, the political stance supporting the preservation of the constitution was occasionally characterised as that of the ‘Tory’ or ‘Tory party’ by the provincial Tory press. It is true that ‘Tory’ was not so popular a word for self-representation as ‘loyal’ and ‘patriotic’ in this period. Nevertheless, there were some cases in which it was used by the provincial Tory press in a positive way. On 10

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<sup>70</sup> *EWJ*, 26 February 1817.

<sup>71</sup> *CG*, 28 August 1819.

<sup>72</sup> *EWJ*, 12 and 26 February 1817, and 22 December 1819.

<sup>73</sup> *CG*, 14 December 1816.

November 1819, for example, the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* stated that ‘There are three parties in the country’: the ‘Whigs’, the ‘Tories’, and the ‘Radical Reformers’. It did not insist that it belonged to the Tory party, but it did independently support it. For this newspaper, the Tories were a party expressing ‘their attachment to the religion and constitution of the country, and ... reprobating the turbulent and seditious assemblages’. They were also ‘by far the most powerful party in the community, and ... are banded together ... to vindicate the loyalty and good faith of the People at large ... as truly representative of the genuine state of public opinion’. The ‘will of the Nation’ was pronounced by the Tory party.<sup>74</sup> This shows that the term ‘Tory’ or ‘Tory party’ was not very common, but they could be used in a positive way to express firm support for the British constitution.

To counter radicalism, which was accused of spreading atheism and infidelity, the provincial Tory press adopted a conciliatory attitude towards the Protestant Dissenters. In these three selected towns, this attitude was most remarkable in Bristol, where dissenting strength was traditionally strong.<sup>75</sup> James Sack has pointed out that the ‘Right-Wing’ press in the capital expressed a similar attitude in the post-war period.<sup>76</sup> The *Bristol Journal* stated:

[S]ure we are, that the great body of Protestant Dissenters, who are never backward in the hour of trial, would be pleased with the opportunity thus

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<sup>74</sup> *EWJ*, 10 November 1819.

<sup>75</sup> Jeanie Williams has maintained that Catholic Emancipation ‘was a red-hot issue to all Bristolians with their strong non-conformist community, their closeness to Ireland and their pride in the power of Bristol’s trading economy. These factors ranged Dissenter and Anglican together against any further concession to the Roman Catholics, while preserving the fullest civil, legal and political rights to protestant non-conformists’. Her emphasis on the collaborated effort of Dissenters and Anglicans against Catholicism can be applied to their collaborated opposition to radicalism. Jeanie Williams, ‘Bristol in the General Elections of 1818 and 1820’, *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 87 (1968), 189-190.

<sup>76</sup> Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 202-204.

afforded them of once more acknowledging the blessings they enjoyed under the present order of things. An appeal to the teachers of our religion on this emergency would be more appropriate.<sup>77</sup>

This demonstrates that Protestant Dissenters and Anglican churchmen stood in the same fold as ‘our religion’ in the attack on provincial radicalism. For this reason, the provincial Tory press expected to gain the support of the Protestant Dissenters.<sup>78</sup> It did not consider that such cooperation in this particular situation was incompatible with Tory support for the principle of the Protestant constitution.

*Liberalism and Reform within the British Constitution*

Despite these political stances in favour of the preservation of the British constitution, it does not mean that the provincial Tory press was simply reactionary, because it supported civil liberty and several types of reform which were regarded as compatible with the preservation of the traditional establishments. What this section will particularly emphasise is that the provincial Tory press supported gradual and moderate parliamentary reform. It is extremely difficult to find a case in which it opposed any parliamentary reform on principle. It may have showed a more positive attitude towards it than the majority of the Tories in Parliament in the period of popular radicalism.<sup>79</sup> Even George Canning, who was one of the most liberal Tory politicians, basically opposed parliamentary reform and was extremely cautious of even a partial alteration of the system of representation, such as the disfranchisement of a corrupt borough in

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<sup>77</sup> *BJ*, 21 December 1816.

<sup>78</sup> It seems that the conciliatory attitude of the provincial Tory press towards the Protestant Dissenters continued at least until the mid-1820s. *Blackwood's*, especially in an article written by David Robinson in 1824, was a case in point. Methodists, who formed the largest Dissenting group, were called ‘moderate Tories’ by this periodical. Milne, ‘The Politics of *Blackwood's*’, 226-228.

<sup>79</sup> Regarding the attitude of Tory MPs against parliamentary reform, see O’Gorman, *British Two-Party System*, 52-54, 59, 112-113; Coleman, *Conservatism*, 41.

Cornwall.<sup>80</sup>

One of the most significant civil liberties within the British constitution that the provincial Tory press supported was the right to petition the government and Parliament. It was, as the *Colchester Gazette* insisted, ‘the inalienable right of Englishmen’.<sup>81</sup> In addition, the freedom of speech and meeting was also supported as ‘the privilege ... essential to a free Constitution’.<sup>82</sup> The provincial Tory press supported the government’s prohibitive measures against radical reformers, but it did not forget to insist that these rights of expression should not be restricted unless the situation became so critical that they might be abused ‘in the hands of innovators or revolutionary spirits’.<sup>83</sup> It also investigated cautiously those restrictive measures one by one and, if necessary, tried to prevent an unnecessary bill from being passed in Parliament.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, it also hoped that ‘the restrictions necessary will be strictly confined in duration and extent’.<sup>85</sup> These demonstrate that, for the provincial Tory press, only reasonable restrictions ought to be introduced.

This benevolent attitude towards freedom of expression could even lead to criticism of the government. On 11 January 1817, the *Bristol Journal* stated that ‘the privilege of censuring, with moderation and decency, the measures of Government, is essential to a free Constitution’.<sup>86</sup> It is important to note that this attitude was expressed in the context of the passage of the government’s restrictive measures regarding public

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<sup>80</sup> With regard to the attitude of Canning towards parliamentary reform, see Lee, *George Canning*, 97-103; Frank O’Gorman, *British Conservatism: Conservative Thought from Burke to Thatcher* (London: Longman, 1986), 25; *Speeches of Canning in Liverpool*, 16-17, 77-80, 210-212, 249-251, 284-286, 293-294, 313-326, 356-367.

<sup>81</sup> *CG*, 4 September 1819.

<sup>82</sup> *BJ*, 11 January 1817.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> Among the five bills provided by the government, this newspaper insisted that a bill, which was ‘To tax all political printed papers’, should be withdrawn. *EWJ*, 1 December 1819.

<sup>85</sup> *CG*, 22 February 1819.

<sup>86</sup> *BJ*, 11 January 1817.

speeches and meetings. The provincial Tory press maintained that these measures should be cautiously examined so as not to allow the government to limit the rights of Britons beyond what was absolutely necessary. This shows that it was not a mere mouthpiece for the Tory government.

Moreover, the provincial Tory press insisted that the opposition should play a significant role in overseeing the actions of the government. On 8 February 1817, the *Colchester Gazette* insisted:

That the vigilance of an Opposition is the great guard to our liberties, we are as ready to admit as the most violent supporters of their principles and expedients. They keep the Executive perpetually on the alert, and induce it to reconcile any intended measures to the just spirit of the people, and in consonance to the just spirit of the Constitution; they tend to make the upright Minister cautious in the execution of his duties, and restrain the naturally corrupt and vicious from even an attempt to enslave the people.<sup>87</sup>

The provincial Tory newspapers did not deny the value of competitive discussions between opposition and government in order to produce sound policies. This attitude was shared by Walter Scott, who in his pamphlet supported two-party politics.

The existence of two parties in this and in every free state, is not only a necessary but a most salutary consequence of that state of freedom. ... It is the difference betwixt the two great political parties called Whig and Tory, that produce that balance of opinion which renders the constitution firm and stationary.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> *CG*, 8 February 1817.

<sup>88</sup> Walter Scott, *The Visionary* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1819), 5. This pamphlet was based on a set of his newspaper articles published in the *EWJ* on 1, 8, and 15 December 1819. It was published soon afterwards with minor alterations and an introductory preface.

For him, constitutional politics required the free exchange of opinions. On the other hand, he did exclude radical reformers from his understanding of the constitutional politics within which conflicting opinions were tolerated. He went on to maintain that, 'I feel myself obliged to separate the leaders and more respectable part of the followers of the Whig party in Scotland, from the more unworthy part of their own body, as well as from the mob of Radicality'.<sup>89</sup> He identified Henry Brougham, who was called 'Mr Vitruvius Whigham', and his close friends, with 'the more unworthy part of their own body'. The provincial Tory press supported two-party politics, but believed that radical reformers should be excluded from constitutional politics in a free state.

One of the reforms that provincial Toryism supported was 'economical reform', a policy sometimes called retrenchment. An urgent problem of national politics in the late 1810s was the huge national debt resulting from the recent long wars against France. The post-war economic recession produced social unrest and the rise of provincial radicalism. To deal with these economic problems, the provincial Tory press, like the Tory government, insisted on the necessity of financial retrenchment. For example, it supported a government measure to cut the annual salaries of Crown officers amounting to a saving of £900,000. It also admired the Prince Regent, who gave up one fifth of his Civil List (£50,000). It stated that these reductions, for which Edmund Burke's economical reform bill of 1782 offered a model, would not only satisfy the Whig Opposition in Parliament,<sup>90</sup> but also help 'calm the public mind, confound the noisy and factious clamour of the rabble leaders, and unite in one band of patriotism every true lover of his country'.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>90</sup> *EWJ*, 12 February 1817; *BJ*, 15 February 1817.

<sup>91</sup> *CG*, 15 February 1817.

More important, the provincial Tory press also supported the alteration of the representative system of the House of Commons through parliamentary reform. It strongly opposed radical reform measures, such as annual parliaments and adult universal male suffrage, but generally agreed on ‘moderate’, ‘partial’, or ‘gradual’ reform. It considered that such reforms were vital not only to preserve various branches of the establishment, but also to protect them from ‘demagogues with visionary ideas’.

A significant reason why the provincial Tory press supported moderate parliamentary reform was its acceptance that the system of representation did have some defects. The *Colchester Gazette*, for example, insisted that, ‘We are not inclined to go the length of many of our contemporaries – that the formation of Parliament is perfect’.<sup>92</sup> The provincial Tory press believed that it was possible to accomplish parliamentary reform without undermining the basic nature of the constitution. The *Bristol Journal*, for instance, stated that ‘instead of wild and visionary schemes, not of reform, but of innovation, we shall doubtless see effected those safe and sufficient ameliorations in the Representative Body, without changing that basis, or destroying that equipoise, which ought ever to subsist between all orders of the community’.<sup>93</sup> The term ‘innovation’ took on a negative meaning in contemporary usage, and in the quoted sentence a radical reform was also implied. By contrast, a ‘reform’ or ‘safe and sufficient ameliorations in the Representative Body’ were not regarded as harmful to the constitution.

On the other hand, it is worth pointing out the differences among provincial Tories about when and how much reform was considered necessary. J.G. Lockhart, the editor of *Blackwood’s*, contributed an article to this monthly periodical in December 1822,

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<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 February 1817.

<sup>93</sup> *BJ*, 15 February 1817.



emphasising that, ‘There is an insane rage for reform, total and radical; there is a reasoned and judicious wish for reform, moderate and partial’.<sup>94</sup> He seems to have supported moderate reform, but showed an ambivalent attitude towards it, and did not propose any detailed reform plan. The *Colchester Gazette* was against immediate reform, stating that, ‘Whatever are the defects, let us patiently bear them till a time more congenial with moderate reformation’.<sup>95</sup> It also admitted that the existing system of representation ‘as it is, is capable of affording us all we can wish for – economy, retrenchment, and a wise and extended scale of commercial and agricultural advantages’.<sup>96</sup> It stated, however, that, when a proper time for reform did come, it would definitely support it. It claimed that ‘some additional power’ and ‘some dismemberment of withered branches’ were necessary to correct the ‘unequal’ representative system.<sup>97</sup> On another occasion, it maintained that ‘a rational increase of suffrage, and a return to triennial Parliaments’ might be needed.<sup>98</sup> A ‘rational increase of suffrage’ was rather vague, but probably implied the extension of the suffrage to some part of the middle classes. Triennial parliaments would bring the existing Septennial parliaments back to the superior form of representation achieved by the Glorious Revolution. The *Bristol Journal* provided a progressive plan of reform. It supported immediate reform, by insisting that ‘one of the worst effects of the violence, either of moderate or immoderate reformers, is that it in reality delays those proper reforms, which would be carried by the sober firmness of men’. It went on to state that:

If any change can, with safety, be made in our representation, it is such a one

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<sup>94</sup> ‘Ms. Notes on the Last Number of the Edinburgh Review’, *Blackwood’s*, December 1822, 789.

<sup>95</sup> *CG*, 8 February 1817.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 December 1816.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 March 1817.

as would render elections less popular, by extending the elective franchise to the whole of the middle class, and preventing it from descending lower; in other words, by restricting it to those who have a real interest, both permanent and temporary, in the well being of society, and who may be supposed capable of forming a judgment on public affairs; persons who are unlikely to swell into riot, and to menace by mobs; and whose calm and settled opinions would have the most influence upon the Government of the country.<sup>99</sup>

This suggested that this newspaper supported the representation of all forms of property which were sufficient to render a man independent of other men.<sup>100</sup> Such a statement put the newspaper in line with many Whigs of the period.

The reform plans provided by the provincial Tory press were neither uniform nor systematic. Provincial Tory opinions also differed in their commitment to parliamentary reform. Nevertheless, the provincial Tory press generally supported it. It tended to focus on the extension of the franchise and the shorter duration of parliaments, probably because it needed to make a counter proposal against such radical reform measures as universal male suffrage and annual parliaments.

As James Sack has pointed out, the ‘Right-Wing’ press published in the capital between the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries supported it too.<sup>101</sup> It has also been pointed out that popular loyalism initiated by John Reeves in the 1790s was a movement which had included those who had supported parliamentary reform.<sup>102</sup> The provincial Tory press was embedded in this Tory/loyal intellectual attitude out-of-doors. Moreover, as an important part of the provincial Tories would have been composed of

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<sup>99</sup> *BJ*, 15 March 1817.

<sup>100</sup> This newspaper also stated in another issue that, ‘Land, trade, Manufacturers, arts, professions, money, as well as person, must all be represented’. *Ibid.*, 15 February 1817.

<sup>101</sup> Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, chapter 6.

<sup>102</sup> O’Gorman, ‘Origins and Trajectories of Loyalism’, 20; Rogers, *Crowds, Culture, and Politics*, 202-206.

middle-class non-electors, the provincial Tory press was likely to support a reform measure to extend the franchise to them. As we shall see, it was to support moderate reform measures over the crisis of the Reform Bills. Such an attitude was not an ad hoc or pretended conciliatory reaction, but was part of a consistent intellectual tradition from the late 1810s or even much earlier.

### *Paternalism*

The third component of the Tory worldview seen in the provincial Tory press was paternalistic thinking. David Roberts has pointed out that, ‘A paternalist is thus one who believes that society can be best managed and social evils best mitigated by men of authority, property, and rank performing their respective duties toward those in their community who are bound to them by personal ties of dependency’. At the same time, however, he has emphasised that paternalism was a spectrum composed of different strands and could be adopted by various people with a wide range of political affiliations.<sup>103</sup> The main aim of this section will therefore focus on revealing what kind of paternalism the provincial Tory press supported during the period of popular radicalism.

For the provincial Tory press, harmonious relations between the different social classes were a vital objective of paternalism. The *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*, for instance, insisted that, ‘All the upper and middling classes, therefore, and indeed the great majority of the lower classes themselves, being pledged to support the established order of things, ... we can see no grounds of encouragement for the comparatively inconsiderable number who meditate the treason and insurrection’.<sup>104</sup> John Harford, a

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<sup>103</sup> David Roberts, *Paternalism in Early Victorian England* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), 8-9, chapter 9.

<sup>104</sup> *EWJ*, 12 April 1820.

close friend of R.H. Davis, MP for Bristol, stated that with ‘an uniting bond of affection between the higher, the middling and the lower classes of society ... our country ... is destined to become the sanctuary of true Religion, of rational Liberty, of social Order, and of unrivalled Happiness’.<sup>105</sup> The provincial Tory press claimed that radicals attempted to destroy traditional social harmony.<sup>106</sup>

Based on the assumption that the various social classes should be harmoniously connected, the provincial Tory press was concerned about the harmful effects of radicalism on weak members of society. John Harford opposed radical reform because it ‘would therefore prove destructive and pernicious in its effects, not only to the interests of the higher classes, but to those also of the humblest individual’.<sup>107</sup> Since many in the working classes did commit themselves to popular radicalism, the provincial Tory press tried to explain this by representing them as the victims of ‘demagogues with visionary ideas’. For instance, the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* pointed out the massive ‘human guilt’ of those radicals ‘instigating the poor and uninformed to commit those outrages against the peace and order of society’. It went on to ask the following question: ‘Who does not feel a most earnest wish, that the miserable instrument of mischief could be spared, and that the prime movers alone were brought forward to expiate those enormities?’<sup>108</sup> The *Colchester Gazette* considered it extremely important ‘to shelter the misguided from becoming a prey to the monsters, who, taking advantage of the moments of distress, seek to drive them into crime, which endangers not only their

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<sup>105</sup> John S. Harford, *Some Account of the Life, Death and Principles of Thomas Paine, together with Remarks on his Writings and on their Ultimate Connections with the Avowed Objects of the Revolutionists of 1790 and of the Radicals in 1819* (3rd edn., Bristol: J.M. Gutch, 1820), 100-101.

<sup>106</sup> *BJ*, 25 January 1817.

<sup>107</sup> Harford, *Some Account*, 17.

<sup>108</sup> *EWJ*, 11 December 1816.

families and their homes, but even their existence'.<sup>109</sup> For the provincial Tory press, the labouring poor as such were not its enemies, but rather the radical leaders who sought to enlist working-class support for their political objectives.

The provincial Tory press continuously emphasised the need to implement a wide range of relief measures in order to persuade the working classes to remain loyal. Among these measures, it especially preferred to raise charitable subscriptions, which would help the poor cover the cost of their daily necessities, and provide them with employment through public works such as engaging in road repairs.<sup>110</sup> As the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* clearly demonstrated, such economic measures, which were actually carried out in the capital as well as in other regions of Britain at large, were regarded as useful 'to supply the deserving' and 'to suppress and punish every tendency to destroy the public peace'.<sup>111</sup> This newspaper also stated 'that public subscriptions are more efficacious than popular meetings, and that universal suffering requires more practicable aids, than *universal suffrage*',<sup>112</sup> which suggests that such economic and philanthropic prescriptions, instead of proposals to grant active political rights to the working classes, were regarded as much more effective forms of public governance. The prevailing social unrest ultimately resulted from 'economic' causes such as the industrial recession and the consequent widespread poverty. Hence, the provincial Tory press believed that if the poor were kept supplied with necessities until the return of prosperity, most of them would be satisfied and would not go to extremes in support of radical political reforms.<sup>113</sup>

The provincial Tory press generally insisted that the elite, described as the 'wealthy

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<sup>109</sup> *CG*, 28 August 1819.

<sup>110</sup> *EWJ*, 20 November 1816, 11 December 1816; *CG*, 22 January 1820; *BJ*, 2 and 30 November 1816.

<sup>111</sup> *EWJ*, 25 December 1816.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 January 1817.

<sup>113</sup> *CG*, 15 January 1820.

and fortunate of the community'<sup>114</sup> or 'the respectable part of the community',<sup>115</sup> needed to take the initiative in relieving the harsh economic conditions of the working classes. It particularly emphasised the importance of the role of the landed classes in supporting such public policies. The *Bristol Journal* reprinted an article from the *Leeds Intelligencer*, called 'Domestic Colonization':

It is now more than ever important to find employment for the labouring poor; not only as a remedy for their distress, but to put them out of the reach of that pernicious influence which is exerted, to lure them on to ruin ... It is in Agriculture alone that occupation can now be found; at least such occupation as is likely at once to be PERMANENT and PRODUCTIVE. ... By colonising the thousands of acres, which now lie waste, with industrious families, we should be renovating the sinews of our national strength – augmenting our resources – diminishing the pressure of our poor rates – creating a new home market for our manufactures – and last, but not least, rearing a hardy peasantry – who would have an interest in defending their country, their religion, and constitution – from foreign foes and domestic traitors.<sup>116</sup>

This quotation suggests that the landed elite were expected to provide significant means to relieve the labouring poor from the threat of radicalism as well as from the misery caused by unemployment.

As well as the landed interest, the middle classes were also expected or advised to play an important role in implementing relief measures, especially in Bristol. The *Bristol Journal* emphasised the need for 'the rich and the middle classes to exert themselves in their duties of charity and benevolence'. It also stated that the responsibility of 'the higher and middling classes' was 'to relieve the distresses of our

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<sup>114</sup> *EWJ*, 11 December 1816.

<sup>115</sup> *BJ*, 25 January 1817.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 July 1819.

peaceable fellow citizens, and to prevent them by our active charity, from being led away under a temporary fit of discontent or impatience, to the commission of crimes against the common peace of all'.<sup>117</sup> The middle classes, part of the propertied elite in the localities, had a duty to assist the poor in harsh economic times. Probably for this reason, this newspaper agreed that these classes should be entitled to vote under a partial reform of the system of representation.

To relieve the labouring classes, the provincial Tory press tended to support those relief measures which were implemented through the initiative of the local elite. There were some cases, however, where it provided other ideas for relief, which did not result from such local initiatives. One of them was maintaining and expanding the British colonies. The *Bristol Journal* maintained that colonisation was a very useful way to provide food and other raw materials for the domestic economy, stating that, 'The produce of the earth may be increased either at home by cultivating the waste lands, or abroad by colonization'.<sup>118</sup> In the opinions of some Tories, the British colonies (and Empire) were expected to provide a security net to reduce the distress of the working classes and eventually prevent them from being involved in radicalism. At that time when the expansion of the British Empire was reaching a peak, the provincial Tory press attempted to justify its enlargement because it strengthened national security.<sup>119</sup>

Another means to relieve the conditions of the poor was to involve the government directly. This was not supported by all the provincial Tory press, however. For example, the *Bristol Journal* stated that, in order to remove 'the distresses of the labouring classes

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<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 December 1816.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 July 1819. The Earl of Hopetoun offered a similar argument in his *Speech Intended to Have Been Delivered at the Meeting of the Pitt Club of Edinburgh, 27th May 1820* (Edinburgh: Adam Black, 1820), 15-16.

<sup>119</sup> C.A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780-1830* (London: Longman, 1989).

... [t]he Government can do nothing, or at least very little towards their relief',<sup>120</sup> and also that, 'Government must act more slowly, and for the effects of their measures the poor can only be enabled to wait by the assistance of individuals'.<sup>121</sup> Nevertheless, there was a new way of thinking in the provincial Tory press that attempted to avoid ad hoc solutions in each local community and to establish a national and permanent paternalistic system managed by the government. For example, the Earl of Hopetoun provided a brief idea of a paternalistic government that, 'If they [unhappy people] think their misfortunes might be averted by Government, it is their birthright to deliberate and to state their views, and no Government should wish to remain ignorant of them'. For him, public works such as the opening of a canal or a road should be regularly initiated by the government, rather than by 'private enterprise'.<sup>122</sup> An open letter written by 'G' to the editor of the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* advanced a similar suggestion, stating that, 'Now, could measures be adopted (in Parliament), which would employ those originally bred to the pursuits of agriculture in a permanent manner ... under the auspices of Government, by the cultivation of the great extent of waste land which is still to be seen in the country, certain I am that the evil would, though slowly, diminish'.<sup>123</sup> The idea of governmental relief was promoted as early as the 1810s by

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<sup>120</sup> *BJ*, 14 August 1819.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 December 1816. During the period of popular radicalism, the *Quarterly Review*, edited by Canning's close friend, William Gifford, increasingly advocated the 'Liberal Tory' policies, such as freer trade and commercial advancement. Many of its contributors believed that these 'laissez faire' policies were underpinned by the theory of providence. They therefore tended to attack the existing Poor Laws, because they were too generous to the poor, and its 'High-Tory' contributors, such as Robert Southey, who supported the paternalistic role of the state in creating employment, were gradually put on the fringes of its mainstream political voices. Boyd Hilton, "'Sardonic grins" and "paranoid politics": Religion, Economics, and Public Policy in the *Quarterly Review*', in Cutmore (ed.), *Conservatism and the Quarterly Review*, 41-60.

<sup>122</sup> Hopetoun, *Speech Intended to Have Been Delivered*, 32, 34.

<sup>123</sup> *EWJ*, 1 January 1817. The idea of a paternalistic government was also shared in the later period by *Blackwood's*, and by its editor, William Johnson, in particular. Kim Lawes, *Paternalism and Politics: The Revival of Paternalism in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 31-37.



such romantic theorists as Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey, but it developed much further with the rise of Michael Thomas Sadler between the late 1820s and early 1830s, and provided a vital spur to the Victorian collective state.<sup>124</sup> Some provincial Tory opinions were linked to this intellectual current favouring a paternalistic form of government.

Some comments in the provincial Tory press also insisted on the moral importance of reform. The labouring poor might escape from their predicament with some kind of education, which made them learn the notion and practice of self-help. For instance, after referring to cultivating the waste lands at home and colonising abroad, the *Bristol Journal* stated that:

The most effectual remedy for the distresses of the Poor, however, is that which they themselves have most at command. It consists in a diminution of superfluous consumption, by means of a *radical reform* in their own habits and modes of life. ... By industry, sobriety, and economy from early youth, the workman will be enabled gradually to accumulate a small property sufficient to insure him against the chance of becoming in his own person, or that of his children, a burthen to the parish. ... We are well aware that a change of this kind in the habits of any class of society must be gradual, and its effect in alleviating the pressure of evil perhaps slow and distant. More immediate good would no doubt be done by some well directed plan of colonization, or of agricultural employment at home; but the only permanent and truly salutary remedy is that which goes to cut off the source of future suffering, and to raise the individual, not perhaps in the political, but what is much better, in the moral

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<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, introduction, chapters 1-4. Governmental relief was partially offered by the Poor Employment Act of 1817, whose introduction was originally motivated by one of the leading Tories, Nicholas Vansittart. The act marked a significant extension of the scope of government into the localities. The loan commissioners appointed by the act were a permanent governmental organisation to deal with unemployment through public works, and provided the Exchequer Bills for private individuals and corporations already well established. They have been considered the progenitors of the current Public Works Loan Board. M.W. Flynn, 'The Poor Employment Act of 1817', *Economic History Review*, 14 (1961), 82-86, 90, 92; Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People*, 253, 322.

scale of being.<sup>125</sup>

This newspaper, however, was ambiguous about the ways of educating them. In this respect, John Harford offered a clearer idea: he insisted on the importance of national education. He claimed that ‘children ... be taught by the general extension of a National System of Education, the true principles of their duty to God and man, instead of being exposed in a state of absolute ignorance to the noxious influences which infest a large proportion of our manufactories’.<sup>126</sup> This idea was still not fully developed or sophisticated. Nevertheless, suggestions such as these demonstrate that the provincial Tory publications realised the education in order to prevent working people from being desperate and going to extreme.

## II

### DIFFERENT TORY POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON MAJOR ISSUES

Table 1-1<sup>127</sup>

	Radicalism	Corn Law	Abolitionism	Catholic Em.	Reform Bills
<i>EWJ</i>	Anti	Pro	Pro	Pro	Pro
<i>BJ</i>	Anti	(Unknown)	Anti	Anti	Anti
<i>CG</i>	Anti	Pro	Pro	Anti	(Pro)
<i>ES</i>	-	-	-	-	Anti
<i>BEM</i>	Anti	-	Pro	Anti	Anti

<sup>125</sup> *BJ*, 24 July 1819.

<sup>126</sup> Harford, *Some Account*, 99-100.

<sup>127</sup> Short hyphens mean that the newspaper was not established yet when the issue was raised. This chapter does not analyse the attitude of the *CG* towards the Reform Bills, because of the transference of its editorship to the liberal Whig side.

This part will focus on the diversity of Toryism, investigating what different political attitudes the provincial Tory press showed towards the four remaining issues. Table 1-1 demonstrates that the provincial Tory press, while largely united in opposing provincial radicalism in the late 1810s, did not react identically to these issues. With regard to the 1815 Corn Law, while the *Bristol Journal* did not offer a clear opinion, the remaining two Tory newspapers supported it. Over the issue of the abolition of slavery, the most diverse opinions were advanced. The *Bristol Journal* opposed it, whilst two publications in Edinburgh, the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* and *Blackwood's*, both supported the moderate and gradual emancipation of the slaves in the British Empire. The most progressive ideas were advanced by the *Colchester Gazette*, which demanded the immediate abolition of slavery. Local Tory opinions concerning Catholic Emancipation were more similar, demonstrating strong hostility to the Catholics. The *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*, however, supported the conciliatory measure proposed by Wellington's government in 1829. The Reform Bills also divided local Tory opinion. The *Bristol Journal* and the *Essex Standard* opposed the bills offered by Grey's Whig administration between 1831 and 1832, whereas the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* supported them.

This demonstrates that there were diverse political opinions and attitudes in the provincial Tory press. This part aims to analyse them deeply, issue by issue. This analysis will reveal that, while Tory political ideology was composed of diverse, and occasionally conflicting, opinions, this diversity was created through the adaptation of the Tory worldview in different ways and for different reasons.

*The Corn Law of 1815*

At the end of 1813, a sharp decline in the price of corn, combined with low yields and foreign competition, created an extra-parliamentary protectionist movement. This movement was originally promoted by Scottish landlords in 1814, but it soon expanded into England. In order to restrain and react to it, the Liverpool government decided to pass a new Corn Law in early 1815. This act forbade the importation of any foreign corn until domestic prices hit 80s. per bushel. Its aim was to delay the unavoidable process of deflation in the post-war period and to stabilise the price of corn between 70s. and 80s. per bushel without foreign competition, whereas the price had fluctuated between 55s. and 125s. before.<sup>128</sup>

Despite the government's claims, the belief that the law was implemented in order to protect unfairly the financial interests of the landed proprietors spread particularly among radical reformers, which resulted in riots in London and other regions.<sup>129</sup> In addition, the London-oriented 'Right-Wing' press was also generally opposed to the Corn Law, criticising the supporters of the measure as 'self-interested'. According to James Sack, it was not until the 1820s that the 'Right-Wing' press began to adopt protectionist attitudes, which were then adopted by the 'Ultra-Tory' press in the 1830s.<sup>130</sup>

The provincial Tory press, however, generally supported the Corn Law. It maintained that the real problem lay in the general difficulty and hardship of the landed interest at large. For example, an anonymous pamphlet published in Bristol insisted that 'such is the present state of things, that many farmers will this year be unable, from *the*

<sup>128</sup> Boyd Hilton, *Corn, Cash, Commerce: The Economic Policies of the Tory Governments, 1815-1830* (Oxford: OUP, 1977), 3-20.

<sup>129</sup> Eric J. Evans, *Britain before the Reform Act: Politics and Society 1815-1832* (2nd edn., London: Longman, 2008), 17.

<sup>130</sup> Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 178-180.

*produce of their farms*, to pay any rent at all, owing to the burden of taxes, the high duty on malt, the rates of wages, and other charges'.<sup>131</sup> The author also rejected the rumour that 'it is by *combining* that the farmers contrive to keep up the prices of their produce'.<sup>132</sup> The *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* emphasised that 'the object of the Legislature is not to raise the price of grain, but to prevent scarcity'.<sup>133</sup> Behind the support of the 1815 Corn Law, there was a belief that agriculture was the most important source of power and guarantee of stability in Britain and, if in danger, it should be protected. The *Colchester Gazette* maintained:

Agriculture ... is ... the most honourable, the most useful pursuit. Honourable, because it is the most ancient, before even the name of the loom or sail was invented. Useful, as procuring the bread of life, and being the only perfect independence within the reach of man.<sup>134</sup>

In order to avoid criticism that the Corn Law was self-interested, the provincial Tory press emphasised that it would not only relieve the farmers, but also protect other commercial sectors. The *Colchester Gazette*, for instance, stated that, without the measure, 'the tradesman, the manufacturer, in short, all those who were, however remotely, connected with agriculture, saw in the ruin of the farmer, the ultimate ruin of themselves'.<sup>135</sup> This opinion rose from one of the most basic ideas of the Tory worldview emphasising the organic unity of society.<sup>136</sup> Because of this, the provincial

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<sup>131</sup> [John Storrs Fry], *Letters on the Corn-Trade: Containing Considerations on the Combinations of Farmers, and the Monopoly of Corn* (Bristol: Philip Rose, 1816), 6.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>133</sup> *EWJ*, 15 March 1815.

<sup>134</sup> *CG*, 4 March 1815.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 January 1815.

<sup>136</sup> For example, a pamphlet stated that, 'THE PROSPERITY OF AGRICULTURE IS ESSENTIALLY DEPENDENT ON, AND INTERWOVEN WITH, THE GENERAL PROSPERITY'. [Fry], *Letters on the Corn-Trade*, 27.

Tory press insisted that every single interest needed to help the others, particularly during a period of economic stagnation. When a serious agricultural recession occurred again in the early 1820s, a similar argument emerged. Edward Hodges, in his pamphlet published in Bristol, tried to convince his readers that his plan to ‘restore the Prosperity of the Agriculturists’ would eventually ‘prove of incalculable utility to all Classes of the Community’.<sup>137</sup>

In the provincial Tory press, this protectionist measure was also vital to the poor. For example, the *Colchester Gazette* objected to the unrestricted import of corn in exchange for the exportation of manufactures, on the grounds that ‘Without any abatement in the price of any other article of necessity but bread’, the ‘poor industrious peasant’ was ‘subjected to a diminution of wages, which starves him’.<sup>138</sup> The *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* maintained that it was vital ‘to keep the prices at such an equilibrium as will afford the necessary relief and encouragement to the agriculturist; and maintain the markets at a rate suited to the means of the labouring classes’.<sup>139</sup>

In addition, the provincial Tory press agreed with this protectionist measure from the viewpoint of national security, insisting that a secure country needed to be self-sufficient in terms of its food supply. The *Colchester Gazette* stated that ‘we cannot look with confidence and safety to a foreign supply, and that we can only be independent by having the means of life within ourselves’.<sup>140</sup> The provincial Tory press claimed that Britain needed to be ready to face another war. The failure of the food supply during the previous war was a lesson that needed to be taken seriously. As the

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<sup>137</sup> Edward Hodges, *Propositions for the Prompt, Certain, and Durable Relief of Agricultural Distress: Humbly Submitted to the Consideration of His Majesty’s Ministers, and All Others whom it may Concern* (Bristol: Hodges & Morgan, 1822), preface.

<sup>138</sup> *CG*, 14 January 1815.

<sup>139</sup> *EWJ*, 1 March 1815.

<sup>140</sup> *CG*, 4 March 1815.

*Edinburgh Weekly Journal* claimed: ‘Let any man reflect on what were the consequences during the late war, of the failure of our crops for one year ... it is the duty of the Legislature to use all means to prevent such a calamity: The question is, are we to encourage our own, or the foreign agriculturist – are we to eat our own, or foreign bread?’<sup>141</sup> For this reason, the system of food autarky could not be renounced no matter how huge the increase in the export of manufactures was expected to be.<sup>142</sup>

Since the provincial Tory press demanded this protectionist measure, it evidently did not support the principle of free trade. According to Sack, the national ‘Right-Wing’ press was generally suspicious of free trade, and this tendency was accelerated by the rise of ‘Ultra-Toryism’ in the late 1820s.<sup>143</sup> This suggests that ‘Liberal-Tory’ MPs, such as George Canning, William Huskisson, and Robert Peel, were a small minority among Tories both in and out of Parliament. The provincial Tory press occasionally referred to Adam Smith in a positive manner, but it did not do so with the aim of supporting the principle of free trade. For example, Sir George Buchanan Hepburn emphasised in his pamphlet that what Smith had said about free trade had been misunderstood:

I occasionally conversed with him on his theories, to some of which I did not subscribe. ... I asked the Doctor what he thought of a free trade in corn, to begin with? He answered me tartly – ‘Mr Hepburn, many persons read my book, without understanding it.’ I bowed; and he continued – ‘While your other bounties and monopolies remain, corn must be equally protected; nay, more, it is an article of such national magnitude and importance, as to be the last upon which the experiment should be tried.’<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> *EWJ*, 15 March 1815.

<sup>142</sup> Hodges, *Propositions*, 8.

<sup>143</sup> Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 180-187.

<sup>144</sup> Sir George Buchan Hepburn, *The Speech of the Hon. Mr Baron Hepburn of Smeaton, on the Subject of the Corn Laws; Delivered in a Numerous and Respectable Meeting of the County of East Lothian, held at Haddington, on the 3d of March 1814* (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Co., 1814), 57-59.

The debate on free trade had not matured at this period. Nevertheless, it can be seen that the protectionist policy which was widely supported by the provincial Tory press led to the later development of a specific form of anti-free-trade Conservatism in the Victorian era.<sup>145</sup>

### *Abolitionism*

The provincial Tory press provided diverse opinions concerning slavery. Its attitude can be divided into three types: moderate abolitionism, anti-abolitionism, and aggressive abolitionism. This is not completely compatible with Sack's opinion that in the early nineteenth century 'the Right was coming to be virtually, if not quite, identified with a moderate or extremist pro-slavery position'.<sup>146</sup> Outside the capital, there were more diverse Tory opinions.

The Edinburgh Tory press, and *Blackwood's* and the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* in particular, supported the gradual emancipation of slaves in British overseas territories. It was cautious about the destruction of the whole slavery system in British dominions, and did not support the most radical proposal of immediate abolition. It was, however, supportive of an anti-slavery ideology and attempted to provide a 'practical' and 'safe' prescription for abolition.

In 1823, the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Dominions, which would later be called the Anti-Slavery Society, was founded by William Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson. In this year, Sir Thomas Buxton, another founding member of this society, brought before the House of

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<sup>145</sup> Gambles, *Protection and Politics*, 7.

<sup>146</sup> Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 173.



Commons his motion for the gradual abolition of slavery in the West Indies.

*Blackwood's* supported this society in some respects. It regarded the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 'as one of the greatest and most glorious achievement of the spirit of the age in which we live', and admitted that, 'SLAVERY is, in its essence, a bad thing'.<sup>147</sup> Nevertheless, it preferred George Canning's views rather than those of this society. It supported his counter-resolutions against the society's measure, believing that they assumed 'a most deliberate, gradual, and sober character'.<sup>148</sup> This objection arose from two elements in particular. First, *Blackwood's* believed that the 'Wilberforces and Buxtons' had made a serious mistake in analysing the existing condition of slaves in the West Indies. Although it admitted that planters were cruel and slaves were miserable in some particular cases, it insisted that they exaggerated this negative image too much. It referred to them as 'agitators' who were creating instability. It stated that, 'We must take it [the subject of slavery] out of the hands of these Wilberforces and Buxtons, or they will ruin the whole body of West Indian proprietors ... they will convert these [slaves] at once into a set of lawless banditti, reveling in blood'. According to *Blackwood's*, slaves were victims.<sup>149</sup> This way of thinking was similar to that expressed in the provincial Tory press about post-war radicalism: the poor became dangerous only when they were agitated by 'demagogues with visionary ideas'.

Second, *Blackwood's* stated that the 'Wilberforces and Buxtons' did not provide any practical way of liberating the slaves without producing anarchy. It particularly emphasised the need for the prior moral education of the slaves, insisting that 'this great negro population must be christianized ere it can be fitted for anything like a

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<sup>147</sup> 'The West Indian Controversy', *Blackwood's*, October 1823, 439-440.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 440.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 442, 444.

participation in the political liberty of British subjects'.<sup>150</sup> To achieve this, it claimed that the Church of England and Wesleyan missionaries should take the initiative and every planter should make a constant effort 'to introduce Christianity among his negro slaves'.<sup>151</sup> For *Blackwood's*, education in the Protestant religion was vital before slaves could be safely liberated and could settle down in society after liberation. This magazine anticipated, however, that the whole process of Christianisation would take time to complete: 'The slave must be Christianized: ... Not by any sudden or violent means; not by any rash preaching of the absolute unlawfulness of slavery ... (but) by the slow, gradual, imperceptible operation of the influences of the Christian religion'.<sup>152</sup> For this reason, *Blackwood's* insisted on the significance of gradual or individual, not immediate or general, emancipation according to the extent of each slave's moral improvement.<sup>153</sup>

The *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* adopted a similar moderate stance. While supporting abolition in principle, it was in favour of Canning's resolutions because of its concern with property rights. He believed that, even if owning slaves originated from 'usurpation', such property was legally protected and 'must be treated with tenderness'.<sup>154</sup> When the Anti-Slavery Society launched a campaign to achieve immediate abolition in 1830, this newspaper strongly opposed it.<sup>155</sup> It admitted that slavery itself was a horrible practice, stating that, 'The sacred right of LIBERTY belongs equally to all human beings; and no man, by the law of God or the law of nature,

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<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 452.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 453. *Blackwood's* insisted that 'the clerical establishment now existing in these islands is altogether inadequate for the task ... It is understood, Sir George Rose [a leading Tory MP] says, that the Ministry intend to establish different bishoprics in the West Indies, and to place under the new prelates, not only the clergy already existing there, but also a separate body of churchmen, appointed (and perhaps educated) expressly for the service of Christianity among the negroes'. *Ibid.*, 453-454.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 455.

<sup>153</sup> 'The West Indian Controversy. No. II', *Blackwood's*, December 1823, 658-664.

<sup>154</sup> *EWJ*, 21 May 1823.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 October 1830.

can claim a right to deprive another of that inestimable possession'. On the other hand, like *Blackwood's*, it maintained that 'much evil arises, both in this country and the West Indies, from the visionary ideas', which exaggerated the 'ill treatment and unhappiness of the slaves in the West Indies'. It stated that this exaggeration was behind the call for immediate action. It insisted that some 'practical' methods for liberating slaves as well as accommodating conflicts regarding property should be sought out. Mentioning the case of the recent economic and social decline of Haiti, it also stated that, without the careful preliminary consideration and management of the labouring market and wages for liberated slaves, 'anarchy, desolation, and slaughter, would be universal'. It was therefore necessary to avoid 'the rash and intemperate doctrines' and carry out 'a gradual emancipation of the slaves', so that 'such a limited number of free labourers would be produced every year as could be provided for without difficulty or derangement'.<sup>156</sup> For this newspaper, such a measure was compatible not only with 'the real interests of the slaves', but would also secure 'the real stability of the empire'.<sup>157</sup>

The Bristol press tended to object to abolitionism on principle. This was because Bristol had become prosperous as a result of the profits reaped by many of its merchants from the slave trade and from the ownership of extensive plantations in the West Indies. The *Bristol Journal* did not offer its own opinions about slavery in 1823, but adopted a clear reactionary attitude by the end of 1830.<sup>158</sup> In October, it declared its opposition to the 'immediate and unconditional emancipation' of the slaves. It represented this as the doctrines of 'the revolutionists and incendiaries ... which inevitably lead to anarchy, confusion, and bloodshed'. Like the Edinburgh Tory press, it insisted on the necessity of

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<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 December 1830. Haiti was once the richest producer of sugar in the West Indies, but its economy was ruined by a slave revolt, or the Haitian Revolution, from 1791 to 1804.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 November 1830.

<sup>158</sup> *BJ*, 22 May 1830.

looking at 'TRUTH' instead of 'a theoretic and visionary good', and pointed out that the bad condition of the slaves was exaggerated, stating that they were better off than the English working classes. On the other hand, it emphasised that slaves were already being given moral instruction based on the Protestant religion by the colonists: 'there were in the West Indies hundred and thousands of negroes, whose minds had been enlightened, and whose souls had been converted to God'. For this newspaper, the main problem lay in those anti-slavery reformers who were 'utterly repugnant to every precept of Christianity, moral justice and humanity'. The *Bristol Journal* claimed that the abolition of slavery would not only lead to anarchy and injustice, but also strip 'thousands of our fellow-subjects of their property and vested rights'.<sup>159</sup> For these reasons, it did not advance even moderate proposals for achieving abolition.

The *Colchester Gazette* presented the most progressive stance among the three Tory newspapers. In May 1823, it supported immediate abolition, stating that 'let us hope that immediate steps will be taken to soften their [slaves] sorrows, that they may live, if for a time in bondage, as men, not beasts, and have that rest, which even the working brute enjoys, without infringing upon the opportunity for religious duty'. It also paid tribute to the 1807 abolition of the slave trade, but showed a deep concern about the surviving practice of slavery. It criticised Canning's resolutions, which were supported by moderate Tory abolitionists, particularly because he actually used Christianity to justify slavery: 'We confess, that there is one part of Mr. Canning's argument, viz. that slavery is not incompatible with Christianity, which we do not understand'. This newspaper admitted that the slaves were the property of planters, but observed that this problem could be solved by a government policy of compensating

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<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 October 1830.

slave owners for freeing their slaves.<sup>160</sup>

The stance of the *Colchester Gazette* was more aggressive in July 1830. It began to attack the justification of slavery based on the defence of property: ‘although the possession of slaves has become legal, ... yet, as this right is founded on the violation of all right, and is only giving legality to plunder and declaring vice to be a virtue, such glaring and monstrous absurdities ought to be for ever removed from the statues of the realm’.<sup>161</sup> It went on to state that ‘It is not a matter of expedience, but of right, that slavery should be abolished’, and represent slavery as the ‘double violation of the rights of man, first his civil and then his religious’.<sup>162</sup> The idea of immediate abolition offered by this newspaper was the most aggressive one among the provincial Tory press, but it is still possible to state that it was obviously underpinned by one of the core thoughts of the Tory worldview that stressed the need to exercise some care for the weakest section of society.

### *Catholic Emancipation*

As Sack has revealed, the ‘Right-Wing’ press in the capital was generally critical of Catholicism in the 1820s. In the late eighteenth century and during the first decade of the nineteenth century, however, it had tended to adopt a favourable attitude towards Catholicism and even the Pope, partly because the French Revolution divided contemporaries ideologically between orthodox Christianity (which included Catholicism as well as Protestantism), and rationalistic atheism and deism. Nevertheless, as the Pope recovered his influence and successfully achieved a rapprochement with the

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<sup>160</sup> *CG*, 24 May 1823.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 July 1830.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

French Republic and Empire, and because of the Irish rebellion of 1798 which resulted in a large number of émigré priests and Irish Catholic immigrants to Britain, alarm against Catholicism gradually grew. The *Anti-Jacobin Review*, which had been launched in 1798 and continued up to 1821, became very anti-Catholic in its later years. The establishment of the Catholic Association in Ireland in 1823, led by Daniel O’Connell, helped spread distrust further.<sup>163</sup> This general change of opinion was accelerated by the increasing importance of the Catholic Emancipation issue in Parliament in the 1820s. In this context, like the ‘Right-Wing’ press published in London, most of the provincial Tory press increased its hatred of Catholicism. In Bristol, Colchester, and Edinburgh, a huge majority of Tory opinions opposed Catholic Emancipation.

The anti-Catholicism or the remarkable objection to Catholic Emancipation in the provincial Tory press was demonstrated in at least four different ways. First, the Tory press expressed its fear that Catholic Emancipation would lead to the destruction of the Revolution Settlement. The *Bristol Journal* stated that, ‘The measures for “BREAKING IN UPON THE CONSTITUTION OF 1688,” are now developed’. It insisted on the necessity of ‘the boasted SECURITIES for upholding the Protestant Succession to the Throne, and preserving inviolate our Protestant Constitution in Church and State’.<sup>164</sup> It stated that, ‘Roman Catholicism itself is out of the Constitution of England, and therefore must necessarily be constitutionally *insufferable* and *incompatible* with it’.<sup>165</sup> *The Scottish Protestant*, a series of pamphlets published in March 1829 in Edinburgh, maintained that, if the emancipation bill became a statutory act, it would be invalid, because, ‘The disabilities and restrictions upon his Majesty’s Roman Catholic subjects,

<sup>163</sup> Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, chapter 9.

<sup>164</sup> The Catholic Emancipation bill provided British and Irish Catholics with ‘a full participation of every civil right and office in the Government, except those of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and Chancellor or Keeper of the Seals’. *BJ*, 14 March 1829.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 November 1828.

are founded, purely, and expressly, by the constitution; and *not* by the laws'.<sup>166</sup> These statements linked provincial Toryism with late-seventeenth-century Whiggism. *The Scottish Protestant* insisted:

It [passive obedience] is the doctrine of blind slavery and submission to the great Moloch of despotism. It is inconsistent with all our principles of government, ever since they were purged of the leaven of Popery, – which were mingled in our institutions in the times of the Stuarts, – which brought Charles I. to the block, and drove his son from the throne of these realms. It is repudiated by the first elements of our revolution whiggery, – and has been reprobated by every authority, and every statesman who has treated of the theory of our Monarchy, and the established freedom of any people.<sup>167</sup>

George Stanley Farber, whose anti-Catholic pamphlets were reprinted in many regions, including Bristol and Edinburgh, regarded himself as one of the 'resolute ancient Whigs' and supported 'the good old principles of *real* Whiggism' or 'the genuine old Whig principle'.<sup>168</sup> Of course, this traditional Revolution Whiggism was regarded as being quite different from the contemporary Whig pro-Catholic stance. *The Scottish Protestant* stated that 'we have been so often deluded by modern Whig prophesies, that we have neither faith nor hope in them'.<sup>169</sup>

Second, the provincial Tory press emphasised the different social consequences that Protestantism and Catholicism had produced. The former was represented as a much superior belief, for it promoted such social advances as science, morality, prosperity, and enlightenment. On the other hand, 'the darkness of Popery' restrained

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<sup>166</sup> *The Scottish Protestant*, VI, 98.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 27.

<sup>168</sup> Rev. George Stanley Farber, *The Roman Catholic Claims. Remarks on Dr. Chalmers's Speech; and a Letter to Mr. Peel* (Bristol: W. Richardson, 1829), 7-9.

<sup>169</sup> *The Scottish Protestant*, IV, 64.

those positive forces and often created ‘anarchy and confusion’.<sup>170</sup>

Third, the provincial Tory press feared that Catholic Emancipation might dissolve the union between Britain and Ireland. The *Colchester Gazette* was concerned that Catholic Emancipation would ‘destroy the Protestant Establishment of Ireland’ and ‘erect the Papal hierarchy in its place’, and then ‘make Ireland, if she cannot preserve her own independence of Great Britain, a province of France’.<sup>171</sup>

Fourth, the provincial Tory press believed that Catholicism was incompatible with the maintenance of a Christian constitution. The *Bristol Journal* maintained:

For what will the British Constitution shortly be, supposing Catholic Emancipation to be granted? A mongrel and unholy assemblage of Infidels, Papists, and any others, with no acknowledgment of our Christ as our Saviour; in short, an unchristian and Atheistical Government. ... So that the notions of these men [the Infidel or Liberal] are directly opposed to the Christian principle of Government. Against this dereliction of principle, against this atrocious attempt at the subversion of the Christian Constitution of Britain by the liberal party of the day, we must and will protest, as our forefathers did, against the tyranny and iniquity of the Church of Rome.<sup>172</sup>

This statement about the position of Catholicism was completely different from that of the 1790s. During the period of the French Revolution, as has been seen, the Church of Rome was regarded as a vital part of the Christian opposition to atheism and deism. In the late 1820s, however, it was contrastingly represented as ‘unchristian and Atheistical’ and an ‘infidel’ enemy against Protestant, Christian Britain.

On the other hand, the provincial Tory press believed that Protestant Dissenters

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<sup>170</sup> *CG*, 20 September 1828, 29 November 1828, and 7 February 1829.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 November 1828.

<sup>172</sup> *BJ*, 21 February 1829.



would be part of a Protestant defence against Catholicism. As has been shown,<sup>173</sup> in the late 1810s the provincial Tory press, and that particularly published in Bristol, had maintained that the Anglicans should collaborate with Dissenters to oppose radical reformers. The same insistence appeared in Bristol again with a view to attacking the ‘radical’ Irish Catholic leaders. In November 1828, the *Bristol Journal* insisted that, ‘Christians of every sect and denomination, the Churchman as well as Dissenter, all except the Roman Catholic, unite in the bonds of fellowship and concord’.<sup>174</sup> Of course, there were some Tories critical of Protestant Dissenters. For example, Thomas Fryer Jennings, an Anglican clergyman in Bristol, warned that ‘many of those, from whom the Church might have expected active support, are not contented even with neutrality, but, by an act of suicidal infatuation, are going over to the ranks of those, who seek *their* downfall in common with hers’.<sup>175</sup> Nevertheless, William Thorpe, a Bristolian Dissenting minister, advanced an anti-Catholic stance in his pamphlet. He supported ‘the very existence of our Protestant Establishment’. He stated that, ‘I stand upon the same ground on which Sheldon and Usher and Milton and Hampden and Sydney and Locke and Newton stood’. For him, ‘The intellectual Locke, who first laid open the principles of toleration in a lucid form, and confirmed them by irrefragable arguments, raised his voice against granting concessions to Papists, from a firm conviction that Popery is but another name for intolerance and despotism’.<sup>176</sup> These statements

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<sup>173</sup> See 32-33 in this chapter.

<sup>174</sup> *BJ*, 15 November 1828. This newspaper also stated that ‘the GENERAL BODY OF DISSENTERS ... always have been, and still are, decidedly opposed to them [the Catholic Claims]’. *Ibid.*, 20 December 1828.

<sup>175</sup> Thomas Fryer Jennings, *England’s Last Effort. A Sermon on the Roman Catholic Question, Preached at St. Thomas Church, Bristol, on Sunday, the 8th Day of March, 1829* (3rd rev. edn., Bristol: W. Richardson, [1829]), 19.

<sup>176</sup> William Thorpe, *England’s Liberties Defended. The Substance of a Second Speech, after an Interval of Sixteen Years, intended to have been Delivered at a Meeting Convened in Queen Square, in the City of Bristol* (Bristol: J.M. Gutch, 1829), 9-12.

suggested the possibility that Anglican Tories and Protestant Dissenters could act together against Catholicism by supporting the ‘Whig’ Protestant constitution achieved in 1688-89.

The provincial Tory press deplored the Wellington ministry’s conciliatory approach to Catholic Emancipation. The *Colchester Gazette* stated that it ‘has excited the greatest astonishment and the deepest regret – has spread terror and alarm throughout the country’.<sup>177</sup> The *Bristol Journal* criticised Peel as ‘This apostate Statesman’. Peel had previously been known as ‘Orange’ Peel because of his support for the Protestant minority in Ireland. This newspaper insisted, however, that he was a ‘Shade of the departed Pitt’ and a supporter of ‘the Jacobin and the Revolutionist’.<sup>178</sup>

The provincial Tory press severely attacked Catholicism, the Pope, and any British minister supporting Catholic Emancipation, but insisted that the arch enemies of the British constitution were Catholic ‘demagogues with visionary ideas’, especially the leaders of the Catholic Association, such as Daniel O’Connell, Richard Lalor Sheil, and John Lawless. The *Colchester Gazette* claimed that ‘the friends of Britain, and the lovers of order and religion’ should ‘endeavour to tear the mask from the faces of those turbulent demagogues, and exhibit the designs of “the agitators” in their true colours’.<sup>179</sup> Moreover, those Irish Catholic priests supporting the Catholic Association were regarded as demagogues who ‘excite their flocks to commotions and crimes’.<sup>180</sup> This is remarkably similar language to that expressed against provincial radicalism in the late 1810s. In fact, this newspaper represented the Catholic Association as made up of

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<sup>177</sup> *CG*, 14 February 1829.

<sup>178</sup> *BJ*, 7 March 1829.

<sup>179</sup> *CG*, 20 September 1828.

<sup>180</sup> [Edward Mangin], *Reminiscences for Roman Catholics; which, if rightly Appreciated, and properly Applied, by Promoting Civil and Religious Liberty, must Insure to Romanists the most Consummate Emancipation* (Bristol: J.W. Newcombe, 1828), 29, 33.

‘radical and turbulent delinquents’.<sup>181</sup>

The provincial Tory press severely attacked Irish demagogues, although it regarded most Irish people as deceived ‘tools’ and duped victims of such agitators. The *Colchester Gazette* maintained that, ‘The present state of Ireland cannot be contemplated without a mixed feeling of grief and indignation – grief, that men should suffer themselves to be duped by their priests and agitators into courses so full of peril to their own and country’s safety – and indignation against those heartless demagogues, who are thus making the peasantry their tools, and who will abandon them without remorse at the first moment of danger’.<sup>182</sup> It also stated that ‘The Irish people are disposed to be quiet and industrious if their priests and agitators would let them alone’ since they ‘enjoyed all the blessings of our constitution and government which are naturally available to their condition’.<sup>183</sup> Like the provincial Tory press’s view on popular radicalism and abolition, its real enemy was radical demagogues, not ordinary Irish people.

The provincial Tory press hoped to conciliate ordinary Irish Catholics by adopting a paternalistic stance. It maintained that their present distress resulted from their financial difficulties, so they could be relieved by being supplied with necessities, rather than by being given political rights. The *Colchester Gazette* stated that ‘the emancipation which is really nearest to the peasant’s heart, is emancipation from the payment of rent and tithes ... by steady, cautious, and prudent legislation’, and insisted on the necessity of paying ‘a constant and persevering attention to the wants of the people’. It further claimed that Catholic Emancipation would bring ‘oppression and not

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<sup>181</sup> *CG*, 25 October 1828.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 October 1828.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 January 1829. The *BJ* adopted a similar stance. *BJ*, 25 October 1828.

emancipation to the poor', because it would not give them food, comfort, and other necessary benefits to improve their lives.<sup>184</sup>

The provincial Tory press provided another way of solving the distress of Ireland, which was similar to that offered to the British labouring poor: improving the country's agriculture. The *Bristol Journal* referred to Sadler's brand-new book, *Ireland; Its Evils and Their Remedies*, and advanced the argument that 'while her [Ireland's] millions of acres lie uncultivated ..., they [the Irish] will find that, under the divine impulse of humanity, and the dictates of common sense, their best policy lies in endeavouring to convert, by their presence, their protection, and their countenance, her indolent, her unremunerated pauper freeholders, into a band of thankful and productive agriculturists'. This argument was closely linked to the protectionist ideology: 'If we want additional supplies, "let us obtain them there [Ireland], rather than from the plains of Poland or of Prussia" ... Let, then, Irish agriculture be but preserved, protected, and extended'.<sup>185</sup> This demonstrates that, according to the provincial Tory press, agricultural improvements could play a vital role in resolving the Irish people's difficulties and eventually restricting the advance of radicals.

Another way of solving the distress of the Irish was to improve their moral character. To diffuse a 'religious and moral principle through the great mass of the population', William Thorpe insisted on the importance of Sabbath schools, Day Schools, Bible Societies, and Evangelical preaching in Ireland, by which 'Honesty, probity, industry, and all the social virtues' and 'her future prosperity' would be promoted.<sup>186</sup> William Marsh stated in his pamphlet that Catholicism was an idolatrous

<sup>184</sup> *CG*, 17 January 1829 and 18 April 1829. A similar attitude can be seen in *BJ*, 1 November 1828, and in *Blackwood's*. Milne, 'The Politics of *Blackwood's*', 212-216.

<sup>185</sup> *BJ*, 8 November 1828.

<sup>186</sup> Thorp, *England's Liberties Defended*, 35.

religion which was not spreading the true teaching of the Bible. The Catholic Bible was written, and major Catholic services were held, in Latin – a language not understood by the poor masses. Marsh implied that Irish Catholics should be converted to Protestantism, claiming:

Let us educate their children with ours, and thus promote brotherly love. Let us give them the Holy Scriptures, as able to make them wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.<sup>187</sup>

It is doubtful whether such an imposed policy would have been successful. The provincial Tory press might not have understood how important the Catholic religion was to common Irish people. It believed, however, that a religious education based on Protestantism would help to improve the conditions of the poor.

In Bristol, Colchester, and Edinburgh, a large majority of provincial Tory opinion supported anti-Catholicism and criticised the conciliatory policy adopted by Wellington's government, although a small portion of the provincial Tory press agreed with the Catholic Emancipation bill. The *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* was a case in point. It had opposed Catholic Emancipation until the mid-1820s,<sup>188</sup> but, during the crisis in the late 1820s, it eventually, like the Tory government itself, regarded the measure as necessary for expedient reasons. It should not be forgotten, however, that its pro-Catholic attitudes derived from the core ideas of the Tory worldview. This newspaper, while supportive of Catholic Emancipation, was still Tory in that it did so within the ideological parameters of Toryism.

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<sup>187</sup> William Marsh, *A Caution to Protestants, and a Warning to Catholics. A Sermon, Preached by the Rev. W. Marsh, M.A. at St. Peter's Church, Colchester, on Sunday, Jan. 9th* (Colchester: Swinbone and Walter, 1825), 38.

<sup>188</sup> As an example, see a column titled 'ROMAN CATHOLIC CLAIMS' and the editorial of the *EWJ*, 30 March 1825.

The first element which the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* developed from the Tory mindset was its consistent rejection of the ‘radical’ Catholic Association. It regarded this society as ‘dangerous’ to the British constitution, and insisted that the disbandment of it was one of the vital conditions for accepting the emancipation measure.<sup>189</sup> This policy was agreed by a majority in Parliament. When the Emancipation bill was actually passed, it was accompanied by a measure making the Catholic Association illegal. Second, this newspaper was extremely fearful of the outbreak of a civil war, which would pose a serious threat to the British constitution. For this newspaper, ‘only two courses were open to be pursued by Ministers’: the tightening of ‘the restrictions of the penal laws’, which would lead to ‘a civil war’, or ‘the framing of some measure for the settlement of the Catholic question’. This newspaper acknowledged the ‘necessary evil’ of Catholic Emancipation to avoid the worse consequence of a civil war. It stated that such a conciliatory measure would avert the radical demand for the ending of the Union with Ireland, and also restrict the influence of Popery across the whole British Isles.<sup>190</sup> Finally, this newspaper supported Catholic Emancipation, because it believed that this measure would not undermine the Protestant constitution: ‘it will wholly remove the disabilities, and yet not trench upon the Protestant Constitution’.<sup>191</sup> This comment was made in the hope that such a conciliatory gesture towards the Catholics could actually prove to be the only way of preserving the Protestant constitution.

### *The Reform Bills*

In 1830, the issue of parliamentary reform became critical in the context of widespread

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<sup>189</sup> Another condition was that, ‘The admission of Catholics to office will not ... be unlimited – probably they will be restricted from holding some of the higher offices in the state’. *Ibid.*, 11 February 1829.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 April 1829.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 February 1829.

and deep economic distress across Britain, which was serious by the end of 1829. It created a new, powerful extra-parliamentary reform movement, following the establishment of the Birmingham Political Union in January 1830. The leaders of the Tory party in Parliament were too optimistic about this change in public opinion. In November 1830, in his speech in the House of Lords, the prime minister, the Duke of Wellington, declared his objection to reform. In many regions, this quickly provoked an extra-parliamentary protest against the government and strengthened radical agitation. In the same month, this political crisis and, more important, the serious division within the party after the passage of the Emancipation bill drove the Tories out of office and enabled the second Earl Grey to form a Whig-dominated government. On 1 March 1831, the first Reform Bills were presented to the Commons by Lord John Russell on behalf of the government, and became immediately a central issue in British politics until the final passage of the Reform Acts in 1832.<sup>192</sup>

The reaction of the provincial Tory press over this issue can be divided into two types: opposition and approval. The former was dominant. In opposing the Reform Bills, the provincial Tory press used the same language it had been developing since the crisis of post-war radicalism. It insisted that the bills would make sweeping changes to Britain's existing mixed government and balanced constitution. The *Bristol Journal* warned that the 'Whigs and Levellers' wished 'to establish ... a Republican House of Commons, with a Citizen King, in imitation of the French'. It particularly feared that 'the Aristocratic branch of the Legislature will ... become a perfect non-entity', and that

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<sup>192</sup> Michael J. Turner, *British Politics in an Age of Reform* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 164-191; Evans, *Britain before the Reform Act*, 81-97. The Reform Bills were separately introduced for England and Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. They were passed with some amendments in Parliament in 1832.

this would ruin the ‘due equipoise in the state’.<sup>193</sup> An anonymous pamphlet apprehended that the bills would give the House of Commons the supreme power and British politics would move towards democracy.<sup>194</sup>

A large majority of provincial Tory opinion insisted that the Reform Bills were put forward by ‘demagogues with visionary ideas’. The *Bristol Journal* showed concern in January 1831 that the reform proposals being considered by the government must be a ‘Rash innovation’ attempted by ‘evil and designing men’.<sup>195</sup> A Scottish pamphleteer, using the pseudonym, ‘A Conservative’, attacked the Reform Bill for Scotland as ‘hypothetical’, ‘Utopian’, and ‘visionary’.<sup>196</sup> Provincial Tory opinion generally criticised the Political Unions as ‘demagogues with visionary ideas’.<sup>197</sup> Besides, it was concerned that the poor would be the main victims of their objectives. The *Essex Standard*, for instance, maintained that, ‘Never was a more fatal mistake made by the poor man, than the supposition that the violent agitators would ever do him any good’. It also insisted that ‘all the Institutions which are the great man’s pride, and the poor man’s best protection’ should be protected.<sup>198</sup>

The provincial Tory press anticipated at least four possible serious results from the Reform Bills. First, such a sweeping change in the system of representation would bring about a revolution because mob rule and physical force would become dominant in British politics. The *Bristol Journal* stated that ‘the present measure’ would be ‘a mere stepping-stone to further encroachments ... to the *radical* principles of Vote by Ballot

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<sup>193</sup> *BJ*, 5 and 12 March 1831.

<sup>194</sup> Anon., *Remarks on the Anti-Protestant and Democratic Tendency of the Reform Bill* (2nd edn., Bristol: John Wansbrough, 1831), 6-7.

<sup>195</sup> *BJ*, 29 January 1831.

<sup>196</sup> [J. Dennistoun], *Letter to the Lord Advocate on the Scottish [sic] Reform Bill* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1832), 19.

<sup>197</sup> For example, see *BJ*, 9 April 1831.

<sup>198</sup> *ES*, 3 December 1831.



and Universal Suffrage'.<sup>199</sup> Second, the projected new system of representation would increase bribery and corruption in elections. The provincial Tory press stated that the new voters would not be independent enough to remain uninfluenced by the power of money. An anonymous pamphlet published in Bristol anticipated that 'the nomination to them [the new seats] ... would have been confined to individuals of commanding property'.<sup>200</sup> A Scottish Tory pamphlet speculated that a large property could be intentionally divided into many parts, and that such 'creation of innumerable fictitious votes' would produce corrupt elections.<sup>201</sup> The third expected result was economic catastrophe. The *Bristol Journal* stated that 'they [merchants, bankers, and freeholders] will see that under the name of reducing the burdens of the people, and the specious cry of unrepresented citizens, a fatal blow will be struck at public credit, and all their enterprises ruined by a general bankruptcy'. It also estimated that a large amount of property confiscation would occur: 'The landholders will see, that the Church will be only the first victim; (and) that their own estates are the real and ultimate object'.<sup>202</sup> Finally, anti-Catholicism was connected to the opposition to the Reform Bills. It was estimated that the number of Irish Catholic MPs would increase to between fifty and seventy because of the influence 'of the popish priesthood, and the ambition of the agitators', and this would harm the Protestant constitution. To avoid this, a pamphlet published in Bristol demanded that 'Protestants, of all denominations' should work together.<sup>203</sup> Moreover, a series of open letters written by 'C.V.' in the Tory *Glasgow Courier* in late 1830, which was soon published as a pamphlet in Edinburgh, claimed

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<sup>199</sup> *BJ*, 26 February and 19 March 1831.

<sup>200</sup> Anon., *Remarks*, 10.

<sup>201</sup> Anon., *Thoughts on Reform, as Applicable to Scotland* (Unpublished) (Edinburgh: University Press, 1831), 17.

<sup>202</sup> *BJ*, 12 March 1831.

<sup>203</sup> Anon., *Remarks*, 21.

that, over the Catholic Emancipation issue in the late 1820s, the author had supported the expedient conciliation measure initiated by Robert Peel, but he now opposed the further growth of the political power of the Irish Catholics. He demanded that the Irish vote should be confined to those independent men who were not influenced by the Catholic priesthood.<sup>204</sup>

While opposing the Reform Bills, the provincial Tory press realised that something should be done to reduce the agitation for reform. A solution that was suggested arose from the Tory view that the problem stemmed from economic distress, so that the best solution was to alleviate distress, not to give the vote to those distressed. The *Essex Standard* stated that, ‘The inconveniencies which men really feel ... are those of stagnation in trade, low price, and a weight of taxation ... (but) the changes contemplated by the Reform Bill will certainly not touch any of these evils’.<sup>205</sup> The provincial Tory press denied that the Reform Bills would solve the present economic depression. Rather, it stressed that Britons had enjoyed economic wealth and prosperity for a long time under the current system of representation.<sup>206</sup>

The provincial Tory press agreed with ‘partial’, ‘gradual’, and ‘practical’ reform of the system of representation. The *Essex Standard* maintained that ‘we are the true friends of Reform ... *We* want reasonable, and fair, and practicable Reform’.<sup>207</sup> It also insisted on timely reform, stating that ‘the amendment of such defects as exist in the representation were [*sic*] left to the calm but certain course of improvement which the taste and good sense of the times we live in would bring about, without resorting to any

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<sup>204</sup> Anon., *General Hints for a Revision of the Parliamentary Representation in the House of Commons: In Letters Addressed to the Editor of the Glasgow Courier by C.V. now changed to Civis* (Edinburgh: Robert Miller, 1830), 11-14.

<sup>205</sup> *ES*, 8 October 1831. A similar claim can be seen in Anon., *Remarks*, 8-9.

<sup>206</sup> *ES*, 8 October 1831. This opinion was shared by Scottish Tories. Anon., *Thoughts on Reform*, 28; Anon., *Letter to the Lord Advocate*, 17-18.

<sup>207</sup> *ES*, 29 October 1831.

extraordinary or violent means'.<sup>208</sup> In his pamphlet, Sir John Sinclair stated that:

The great object aimed at by every wise reformer, should be, *practical improvement, not theoretical perfection*. A perfect commonwealth is a visionary idea, never to be realised while mankind are themselves imperfect. Utopian schemes of reform, may please the thoughtless or the inexperienced, but are too chimerical to be cherished by those who possess either prudence or reflection. Let our efforts, therefore, be directed, to the removal of obvious defects in our present system, rather than to the construction of a new government.<sup>209</sup>

These Tory attitudes all revealed a conservative stance on reform.

Some parts of the provincial Tory press actually supported the Reform Bills to some extent. The *Essex Standard* agreed with two provisions in the Reform Bill for England and Wales, namely 'the disfranchisement of all borough out-voters, and the granting the franchise to the agricultural tenantry'.<sup>210</sup> It also supported the idea of seats being given to those large towns which did not have their own representatives. It considered it necessary to gradually 'extend the elective franchise to every man possessing as much property as would make him independent'.<sup>211</sup> A Tory pamphlet supported the bill's 'provisions for shortening the duration of Elections, diminishing their expence, and excluding distant out-voters from the exercise of the franchise'.<sup>212</sup>

Regarding the Scottish representation, another Tory pamphlet demanded an increase of

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<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 October 1831. This newspaper also stated that, 'The British Constitution as it now exists in the growth of many years practical experience. Our ancestors and our contemporaries by gradually adding, amending, and adopting changes to meet the exigencies of the times, have formed a constitution which, till lately, has been the proud boast of every Briton'. *Ibid.*, 1 October 1831.

<sup>209</sup> Sir John Sinclair, *Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform, with Tables, Exhibiting the Original Amount and Progressive Increase of the Number of National Representatives; together with some Observations on the Present State of the Representation of Scotland, and the Improvements of which it is Susceptible* (Edinburgh: Bell and Bradfute, 1831), 3-4.

<sup>210</sup> *ES*, 1 October 1831.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 December 1831.

<sup>212</sup> Anon., *Remarks*, 7-8.

more than twenty MPs for Scottish constituencies ‘in order to put her upon an equal footing with the rest of the United Kingdom’.<sup>213</sup> Sir John Sinclair pointed out the closed nature of the Scottish burghs and insisted that ‘the member is to be chosen, to the inhabitants at large, paying taxes to a certain amount’.<sup>214</sup>

Some provincial Tory opinions showed their own plans for reform which were not included in the Reform Bills. An anonymous Tory pamphleteer, for example, insisted on the introduction of the system of plural voting. Property owners could already have more than one vote, but in different constituencies where they owned property. He claimed, however, that the number of votes possessed by each elector in a single borough ought to be decided according to the amount of property tax he paid in that borough. Basically he agreed with the introduction of £10 voters. Believing that ‘The population, the public revenue, and property, being the basis of the representation’ for ‘a fair and equal distribution of the representation’, however, he was concerned that the Reform Bills would promote a sense of unfairness among those who paid heavy taxes. He thus advanced a new idea that ‘every person paying *bona fide* not less than L.10 yearly of property or income tax, should have one vote in the choice of a representative for the district – a person paying not less than L.50, two votes – and a person paying not less than L.100 or upwards, three votes’.<sup>215</sup> It is obvious that this measure would offer a considerable advantage to the wealthy classes. The author of this pamphlet feared that, under the reformed system of representation, the new voters would be powerful, but the political influence of these classes would be greatly reduced.

Over the issue of the Reform Bills, the word ‘conservative’ became an important

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<sup>213</sup> Anon., *Letter to the Lord Advocate*, 22.

<sup>214</sup> Sinclair, *Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform*, 28.

<sup>215</sup> Anon., *General Hints*, 8-9.

term in the provincial Tory press. The *Bristol Journal*, for example, maintained that, ‘The appellations of Whig and Tory, high party and low party, are, we apprehend, about to be merged in the more concise and intelligible ones of the SUBVERSIVE and the CONSERVATIVE PARTY, or in other words, those whose efforts tend to overthrow the Constitution, and those who are resolved to support it’.<sup>216</sup> The *Essex Standard* also insisted that, ‘We are bound to party only by our own conviction, that the conservative principles of Toryism are the best adapted to promote the general welfare of the country’.<sup>217</sup> This demonstrates that, while the words ‘party’ and ‘Tory’ had been used hesitantly in the late 1810s, they were used as a positive badge of self-labelling by 1832.

While a large majority of the provincial Tory press opposed the Reform Bills, it was the case that there were some examples of pro-Reform-Bill Toryism. The *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* was a case in point. It is worth emphasising that this type of Toryism still stemmed from the core elements of the Tory worldview. In the immediate aftermath of the formation of Grey’s ministry, this newspaper insisted that the reform bills which were expected to be presented soon would be ‘timely’, ‘moderate’, and ‘partial’, insisting that ‘the Ministers – made wise as well as wary by the signs of the times – would have been willing ... to lend a favourable ear to any moderate plan which might promise to lessen some of the evils connected with the representation of the people, some of which, indeed, are only the accidents of our system, and no essential parts of it’.<sup>218</sup> After Lord John Russell had presented his bills in March 1831, this newspaper’s attitude towards the ministry did not change. It seems that the bills were exactly what this newspaper wanted.<sup>219</sup> For this newspaper, they would not threaten a

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<sup>216</sup> *BJ*, 26 February 1831.

<sup>217</sup> *ES*, 1 October 1831.

<sup>218</sup> *EWJ*, 10 November 1830.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 March and 12 October 1831.

total change to the existing constitution.

The *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* strongly opposed ‘the Radical faction’<sup>220</sup> and feared those ‘demagogues with visionary ideas’ in the Political Unions in particular, who threatened the British constitution and undermined social harmony.<sup>221</sup> It stated that radicals contrived to shift ‘the lever of ARCHIMEDES to remove the Constitution from its base’.<sup>222</sup> There were two particular reasons for its opposition. First, this newspaper was concerned that ‘the Revolutionists ... accept the Bill as it stands merely as a temporary resting-place, a lever by means of which further and mightier changes are to be effected’.<sup>223</sup> It insisted that ‘the most certain method of disappointing their mischievous designs is to grant a measure at once, which, by effectually removing real corruptions from our Constitution, may unite all honest men and true patriots in its defence and so confound the devices of the unprincipled and traitorous’.<sup>224</sup> This showed a clear contrast between the large majority of provincial Tory opinion and this newspaper. The former opposed the bills because their passage would lead to more radical measures, whereas the latter supported the bills because the *failure* of their passage would result in more radical measures. The second reason, however, was shared with the anti-Reform-Bill Tories: radicals were deceiving the poor. This newspaper emphasised that, ‘The multitude ... are at present in danger of being first the dupes, and then the victims of their artful flatterers’.<sup>225</sup>

The *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* emphasised that the Reform Bills were different from the radical reforms advocated in the post-war period. They would be carried with

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<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 March 1831.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 January, and 2 and 23 November 1831

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 April 1831.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 January 1831.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 April 1831.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 September 1831.

‘the united interests of all classes of the community, strengthening and combining them by a unity of feeling, and enlisting all ranks in gratitude to the Sovereign who has sanctioned’ it.<sup>226</sup> They ‘will meet the wishes of all parties’ except the radicals.<sup>227</sup> The support of William IV for them added loyalism to the reform movement. The newspaper insisted that it was ‘the secret of the prevailing tranquility’.<sup>228</sup>

Like the anti-Reform-Bill Tory press, the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* used the term ‘conservative’, but in a different way. It supported the bills, because they would ensure ‘the services ... of a most numerous and influential body of men, who are perhaps the very best representatives of the middle classes ... manly and independent in their sentiments and general character’. This kind of reform, which would fasten the middle classes more firmly to the establishment, therefore ‘has a conservative tendency’. By means of this conservative reform, the British constitution would be preserved, and ‘a thousand fears and alarms which might ... be entertained for the results of concessions made to more doubtful classes’ would be eased.<sup>229</sup>

The *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*, while supporting Grey’s government, was still supportive of some Tory MPs, and Sir Robert Peel in particular. It did not support the Reform Bills for a partisan reason. It emphasised that the passage of the bills was a patriotic action. It expected that Peel would join the ministry to support this patriotic project.<sup>230</sup> In the immediate aftermath of the 1831 general election, it quoted his speech delivered at his constituency, Tamworth:

“The chief lesson I have learnt in public life,” said Sir ROBERT, “is toleration.

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<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 March 1831.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 March 1831.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 October 1831.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 March 1831.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*

... He (Sir R.) had never been the decided supporter of any band of political partisans; but had always thought it much better to look steadily at the political circumstances of the times in which they lived, and if necessities were so pressing as to demand it, there was no dishonor or discredit in relinquishing opinions or measures, and adopting others more suited to the altered circumstances of the country.”<sup>231</sup>

This newspaper praised Peel’s change of opinion about Catholic Emancipation because of altered circumstances. It hoped that a similar change would happen in this case too. By the end of 1831, this hope had turned to disappointment, because Peel did not change his attitude. Its longlasting expectation of him, however, demonstrated how difficult it was for this newspaper to give up supporting the Tories at Westminster.

## CONCLUSION

Between 1815 and 1832, the provincial Tory press published in Bristol, Colchester, and Edinburgh showed various political attitudes. This suggests that local Tory discourse could potentially develop a considerable degree of flexibility. The provincial Tory press, while basically supporting the Tory party, was cautious and careful about using the terms ‘party’ and ‘Tory’ as a means of self-labelling, which suggests the strength of local independence. On the other hand, such diversity stemmed from the same core principles of Tory ideology, namely that Tory worldview, which had clearly emerged during the period of post-war radical agitation. While attempting to preserve the political establishment and social harmony and strongly opposed to radical measures,

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<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 May 1831.



the provincial Tory press kept advising the pursuit of ‘practical’ and ‘safe’ measures of change. In most cases, such measures were demanded in order to avoid anarchy and despotism, which would destroy the British constitution, and also to protect the weakest section of society, including the labouring poor, West Indian slaves, and Irish Catholics, from those ‘demagogues with the visionary ideas’. These features demonstrate that provincial Toryism in this period was neither reactionary nor inflexible, but was rather a set of resilient ideas ready to consider transforming British society, but in safe and secure ways in order to preserve stability.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *Tory Clubs and Societies in Britain, c.1808-1832*

In the early nineteenth century, Tory clubs and societies were established in many towns in Britain and they played a vital role in connecting two political spheres, one in Parliament and the other in the localities. They also served as a significant rallying point for local Tories and as a fundamental political force in urban communities, where the state practically abandoned its responsibility for governance and local administration was dealt with on a voluntary basis.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, historians have provided little detailed research on the Tory clubs and societies in this period. They have paid more attention to cultural and social clubs and societies than to party-political ones, especially in the early nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Even when they have focused on party-political clubs and societies, their interest has primarily focused on the Whig ones.<sup>3</sup>

This chapter thus aims to conduct a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the Tory clubs and societies, particularly by examining the ways and the extent to which they reacted to national Tory politics at Westminster and how they functioned in local politics.<sup>4</sup> By conducting this analysis, it will challenge David Walsh's claim that they were mere 'harmless (and only marginally useful) gatherings' for holding social and recreational events.<sup>5</sup> It will also reconsider the interpretation of the Tory clubs and societies offered by three other historians. Frank O'Gorman has maintained that they

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<sup>1</sup> Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, 95-96, 175-180, 184-187.

<sup>2</sup> Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, *Civil Society, 1750-1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> Brett, 'The Liberal Middle Classes', chapters 1-3; Orme, 'The Scottish Whig Party', chapter 1; *idem.*, 'Toasting Fox'.

<sup>4</sup> In this analysis, occasionally political, but basically non-party religious and social clubs, such as debating clubs and anti-slavery societies, are excluded.

<sup>5</sup> Walsh, *Making Angels in Marble*, 90.

‘were local groups and had little or no connection, save self-identification, nostalgic reminiscences of shared past endeavours and a vague general allegiance to the Tory party and its ideas’.<sup>6</sup> Philip Salmon and Matthew Cragoe have both emphasised that it was not until the post-1832 period that party-political identity became significant at grass-roots level in Britain.<sup>7</sup> This chapter will test these claims, concluding that the Tory clubs and societies were loosely connected with each other and gradually developed a pan-British political network, which helped provincial Tories to be involved in national and local politics within a collective political identity.

This chapter is divided into five sections. The first two sections will focus on the distribution and organisational structure of the Tory clubs and societies, and attempt to understand them in a wider context of conservative associational culture, by paying attention to the differences and similarities between the Tory clubs and societies and both the Reeves’ societies of the 1790s and the Conservative Clubs and Associations which mushroomed in the decade after 1832. The following three sections will analyse the political developments of the Tory clubs and societies over time. The third section will examine the process of the integration of the Tories beyond Westminster in the period of post-war radicalism. The fourth section will assess the ways and the extent to which the controversial issue of Catholic Emancipation had an impact on the development of the Tory clubs and societies. In the fifth and final section, their reaction to the Reform Bills in the early 1830s will be examined.

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<sup>6</sup> O’Gorman, ‘Origins and Trajectories of Loyalism’, 40.

<sup>7</sup> Philip Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work: Local Politics and National Parties, 1832-1841* (London: Boydell Press, 2002); Matthew Cragoe, ‘The Great Reform Act and the Modernization of British Politics: The Impact of Conservative Associations, 1835-41’, *Journal of British Studies*, 47 (2008), 581-603.

## I

## CATEGORISATION AND DISTRIBUTION

The emergence of British associational culture can be found as early as the late sixteenth century, although it was in the later eighteenth century that urbanisation considerably accelerated the numerical increase and regional expansion of provincial clubs and societies. Before 1760, the number of clubs and societies established in the British Isles and the colonies (including America) was only about 500. The number, however, tripled during the 1760s and rose sharply to about 6,550 by the end of the century, which demonstrates that by the beginning of the nineteenth century an associational culture was firmly embedded in the life of many ordinary Britons.<sup>8</sup> In the early nineteenth century, the impact of two-party parliamentary politics was added to the rise of the British associational culture, which led to a wide distribution of Tory clubs and societies.

It is impossible to enumerate, and grasp the characteristics of, all provincial Tory clubs and societies because of a shortage of evidence, although the available primary sources have demonstrated that Tory clubs and societies did attain vitality and importance in local politics. Broadly speaking, they can be divided into four types: election clubs, commemoration associations, secret societies, and pressure groups. It should be noted, however, that the differences between these four categories are not rigid, as a single political society often performed all four functions.

In the first place, election clubs were established widely in the populous constituencies in which intense party rivalry brought about by a highly politicised

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<sup>8</sup> Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, 26-27, 94-96, 127-128; Dickinson, *The Politics of the People*, chapter 2.

public promoted frequently contested elections. Liverpool was a case in point. This town had a booming population from 77,653 in 1801 to 118,972 in 1821, and 165,175 in 1831, and became the second largest town in Britain after London by the early nineteenth century. Accompanying this, the estimated number of its electors increased from 3,000 to more than 5,000 by 1832. Between 1790 and 1832, all the parliamentary elections, except for the 1826 re-election following William Huskisson's appointment to office, were contested ones.<sup>9</sup> Strong party rivalry in Liverpool can be illustrated by looking at the establishment of a series of Tory election clubs. The Backbone and the Canning Clubs, both of which supported George Canning, were formed in the immediate aftermath of the heated contested election of 1812. Another Tory MP, Isaac Gascoyne, who gained support from the Liverpool Corporation, had the support of the Pitt Club which was formed in 1814, although it took no part in elections. In 1818, however, his supporters established the True Blue Club as an electioneering organisation. By using these clubs, local Tories in Liverpool countered local Whigs, who formed not only the Concentric Society and the Liverpool Freemen's Club in 1812, but also the Independent Debating Society in 1813.<sup>10</sup> In addition, Bristol, which also had a large population of nearly 60,000 with more than 6,000 voters by 1830, experienced contests in every election between 1812 and 1830. Two Tory election clubs, such as the Steadfast Society established as early as 1737<sup>11</sup> and the less exclusive White Lion Club formed by 1802,<sup>12</sup> supported Tory candidates with their shared membership.

The True Blue Clubs, one of the most prominent Tory associations established

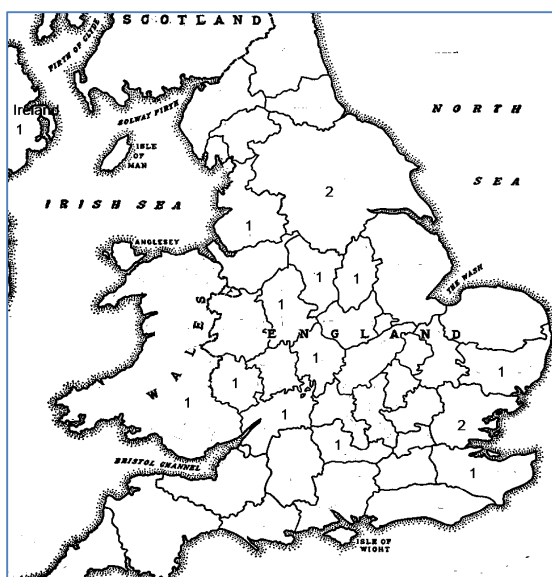
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<sup>9</sup> HoP, *Commons 1790-1820*, 'Liverpool'; HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, 'Liverpool'.

<sup>10</sup> B. Whittingham-Jones, 'Electioneering in Lancashire before the Secret Ballot: Liverpool's Political Clubs, 1812-1830', *THSLC*, 111 (1959), 117-138.

<sup>11</sup> HoP, *Commons 1754-1790*, 'Bristol'.

<sup>12</sup> HoP, *Commons 1790-1820*, 'Bristol'.



Map 1: Distribution of the True Blue Clubs

mainly in England, are difficult to categorise, but many of them played a part in elections. While they were founded for the first time in the early nineteenth century, they stemmed from the blue colour traditionally used at elections. The term ‘True Blue and Old Interest’ seen in New Windsor in the eighteenth century was one such example.<sup>13</sup>

While the colour was not used exclusively by the Tories even in the early nineteenth century,<sup>14</sup> the True Blue Clubs had a distinctive Tory character. Many of them were involved in election processes, nominating Tory candidates and making efforts to secure their return. If the election ended with a victory, they also celebrated it.<sup>15</sup> The True Blue Clubs were established even in unrepresented towns, where some of them, nevertheless, were committed to the county election processes.<sup>16</sup> The Leeds True Blue Club, for example, celebrated Henry Lascelles’s return for Yorkshire in 1812.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> HoP, *Commons 1754-1790*, ‘New Windsor’.

<sup>14</sup> In many constituencies, such as Westmorland, Cheshire, Rochester, Cumberland, Great Grimsby, and Norwich, the Whigs used the colour as their own. HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, ‘Surveys, I. England’. A similar situation was seen in Wales. *Ibid.*, ‘Carmarthen’.

<sup>15</sup> See examples of the True Blue Clubs of East Retford, Maldon, and Monmouth. *Ibid.*, ‘East Retford’, ‘Maldon’, and ‘Monmouth’. The election process of the period has been analysed in Frank O’Gorman, ‘Campaign Rituals and Ceremonies: The Social Meaning of Election in England, 1780-1860’, *Past & Present*, 135 (1992), 79-115.

<sup>16</sup> There were at least fifteen True Blue Clubs established in the early nineteenth century. Thirteen were in England: Barnsley, Colchester, Coventry, Derbyshire, East Retford, Gloucester, Leeds, Lichfield, Liverpool, Maidstone, Maldon, Wallingford, Woodbridge. One was in Wales: Monmouth. One was in Ireland: Clare.

<sup>17</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 14 November 1812.



Map 2: Distribution of the Pitt Clubs

Second, provincial Tories established a large number of commemoration societies in Britain. The Wellington Clubs were formed in English towns, such as Ipswich, Liverpool, and Stockport, to celebrate the victory over Napoleon at Waterloo and the Duke of Wellington's contribution to it. Among these three, the last one, called the Stockport Loyal Wellington Club, was perhaps the largest

with an increasing number of members from at most 300 in 1820 to about 500 in 1823. It continued for at least thirteen years from its establishment in 1815.<sup>18</sup> The King and Constitution Clubs were formed in the early nineteenth century in Chester, Congleton, Nantwich, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Northampton, Norwich, Sunderland, Sutherland, and York, to celebrate the king's and the Regent's birthdays.<sup>19</sup> Among them, the development of the Knutsford King and Constitution Club was remarkable, and its monthly meetings in its own club room provided a significant political platform for Cheshire Tories.<sup>20</sup> The third and most influential group of commemorative Tory associations was the Pitt Clubs. In the aftermath of the establishment of the London Pitt

<sup>18</sup> *MP*, 28 June 1820; HoP *Commons 1820-1832* 'Cheshire'; *Standard*, 23 June 1828. The meetings of the Stockport Wellington Club were held quarterly. *MP*, 9 October 1827. The Ipswich Wellington Club was turned from a True Blue Club in 1825. Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 100.

<sup>19</sup> *Chester Chronicle*, 13 June 1817, 12 June 1818, 11 August 1820 and 10 June 1825; *York Herald*, 7 November 1818; *Norfolk Chronicle*, 13 March 1819; *Newcastle Courant*, 29 April 1821; *Northampton Mercury*, 7 January 1826; Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 100.

<sup>20</sup> Cheshire Archives and Local Studies, D 5747, Knutsford King and Constitution Club (1813-19), Minute Book including Constitution and Rules.



Map 3: Distribution of the Orange Lodges

Club in 1808, local Pitt Clubs expanded in Britain at large as Map 2 shows.<sup>21</sup> In the context of the expansion of post-war provincial radicalism and the Luddite movement, they quickly developed a pan-British rallying point for local Tories under the guise of sustaining the memory and promoting the principles of William Pitt the Younger. They increased in number to at least sixty-two.

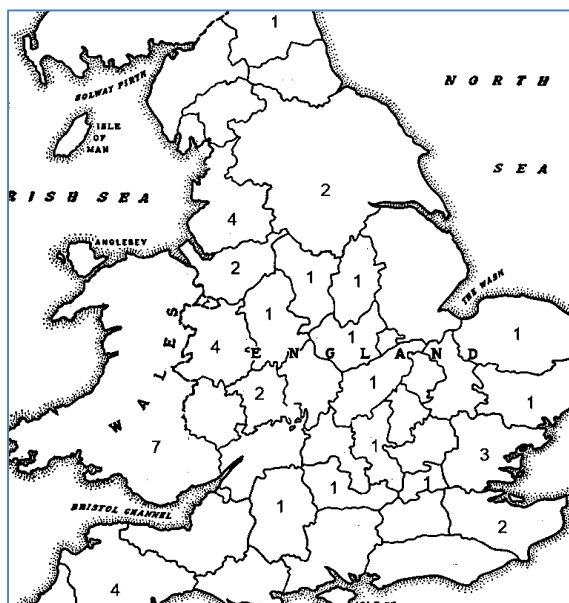
Third, the anti-Catholic and more secretive societies, the Orange Lodges, even if more numerous and influential in Ireland,<sup>22</sup> expanded widely across Britain at large in the early nineteenth century, and the number of civil lodges operating in November 1830 was 228 as seen in Map 3.<sup>23</sup> First British Orange Lodges were established by

<sup>21</sup> There were at least sixty-two Pitt Clubs operating in the early nineteenth century. Fifty-three Pitt Clubs were in England: Altrincham, Armley, Birmingham, Blackburn, Blackburn Hundred, Bolton, Bristol, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Colchester, Derby, Devon and Exeter, Doncaster, Dudley, Halifax, Hampshire, Hereford, Holbeck, Huddersfield, Hull, Lancaster, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, London, Maldon, Manchester, North and South Shields, Northumberland and Newcastle, Northwich, Norwich, Nottingham, Oldham, Oxford, Plymouth, Preston, Reading and Berkshire, Rochdale, Saddleworth, Salford, Scarborough, Sheffield, Staffordshire and Newcastle under Lyme, Stockport, Suffolk, Sunderland, Taunton and Somerset, Warrington, Walverhampton, Whitehaven, Wortley, and York. Two were in Wales: Menai, and Wales. Seven were in Scotland: Dundee, Edinburgh (Pitt Club of Scotland), Glasgow, Greenock, Kilmarnock, Paisley, and Stirling.

<sup>22</sup> The number of Irish Orange Lodges was more than 1,000. Simes, 'The Ultra Tories', 195-198.

<sup>23</sup> With reference to appendix 20 in *Report from the Select Committee Appointed to Inquire into the Origin, Nature, Extent and Tendency of Orange Institutions in Great Britain and the Colonies*, Hereward Senior has listed '391' Orange Lodges in Britain in '1830'. Investigating this *Report*, I have found two mistakes in Senior's list. First, the *Report* lists 381 Orange Lodges, not 391. According to it, the number of lodges in Newcastle-upon-Tyne is ten, not sixteen; that in Plymouth & Portsmouth Docks is three, not ten; and that in Sheffield is three, not four. In addition, he has not added to the list Stranraer, in which four lodges were formed. Second, according to the *Report*, the list describes the distribution and the number of Orange Lodges in 1835, not 1830. The distribution and the number of lodges in 1830 can be seen in the *Report*, appendix 19, 141-144. According to it, there were 265 lodges and the Grand Lodge in Britain and the colonies in November 1830. These 266 lodges were: thirty military lodges in Britain, 234 civil lodges in Britain, and the remaining two in the colonies. Out of 234 civil lodges, six were dormant. *Report from*





Map 4: Distribution of the Brunswick Clubs

1800 mainly by English and Scottish regimental officers, who had served on active duty in Ireland particularly during the Irish rebellion of 1798. Thereafter, civilian lodges were also formed. By 1815, there were seventy-five British Orange Lodges.<sup>24</sup> They had many similarities to other Tory clubs and societies especially in terms of anti-radicalism and the defence of the Established Churches.<sup>25</sup> Their political

colour was, of course, orange, but they also sometimes used a Tory colour, blue: for example, as a phrase of one of the Orange songs, 'From clime to clime she [Minerva] searching flew, And with the Orange mix'd True Blue'.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, local Tories developed pressure groups to pursue a particular policy. While the True Blue Clubs and the Pitt Clubs also had a political function to appeal to Westminster, the most typical Tory pressure group was the Brunswick Clubs established in England and Wales. Even though less numerous and influential than the more than

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*the Select Committee Appointed to Inquire into the Origin, Nature, Extent and Tendency of Orange Institutions in Great Britain and the Colonies; with the Minutes of Evidence, Appendix and Index*, Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed, 7 September 1835, appendix 20, 145; Hereward Senior, *Orangeism in Ireland and Britain, 1795-1836* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), appendix C, 304-305.

<sup>24</sup> William Nuttall, *The Orange Miscellany; or, Orangeman's Guide: Containing Select & Original Song, particularly Adapted to the Business of the Lodge, Extracts and Original Treatises, Prologues, Epilogues, &c. A List of Orange Lodges in England, Toasts & Sentiments, &c.* (Huddersfield: J. Lancashire, 1815), 97-201.

<sup>25</sup> Navickas, *Loyalism and Radicalism in Lancashire*, 108-130; Frank Neal, *Sectarian Violence: The Liverpool Experience, 1819-1914; an Aspect of Anglo-Irish History* (Liverpool: Newsham Press, 1988), 7-32.

<sup>26</sup> Nuttall, *The Orange Miscellany*, 42. See also, *ibid.*, 168, 203, 205.

200 Irish Brunswick Clubs,<sup>27</sup> they increased their number rapidly to more than forty in late 1828 as seen in Map 4.<sup>28</sup> They provided the ‘Ultra’ Tories with an important platform to assist the extra-parliamentary anti-Catholic movement in influencing parliamentary decisions.

There are two significant features about the distribution of the Tory clubs and societies. First, they expanded in Britain at large. As Peter Clark has suggested, most British clubs and societies operating in the eighteenth century, aside from a few exceptions, such as freemason lodges, were overwhelmingly English ones.<sup>29</sup> With regard to the Reeves’ loyalist societies, Bob Harris and Atle Wold have pointed out that they were seldom formed in Scotland and, if any, only ‘three, possibly four’, were established compared to an estimated 1,000 plus or perhaps even 1,500 associations in England and Wales.<sup>30</sup> In this sense, the pan-British expansion of the Pitt Clubs and, more prominently, of the Orange Lodges was a remarkable phenomenon. It may have offered a foundation for the pan-British development of the Conservative Clubs and Associations, whose number increased to several hundred within five years of the post-1832 era.<sup>31</sup> Second, it seems that the Tory clubs and societies expanded more

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<sup>27</sup> Simes, ‘The Ultra Tories’, 200. Alan Phylan has listed 174 Irish Brunswick Clubs, from the *Ennis Chronicle and Clare Advertiser*, 29 November 1828. Alan Phylan, ‘The Brunswick Clubs: Rise, Contradictions and Abyss’, *Old Limerick Journal*, 40 (2004), appendix 1, 31-32.

<sup>28</sup> There were at least forty-two British Brunswick Clubs in operation. Of these, thirty-three were in England: Bacup, Bolton-le-Moore, Bridgenorth, Buckinghamshire, Chelmsford, Cheshire, Colchester, Colyton Hundven, Derby, Essex, Exeter, Honiton, Kent, Leeds, Leicester, London, Macclesfield, Manchester, Newborough, Newton Abbott, Northampton, Northumberland, Norwich, Nottingham, Oswetry, Ripon, Rochester, Pewdley, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, Stockport, Suffolk, Wallingford, Wiltshire, and Worcester. Seven were in Wales: Anglesey, Bangor, Caernarvon County, Caernarvon Town, Llangefni, Llanguinnen, and Merioneth. The available primary sources and the existing literature do not provide any record of Brunswick Clubs in Scotland.

<sup>29</sup> Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, 98-100, 131-139, esp. Figure 4.2.

<sup>30</sup> Bob Harris, *The Scottish People and the French Revolution* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), 125; Atle L. Wold, ‘Loyalism in Scotland in the 1790s’, in U. Broich, H.T. Dickinson, and E. Hellmuth (eds.), *Reactions to Revolutions: The 1790s and their Aftermath* (Münster: LIT, 2007), 110. The exact number of the Reeves’ loyalist associations in Britain has not been established. Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 100; Dozier, *For King, Constitution, and Country*, 60-62.

<sup>31</sup> Stewart, *Conservative Party*, 131. Besides, between 1835 and 1836, more than 100 Conservative

widely than their Whig counterparts.<sup>32</sup> These points suggest that the Tory clubs and societies, while less in number than the Reeves' societies and the Conservative Clubs and Associations, were influential local centres to express their political opinions and compete with their political opponents.

With regard to the distribution of the Tory clubs and societies in England, the general tendency suggests where local Tories and their opponents were influential. They expanded particularly in the industrial north, the Midlands, and to a lesser extent East Anglia, which suggests that English Tory clubs and societies tended to be established in heated political battlefields against local Whigs and against provincial radicalism. Another noticeable tendency can also be found in the expansion of the British Orange Lodges, which were mainly formed in the north-west, where there were a large number of Irish Catholic immigrants.<sup>33</sup> For the same reason, Scottish Orange Lodges were much more numerous in the west than in any other region of Scotland.<sup>34</sup>

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societies for the working classes, called the Operative Conservative Associations, were established to prevent these classes from going to extremes in support of radicalism. Walsh, *Making Angels in Marble*, 108.

<sup>32</sup> The distribution of the Whig clubs and societies is as follows. Fox Clubs or Fox Dinners (six): Bristol, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Newcastle, Norfolk, and Suffolk. Others Whig clubs and societies (twelve): Bristol Concentric Society; Cirencester Whig Club; Cheshire Whig Club; Colchester Independent Club; Devon County Club (Devonshire Whig Club); Essex Whig Club, Gloucester (Constitutional) Whig Club; Kent Liberal dinner; Liverpool Concentric Society; Maldon Independent Club; Nantwich Whig Club; York Whig Club. Austin Mitchell, *The Whigs in Opposition, 1815-1830* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 54-55; Brett, 'The Liberal Middle Classes', chapters 1-2; HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, 'Maldon'.

<sup>33</sup> Senior, *Orangeism*, 156.

<sup>34</sup> In 1835, there were thirty-five Scottish lodges: ten in Ayr; two in Dumfries; five in Edinburgh; twelve in Glasgow; four in Stranraer; and two in Wilson's Town. This shows that all the lodges except those in Edinburgh were formed in West Scotland. *Orange Institutions in Great Britain and the Colonies*, appendix 20, 145.

## II

### STRUCTURAL ORGANISATION

#### *Middle-Class Dominated?*

Many historians have claimed that the expansion of British clubs and societies was closely connected to the expansion of the middle classes and their emerging class consciousness.<sup>35</sup> They have also insisted that, for the middle or middling classes, clubs and societies were an effective means of counteracting the corrupt hegemony of the aristocracy.<sup>36</sup> In opposition to this claim, however, Peter Clark, looking at social and cultural clubs and societies in particular, has insisted that ‘there was no straightforward alignment of British voluntary associations with social classes or class formation up to the early nineteenth century’. He has also maintained that ‘it seems probable that eighteenth-century clubs and societies were more influential in developing linkages inside urban communities, between social groups, both within and (to a limited extent) across broad social alignments’.<sup>37</sup> His argument has been supported by more recent historical work, in which Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, in particular, has examined nineteenth-century associations within a European context and has maintained that associational culture served to reconcile the traditional elite with expanding new groups.<sup>38</sup> Based on such evidence, this section will explore the relationship between Tory associational culture and class, and will conclude that the revisionist argument is more convincing and applicable to political clubs and societies in the early nineteenth

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<sup>35</sup> Robert J. Morris, ‘Voluntary Societies and British Urban Elites, 1780-1850: An Analysis’, *Historical Journal*, 26 (1983), 95-118; *idem.*, ‘Clubs, Societies and Associations’.

<sup>36</sup> John Brewer, ‘Commercialization and Politics’, in Neil Mackendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb (eds.), *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 197-262.

<sup>37</sup> Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, 445-446.

<sup>38</sup> Hoffmann, *Civil Society*.

century.

Table 2-1: The Committee Members of the Pitt Club of Scotland, 1814<sup>39</sup>

Aristocrats and gentry	21
High local posts	2
Naval and military interests	3
Unidentifiable	1
Total	27

Table 2-2: The Members' List of the Pitt Club of Scotland, 1814<sup>40</sup>

Aristocrats and gentry	69
High local posts	17
Lesser local posts	37
Naval and military interests	45
Merchants and professionals	271
Unidentifiable	205
Total	643

An analysis of the composition of the committees of local Tory clubs and societies, which were their managerial centres, reveals that, in most cases, they were composed of members of the aristocracy and the landed gentry, some of whom were MPs. The Canning Club, for example, chose its presidents from among the local landed elite, such as James Ackers,<sup>41</sup> and the most important patron of this club was John Gladstone, MP for Lancaster.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, a large majority of the ordinary members of these Tory clubs and societies came from the traditional landed elite and the substantial

<sup>39</sup> There were two MPs among these twenty-seven committee members. NRS, GD/113/5/283/28, The Pitt Club: Lists of Members, Circulars to Members, Programmes of Entertainment, and Discharged Accounts (Pitt Club Papers A: 1814-1824), Papers of the Innes Family of Stow, Peeblesshire.

<sup>40</sup> There were nineteen MPs among these 643 members. *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> He was the president of the Canning Club between 1812 and 1813, Canning Club, Minutes, 4, 38.

<sup>42</sup> HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, 'John Gladstone'.

middle classes, such as merchants and professionals. In some Tory clubs, such as the Chelmsford Pitt Club founded by ‘the most respectable Tradesmen of this Town’, the initiative was taken by those lower in the middle classes than merchants and professional men, but probably this case was rare.<sup>43</sup> Tables 2-1 and 2-2, showing the composition of the Pitt Club of Scotland, demonstrate this. Table 2-1 shows that the committee was almost entirely dominated by the landed classes, while according to Table 2-2 a substantial number of members included such middle-class men as merchants, advocates, bankers, writers, and writers to the signet. They constituted at least forty per cent of its total membership. A similar conclusion can be applied not only to other local Tory clubs and societies,<sup>44</sup> but also to their Whig counterparts.<sup>45</sup> Peter Brett has pointed out that the ‘liberal middle classes’ in the localities were mainly composed of ‘merchants, bankers, professional men and tradesmen’.<sup>46</sup>

A similar pattern appeared in the London Pitt Club. Among the twelve committee members in 1808, the Duke of Richmond took the presidency with the aid of several vice presidents including Lord Eldon, the Marquess of Huntly, and George Rose, MP for Christchurch and vice-president of the Board of Trade.<sup>47</sup> The senior party leaders, such as Lord Liverpool and the Duke of Wellington, as well as younger members like Robert Peel were among the club’s official members and constant attendants. This society, however, was composed of ‘Peers, Privy Councillors, Members of Parliament, Sons of

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<sup>43</sup> Essex Record Office, D/Z 4/2, Chelmsford Pitt Club: Proceedings and Rules (1817-24), 1.

<sup>44</sup> For instance, the Suffolk Pitt Club was composed of ‘such a mass of loyal and independent Gentlemen, ... accompanied by such a body of the Clergy, of the Yeomanry, and by many most respectable Gentlemen concerned in the trade and commerce of the country, ... Gentlemen distinguished both in the army and navy’. *Ipswich Journal*, 25 August 1821. With regard to the Brunswick Clubs, see Simes, ‘The Ultra Tories’, 201-202.

<sup>45</sup> For example, see the York Whig Club. York Archives and Local History, Y363 os/pm, Resolutions passed at a Meeting of York Whig Club, formed Sept. 18th 1818.

<sup>46</sup> Brett, ‘The Liberal Middle Classes’, 10.

<sup>47</sup> Cecil Powney, *History of the London Pitt Club 1793-1925* (London: Harrison, 1925), 6.

Peers, Baronets, Divines, private gentlemen, including a few officers of the Navy and Army, and a large number of merchants and tradesmen chiefly residing in the City'.<sup>48</sup>

The membership of these two Pitt Clubs suggests that they were different from the political clubs established by 'old' Tories in London in the previous century, such as the Loyal Brotherhood and the Cocoa Tree. These two eighteenth-century 'old' Tory clubs excluded those who were not peers and MPs and restricted the number of members up to around 100.<sup>49</sup> On the other hand, the Pitt Clubs were open to the middle classes, which increased the number of members of each club: to 643 in Edinburgh in 1814 and about 1,300 in London in 1816.<sup>50</sup> Probably, this openness was related to their interest in influencing public opinion by inviting supportive newspaper editors to meetings and dinners.<sup>51</sup> In this respect, they contrasted sharply with the Fox Club in London, which was still such an eighteenth-century-style private society predominantly composed of 'Whig families and members of the Houses of Commons or Lords'.<sup>52</sup>

The Tory clubs and societies were open to the middle classes, but most of them were still very exclusive. The annual subscription fee of each club varied widely, ranging between one and four pounds, but in most cases it was about one guinea.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>49</sup> Linda Colley, 'The Loyal Brotherhood and the Cocoa Tree: The London Organization of the Tory Party, 1727-1760', *Historical Journal*, 20 (1977), 86-87, 92-94.

<sup>50</sup> Powney, *London Pitt Club*, 10.

<sup>51</sup> For example, at the 1817 annual meeting, the London Pitt Club invited the editors of the *Day*, the *New Times*, the *MP*, the *Sun*, the *Courier*, and the *Anti Gallican Monitor*. *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>52</sup> Charles Sebag-Montefiore, *Charles James Fox, Brooks's and Whiggery, The Fox Club* (London: Fox Club private printing, 2006), 11.

<sup>53</sup> For example, the Bolton Pitt Club's admission fee was one pound, while the Manchester Pitt Club's was one guinea. Lancashire Record Office, DDHU 53/82/11, List of Members, Resolutions of the Bolton Pitt Club, 17 May 1813; Chetham Library, MUM Mum.A.2.79.e(2), The Rules of the Pitt Club, 10 December of 1812. Even if the Tory clubs and societies referred to the fees in their rules (or something else), many of them stipulated only admission fee. It is not reasonable to assume that members did not pay anything after the admission fee. Probably, the admission fee mentioned in those rules meant the annual subscription fee in the following year. As far as I have found, only the two Pitt Clubs of London and Edinburgh stipulated the admission fee and the annual subscription fee respectively. The admission fee of the London Pitt Club was three pounds (four by 1816) and the annual one was two, which was exempt for the first year. Powney, *London Pitt Club*, 11; *New Monthly Magazine*, 5:29 (1816:June), 432.

Even though the one-guinea subscription was not so high as that of gentlemen's clubs in London, which ranged between seven and eleven pounds,<sup>54</sup> it was probably still too high for many of the middling classes.

Of course, there were exceptions. For instance, the Canning Club's subscription was only five shillings,<sup>55</sup> which may have been related to the constituency's situation, in which the freeman-voters were 'socially mixed, including some of the lowest and highest classes of Liverpool society'.<sup>56</sup> The same amount was demanded as the admission fee by the Knutsford King and Constitution Club.<sup>57</sup> In comparison the subscription of some radical societies in the localities was not that different. The Leicester Hampden Club, which was established early in October 1816 and was led by small tradesmen or skilled artisans, requested members to pay a penny per week as the minimum subscription. This weekly payment amounted to approximately four shillings a year, which was not so different from that of the Canning Club and the Knutsford King and Constitution Club.<sup>58</sup> It seems that the Orange Lodges were more open even than these two Tory societies. D.G.S. Simes has pointed out that, 'It was the element of democracy in the Orange system which distinguished its structure from the traditional hierarchy'. The British Orange Lodges, and the English lodges in particular, were composed of not only members of the landed interest and the professional middle

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According to the sixth rule of the Pitt Club of Scotland, 'Each Member to pay on his admission, Three Guineas for the first year, and Two Guineas annually thereafter, or he may redeem the whole by payment of Ten Guineas, provided the redemption be made within eighteen months after his admission'. NRS, GD/113/5/283/28, Rules of the Pitt Club and List of the Members in 1814.

<sup>54</sup> Jupp, *British Politics on the Eve of Reform*, 361, 384, n.91.

<sup>55</sup> This amount perhaps was annual one. Canning Club, Minutes, 5.

<sup>56</sup> E.M. Menzies, 'The Freeman Voter in Liverpool, 1802-1835', *THSLC*, 124 (1972), 87.

<sup>57</sup> Knutsford King and Constitution Club, Minute Book.

<sup>58</sup> Of course, paying a penny a week is different from paying five shillings at once as the annual fee. This calculation suggests, however, that the Canning Club and the Knutsford King and Constitution Club were much more 'popular' than other Tory clubs and societies. A. Temple Patterson, 'Luddism, Hampden Clubs, and Trade Unions in Leicestershire, 1816-17', *English Historical Review*, 63 (1948), 176. Nancy D. LoPatin has pointed out that the annual fee of the Liverpool Political Union was almost the same, a penny per week or a shilling per quarter. LoPatin, *Political Unions*, 48.



classes, but also working-class men, who could be a Master without difficulty, and men in all these three classes called each other ‘brother’. He has argued that, ‘It is possible that the origins of working class Toryism are to be found in Orangeism’.<sup>59</sup>

The inclusion of working-class members, however, was not common in a majority of the Tory clubs and societies. Their anniversary celebrations, such as the birthday dinners for the king, the Regent, and Pitt, which were held by election clubs as well as by commemorative associations, also demonstrate the exclusiveness of Tory associational culture. While these events were the most important ones for the Tory clubs and societies, they operated, as Peter Brett has shown, in a ‘social and political exclusion zone’, which made it almost impossible for the middling and lower classes to participate. Two factors brought about this exclusion. The first one was the cost of a ticket, ranging between fifteen shillings and a guinea.<sup>60</sup> For each dinner, even the Canning Club charged one guinea,<sup>61</sup> and a ticket for Pitt’s birthday party hosted by the Manchester Pitt Club was one pound and five shillings.<sup>62</sup> The annual income of the middling classes, ranging from fifty to four hundred pounds, might have enabled them

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<sup>59</sup> Simes, ‘The Ultra Tories’, 193-194. Katrina Navickas has underscored the same point: ‘In England, Orangeism internalized what was to become a defence of the principles of the Established Church and the Tory party. ... Orangeism could be seen as forming part of the root or at least as having helped to shape the emergence of a Tory working class in nineteenth-century Lancashire’. Navickas, *Loyalism and Radicalism in Lancashire*, 129.

<sup>60</sup> Peter Brett has shown that the price of a political dinner of radicals in Newcastle was only two shillings and held at a rope factory. Peter Brett, ‘Political Dinners in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain: Platform, Meeting Place and Battleground’, *History*, 81 (1996), 531.

<sup>61</sup> Regarding the Canning Club, see Whittingham-Jones, ‘Liverpool’s Political Clubs’, 124.

<sup>62</sup> *Wheeler’s*, 25 May 1816. This price was not substantially different. For example, the cost of each dinner of the Norfolk and Norwich Pitt Club was fifteen shillings. See the printed proceedings of the 1820 dinner in Norfolk Record Office, MS502, a Volume of Memoranda and Minutes relating to the Corporation Club 1764-1819. The ‘Anniversary Dinner Bill’ of the Rochdale Pitt Club was much cheaper at seven shillings and six pence, but it did not include fruit and wine. If the attendants wanted them, they must pay extra. Touchstone Rochdale, P/MISC/PITT, Notebook with Details of Rochdale Pitt Club (including Membership and Officers for 1818), 28-29. The ticket of the Bolton Pitt Club was also cheap, sold for eight shillings and six pence. It was, however, just called ‘Admission Ticket’, so it is probable that, like the Rochdale Pitt Club, if the attendants wanted a set of meal, drink, and dessert, they should pay more. List of Members, Resolutions of the Bolton Pitt Club, 17 May 1813; *Wheeler’s*, 24 May 1817.

to attend a dinner.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, given that each dinner cost eight shillings at Brooks's Club, which was one of the most genteel clubs in London at this time, and that a ticket price of a ball on the king's birthday was six shillings in Manchester, the ticket price of the Tory clubs and societies might be high for a single meal and for political entertainment.<sup>64</sup> Second, the starting time of a dinner also brought about some exclusions. According to Brett, dinners usually began at five o'clock, and the starting time 'excluded those who did not belong to a leisured elite or who did not have control over their employment, most of whom would still be at work at this hour'.<sup>65</sup> The dinners of the Tory clubs and societies started at different times, but usually within an hour before or after five o'clock.<sup>66</sup> In addition, they were constituted of lavish entertainments such as choral and solo performances by professional singers with a military band and a grand piano as well as expensive meals of venison and turtle with excellent wines and desserts.<sup>67</sup> This atmosphere was not likely to appear welcoming to ordinary people.<sup>68</sup>

It may be worth comparing the membership of the Tory clubs and societies with that of the Reeves' societies and that of the Conservative Clubs and Associations. The

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<sup>63</sup> Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People, England, 1727-1783* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 62-63.

<sup>64</sup> Philip Ziegler and Desmond Seward (eds.), *Brooks's: A Social History* (London: Constable, 1991), 28; *Wheeler's*, 29 May 1813.

<sup>65</sup> Brett, 'Political Dinners', 530.

<sup>66</sup> The Pitt Clubs of Lancaster and Suffolk at four. *Lancaster Gazette*, 20 May 1820; *MP*, 26 August 1823. The Manchester Pitt Club at half past four. *Wheeler's*, 24 May 1817. The Pitt Club of Devon and Exeter and the Canning Club at five. *Leeds Mercury*, 28 May 1831; Whittingham-Jones, 'Liverpool's Political Clubs', 124. The Pitt Clubs of Birmingham and Leeds at half past five. *MP*, 29 October 1823; *ibid.*, 2 June 1825.

<sup>67</sup> Powney, *London Pitt Club*, 9.

<sup>68</sup> For example, the accessibility to fine music played by an orchestra was limited to high social ranks. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 306-307. Moreover, some members of the Tory clubs and societies needed to pay extra to attend the annual celebration. For example, it cost the members of the Pitt Clubs £1 16s. 6d. for the Pitt medal with inscription of their name, which they wore at the annual dinners. Powney, *London Pitt Club*, 6, 12. If members of the Knutsford King and Constitution Club attended the meetings without wearing the uniform, 'a dark blue coat with the buttons of the society and a red waistcoat with small gilt buttons', they had to pay a fine of five shillings. Knutsford King and Constitution Club, Minute Book.

leadership of the Reeves' societies was taken by local men of property, but their membership was open to the lower orders. As many historians have emphasised, all social classes were involved in their loyalist campaigns.<sup>69</sup> The membership fee of the central organisation in London, the Association for the Preservation of Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers, was low at five shillings.<sup>70</sup> With regard to the provincial loyal associations, the membership fee might be lower. The loyal associations established in Edinburgh in the 1790s might be put in a different situation, however. According to Bob Harris, 'the overwhelming preponderance of members' was 'drawn from the legal, professional and mercantile elites',<sup>71</sup> many of whom probably would join the Pitt Club of Scotland.<sup>72</sup> The Conservative Clubs and Associations 'were generally far more progressive and popular than those of the Reformers',<sup>73</sup> while it seems that their members were almost entirely composed of the landed and the middle classes. Norman Gash has estimated that their annual subscription fees ranged between five shillings and two pounds,<sup>74</sup> which were quite similar to those of the Tory clubs and societies.

### *Leadership and Influence*

The leadership and influence of the Tory clubs and societies lay in the localities. In most

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<sup>69</sup> Dickinson, 'Popular Loyalism in Britain', 520; Dozier, *For King, Constitution and Country*, 63-64; O'Gorman, 'Origins and Trajectories of Loyalism', 33.

<sup>70</sup> Dozier, *For King, Constitution and Country*, 94.

<sup>71</sup> Harris, *The Scottish People and the French Revolution*, 132.

<sup>72</sup> Some of the active members of the Edinburgh association to whom Bob Harris has referred in his book, such as George Ferguson and John Wauchope, were members of the Pitt Club of Scotland. *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>73</sup> Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work*, 73. A similar comment can be seen in Stewart, *Conservative Party*, 135-136.

<sup>74</sup> Norman Gash, 'The Organization of the Conservative Party, 1832-1846. Part II: The Electoral Organization', *Parliamentary History*, 2 (1983), 148. According to David Walsh, the annual subscription of the Blackburn Operative Conservative Association was reduced from five to two shillings just after its establishment in 1835, because its working-class members had complained about five shillings being too high. Walsh, *Making Angels in Marble*, 107.

cases, they were established under the initiative of the local Tory elites.<sup>75</sup> Their management was under the authority of each local standing committee composed of office bearers annually elected by the members. The committee served as the nerve centre of the command, control, and decision-making structure. It made, on its own, the rules and resolutions. With regarding to the annual celebrations, they decided not only the date and place, but also the songs and toasts to be performed as well as the speakers to be selected.<sup>76</sup> The Tory clubs and societies were financed from their own funds, which demonstrates that they were financially independent of the Tory government or parliamentary party or of any other political organisation.<sup>77</sup> This supports the prevailing historiographical evidence that British clubs and societies were basically locally oriented, and their associational culture was controlled by local men. This was also a feature similarly seen in the local loyalist societies in the 1790s and the Conservative Clubs and Associations.<sup>78</sup>

Nevertheless, it is worth emphasising that the decision-making processes of each local Tory club could be affected by complicated regional networks. Such networks tended to be stronger especially in neighbouring areas. One of the ways of networking

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<sup>75</sup> For example, see the Pitt Clubs of Newcastle and Chelmsford. Pitt Club (Northumberland and Newcastle-upon-Tyne), *Commemoration of the Birth-Day of the Right Honourable William Pitt, by the Northumberland and Newcastle upon Tyne Pitt Club, at the Assembly Rooms, Newcastle upon Tyne, Saturday, May the Twenty-Seventh, MDCCCXX* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Edward Walker, 1820), 15; Chelmsford Pitt Club, Proceedings and Rules, 78. Regarding several Pitt Clubs, leading Tory MPs took the initiative of, or had some influence on, their establishment. Sack, 'The Memory of Burke and the Memory of Pitt', 635-636.

<sup>76</sup> NRS, GD/113/5/283/109, Pitt Club Papers; NRS, GD224/654/1/6, a letter from Money Penny to the Duke of Buccleugh on 28 April 1817, Correspondence of Henry Duke of Buccleugh, and Charles, Lord Dalkeith, his Son; NRS, GD113/5/351/55, Discharged account to James Ballantyne, 29 March 1816, Discharges and Related Items concerning Some of the Financial Interests of Gilbert Innes Esq of Stow (1816).

<sup>77</sup> NRS, GD113/5/283, Papers of the Innes Family of Stow, Peeblesshire, Correspondence of Gilbert Innes of Stow, The Pitt Club: Lists of Members, Circulars to Members, Programmes of Entertainment, and Discharged Accounts (1814-1824).

<sup>78</sup> Dozier, *For King, Constitution and Country*, 105; Gash, 'Conservative Party, Part II', 140-141; Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work*, 59-61; Walsh, *Making Angels in Marble*, 95.

was through personnel exchanges, as a single person often belonged to several clubs in the neighbourhood. For example, the Manchester Pitt Club, which was one of the largest Pitt Clubs with 376 members in 1819,<sup>79</sup> provided a significant political centre for the Tories in the north of England. James Ackers, first president of the Canning Club,<sup>80</sup> Richard Hancock, who was frequently elected as vice-president and chairman of the Knutsford King and Constitution Club,<sup>81</sup> and William Hulton, leader of the Bolton Pitt Club,<sup>82</sup> were members of the Manchester Pitt Club. Colonel Ralph Fletcher was a committee member of the Bolton Pitt Club and also the deputy grand master of the British Grand Lodge established in Manchester.<sup>83</sup> At the dinner held in June 1816 by the Knutsford King and Constitution Club, several members of the Manchester Pitt Club, such as the leading Mancunian Pittite, Trafford Trafford, attended.<sup>84</sup> Members of the Nottingham Pitt Club joined the anniversary dinner of the Derbyshire Loyal True Blue Club in October 1818. Such personnel exchanges demonstrate that local Tories shared the aims and principles of their organisational activity to a certain extent. At that dinner, Lewis Allsop, one of the Derbyshire True Blues, insisted that ‘the objects and principles of the two Clubs [the Nottingham Pitt Club and the Derbyshire Loyal True Blue Club] ... were both the same’.<sup>85</sup>

In addition to these individual ties, regional networks were developed by promoting the distribution of information, particularly newspaper reporting. The Warrington Pitt Club, for example, published a notice of its general meeting by using

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<sup>79</sup> MPC records, *List of the Members of the Manchester Pitt Club from the Commencement to and including the Sixth of May, 1819* (Manchester, 1819).

<sup>80</sup> Canning Club, Minutes, 2-4.

<sup>81</sup> Knutsford King and Constitution Club, Minute Book.

<sup>82</sup> List of Members, Resolutions of the Bolton Pitt Club, 17 May 1813.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*; Senior, *Orangeism*, 154-155.

<sup>84</sup> Knutsford King and Constitution Club, Minute Book.

<sup>85</sup> *Derby Mercury*, 29 Oct 1818.

the newspapers of Liverpool and Manchester.<sup>86</sup> Newspaper reporting permitted the provincial Tories to know what was going on in other Tory clubs and societies in neighbouring regions.

Pan-British networks also developed gradually in several ways. First, local Tory clubs and societies were supported by the leading parliamentary Tories. Most of these local organisations permitted or occasionally asked Tory MPs and aristocrats with local interest to be members. The Gloucester True Blue Club was supported by the Duke of Beaufort, Lord Edward Somerset, and Thomas Cooper.<sup>87</sup> Canning and Huskisson, who were representatives for Liverpool, joined the Manchester Pitt Club as members.<sup>88</sup> In addition, those parliamentary Tories who did not build up a regional interest still supported local Tory clubs and societies. For example, the membership of the Manchester Pitt Club included the Duke of Wellington, Lord Kenyon, and Sir Charles W.W. Wynn, all of whom did not have a particular regional connection.<sup>89</sup> Similarly, Lord Castlereagh, who did not have any personal connection with Cheshire, became an honorary member of the Knutsford King and Constitution Club in 1814.<sup>90</sup> At the public meeting organised by the members of the Hereford Pitt Club in June 1827, E.F. Scudamore Stanhope, chairman and the club member, presented an address to Robert Peel, insisting that ‘we desire, though locally unconnected, to tender you this public testimony of our esteem’.<sup>91</sup>

Second, the proceedings of the Tory clubs and societies were often reported even in

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<sup>86</sup> For example, see the procedure of the 1819 dinner of the Warrington Pitt Club. Warrington Library, WMS 1011, Warrington Pitt Club, Minute Book, 1814-1829.

<sup>87</sup> *Bristol Mercury*, 12 Feb 1827.

<sup>88</sup> MPC records, A List of the Members of the Manchester Pitt Club, 4 May 1827.

<sup>89</sup> A List of the Members of the Manchester Pitt Club, 4 May 1827. Wellington also obtained membership of the Warrington Pitt Club in 1821. Warrington Pitt Club, Minute Book.

<sup>90</sup> Knutsford King and Constitution Club, Minute Book.

<sup>91</sup> *John Bull*, 11 June 1827.

remote areas. A Tory local newspaper in Bury St. Edmunds, for instance, reported the activity of the Pitt Club of Scotland.<sup>92</sup> Matthew Cragoe has emphasised the role of newspaper reports of the dinners and meetings of the Conservative Clubs and Associations in developing grass-roots Conservatism in post-1832 Britain, claiming that:

Newspaper broke down the barriers of time and space that separated individual Conservatives. ... In absence of any central party direction, it is arguable that it was the coverage offered by the national press that supplied local Conservatives with a sense of their party's unity and extent.<sup>93</sup>

It should be noted, however, that such a sense of national community underpinned by the press can be seen in the Tory clubs and societies as well.

Third, local Tory clubs and societies were also connected in conceptual terms. The most significant factor was the cult of Pitt, which was not only central to the Pitt Clubs, but was also promoted in other Tory clubs and societies, in the True Blue Clubs and the King and Constitution Clubs in particular. In May 1816, the Knutsford King and Constitution Club regarded 'this club as a token of their Veneration of the memory of the Right Honourable William Pitt and of their high respect of "The Pitt Club"'.<sup>94</sup> At the anniversary dinner of the Derbyshire True Blue Club, Richard Cheslyn, who was a member of the club and the Nottingham Pitt Club, stated that:

[The] *Preservation inviolable of the Constitution* of this Country in Church & State, as it was established at the Revolution, would be best attended to, by a *prevalence* and *extension* of those principles. To *these* Principles was Mr. Pitt

<sup>92</sup> *Bury and Norwich Post*, 31 May 1826.

<sup>93</sup> Cragoe, 'The Great Reform Act', 601-602.

<sup>94</sup> Knutsford King and Constitution Club, Minute Book.

most sincerely attached, – and *such were the Principles of those Clubs* [the Derbyshire True Blue Club and the Nottingham Pitt Club] to which he [Cheslyn] had the honour to belong.<sup>95</sup>

At these dinners, most of the Tory clubs and societies gave the toast, ‘The immortal Memory of the Right Hon. William Pitt’, with the most famous Pittite song, ‘The Pilot that weathered the Storm’, which Canning had written for Pitt’s birthday dinner in London in 1802.<sup>96</sup> In order to connect themselves to a wider organisational association, the True Blue Clubs as well as the Pitt Clubs gave the toast, ‘The Pitt Clubs of the United Kingdoms’. In May 1817, the Castle Corporation Club of Norwich, which had been established in 1764, changed its title to the Norfolk and Norwich Pitt Club.<sup>97</sup> The Derbyshire True Blue Club, even if it did not change its own name, regarded itself as one of the Pitt Clubs.<sup>98</sup> It seems that the cult of Pitt hardly developed in the British Orange Lodges.<sup>99</sup> Nevertheless, it was one of the peculiar features of local Toryism in the early nineteenth century, which was uncommon in the Reeves’ societies and the Conservative Clubs and Associations.

The cult of Pitt was a significant symbol to link the Tory clubs and societies to a national political culture without undermining localism. For example, from the eighteenth century onwards, Norwich politics had been represented by ministerialist orange and purple and reformist opposition’s blue and white. The Norfolk and Norwich

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<sup>95</sup> *Derby Mercury*, 29 Oct 1818.

<sup>96</sup> *MP*, 11 January 1819.

<sup>97</sup> See a printed report of the 1817 celebration of Mr. Pitt’s dinner. Memoranda and Minutes relating to the Corporation Club.

<sup>98</sup> Pitt Club (London), *The Pitt Club. The Commemoration of the Anniversary of Mr. Pitt’s Birth-Day, at the City of London Tavern, on Tuesday the 28th of May, 1816. Edward Bootle Wilbraham, Esq. M.P., in the Chair* (London: T. Davidson, 1816), 54.

<sup>99</sup> It is difficult to know the proceedings of the meetings of the Orange Lodges, but in a pamphlet published in 1815, which listed Orange toasts and songs, Pitt was not mentioned. Nuttall, *The Orange Miscellany*.



Pitt Club not only decorated the chairman's seat with flags of orange and purple, but also displayed nationally adopted materials, such as Pitt's busts, at the venue for the dinners.<sup>100</sup> Similar ornamentation with a mixture of local and national materials can also be seen in the club room of the Canning Club. The room was decorated by local ornaments, such as a painting of the Liverpool Arms as well as many belongings in the local Canningite colour, scarlet, including a merino canopy, window curtains, and the cushions of the vice president's chair. At the same time, however, it was also filled with nation-wide partisan symbols, such as an inscription and a painting of Pitt.<sup>101</sup> This visual and spatial representation showed that localism and a pan-British symbolism were not incompatible, but were complementary.

Another interesting example of a mixture of local pride and a national culture appeared in the national anthem, 'God save the King'. The Northumberland and Newcastle upon Tyne Pitt Club, like other Tory clubs and societies, sang the song after giving the toast to the king. The club added local elements, as parody, to the lyrics of the fifth verse of it:

The manly Hearts on Tyne,  
O, Royal George, are thine,  
True to their King;  
Northumbria's, of old,  
Were England's strongest hold,  
And still are firm and bold.  
God save the King.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>100</sup> See a printed procedure of the 1820 dinner of the Norfolk and Norwich Pitt Club. Memoranda and Minutes relating to the Corporation Club.

<sup>101</sup> A large gilt-framed portrait of the Prince Regent was also hung in the club room. Canning Club, Minutes, 31, 41-42, 53, 166, 174-177.

<sup>102</sup> Anon., *The Canon, or Grace, Non Nobis Domine, and the National Anthem, God Save the King: ... For the Use of, and Respectfully Dedicated to, the Northumberland and Newcastle upon Tyne Pitt Club. By a Member* (Newcastle, 1822), 4.

While this parody expressed localism, it was demonstrated *within* a national culture. Matthew Cragoe, describing the visual and spatial representation of the dining rooms of the Conservative Clubs and Associations, has pointed out that ‘slogans with a more “local” resonance ... were either relegated to inferior positions in the room ... or mediated by the national symbols’.<sup>103</sup> A similar feature can be seen in the Tory clubs and societies.

The Pitt Clubs operated in pan-British networks under a certain level of initiative taken by the London Pitt Club, which was called the ‘mother’ or ‘parent’ club.<sup>104</sup> Local Pitt Clubs not only paid considerable attention to the ‘mother’ club’s activities,<sup>105</sup> but also had direct communications with it in multiple ways. First, following requests from local clubs, the London Pitt Club published in the form of a pamphlet the lists of standing toasts and songs to be offered at the annual dinners. The ceremonial forms of local Pitt Clubs were thereby standardised to a considerable degree.<sup>106</sup>

Second, local Pitt Clubs corresponded with the ‘mother’ club regarding various items of information through their secretaries, who informed the honorary secretary of the London Pitt Club, John Gifford (and, after his death in March 1818, A.D. Welch), of their own rules, resolutions, members, proceedings, and dinners as well as their political

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<sup>103</sup> Cragoe, ‘The Great Reform Act’, 594.

<sup>104</sup> *New Monthly Magazine*, 5:29 (1816:June), 436; *Standard*, 11 September 1828.

<sup>105</sup> See, for example, Warrington Pitt Club, Minute Book.

<sup>106</sup> For example, Pitt Club (London), *The Pitt Club. The Commemoration of the Anniversary of Mr. Pitt’s Birth-Day, at the City of London Tavern, on Tuesday the 28th of May, 1816*. Similar pamphlets were printed at least in 1813, 1814, and 1815. *Idem*, *The Pitt Club Anniversary Meeting, 1813* (London: T. Davison, [1813]); *idem*, *The Pitt Club. The Triennial Commemoration of the Anniversary of Mr. Pitt’s Birth-Day, at Merchant Taylor’s Hall, on Saturday the 28th of May, 1814* (London: T. Davidson, 1814); *idem*, *The Pitt Club. The Commemoration of the Anniversary of Mr. Pitt’s Birth-Day, at the City of London Tavern, on Saturday the 27th of May, 1815*. *Sir Robert Peel, Bart. M.P. Vice-President, in the Chair* (London: T. Davidson, 1815).

activities, such as their reaction to local radical campaigns.<sup>107</sup> This kind of communication made some local Pitt Clubs act ‘completely in unison with the rules and regulations of the LONDON CLUB’.<sup>108</sup> They occasionally sought advice from the ‘mother’ club with regard to some serious political matters they found difficult to manage. For example, when the Manchester Pitt Club discussed the plan of the annual dinner of 1829, its secretary, Edward Chesshyre, sent a letter to A.D. Welch to ask about ‘what are the intentions of the London Pitt Club relative to a Meeting, the Sentiments and Toasts which they will probably adopt as suitable to the Times and especially as to our Shibboleth “The Protestant Ascendancy” – His Grace of W – Mr. P. &c. &c.’ In this letter, he went on to claim that, ‘Looking to the London Pitt Club as the Parent Institution, we trust that you will not think there is any Impropriety in your offspring soliciting your paternal advice and Information’.<sup>109</sup> Such evidence demonstrates that, to some extent, the London Pitt Club played a central role in accumulating information about provincial politics from local Pitt Clubs and it also had some influence on local Pittite activities.

Third, between the London and local Pitt Clubs, there were exchanges of personnel. Sometimes local Pittites attended the meetings of the ‘mother’ club.<sup>110</sup> A new system called ‘Members Extraordinary’ was launched in 1817, by which, if they paid 1.5 guineas, all members of local clubs were entitled to attend the London Pitt Club’s meetings and dinners. The aim of this policy was to connect as many local Pittites as possible to the central institution and to cover the costs associated with the

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<sup>107</sup> Memoranda and Minutes relating to the Corporation Club.

<sup>108</sup> *New Monthly Magazine*, 5:29 (1816:June), 436.

<sup>109</sup> MPC records, red box, 1, no. 9, 18 March 1829.

<sup>110</sup> *MP*, 20 March 1813.

correspondence conducted with local Pitt Clubs.<sup>111</sup> It is almost impossible to assess precisely how successful this measure was, but some of the local clubs reacted favourably. Forty members of the Leeds Pitt Club, for example, were registered as members extraordinary.<sup>112</sup>

Other Tory clubs and societies had a similar organisational connection between centre and periphery. Each of the Brunswick Clubs was a self-governing body, but slightly connected with their mother club, the metropolitan Brunswick Club. Most local Brunswick Clubs were established with the initiative of leading members of this central club. Their organisational structure and declared principles were commonly modeled by those in it.<sup>113</sup> With regard to the British Orange Lodges, the role of the central body, the Grand Lodge, was more significant. To establish a new Orange Lodge, a warrant issued by the Grand Lodge was necessary. These rules and regulations with which each Orange Lodge complied were made by a committee of the Grand Lodge. According to these rules and regulations, each lodge elected its own officers and masters, but it needed to inform the Grand Lodge of the results of these elections. In addition, the Grand Lodge was connected with other lodges in a financial relationship: ‘in order to establish a fund to defray the various and necessary expences of the Grand Lodge, in all Lodges, one fifth of the sum paid by members on their first admission, shall be forthwith paid by each’.<sup>114</sup>

The Reeves’ societies and the Conservative Clubs and Associations were different

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<sup>111</sup> Pitt Club (Northumberland and Newcastle-upon-Tyne), *Commemoration of the Birth-Day of the Right Honourable William Pitt, by the Northumberland and Newcastle upon Tyne Pitt Club, at the Assembly Rooms, Newcastle upon Tyne, Saturday, May the Twenty-Seventh, MDCCCXX* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Edward Walker, 1820); John Gifford’s circular letter in Powney, *London Pitt Club*, 27

<sup>112</sup> It occupied almost thirty per cent of the total of members, as the club’s membership was 140 in June 1816. *New Monthly Magazine*, 5:29 (1816:June), 436.

<sup>113</sup> Simes, ‘The Ultra Tories’, 199-201.

<sup>114</sup> Nuttall, *The Orange Miscellany*, 144-165.

in this respect. Like the Tory clubs and societies, the Reeves' societies set about creating a national network. They communicated with each other, and were given information and advice by the central body, the APLP.<sup>115</sup> By contrast, the Conservative Clubs and Associations lacked such a central body. They rarely asked the Carlton Club for political assistance,<sup>116</sup> and they developed their political action on a more voluntary basis.<sup>117</sup>

Despite the deep and widespread embedment of political clubs in British political culture, some distrust of them was occasionally expressed by parliamentary elites in particular. Political clubs themselves were not illegal. Nevertheless, they might encounter serious difficulty in drawing support from the elite, if they were socially mixed bodies composed of men of property and the lower orders, and if they expanded a national network and attempted to exercise an impact on the decision-making process in Parliament.<sup>118</sup> This kind of distrust of political clubs created in a particular situation imposed some limitations on Tory associational activity, as we shall see in the following sections. It was commonly seen in the 1790s and the post-1832 period too. With regard to the Reeves' societies, Michael Duffy has claimed that, 'if ministers were to sanction the mobilization of a popular loyalist movement, they had no desire to see it get out of control of government or even to start dictating policy to government'. They supported with some hesitation 'the Reeves association as an example of the movement they wanted, but one which would encourage the spread of independent local associations

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<sup>115</sup> Mitchell, 'The Association Movement', 73-74; Harris, *The Scottish People and the French Revolution*, 126.

<sup>116</sup> Stewart, *Conservative Party*, 133-134.

<sup>117</sup> They acted more voluntarily and independently than their Whig and Liberal counterparts, the Reform Associations. Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work*, 60.

<sup>118</sup> Brett, 'The Liberal Middle Classes', 193. Some hatred of political clubs was shared by national Whig politicians. In November 1828, for example, the second Earl Grey, the leader of the Whig party at Westminster, while actively supporting Catholic Emancipation, opposed the suggestion that a pro-Catholic association should be established to counterattack the Brunswick Clubs, believing that the party should only make speeches and vote for the measure in Parliament without any support out-of-doors. Jupp, *British Politics on the Eve of Reform*, 362.

rather than establish a single national body with central organization'.<sup>119</sup> In the post-1832 era, the Conservative leaders 'remained deeply suspicious of extra-parliamentary organisation', which was exemplified by Peel's 'dislike of public dinners and natural aversion to "popular" politics'.<sup>120</sup> In July 1835, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* claimed that the Conservative Clubs and Associations 'must not imitate the political unions in seeking to dictate to, or overawe any branch of the legislature'.<sup>121</sup> With this restriction on political clubs, which was commonly seen in the 1790s, in the early nineteenth century, and in the post-1832 period, the Tory clubs and societies needed to be careful to avoid being regarded as beyond the bounds of acceptability.

### III

#### THE INTEGRATION OF LOCAL TORIES AND ANTI-RADICALISM

Between the 1800s and the early 1820s, Tory clubs and societies developed their various functions to promote cooperation among local Tories. In reaction to the spread of provincial radicalism and the remarkable influence of local Whigs in some constituencies, such as Gloucester, Cheshire, Suffolk, and Edinburgh, they made efforts to compete successfully in local politics and also to support the Tory government and leading parliamentary Tories on a voluntary basis.<sup>122</sup> Most of them were formed in the

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<sup>119</sup> Duffy, 'Loyalist Association Movement', 956, 958.

<sup>120</sup> Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work*, 51. This attitude was noticeable among not only the Tories and Conservatives, but also the Whigs. *Ibid.*, 57-58.

<sup>121</sup> 'Conservative Associations', *Blackwood's*, July 1835, 9.

<sup>122</sup> For example, the Canning Club expressed its support for Liverpool's administration by giving the toast, 'His Majesty's present Ministers, the firm supporters of our unequalled Constitution'. A similar

1810s, while the London Pitt Club emerged earlier in 1808 and served as an important rallying point for the Tories in the capital.

Prior, and even posterior, to the establishment of the London Pitt Club, there were a few extra-parliamentary Tory gatherings in London, but they failed to provide an effective platform for the Tories. The traditional Tory gentlemen's club, White's, for example, still existed in the early nineteenth century, although, by then, it had almost completely lost its political influence, and had become only a politically mixed, non-party body.<sup>123</sup> In addition, the Constitutional Association for Opposing the Progress of Disloyal and Seditious Principles was established by London bankers, and Sir John Sewell in particular, to prosecute radical writers and publishers in December 1820 in the context of the defeat of the Liverpool ministry over the Queen Caroline affair.<sup>124</sup> The founding of this society was aided by Viscount Palmerston, at this time a Canningite Tory, and it also drew support from some London Tory newspapers, such as the *New Times* and the *Courier*. Nevertheless, it was generally unpopular among Tory MPs and the Tory press in London. It seems that it had ended its political activities by the end of 1822.<sup>125</sup> The Orange Lodges in London were a possible rallying point for the anti-Catholic Tories. Since the first English lodge was established in Manchester in 1798, however, Orangeism had been as influential in the industrial north as any other region of England. The first British Grand Lodge was thus placed in Manchester in

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toast was given by most Tory clubs and societies. They supported not only the Tory government, but also leading parliamentary Tories. Particularly popular Tories were the Duke of Wellington, the Earl of Liverpool, George Canning, Lord Kenyon, and Robert Peel. *Morning Chronicle*, 31 August 1822. Spencer Perceval and Viscount Castlereagh were commemorated after their death. Regarding Perceval, see the proceedings of the 1812 dinner of the Sheffield Pitt Club. Sheffield Archives and Local Studies, Jackson Collection, JC1296, Pitt Club (Sheffield), Minute Book, 1810-1819. Concerning Lord Castlereagh, see the 1823 meeting of the Suffolk Pitt Club. *Ipswich Journal*, 26 July 1823.

<sup>123</sup> Stewart, *Conservative Party*, 72-73; Jupp, *British Politics on the Eve of Reform*, 256.

<sup>124</sup> *Lancaster Gazette*, 10 February 1821.

<sup>125</sup> Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 105-106; Jonathan Fulcher, 'The Loyalist Response to the Queen Caroline Agitations', *Journal of British Studies*, 34 (1995), 495-496.

1808 with the grand mastership of the local notable, Colonel Taylor.<sup>126</sup> London might have seemed a possible site for the British Grand Lodge, but, when the main organiser, the Rev. Ralph Nixon, visited London, he was ‘disappointed to find the society (of London) neither so numerous nor quite so respectable as we anticipated, or as the nature of such an establishment requires’.<sup>127</sup> Compared to these societies, the London Pitt Club was more successful.

The London Pitt Club, which was officially established in 1808, had originated from a society founded in 1793 by the solicitor and pamphleteer, Nathaniel Atcheson of the Middle Temple.<sup>128</sup> This society aimed ‘to counteract the principles disseminated by the Partisans of the French Revolution’. Its main activity was to hold anniversary birthday dinners to honour the king and the queen but, after Pitt resigned in March 1801, it held annual birthday meetings to honour him as well. In May 1802, at Merchant Taylors’ Hall, there were about 900 attending his birthday gathering,<sup>129</sup> which was held under the presidency of Earl Spencer, while it was George Canning who was very active behind the scene. As he wrote to the Canningite, J.H. Frere, ‘it would be a proper testimony of regard to P. [Pitt] to have a public dinner on his Birthday – why not on his [Pitt’s birthday], as Fox’s friends do on Fox’s? ... In the mean time the best people of the H. of Commons have been spoken to, and almost uniformly come to the plan with great eagerness’. He had two objectives in suggesting this celebration: to show rivalry with the Whig party; and to use the event as part of an attack on Addington’s

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<sup>126</sup> Senior, *Orangeism*, 151-154.

<sup>127</sup> Ralph Nixon to John Verner, 3 September 1808, *Orange Institutions in Great Britain and the Colonies*, appendix 44, 174-175. Ralph Nixon decided to establish the British Grand Orange Lodge, because its Irish counterpart had virtually disappeared by 1808. Neal, *Sectarian Violence*, 22.

<sup>128</sup> *The Annual Register*, 67 (December, 1825), 292; *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, 96:1 (1826), 91. At the 1818 general election, he stood as a candidate for Petersfield, but failed in the contest. HoP, *Commons 1790-1820*, ‘Petersfield’.

<sup>129</sup> Powney, *London Pitt Club*, 5.



ministry.<sup>130</sup> Canning tried to hide his involvement by avoiding acting as steward,<sup>131</sup> but he did write and present a Pittite song to the celebration, ‘The Pilot that Weathered the Storm’, and for this he earned a great reputation.<sup>132</sup>

Once established officially, however, the London Pitt Club began to be used as a body to reconcile the Old Pittites. The composition of the stewards for the 1811 birthday dinner is a case in point. According to the stewards’ list,<sup>133</sup> even before the official re-union, the mainstream Pittites (for example, Lord Liverpool and George Rose), the Addingtonians (Spencer Perceval), and the Canningites (Canning and Lord Gower) joined the meeting as stewards. This suggests that, while the main aim of the official establishment was to make it ‘a more extensive society ... to perpetuate the principles of this illustrious statesman’ and to counteract those Whig gatherings which commemorated Fox,<sup>134</sup> the Pitt Club also served as a significant factor in promoting the establishment of the Tory party at Westminster.

The London Pitt Club soon turned out to be popular. It had four regular meetings on the third Thursdays from January to April as well as the most important event, Pitt’s anniversary birthday dinners on 28 May (or on a near date). As these meetings were

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<sup>130</sup> George Canning to J.H. Frere, 26 April 1802, Gabrielle Festing, *John Hookham Frere and His Friends* (London: James Nisbett, 1899), 75-76.

<sup>131</sup> He wrote ‘I must not be a Steward – not I – nor Ld. Grenville – nor Windham. But we shall all attend, I hope’. *Ibid.*, 77. Canning’s name was not on the list of twenty-three MPs acting as stewards. HoP, *Commons 1790-1820*, I, ‘General elections’, 160.

<sup>132</sup> Wendy Hinde, *George Canning* (London: Collins, 1973), 108-109; Lee, *George Canning*, 29-30.

<sup>133</sup> Stewards of the London Pitt Club in 1811 were: Hon. Henry Lascelles, chair and vice-president; Duke of Montrose; Earl Bathurst; Marquis of Cornwallis; Earl of Liverpool; Marquis Wellesley; Lord Mulgrave; Marquis Huntley; Lord Eliot; Earl Camden; Lord Castlereagh; Earl of Bridgewater; Lord G.L. Gower; Rt. Hon. Spencer Perceval; Richard Strong Wells; Rt. Hon. Sir William Scott; John North; Rt. Hon. George Rose; Richard Barker; Rt. Hon. Sir James Murray Pulteney; Robert Clark; C.R. Morgan; Rt. Hon. George Canning; J.B. Morgan; Rt. Hon. Charles Long; John Rawlinson; Rt. Hon. Richard Ryder; W.H. White; William Wilberforce; Solomon Peile; Samuel Thornton; and Nathaniel Atcheson. Pitt Club (London), *The Pitt Club. The Commemoration of the Anniversary of Mr. Pitt’s Birth-Day, at the City of London Tavern, on Tuesday the 28th of May, 1816. Edward Bootle Wilbraham, Esq. M.P., in the Chair* (London: T. Davidson, 1816), 5.

<sup>134</sup> Powney, *London Pitt Club*, 5; Sack, ‘The Memory of Burke and the Memory of Pitt’, 635.

held during parliamentary sessions, Tory peers and MPs found it easy to attend and some of them had charge of managing them. The meetings were well-attended, and the attendance at the celebration dinners generally increased: 320 attended in 1809; 500 in 1811; 600 in 1814;<sup>135</sup> and 600 in 1817.<sup>136</sup> The newspapers devoted pages to reports of these dinners, which suggest that readers were really interested in learning about them. The considerable popularity of the club can also be estimated by looking at the rapid growth of members which had increased to 1,300 by 1816.<sup>137</sup>

One of the most significant functions of these meetings was to present a set of political messages before the public. These messages emphasised that, owing to the efforts of loyal followers of Pitt's principles as well as those of Pitt himself, the British constitution was protected from simultaneous attacks from Jacobinical foreign invaders and domestic radical malcontents and remained the envy of the world. These principles, the Tories believed, also created a determined spirit of resistance against the tyranny and oppression of Napoleonic France. By defeating France, British liberty was safeguarded and peace was secured in Europe. Between the late 1810s and the early 1820s, the leading speakers, such as Lords Liverpool and Eldon, attempted to justify their efforts to counterattack the expansion of post-war radicalism and the reform movement by insisting that Liverpool's ministry acted upon the same political principles as Pitt's administrations.<sup>138</sup> It appears that the club did not organise electioneering or massive propaganda campaigns, but it did promote the *Quarterly Review's* circulation in order to counteract the Whiggish daily newspaper, *The Times*.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> *MP*, 29 May 1809, 29 May 1811, and 30 May 1814.

<sup>136</sup> Powney, *London Pitt Club*, 20.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>138</sup> *MP*, 29 May 1811, 30 May 1814, 29 May 1816, and 29 May 1817. The Pitt Club did not have French wines at the 1811 dinner, which demonstrates its Francophobia. Powney, *London Pitt Club*, 11.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 19. It was also involved in several social and cultural events, such as the erection of Pitt's statue

There is no doubt that the London Pitt Club was an important rallying point for the Tories in London. It is worth noting, however, that the union of the Old Pittites in the club, seen at the 1811 dinner, did not last long. In 1817, a serious issue arose relating to one of the standing toasts, the ‘Protestant Ascendancy’. Some of the leading Tories, and Canning in particular, resented the anti-Catholic sentiment being expressed. This toast, which had not been given at the 1811 dinner, appeared for the first time as late as 1813, and thereafter became one of the standing toasts.<sup>140</sup> From this year onwards, Canning and Castlereagh, leading pro-Catholic Tories, absented themselves from the dinners, giving plausible excuses,<sup>141</sup> but, in 1817, Canning, even though his real motive is not clear, challenged the club’s management committee regarding this toast. The correspondence between Canning and the committee was soon published in several newspapers as open letters. On 11 May, he wrote to the committee that the toast was an anti-Catholic ‘Irish Orange Toast’, and insisted that, as Pitt had supported Catholic Emancipation, ‘The coupling this Toast with the name of Mr. Pitt, would appear to me to imply what (according to the best of my knowledge) I believe not to be true’. He went on to state that, ‘My acceptance therefore of the invitation (to the 1817 dinner) ... must depend upon the answer’. In order to reply to this, the committee held a general meeting on 21 May and passed the following resolutions:

That ... from that Gentleman [Canning] alone have they [the committee] learned, that it is ‘the Irish Orange Toast;’ they not only not having adopted it from any other Club, but being perfectly ignorant of the fact that it formed one

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and the organisation of Pitt Scholarships and Exhibitions for the University of Cambridge and some public schools. *Ibid.*, 5-6, 34-35; *New Monthly Magazine*, 5:29 (1816:June), 431-432.

<sup>140</sup> *MP*, 29 May 1811, 30 May 1814, 29 May 1816, 29 May 1817; Pitt Club (London), *The Pitt Club Anniversary Meeting, 1813*.

<sup>141</sup> In case of the 1816 dinner, Castlereagh wrote to the committee that he would be absent because ‘business of importance had come on at the House of Commons’. *MP*, 29 May 1816.

of the toasts of the Orange Societies in Ireland. ... That according to their conception of the British Constitution, the 'Protestant Ascendancy' is essential to its very existence ... That if they rightly understand Mr. Canning, Mr. Pitt was not, in his belief, a friend to the Protestant Ascendancy; on which point they can only express their own decided conviction, that the Protestant Ascendancy never had a firmer friend than that illustrious Statesman. ... That ... they had always understood, that those friends of Mr. Pitt who had voted for the Claims of the Catholics had disavowed all intention of interfering with the Ascendancy of the Protestants.<sup>142</sup>

The committee emphasised that the toast was not given to support Orangeism or the anti-Catholic cause, but was given just to praise the Protestant constitution which had been established by the Glorious Revolution.

This explanation put forward by the committee seems to have been convincing, because speeches or some additional comments to the toast at the dinners did not suggest any link between the toast and anti-Catholicism. Although Eldon delivered a speech with such an implication for the first time at the 1821 dinner, he did so just to insist that the Catholics should be given toleration as far as possible as long as it was done within the safety of the constitution, not to launch an attack on the Catholics.<sup>143</sup> Moreover, in contrast to James Sack's assumption that the club became an anti-Catholic 'Ultra' political association by the late 1810s,<sup>144</sup> an analysis of the lists of those attending the dinners in 1814, 1816, and 1817 who had been, were, or would in future be MPs shows that about ten per cent of them were pro-Catholic Tories.<sup>145</sup> This

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<sup>142</sup> *Examiner*, 1 June 1817.

<sup>143</sup> *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 2 June 1821.

<sup>144</sup> Sack, 'The Memory of Burke and the Memory of Pitt', 637.

<sup>145</sup> At the 1814 dinner, out of thirty-seven attendants who had been, were, and would be Tory MPs, thirty were anti-Catholic, four were pro-Catholic, and the remaining three were unknown about their attitude towards Catholic Emancipation. *MP*, 30 May 1814. At the 1816 dinner, out of twenty-three, seventeen were anti-Catholic, two were pro-Catholic, one had changed his attitude from pro- to anti-Catholicism, and the remaining three were unknown. *Ibid.*, 29 May 1816. At the 1817 dinner, out of seventeen, eleven were anti-Catholic, two were pro-Catholic, and the remaining four were unknown. *Ibid.*, 29 May 1817.

proportion should not be considered very low, since a substantial majority of the Tory party was anti-Catholic.<sup>146</sup>

Of course, the concept of the 'Protestant Ascendancy' was not irrelevant to the Orange Lodges. According to an Orange pamphlet published in 1815, *The Orange Miscellany*, the rules and regulations of Orange Lodges demanded that their members 'support Protestant Ascendancy, the Constitution, and Laws of these Kingdoms'. Besides, at the meeting of an Orange Lodge, held in Manchester on 4 November 1814, the toast, 'Protestant Ascendancy', was given with other loyal toasts.<sup>147</sup> Canning might have known this, because, as an MP for Liverpool, he had a connection to Manchester.<sup>148</sup> This case of Manchester, however, does not necessarily demonstrate that the toast, the 'Protestant Ascendancy', was commonly given by other Orange Lodges, because the official list of toasts shown in the pamphlet did not include that toast.<sup>149</sup>

As Canning had admitted in his reply that pro-Catholic Pittite Tories were not enemies to the Protestant Ascendancy, the representative of the committee, John Gifford, the club's honorary secretary, wrote on 26 May that Canning did not have any reason to stay away from the dinners.<sup>150</sup> Canning, however, did not show up at the dinner. In the immediate aftermath of the dinner, a pamphlet was published by 'an Old Member of the Pitt Club'. It is not clear whether the author was Canning himself or was related to him, but the pamphlet claimed, as Canning had done, that Pitt was pro-Catholic. On the other hand, it emphasised the need to unite the Pittite Tories, and suggested that the

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<sup>146</sup> Coleman, *Conservatism*, 22.

<sup>147</sup> Nuttall, *The Orange Miscellany*, 130, 146.

<sup>148</sup> For example, just after the 1812 general election, he attended the public dinner celebrating his victory of the election, which was held in the New Exchange Room, Manchester, on 31 October. *Speeches of Canning in Liverpool*, 69-80.

<sup>149</sup> Nuttall, *The Orange Miscellany*, 209-215.

<sup>150</sup> *MP*, 2 June 1817.

alternative toast, ‘Church and King’, should be adopted.<sup>151</sup> The issue which had begun with Canning’s challenge eventually ended up without any solution. The club was not an ‘Ultra’ society, but continued to be a significant London body for a majority of Tories. Nevertheless, it lost the support of such leading figures as Canning, Castlereagh, and Huskisson.<sup>152</sup>

Despite such a limited connection between the London Pitt Club and the Tory party, local Tory clubs and societies, and the Pitt Clubs in particular, promoted the integration of local Tory supporters more successfully. They realised that local Tories had different opinions, particularly about religious and economic issues, but believed that they could agree on important constitutional principles, which helped them to overcome these differences and to forge a collective political identity. At the anniversary dinner held on 29 May 1815, for example, the Rev. Alexander Mackenzie, president of the Sheffield Pitt Club, insisted that ‘the approval of his [Pitt’s] policy and the admiration of his talents, have almost ceased to cause a difference of opinion among such well informed persons as prefer that mixed form of Government which constitute the excellence of ours’.<sup>153</sup>

Following the example of the London Pitt Club, most Tory clubs and societies in the localities gave the standing toast, ‘Protestant Ascendancy’, at their dinners.<sup>154</sup> The toast, however, did not bring about serious conflict among local Tories, at least until the Catholic problem became a significant issue in Britain at large in the mid- and

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<sup>151</sup> Anon., *A Letter from an Old Member of the Pitt Club to the Honorary Secretary of that Society; to which is Annexed the Correspondence between the Managing Committee and Mr. Canning* (London: Budd and Calkin, 1817).

<sup>152</sup> These three were not included in the list by Cecil Powney tracing the members from 1793 to 1848. Powney, *London Pitt Club*, 37-71.

<sup>153</sup> Pitt Club (Sheffield), Minute Book.

<sup>154</sup> For example, see the dinner of the Gloucester True Blue Club held on 5 February 1827. *Bristol Mercury*, 12 February 1827.

late-1820s. At the anniversary dinner held on 28 May 1818, for example, the Manchester Pitt Club did not consider that there was anything contradictory to give the toast and at the same time celebrate Canning's election victory. The toast, 'The Right Hon. George Canning: and success to his election at Liverpool', was followed by loud cheering.<sup>155</sup> It is probable that Canning himself adopted a double standard, because he kept his membership of this club, which adopted this toast as one of its standing ones, at least until 1827.<sup>156</sup> Many other Tory clubs and societies in the localities also did not connect the name of Canning to pro-Catholicism, but rather praised him, for instance, as a distinctive minister, who successfully reduced taxes by avoiding unprofitable wars.<sup>157</sup> Some local Tories, such as Colonel Edgar, chairman of the Suffolk Pitt Club at the 1822 dinner, tried to associate the 'Protestant Ascendancy' toast with religious toleration.<sup>158</sup> Many pro-Catholic Tories supported the toast. For instance, the chairman of the Sheffield Pitt Club at the 1823 dinner, J.A.S. Wortley, MP for Yorkshire, stated that:

Gentlemen, you all know that since I have been in Parliament, I have voted for the Catholic Question; but I am as ready as any of you to drink "The Protestant Ascendancy," for neither I nor a great majority of those who vote for the Catholic Question have any idea that our doing so, will destroy the Protestant Ascendancy.<sup>159</sup>

While local Tories continued to give the toast, they did not launch attacks on the Catholics. In the localities, unlike the London Pitt Club, the equivocal relationship between Pitt and the Catholic question did not become a divisive issue, but the unity

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<sup>155</sup> *Wheeler's*, 30 May 1818.

<sup>156</sup> A List of the Members of the Manchester Pitt Club, 4 May 1827.

<sup>157</sup> *MP*, 26 August 1823.

<sup>158</sup> *Ipswich Journal*, 24 August 1822.

<sup>159</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 19 December 1823.

between anti- and pro-Catholic Tories in local Tory clubs and societies lasted until the late 1820s. This suggests that local Tory clubs and societies worked to promote the unity, rather than the disunity, of their members.<sup>160</sup>

Local Tory clubs and societies also tried to integrate different classes in society. They particularly emphasised the importance of the unity between the aristocracy and the middle classes. This was exemplified by one of their usual toasts, ‘The Landed and Commercial Interests of the Country, and may they, as on this day, be ever united’.<sup>161</sup> This toast demonstrates that these societies had many members drawn from both the landed elite and the wealthy middle classes, as shown above. In addition, taking into consideration an analysis done by Dror Wahrman that, in the late 1810s, when the ‘middle class’ was regarded as equivalent, or closely connected, to ‘public opinion’, both the government and radicals appealed to the ‘middle class’ in order to show themselves as ‘not ... a narrow interested group’, but as an association of ‘an inclusive social range, indeed a universalistic alignment’,<sup>162</sup> this toast also suggests that the Tory clubs and societies endeavoured to justify their political position by gaining support from the ‘middle class’.

Besides, the Tory clubs and societies also forged language and symbols to unite with the labouring classes. The existing literature has emphasised that a serious tension

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<sup>160</sup> Indeed, even in the 1810s, some Tory clubs and societies expressed anti-Catholic attitudes. It seems, however, that they did not consider such attitudes bald enough to offend pro-Catholic members. On 1 June 1813, the Knutsford King and Constitution Club resolved that ‘the heartfelt thanks of this society be given to the two hundred and fifty-one members of the Honourable House of Commons who, on the 24th day of May last, so nobly supported our glorious Constitution in Church and State by voting against the Bill to allow Roman Catholics to sit in Parliament’, and sent a copy of the resolution to Joseph Butterworth, MP for Coventry. On the other hand, in 1814, the club asked the pro-Catholic Tory MP, Lord Castlereagh, to be an honorary member. Knutsford King and Constitution Club, Minute Book.

<sup>161</sup> The Pitt Clubs adopted such a toast to emphasise the connection between the landed and commercial classes as one of its standing toasts. *MP*, 29 May 1811; Pitt Club (London), *The Pitt Club. The Commemoration of the Anniversary of Mr. Pitt’s Birth-Day, 1816*, 10. Another example can be seen in the 1819 dinner of the Liverpool True Blue Club. *LM*, 20 August 1819.

<sup>162</sup> Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class*, 190-199.



lay between these classes and the Tory elite in this period.<sup>163</sup> Nevertheless, local Tory clubs and societies began to adopt a conciliatory language towards these classes, especially after provincial radicalism reached a peak around the time of the ‘Peterloo Massacre’ in August 1819. At the meeting of the Birmingham Pitt Club held in November 1819, for example, Isaac Spooner insisted that, following the example provided by Pitt, people from the upper to the lower orders should unite:

He [Pitt] called upon every friend to the country to unite in those exertions by which alone the religion, the laws, the establishment both in Church and State, could be defended, or private property preserved to those who held it. ... Every individual, from the Peer to the peasant (with a few lamentable exceptions) seemed animated with one common feeling.<sup>164</sup>

Edinburgh Tories were relatively slow to develop such a language, but, in the aftermath of the ‘Radical War’, a week of large-scale strikes and skirmishes in western Scotland in April 1820,<sup>165</sup> it was suggested at the dinner of the Pitt Club of Scotland held in January 1821 that ‘the agricultural, commercial, manufacturing, and labouring interests, and every other interest’ should ‘be all combined in one common cause’.<sup>166</sup>

In addition, the concept of ‘the people’, which was usually used by Tories to indicate those who had active political rights or those who were referred to as the ‘political nation’ because they possessed advanced political consciousness, was intentionally widened to incorporate the lower classes. At the Norfolk and Norwich Pitt Club dinner held on 29 May 1820, Colonel Edmund Woodhouse, MP for Norfolk,

<sup>163</sup> Walsh, ‘Working Class Political Integration’, chapter 3, esp. 72; *idem.*, *Making Angles in Marble*, 32; Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 102-103.

<sup>164</sup> *MP*, 2 November 1819.

<sup>165</sup> With regard to the ‘Radical War’, see Gordon Pentland, *The Spirit of the Union: Popular Politics in Scotland, 1815-1820* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011).

<sup>166</sup> See the toast given by Sir A. M. M’Kenzie. *Caledonian Mercury*, 13 January 1821.

maintained that:

I will tell you whom I mean when I speak of the people. Not revolutionary writers – not professed infidels – not pretended reformers – men who deny their God, and propagate sentiments subversive of all respect for lawful authority. No Gentlemen, by the people I mean the loyal and constitutional, the peaceable and well-affected part of the community; such as those whom I have now the happiness to see assembled in this Hall. I mean the honest and industrious agriculturist, who exerts himself to the utmost to meet that pressure which so heavily weighs upon him – I mean the equally honest and industrious labourer or artizan, who struggles patiently, under great privation, and retains his good habits and good principles, in spite of the difficulties and temptations by which he is surrounded. These are really the People.<sup>167</sup>

The language to promote unity with the lower classes was used particularly during the crisis of the radical movement of the late 1810s. Local Tory clubs and societies began to consider that the rehabilitation of a harmonious relationship with the lower orders was necessary, especially when such a relationship was being undermined by the growth of radicalism.

In addition to their use of language, some local Tory clubs and societies engaged in political activities against radicalism. On 15 January 1817, just after the Hampden Club had hosted a meeting of delegates from radical societies at the Crown and Anchor tavern in London, for example, the Manchester Pitt Club established a select committee ‘for the purpose of proposing printing and circulating suitable Political Tracts, in order to counteract the poisonous Effects of the various Efforts’. The committee published thousands of copies of each loyalist pamphlet, many of which were written by the

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<sup>167</sup> See the printed report of the 1820 dinner of the club. Memoranda and Minutes relating to the Corporation Club.

committee members themselves, in order to appeal to the public and to the middling and working classes in particular. It also distributed thousands of copies of a pamphlet entitled ‘Parliamentary Reform’, which had been originally written by Robert Southey for the *Quarterly Review*. In addition, it resolved that ‘the crown and anchor association [Reeves’ Loyalist Association] Papers of 1793 be procured’, and tried to revive the Manchester Church and King Club, which had been a focus for Mancunian loyalists in the 1790s.<sup>168</sup> Other local Tory clubs and societies engaged in similar political actions. In May 1817, for instance, the Warrington Pitt Club resolved to purchase and distribute ‘Loyal Tracts’.<sup>169</sup> From the end of 1816, the Norfolk and Norwich Pitt Club provided financial aid for ‘the loyal and constitutional societies of our poorer fellow citizens in the city [Norwich], either already existing or to be formed hereafter’. It also offered financial support to help poorer members attend the club’s meetings, and set up subscriptions for relieving the labouring poor.<sup>170</sup> When provincial radicalism gained momentum again in 1819, local Tory clubs and societies organised a petitioning campaign to the Prince Regent,<sup>171</sup> and tried to counteract ‘the endeavours daily made to poison the minds of the people through the medium of the press, by publishing cheap loyal tracts’.<sup>172</sup> The Orange Lodges not only held political dinners to celebrate the birthdays of the kings, William III and George III, and the former’s victories at the Boyne and Augherim,<sup>173</sup> but also, particularly during the Luddite movement of 1812, developed counter-revolutionary activities as local constables and spies and

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<sup>168</sup> MPC records, red box, Minutes of the Select Committee, 1817.

<sup>169</sup> See the procedure of the meeting held on 6 May 1817. Warrington Pitt Club, Minute Book.

<sup>170</sup> Memoranda and Minutes relating to the Corporation Club.

<sup>171</sup> See an example of the Derbyshire True Blue Club. True Blue Club (Derbyshire), *The History, and Proceedings, of the Derbyshire Loyal True Blue Club; from its Origin in 1812, to its Seventeenth Anniversary in May, 1829, by the Editor of the ‘Derbyshire Courier’* (London: Hurst, Change, and Co., [1830]), 59-63.

<sup>172</sup> *MP*, 2 November 1819.

<sup>173</sup> Neal, *Sectarian Violence*, 23-24.

informers.<sup>174</sup>

The Tory clubs and societies successfully made themselves rallying points to counteract provincial radicalism in various regions. They needed to be careful about a restrictive practice for political clubs, however. The failure of John Gifford's plan to strengthen the role of the Pitt Clubs was a case in point. Gifford was a leading organiser of the London Pitt Club as its honorary secretary. He had extensive experience of associational political campaigns. In the 1790s, he had committed himself to the loyalist movement initiated by the APLP. At that time, he had been an influential political writer and editor. His pamphlet published in 1798, *Short Address to Members of Loyal Associations*, was said to have sold 100,000 copies. In the same year, he had founded the *Anti-Jacobin Review* and, as its editor, asked Reeves to contribute articles.<sup>175</sup> On 9 January 1817, he sent a circular letter to the secretaries of local Pitt Clubs:

At such a period, surely, it is the duty of all true Pittites to exercise a more than common degree of vigilance and of vigour; to unite in one firm and compact body, and to be fully prepared to rally round the Standard of our Constitution ... Nothing, I am persuaded, can more conduce to the accomplishment of that desirable object than the extension of such Associations as those to which we, Sir, have the honor to belong.<sup>176</sup>

What he meant by insisting on 'the extension of such Associations' was unclear, but it is assumed that he attempted to enlarge and strengthen the connection of the Pitt Clubs in order to counterattack radicalism more effectively. His attempt, however, was opposed by many parliamentary Tories who belonged to the London Pitt Club. For example,

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 19, 21-22; Navickas, *Loyalism and Radicalism in Lancashire*, 126-127; Senior, *Orangeism*, 152, 156.

<sup>175</sup> ODNB, 'John Gifford', online, accessed on 17 September 2015; Duffy, 'Loyalist Association Movement', 948.

<sup>176</sup> Powney, *London Pitt Club*, 27.

Henry Lascelles maintained, in his letter of 10 February 1817, that, ‘I cannot refrain from stating my opinion that it would be highly inexpedient to adopt any measure on behalf of the Club with a view to the present state of public affairs’.<sup>177</sup> George Rose also expected ‘the very *dangerous consequences* of adopting the suggestion therein alluded to’, and went on to state that, ‘I am so strongly impressed with the measure to be discussed, as to induce me to wish that nothing may be done respecting it without communication with the Secretary of State’.<sup>178</sup> Facing these negative opinions, Gifford gave up his plan.

If Gifford’s plan had been accepted, the Pitt Clubs might have taken more aggressive measures against radicalism. As in the 1790s, however, the Tory ministers preferred directing the anti-radical movement to relying completely on voluntary actions taken by local Tories.<sup>179</sup> In March, they passed the Seditious Meetings and Assemblies Act, which influenced not only radical associations, but also the Tory clubs and societies. Just after the passage of this act, on 31 March, the committee of the London Pitt Club made a resolution: ‘That this committee ever anxious to set an example of perfect obedience to the laws, without a strict observance of which neither the happiness of individuals, nor the security of the State can be maintained, will cease from this day to confer, communicate or correspond with any other society or with the representative or representatives of any other society’.<sup>180</sup> Despite the passage of this resolution, the London Pitt Club continued to communicate with other Pitt Clubs. After this period, however, the Pitt Clubs never attempted to launch any vigorous and massive political campaign. This demonstrates that the Tory clubs and societies acted very

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<sup>177</sup> This letter was probably written to Gifford himself. Powney, *London Pitt Club*, 28.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>179</sup> Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 105.

<sup>180</sup> Powney, *London Pitt Club*, 20.

carefully not to misrepresent themselves as dangerous and unlawful associations.

The British Orange Lodges faced more serious difficulty, because they were often attacked as illegal secret societies by MPs and even the parliamentary Tories. On 29 June 1813, in the House of Commons, the Grenvillite, Charles Watkin Williams Wynn, proposed a motion against the Orange Lodges and attacked their conditional loyalty – one of their rules had urged the members to swear the oath of defending the king and his successors only if they supported Protestant Ascendancy. In this debate, Canning and Castlereagh opposed the Orange Lodges too, and the latter insisted that ‘the good sense of the people would prefer the empire of the law to the domination of clubs and associations’. Wynn’s motion was withdrawn, however, because a majority of MPs considered that the British Orange Lodges were put within law by the new rules and regulations, which were published by Ralph Nixon in early 1813 to forestall Wynn’s action and dropped that qualified oath.<sup>181</sup> When the British Orange Lodges revealed their own rules, toasts, and songs by publishing *The Orange Miscellany* in 1815, they might intend to inform the public that they were truly loyal and constitutional societies.

The British Orange Lodges also made efforts to improve their social standing by transforming themselves into a royal organisation. After Colonel Taylor had died in 1820, the successive grand mastership was given to the Duke of York in February 1821. Lord Kenyon was elected as the deputy grand master, and the location of the Grand Lodge moved to London. With this organisational change, the British Orange Lodges attempted to draw more support from the parliamentary Tories. Such an attempt eventually failed, however. In the same month as the Duke of York became the grand master, the Duke of Wellington refused to join an Orange Lodge, because he still

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<sup>181</sup> Senior, *Orangeism*, 159-164, 168-171.

suspected that the Orange Lodges were untrustworthy societies bound by a secret oath. In addition, on 21 June 1821, Sir Simon John Newport, the Grenvillite MP, raised a question in the House of Commons about the royal patronage of the Orange Lodges, insisting that the Orange Lodges were illegal corresponding societies. The distrust of the Orange Lodges expressed by these parliamentary Tories seems to have affected the Duke of York, who came to believe that the legality of the Orange Lodges was doubtful. The following day, on 22 June, he informed Lord Kenyon of his decision to resign his role. All in all, a series of attacks on the British Orange Lodges made in Parliament did not lead to the passage of any statutory act for disbanding them, but they did greatly weaken the political role of the British Orange Lodges as an organisational platform for the Tories in the capital and in the localities.<sup>182</sup>

This section has revealed a significant development of the Tory clubs and societies in the capital and in many towns in Britain in the context of the growth of post-war popular radicalism. In the immediate aftermath of its establishment in 1808, the London Pitt Club became popular among the parliamentary Tories and their middle-class supporters in London. It failed to promote the complete unity of the Tory party, however. On the issue of the toast, the 'Protestant Ascendancy', Canning, Castlereagh, and some of their pro-Catholic friends declined to attend the annual dinners of the club from the mid-1810s. By contrast, this issue did not create fundamental divisions between anti- and pro-Catholic Tories in the localities. Provincial Tory clubs and societies successfully promoted the integration of local Tories who possessed various sentiments on the Catholic question, and attempted to draw support from different classes in society.

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<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 172-176; Neal, *Sectarian Violence*, 25-26. On the other hand, the Irish Orange Lodges were suppressed by a statutory act passed between 1825 and 1828. Senior, *Orangeism*, 223; Neal, *Sectarian Violence*, 26.

Facing the threat of provincial radicalism, some of them performed strenuous political activities, such as publishing loyal tracts and establishing or supporting popular loyal societies. On the other hand, further political activities of the Tory clubs and societies were disliked by the parliamentary Tories, who believed that political clubs were potentially dangerous. The British Orange Lodges were even less popular than other Tory clubs and societies, which considerably reduced their political importance.

## IV

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANTI-CATHOLIC PRESSURE GROUPS

In the 1810s, reacting to provincial radicalism, the Tory clubs and societies served to integrate local Tories into a nationwide campaign. By the mid-1820s, however, many Tory clubs and societies gradually became less active because of the decline of the nation-wide radical movement and the aggressive attitude of Whiggism, particularly after the Queen Caroline affair. They ceased to operate or reduced their activity to such an extent that evidence of their actions cannot be found. It seems that most of the King and Constitution Clubs ended their activity at this time. There was a rumour that the Pitt Clubs began to disband.<sup>183</sup> Probably because of the return to political stability, the Manchester Pitt Club on 5 April 1827 decided to cancel the next annual celebration, which had normally been held on 28 May.<sup>184</sup> Tory election clubs, some of which had held anti-radical meetings and dinners, were now active only at contested elections. For example, after Canning had left Liverpool in 1822, the Canning Club supported his

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<sup>183</sup> *MP*, 26 August 1823.

<sup>184</sup> MPC records, red box, 3, no. 13.



successor, William Huskisson, but did not engage in such prominent activities as before.<sup>185</sup>

By the late 1820s, however, most of the surviving local Tory clubs and societies gradually moved towards anti-Catholic ‘Ultra’ Toryism. This shift was exemplified by the changing composition of MPs present at the dinners of the London Pitt Club. At the 1827 anniversary dinner, which launched an attack on Canning’s administration, four out of forty-three MPs present were pro-Catholic Tories. Thirty were staunch and consistent anti-Catholics, and the remaining nine were to be anti-Catholic ‘pragmatists’ ready to reach a compromise in favour of the Catholic Emancipation bill in 1829.<sup>186</sup> At the May 1828 dinner, which celebrated the return of the Tory government, among the thirty-three MPs who can be identified, twenty-four were anti-Catholics and nine were ‘pragmatists’, while there were no pro-Catholic Tory MPs present.<sup>187</sup> At the May 1829 dinner, all identifiable twenty-four MPs were ‘Ultra’ Tories who had consistently opposed Catholic Emancipation. Clearly, by that time, this club had become a society for the ‘Ultra’ Tories.<sup>188</sup>

In the mid-1820s, local Tory clubs and societies began to show ‘Ultra’ Toryism in the context of the growing importance of the Catholic problem in Parliament and the 1826 general election which raised the ‘No Popery’ cry.<sup>189</sup> They began to abandon their important function of keeping anti-Catholic and pro-Catholic Tories within the same fold. For example, the pro-Catholic Tory, Lord Somers, resigning from the Hereford Pitt Club, wrote an open letter on 23 October 1826 to James Eyre, honorary secretary of this club:

<sup>185</sup> HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, ‘Liverpool’.

<sup>186</sup> *Standard*, 29 May 1827.

<sup>187</sup> *MP*, 29 May 1828.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 May 1829.

<sup>189</sup> Coleman, *Conservatism*, 45; HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, ‘Parliament’.

A recent event imperatively calls upon me to retire from the Hereford Pitt Club, although I am, and shall ever continue, firm in my attachment to those principles of the Club which support the Monarchy against republican and leveling systems. I cannot, consistently with my known and avowed opinions, continue the member of a Society, who, from their late proceedings, appear to be a body (which his Majesty's Ministers are not) opposed to Catholic Emancipation, a great and arduous measure, I acknowledge, but which I judge essential to the good of the State, in order to cement the happy union of Great Britain and Ireland into one consolidated Kingdom and one great public interest.<sup>190</sup>

This letter demonstrates not only that this club's main focus had shifted from anti-radicalism towards anti-Catholicism, but also that until the mid-1820s Somers had not had to worry about the Catholic problem affecting relations within his club.<sup>191</sup> Another important feature of this letter was that Somers warned the club that its objection to Catholic relief was incompatible with the basic policy of 'his Majesty's Ministers', who had agreed that Catholic Emancipation should be an 'open', non-governmental question. Most local Tory clubs and societies probably experienced a similar change in their composition in the mid-1820s. For example, the Stockport Loyal Wellington Club had been an anti-radical body in 1820, but it became an anti-Catholic organisation by the late 1820s.<sup>192</sup>

The establishment of Canning's ministry in April 1827 had a significant impact on local Tories. In February, Lord Liverpool was incapacitated by an apoplectic stroke, which ended his long and relatively stable administration. Canning hoped to continue the 'open' attitude to the Catholic question during his Tory administration, but failed,

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<sup>190</sup> *MP*, 27 October 1826.

<sup>191</sup> Some other members resigned with Lord Somers. *North Wales Chronicle*, 18 October 1827.

<sup>192</sup> *MP*, 28 June 1820; *Standard*, 23 June 1828.

because of the resignations of several Tory ministers who hated Canning himself or his pro-Catholic attitude. This forced him to forge a coalition with the Whigs in Parliament.<sup>193</sup> The reaction of local Tory clubs and societies to this ministerial change varied. Some of them were moderately opposed to Canning and his coalition ministry. At the dinner of the Maldon True Blue Club, held on 27 May 1827, for example, G.M.A.W. Allison Winn, MP for Maldon, while cautious about the stance of the pro-Catholic ministers, hoped that ‘the Whigs would be over-awed, and persuaded to act under the same principles that Mr. Canning did when under Lord Liverpool’. On the other hand, Thomas G. Bramston simply stated that ‘the Canningites were not to be trusted’.<sup>194</sup> Most local Tory clubs and societies, however, were generally more aggressive and hostile towards the government. At the Warrington Pitt Club, the chairman, the Rev. Peter Legh, criticised Canning as a ‘political Judas’ and ‘a traitor to publicly-avowed principles ... who would in the end, by his introduction into the Cabinet, prove one of the greatest curses that ever fell on the country’. He went on to state that, ‘If there was in England a base deserter of his party, it was the Right Honourable George Canning!’, and so he asked ‘all true and loyal Protestants to oppose him’.<sup>195</sup> At the Leeds Pitt Club, the chairman and vice-president, Michael Thomas Sadler, insisted that, with such ‘a sudden, and unnatural, a base coalition’, ‘the ancient principles of our constitution must, one by one, be destroyed, and its character changed and re-modelled’. He criticised Canning as ‘one of the meanest trucklers for place and pension that ever existed; one of the greediest cormorants that ever fed at the public cost’, and also as a betrayer of ‘the cause of Protestantism’.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Machin, *The Catholic Question*, 89-105.

<sup>194</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 4 July 1827.

<sup>195</sup> *Wheeler's*, 2 June 1827.

<sup>196</sup> Pitt Club (Leeds), *The Anniversary Meeting of the Leeds Pitt Club, May 28, 1827* (Leeds: Robinson

The toast ‘Protestant Ascendancy’, which had previously assumed various and vague implications for local Tory clubs and societies, began to be connected firmly to anti-Catholicism. For example, at the annual dinner of the Manchester Pitt Club, held on 28 May 1827, this toast ‘was drunk with the most enthusiastic cheering, which lasted a considerable time’. In his address following the toast, the chairman, Francis Phillips, admired the ‘*Consistency*’ of anti-Catholic sentiments possessed by Robert Peel, who ‘was ever the firm and undaunted friend of the constitution, in church and state, and the best advocate of the Protestant ascendancy’.<sup>197</sup>

At the same time, the celebration of Pitt and his principles at the meetings of the Tory clubs and societies also changed. It previously had been utilised to integrate various Tories in a campaign to counteract radicalism and Whiggism, but now it began to be exclusively linked to anti-Catholicism. By the late 1820s, pro-Catholics increasingly insisted that ‘the memory and praise of Pitt’ as anti-Catholic were incompatible with ‘all the measures and principles which he held most important’.<sup>198</sup> Reacting to this, for example, the Rev. A. Matthews insisted at the dinner of the Hereford Pitt Club, held in October 1827, that:

I may ask however, whether it can be collected from anything which Mr. Pitt has said or written that he would have granted unconditionally what is now so fiercely and peremptorily demanded? – that he would have tolerated the Catholic Association, or the Catholic rent? I think not! ... Mr. Pitt we may be quite sure would have granted nothing inconsistent with the most perfect security of the civil and ecclesiastical constitution of this country – nothing that would endanger either, or change their relation to each other.<sup>199</sup>

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and Hernaman, 1827), 9-10, 12.

<sup>197</sup> *Standard*, 1 June 1827.

<sup>198</sup> See the letter written by Lord Palmerston, pro-Catholic Secretary at War, to his brother at the 1826 general election. HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, ‘Survey, VIII, Politics and Parties’.

<sup>199</sup> *North Wales Chronicle*, 18 October 1827. Similar arguments can be seen in many sources which

Along with this shift in the representation of Pitt, the principles of Pitt now came to be closely connected to anti-Catholicism. For local Tory clubs and societies, the ‘true’ successors of Pitt’s principles and the disciples of Pitt were exclusively the anti-Catholic Tories, such as Eldon, Wellington, and Peel.<sup>200</sup> They thus welcomed the establishment of Wellington’s ministry in January 1828. When this ministry passed the bill to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts in May, local Tory clubs and societies showed little concern about it, but rejoiced in the return of ‘true’ Pittite Tory ministers.<sup>201</sup>

Nevertheless, sound relations between the government and local Tory clubs and societies did not last long. The sensational victory of Daniel O’Connell in the County Clare by-election in June 1828 and the ‘Ultra’ Tories’ growing suspicion about the attitude of ministers towards the Catholic question resulted in the establishment of an anti-Catholic extra-parliamentary organisation: the Brunswick Clubs.<sup>202</sup> In Britain, the first Brunswick Club, called the metropolitan Brunswick Club, was established in London in July 1828. It was a formal and elitist club for peers and MPs, who held monthly dining meetings during parliamentary sessions. For the ‘Ultra’ Tories, this type of club was desirable. The British Orange Lodges did not serve as a powerful rallying point for the anti-Catholic movement. Many Tories were suspicious of the democratic tendency of the Orange Lodges and regarded them as oath-bound illegal associations. In the immediate aftermath of the establishment of the metropolitan Brunswick Club, local

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described the proceedings of the Tory clubs and societies. For example, see Lord Eldon’s speech at the London Pitt Club, and the Rev. G. Wray’s one at the Leeds Pitt Club. *Standard*, 29 May 1827; Leeds Pitt Club, *The Anniversary Meeting, May 28, 1827*, 5.

<sup>200</sup> For example, see the proceedings of the Pitt Clubs of Manchester and Warrington in May 1827. *Wheeler’s*, 2 June 1827.

<sup>201</sup> For example, see the proceedings of the Pitt Clubs of London, Reading and Berkshire, and Gloucester. *MP*, 29 May 1828; *Standard*, 31 May 1828; *MP*, 13 August 1828.

<sup>202</sup> Simes, ‘The Ultra Tories’, 346-358.

Brunswick Clubs were formed and helped local anti-Catholic Tories to arouse public opinion against Catholic Emancipation.<sup>203</sup>

While the Brunswick movement was much stronger in Ireland, the expansion of the English Brunswick Clubs was significant under the influence of two leading provincial Brunswick Clubs, formed in Kent and Buckinghamshire in September 1828. The former, led by Lord Winchelsea, had 800 members, while the latter, organised by the Marquess of Chandos, was supported by the clergy, local landowners, and 1,200 freeholders.<sup>204</sup> The number of active English Brunswick Clubs was only about twenty,<sup>205</sup> but their 'Ultra' anti-Catholic efforts were supplemented by other Tory clubs and societies. On 20 November 1828, for instance, the Leicestershire Pitt Club resolved to send anti-Catholic petitions to Parliament, which were eventually presented to the House of Lords by the Duke of Rutland and to the House of Commons by Lord Robert Manners and A. Legh Keck.<sup>206</sup> Some Brunswick Clubs were formed under the influence of the existing Tory clubs and societies. At the dinner of the Colchester Pitt Club held on 18 November, for example, in giving the toast, 'The Protestant Ascendancy', Sir George H. Smyth, chairman and MP for Colchester, proposed that the establishment of a Brunswick Club should be considered. Agreeing with this, Sir Eliab Harvey, Sir John Tyrell, Colonel Bramston, and J. Round stated that their names might be enrolled in the Colchester Brunswick Club. Celebrating the formation of a local Brunswick Club, the mayor of Colchester, William Sparling, gave another toast: 'Success to the intended Colchester and Essex Brunswick Club'.<sup>207</sup>

The Brunswick Clubs offered extra-parliamentary support for the 'Ultra' Tories in

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, 188-200, 346-349; Machin, *The Catholic Question*, 131-132; Neal, *Sectarian Violence*, 26.

<sup>204</sup> Simes, 'The Ultra Tories', 360-362.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

<sup>206</sup> *Standard*, 27 November 1828.

<sup>207</sup> *MP*, 21 November 1828.

Parliament, although the role in putting pressure on the decision-making process in Parliament was limited by strong suspicion about 'club government'. The following letter written by the second Earl of Romney, Pittite Tory aristocrat, to Lord Winchelsea on 7 September 1828 was a case in point:

[The] principle of a self constituted, permanent, political body I consider to be very objectionable. Different as the practice has been, the principle I consider to be uniformly bad, whether it originates a Whig Club, a Pitt Club, a Jacobin Club, a Corresponding Society, an Orange Lodge, a Catholic Association, a Brunswick Protestant Club.<sup>208</sup>

This might be an extreme opinion, because Romney opposed any permanent political club. Lord Eldon, as a leading member of the London Pitt Club, adopted a more moderate stance about political clubs. He, however, feared that the Brunswick Clubs as a pressure group would threaten the authority of Parliament, and considered that a traditional method for expressing local opinion, petitioning following public meetings, was more desirable.<sup>209</sup> A similar attitude was seen in local Tories. In some regions, local notables, even though anti-Catholic, opposed the establishment of the Brunswick Clubs, because they feared that the Brunswick Clubs might upset the existing social order in the localities.<sup>210</sup>

Under these circumstances, the influence of the Brunswick anti-Catholic movement was weakened. A monster meeting to send an anti-Catholic petition to Parliament, held on 24 October 1828 in Penenden Heath, Kent, drew 40,000 attendants. Another meeting held in Leeds drew as many as 25,000. In other regions, however,

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<sup>208</sup> Quoted from Machin, *The Catholic Question*, 136.

<sup>209</sup> Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 107-108, 111.

<sup>210</sup> Jupp, *British Politics on the Eve of Reform*, 370-371.

anti-Catholic meetings were not as popular, attracting less than 1,000 attendants.<sup>211</sup> In addition, there were some meetings at which a large number of pro-Catholics were present. The Kentish monster meeting, for example, was joined by not only the anti-Catholics, but also by some pro-Catholic moderates and radicals. In Edinburgh, pro-Catholic Tories, such as Walter Scott, combined with local Whigs to counter the 'Ultra' Tories' efforts. This demonstrated a serious conflict within local Tories.<sup>212</sup> The final, and the most important, example to show the limitation of the Brunswick movement was the actual passage of the bill in support of Catholic Emancipation. The Brunswick Clubs eventually failed to dissuade the ministry and the king from supporting the measure.

In the 1820s, when the issue of Catholic Emancipation gradually increased its political importance, the Tory clubs and societies expressed their anti-Catholic attitude more strenuously. They began to connect the toast, the 'Protestant Ascendancy', and the principles of Pitt more firmly to anti-Catholicism. This change of the characteristics of the Tory clubs and societies made many pro-Catholic Tories leave them. The anti-Catholic political movement was organised by not only the existing Tory clubs and societies, but also the newly-established associations, the Brunswick Clubs. In several regions in particular, the British Brunswick Clubs launched massive petitioning campaigns to express their anti-Catholic sentiment and their loyalty to the Protestant constitution. Nevertheless, the anti-Catholic Tory clubs and societies failed to block the passage of the Catholic Emancipation bill proposed by the Wellington government. This was partly because a strong suspicion about 'club government' expressed by some governing Tories at Westminster and in the localities forced the potential of these

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<sup>211</sup> Simes, 'The Ultra Tories', 367-370.

<sup>212</sup> Machin, *The Catholic Question*, 140-141, 144-145



associational Protestant movements to be greatly reduced.

## V

### TORY ASSOCIATIONALISM AND THE REFORM BILLS

After the passage of the Catholic Emancipation bill, the Brunswick Clubs ceased to operate. Along with this, many local Tory clubs and societies were dissolved or ceased to remain active. It is difficult to identify accurately local Tory clubs and societies operating during the crisis over the Reform Bills between 1831 and 1832. It is clear, however, that the Pitt Clubs markedly declined. The London Pitt Club and the Pitt Club of Scotland kept meeting, but it seems that only a few provincial counterparts were active. The Manchester Pitt Club, which had been one of the largest local Pitt Clubs, disbanded in 1831.<sup>213</sup> The True Blue Clubs were also estimated to meet in only a few towns, such as Gloucester.<sup>214</sup> Some local Tory clubs and societies, however, were active at least in Bristol, Hertford, Leeds, Lewes, Norwich, and Newark.<sup>215</sup> The British Orange Lodges grew in number to 258 by November 1830.

The major aim of the Tory clubs and societies operating in this period was to oppose the Reform Bills proposed by Earl Grey's government. For example, the Gloucester True Blue Club was established in April 1832 to support 'conservative principles'. At its inaugural meeting, held on 24 April, the chairman, Lord Ellenborough,

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<sup>213</sup> It was announced that the 1829 meeting was postponed to the next year, but there is no record that a meeting was held in either 1830 or 1831 and after this year. *Wheeler's*, 9 and 23 May 1829; MPC records, red box, 6, no. 1; Michael J. Turner, *Reform and Respectability: The Making of a Middle-Class Liberalism in Early Nineteenth-Century Manchester* (Manchester: Chetham Society, 1995), 295.

<sup>214</sup> *MP*, 1 May 1832.

<sup>215</sup> Gash, 'Conservative Party, Part II', 140-141; Stewart, *Conservative Party*, 130-131.

accepted ‘a moderate, safe, and temperate amendment of our representative system’, but strongly opposed ‘the Ministerial measure of Reform’.<sup>216</sup> At the first meeting of the Leeds True Blue Constitutional Association, held on 9 June 1831, Michael Thomas Sadler claimed that the purpose of the association ‘was self-defence; it was the retention of the genuine principles of English freedom, and those venerated institutions which the nation had long enjoyed’. He expressed his belief that ‘the Tories were a strong and still spirited party’, and went on to insist on the unity of the Tories to organise the national campaign against the Reform Bills: ‘All they [the Tories] wanted to give them effect was union; it would refresh their own minds, and revive that spirit of patriotism which had not yet expired’.<sup>217</sup> Under the leadership of Colonel William Blennerhasset Fairman, the British Orange Lodges endeavoured to recover their political importance in order to attack ‘our Jacobinical rulers’ by recruiting aristocratic leaders as well as the working classes.<sup>218</sup> These suggest that local Tory clubs and societies attempted to become an important rallying point to oppose the Reform Bills in some regions.

Facing the threat of the passage of the Reform Bills, some Tory clubs and societies helped the pro-Catholic and anti-Catholic Tories to be reconciled. As has been seen in the previous section, Tory MPs present at the annual meeting of the London Pitt Club held in May 1829 were all staunch anti-Catholic. In the early 1830s, however, pro-Catholic Tory MPs began to attend its meetings again. At the annual meeting, held on 23 May 1831, at least two out of ten Tory MPs present had constantly supported Catholic Emancipation. At the annual meeting the following year, held on 30 May 1832, out of twenty-three Tory MPs present, at least two had been constantly in favour of it,

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<sup>216</sup> *MP*, 1 May 1832.

<sup>217</sup> *Standard*, 10 June 1831.

<sup>218</sup> Neal, *Sectarian Violence*, 28; Senior, *Orangeism*, 235.

and one, even if anti-Catholic before, had cast a compromising vote for the emancipation bill in 1829.<sup>219</sup> Outside the capital, pro-Catholic Tories also engaged in associational campaigns to oppose the Reform Bills by cooperating with anti-Catholic Tories. For instance, at the meeting of the Gloucester True Blue Club in April 1832, Lord Ellenborough, following the toast of ‘The Protestant Ascendancy’, maintained that:

[H]aving been one of the Ministers of the Crown who advised his Sovereign to concede the measure of Roman Catholic emancipation, he [Ellenborough] felt it his especial duty to uphold the ascendancy of the Protestant interests in Ireland as much as in this country. The framers of the Catholic Relief Bill had endeavored to protect these interests from injury by the strongest obligations of an oath. The object of the proposed Irish Reform Bill was to break down these barriers, and to throw the power of every borough into the hands of the Roman Catholics.<sup>220</sup>

This suggests a flexible usage of the toast, the ‘Protestant Ascendancy’. In this period, this toast could be given to justify the then ministers’ compromise on Catholic Emancipation and also to attack the reform of the Irish representative system.

Nevertheless, the Tory clubs and societies failed to create a massive and effective associational campaign to oppose the Reform Bills. There were at least two reasons for

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<sup>219</sup> At the 1831 meeting, Lords Mahon and Ashley constantly supported Catholic Emancipation. Six Tory MPs present at the meeting were anti-Catholic: Lords Encombe and Grimston, George Rice Trevor, Sir George Henry Rose, Sir Charles Wetherell, and John Capel. The attitude of the remaining two MPs, Walker Ferrand and G.E. Welby, is not known, because they became MPs after the Catholic Emancipation bill had passed. *MP*, 30 May 1831. At the 1832 meeting, Lord Mahon and John B. Walsh were constant pro-Catholic Tories. Frederick Hodgson had been anti-Catholic, but voted for the emancipation bill with Peel. Another thirteen Tory MPs were anti-Catholic: Lords Lowther, Encombe and Ingestrie, Charles Wetherell, Arthur Cole, Colonel Horatio George Powys Townsend, John J. Buxton, Robert Adam Dundas, John Capel, Colonel Charles De Laet Waldo Sibthorp, George Bankes, Captain George Pitt Rose, and William Wigram. The attitude of the remaining seven MPs, Philip Pusey, Charles Barry Baldwin, Richard Jenkins, James Lewis Knight, Walker Ferrand, and Colonel Edward Michael Conolly has been unknown, as they all became MPs between 1830 and 1831. *MP*, 31 May 1832.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*

this. First, a broad and cross-party agreement on the bills within public opinion prevented the development of the Tory clubs and societies in this period. As long as William IV himself supported the bills, local Tories could not rely on loyalism to justify their own anti-Reform-Bill campaign. In this respect, they were placed in a completely different situation from that in the late 1810s. Many of the moderate middle classes who had strongly opposed popular radicalism in the post-war period now expressed their full support for the bills.<sup>221</sup> Despite the massive regional expansion of the British Orange Lodges, they failed to recruit the working classes to support a strong and organised opposition to the bills. Many of these classes who would support the Conservative party in the post-1832 era joined the Political Unions in this period between 1830 and 1832.<sup>222</sup> As on the issue of Catholic Emancipation in the late 1820s, the principles of Pitt were ineffective in promoting the union of the Tories in the capital and the localities. Pointing out that Pitt himself had presented parliamentary reform measures in the 1780s, the Whig *Leicester Chronicle* insisted that the Tories who attempted to apply Pitt principles to the justification of their opposition to the Reform Bills were self-deceived.<sup>223</sup> These conditions were all disadvantageous to the anti-reform associational campaign created by local Tories in this period.

Second, a deep and widespread distrust in the governing elite of powerful pressure groups which could threaten the sovereignty of Parliament wrecked the hope of the Tory

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<sup>221</sup> Walsh, *Making Angels in Marble*, 96.

<sup>222</sup> Gash, 'Conservative Party, Part II', 142; Neal, *Sectarian Violence*, 27-28; Elaine W. McFarland, *Protestants First: Orangeism in Nineteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), 57-61; Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work*, 69.

<sup>223</sup> *Leicester Chronicle*, 28 May 1831. A similar comment was provided in the *Manchester Times and Gazette*, 28 May 1831. Lord Kenyon was one of the Tories who used the principles of Pitt to oppose the Reform Bill. He stated at the annual dinner of the London Pitt Club of 1831 that Pitt 'never would be capable of sacrificing the security of the country and the blessings it had enjoyed ... for any untried experience, fanciful theories, and startling innovations', and also 'that in 1782 he was not a very ripe politician, and that he lived to see and to confess his error'. *MP*, 30 May 1831.

clubs and societies to make a nationwide associational movement against the Reform Bills. Some Tories hoped that the Tory clubs and societies would establish a nationwide political network, which had been actually created before. An influential Tory newspaper in the capital, the *Morning Post*, stated that, ‘These associations, established, as we hope to see them, not only in the Metropolis, but in every quarter of the United Kingdom, will form the rallying points for all that powerful party who ... are resolved once again to effect her [England] deliverance, when, as in the former instance, the Revolutionary system ... has extended its baneful influence to this country’.<sup>224</sup> At the meeting of the Leeds True Blue Constitutional Association, held in May 1832, Henry Hall, the chairman, asked: ‘Their political opponents were vigilant, and had formed associations for the purpose of forwarding their views, and why should not the Tories?’ Nevertheless, other Tories were aware of negative aspects of such powerful associations. At the same meeting of the Leeds True Blue Club, for example, the Rev. J.A. Rhodes did ‘deprecate the establishment of any society or institution which would interfere with the functions of the legislature’. He supported the establishment of a political network of local Tory clubs and societies connected with each other by a set of fundamental principles, but did disagree that they would execute a massive petitioning campaign in order to block the passage of the Reform Bills. He went on to state that:

[T]his was not a question between the legislature and the people. The real contest was between a set of principles the badge of which was the true blue colour, and another set of principles distinguished by the orange colour.<sup>225</sup>

In Leeds, ‘blue’ was the Tory colour, and ‘orange’ was the Whig one. This statement

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<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 May 1832.

<sup>225</sup> *Standard*, 10 June 1831.

suggests that the major role of local Tory clubs and societies was to compete with their Whig counterparts in the local context, not to interfere with the decision-making process in Parliament.

Most of the Tory clubs and societies operating in this period between 1831 and 1832 opposed the Reform Bills. They became a significant rallying point for local Tories and prompted the re-union between the pro-Catholic and anti-Catholic Tories, but only in a small number of towns. They failed to make an important impact on British politics. This was because the king, the government, a large majority of MPs, and public opinion strenuously supported the Reform Bills, and also because even the anti-Reform-Bill Tories did not hope that the Tory clubs and societies would become so powerful and influential as to threaten the supremacy of Parliament.

## CONCLUSION

Between 1815 and 1832, the Tory clubs and societies expanded widely in a large number of towns in Britain and became deeply embedded in the local political culture. They operated independently under the initiative of local propertied classes, but they took a significant role in connecting local Tories to each other and making nationwide associational movements. Despite some significant differences, they were quite similar to the earlier Reeves' societies and the Conservative Clubs and Associations in several respects: in membership, leadership, ways of management, influence on regional and national politics, and the fear expressed particularly by the governing elite. In the late 1810s, they exerted a powerful political influence against post-war popular radicalism

and played a major role as rallying points for local Tories who had various opinions particularly about the Catholic question. In the late 1820s, however, they transformed themselves into anti-Catholic associations. In some regions, they organised massive petitioning campaigns, but they were not so powerful or influential as to change the conciliatory attitude of the Wellington government towards Roman Catholics. During the crisis over the Reform Bills between 1831 and 1832, the Tory clubs and societies operated in a limited number of towns, but completely failed to become a powerful nationwide associational force capable of opposing the bills. During the period under consideration, the activities of the Tory clubs and societies were always conditioned by the issues and the local and national contexts. Nevertheless, they grew as a vital organisation in which local Tories were constantly involved in order to express their political opinion and make their political campaigns. By conducting these organisational activities, local Tories shaped their party-political identity and connected themselves to the national political world.

## CHAPTER THREE

*Tory Electoral Politics, 1812-1832:**Liverpool, Bristol, and Colchester*

This chapter will analyse the parliamentary electoral politics of the Tories in three large, open, freeman boroughs: Liverpool, Bristol, and Colchester, between 1812 and 1832. It is divided into three sections, each of which will focus on Tory electoral politics in a distinctive way. The first section will examine the ‘official’ electoral political world. Investigating the characteristics of Tory MPs for these boroughs, it will not only uncover the strength of Toryism, but also point out that there were various types of Tory MP and different demands by the electors. It will also maintain that Tory election clubs in these boroughs played a vital role in elections, from coordinating the views of the local elites and nominating the candidates to mobilising voters and appealing to the wider public. Without them, local Tories could not effectively compete with local Whigs in such large, open, freeman boroughs. Using poll books, this section will also examine the voting behaviour of the electors, particularly focusing on their occupations and the proportion of split votes.

In the second section, the ‘unofficial’ participants in electoral politics, that is the non-voters, will be investigated. The local governing elite and the electors, who composed the ‘official’ electoral world, were the main actors in electoral politics, but the non-voters, regardless of gender, could also play significant electoral roles in indirect or ‘unofficial’ ways. This section will thus examine the ways in which these



‘unofficial’ electoral participants were involved in Tory electoral politics, and analyse the reaction to them of the ‘official’ electoral participants, and Tory candidates in particular.

The third section will examine the extent and the ways in which national issues at Westminster were received in the selected constituencies, particularly focusing on the local context. It will claim that local Tories in these boroughs were equally powerful and influential in the 1810s when popular radicalism grew remarkably and two-party politics were significant in the country at large as well as at Westminster. It will also maintain that, in the 1820s when popular radicalism declined and two-party politics became much less important, different national issues were influential and Tory electoral politics developed differently in these boroughs. It will also reveal that between 1830 and 1831 the impact of the issue of parliamentary reform, and that of the Reform Bills in particular, was massive in these boroughs, but the reaction of local Tories to it was fairly diverse.

## I

### THE ‘OFFICIAL’ ELECTORAL WORLD:

#### TORY MPs, ORGANISATION, AND VOTERS

##### *Tory MPs*

In Liverpool, Bristol, and Colchester, provincial Toryism was remarkably strong. Tory MPs representing these boroughs, however, were quite different in character and policy. This shows that Toryism was composed of a wide spectrum of political attitudes and

also that Tory MPs needed to take into account the markedly different political context in these constituencies.<sup>1</sup>

Table 3-1: MPs for Liverpool, 1812-1832

MPs	Party	Years as MP
George Canning (1770-1827)	Tory	1812-1822
Isaac Gascoyne (c.1763-1841)	Tory	1796-1831
William Huskisson (1770-1830)	Tory	1823-1830
William Ewart (1798-1869)	Tory	1830-1837
John Evelyn Denison (1800-1873)	Tory	1831
Dudley Ryder, Viscount Sandon (1798-1882)	Tory	1831-1847

In Liverpool, Tory MPs consistently occupied both seats throughout the period from 1812 to 1832. They had different political and religious attitudes, but were active in advancing the commercial interests of Liverpool. Between 1812 and 1830, one of the seats was taken by two ‘Liberal’ Tory statesmen: George Canning and his close friend and ally, William Huskisson. These two MPs did not have any local connection to Liverpool, but were popular particularly among local merchants, who supported their anti-radical attitude and their liberal economic policies.<sup>2</sup> The other seat was taken by a native of Liverpool, General Isaac Gascoyne. He was a loyal supporter of Lord Liverpool’s Tory government, but occasionally opposed its commercial measures in order to serve local interests.<sup>3</sup> With regard to religion, he was consistently a ‘High’ Tory. He was a moderate reformer, supporting the enfranchisement of large manufacturing

<sup>1</sup> With regard to the election results in these three boroughs between 1812 and 1831, see Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup> S.G. Checkland, *The Gladstones: A Family Biography, 1764-1851* (Cambridge: CUP, 1971), 59-64, 144-145; Lee, *George Canning*, 59-65; G.S. Veitch, ‘Huskisson and Liverpool’, *THSLC*, 80 (1928), 18-22.

<sup>3</sup> For example, Gascoyne opposed the Orders in Council in 1808 and 1812 and the renewal of the Property Tax in 1816. He also opposed the Corn Law of 1815, stating that it would offer too big a concession to the agriculturists. He had supported the slave trade in terms of its commercial importance until its abolition in 1807, but afterwards he gradually opposed slavery itself.

towns in May 1829 and February 1830, but opposed the Reform Bills presented by Earl Grey's government.<sup>4</sup>

Between the death of Huskisson in September 1830 and the passage of the Reform Bills, there were three Tory MPs for Liverpool: William Ewart, John Evelyn Denison, and Viscount Sandon. All of them were young Huskissonians, supporting liberal commercial and financial measures, religious freedom, the abolition of slavery, and the Reform Bills. It is important to note, however, that they had different backgrounds and developed different political careers in the post-1832 era. William Ewart was the son of an influential Canningite merchant in Liverpool, William Ewart senior.<sup>5</sup> When he gained a seat for Liverpool in the by-election of November 1830, he made the most of his Liverpool origins and Huskissonian connections. Between 1831 and 1832, he moved towards the Whig party. After 1832, however, he gradually sympathised with radicalism, frustrated by the limited nature of the Reform Acts. J.E. Denison was not a native of Liverpool, but his close connection to Huskisson drew him to the borough. He was Lady Canning's nephew and the Duke of Portland's son-in-law. In Grey's ministry, he served as Secretary to the India Board. In the 1831 general election, he defeated Gascoyne and stood second. In the 1832 general election, he was returned as a Whig for Nottinghamshire South. Viscount Sandon, son of the Tory peer, the first Earl of Harrowby, was not a native of Liverpool. He was returned for this constituency in the 1831 by-election. In the post-1832 era, he held a seat for Liverpool as a Conservative until 1847.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> HoP, *Commons 1790-1820*, 'Isaac Gascoyne'; HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, 'Isaac Gascoyne'.

<sup>5</sup> The future prime minister, William Ewart Gladstone, was named after William Ewart senior. His father, John Gladstone, was a leading Canningite and William Ewart senior's closest friend. Checkland, *The Gladstones*, 55.

<sup>6</sup> HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, 'William Ewart', 'John Evelyn Denison', and 'Dudley Ryder, Viscount Sandon'; W.A. Munford, *William Ewart, M.P., 1798-1869: Portrait of a Radical* (London: Grafton,

Table 3-2: MPs for Bristol, 1812-1832

MPs	Party	Years as MP
Richard Hart Davis (1766-1842)	Tory	1812-1831
Edward Protheroe (1774-1856)	Whig	1812-1820
Henry Bright (1784-1866)	Whig	1820-1830
James Evan Baillie (c.1781-1863)	Whig	1830-1834
Edward Protheroe Jr. (1798-1852)	Whig	1831-1832

In Bristol, Richard Hart Davis was the only Tory MP (and candidate) during the period. Between 1812 and 1830, the seats were divided between the two parties. Davis was a rich Bristol merchant who traded with the West Indies. He was an active supporter of the Tory government and was a close friend of Lord Liverpool. He consistently opposed religious toleration and was not an active supporter of parliamentary reform. In 1831, he supported moderate reform, but strongly opposed the Reform Bills. He was very popular among local inhabitants until 1831, particularly because he strenuously promoted the commercial interests particularly of local merchants.<sup>7</sup> From 1812 to 1830, he was returned with Edward Protheroe and then Henry Bright, both of whom were conservative, anti-Catholic Whigs.<sup>8</sup> Bristol was one

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1960).

<sup>7</sup> For example, Davis opposed the Corn Law of 1815 and the monopoly of the East India Company. With regard to the issue of slavery, he was not a staunch opponent. In the House of Commons on 20 December 1830, he opposed immediate abolition, but claimed that slavery should be gradually abolished on condition that religious education for slaves and compensation for planters were provided. HoP, *Commons 1790-1820*, 'Richard Hart Davis'; HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, 'Richard Hart Davis'.

<sup>8</sup> Edward Protheroe was the son of a West India merchant and ship-owner in Bristol. In the 1812 general election, he criticised another Whig candidate, Sir Samuel Romilly, as someone who had 'the inflammatory spirit' that threatened to subvert the constitution. In Parliament, Protheroe was a lukewarm supporter of the Whig party. He did not join Brooks's Club, a significant meeting place for the Whigs in the capital. He was liberal in that he had supported William Wilberforce over the abolition of the slave trade and opposed the 1815 Corn bill. On the other hand, he supported the renewal of the Property Tax in 1816 and the suspension of Habeas Corpus in 1817. He did not support parliamentary reform, and opposed Catholic Emancipation. Henry Bright was the other moderate Whig MP. His father was a banker and merchant in Bristol. He was more assertive in favour of parliamentary reform than Protheroe. He regularly voted with the Whigs in opposition. He did not belong to Brooks's Club, however. He supported

of the strongest centres of anti-Catholicism, so pro-Catholic candidates had no chance to win a seat there between 1812 and 1830. The conservative nature of this constituency was demonstrated by these three MPs. The situation in Bristol drastically changed in the 1831 general election, however. In this election, two progressive, pro-Catholic Whigs, James Evan Baillie and Edward Protheroe Jnr., both of whom supported the Reform Bills, took the seats.<sup>9</sup> Facing the massive reform movement, Davis decided to retire.

Table 3-3: MPs for Colchester, 1812-1832

MPs	Party	Years as MP
Hart Davis (1791-1854)	Tory	1812-1818
Robert Thornton (1759-1826)	Tory	1790-1817
Sir William Burroughs (c.1753-1829)	Tory	1817-1818
J.B. Wildman (1788-1867)	Tory	1818-1826
Daniel Whittle Harvey (1786-1863)	Whig	1818-1820; 1826-1834
Henry Baring (1777-1848)	Whig	1820-1826
Sir George H. Smyth (1784-1852)	Tory	1826-1829; 1835-1850
Richard Sanderson (c.1783-1857)	Tory	1829-1830; 1832-1847
Andrew Spottiswoode (1787-1866)	Tory	1830-1831
William Mayhew (1788-1855)	Tory	1831-1832

Between 1812 and 1818, both Colchester seats were dominated by the Tories: Hart Davis, Robert Thornton, and Sir William Burroughs. Davis was the eldest son of

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the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts against Dissenters, but was a strenuous opponent of Catholic Emancipation even in 1829. HoP, *Commons 1790-1820*, 'Edward Protheroe'; HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, 'Henry Bright'.

<sup>9</sup> J.E. Baillie was a native to Bristol and the defeated candidate in the 1820 general election. He was a member of Brooks's Club, and supported both Catholic Emancipation and parliamentary reform. On the issue of slavery, he adopted a more moderate stance. Opposing immediate abolition, he supported its gradual and 'ultimate' extinction of slavery. In the 1830 general election, the voters, many of whom were of the West India interest, preferred him to Edward Protheroe Jnr., who showed a more progressive attitude to abolition. Edward Protheroe Jnr., the only son of Edward Protheroe, was another progressive Whig. As an MP for Evesham, he had consistently supported Catholic Emancipation and supported the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. On 27 February 1828, he joined Brooks's Club. HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, 'James Evan Baillie' and 'Edward Protheroe, Jnr'.

Richard Hart Davis, MP for Bristol. Like his father, he was a staunch supporter of Liverpool's ministry and a vehement opponent of Catholic Emancipation. Thornton was a spokesperson of the East India Company, defending that company's trading monopoly. He supported the government and opposed parliamentary reform and, inconstantly, Catholic Emancipation. With regard to slavery, however, he was a progressive abolitionist. He was a kinsman of William Wilberforce and a member of the Clapham Sect. He supported immediate abolition and even opposed compensation to the slave owners.<sup>10</sup> In 1817, because of bankruptcy, he had to resign his seat. Sir William Burroughs, who won a seat in the by-election in March 1817, was a lawyer from Ireland. He was a government supporter, but inconsistently so. In the late 1810s he gradually moved over to the Whig side and, in June 1817, he joined Brooks's. Because of this, the Tory corporation in Colchester did not nominate him in the 1818 general election.<sup>11</sup>

From 1818 to 1832, both seats were divided between the two parties, but significantly all MPs were anti-Catholics. In Colchester, anti-Catholicism was so influential that even Whig MPs, D.W. Harvey and Henry Baring, needed to oppose Catholic Emancipation.<sup>12</sup> J.B. Wildman was the son of a rich Jamaica merchant from

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<sup>10</sup> Considering that abolitionism was popular among Colchester Tories as seen in Chapter One, the progressive attitude of Thornton in favour of immediate abolition might have helped him to be returned.

<sup>11</sup> HoP, *Commons 1790-1820*, 'Hart Davis', 'Robert Thornton', and 'Sir William Burroughs'; Speight, 'Politics in Colchester', 100-101.

<sup>12</sup> D.W. Harvey was a Whig lawyer from a Unitarian family in Essex. He was a progressive Whig, supported by radicals and the Protestant Dissenters. In Parliament, he voted steadily with the opposition Whigs and actively supported repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, freer finance and commerce, the immediate abolition of slavery, and parliamentary reform. He was a staunch opponent of Catholic relief, however. He believed that Catholic Emancipation would not 'reconcile the security of spiritual freedom' of the Protestant Dissenters, claiming that 'if the Catholics gained an ascendancy in Parliament, they would be decidedly opposed to Protestant toleration'. For him, the redistribution of Irish church revenues, rather than Catholic Emancipation, would pacify Ireland. Eventually, he unwillingly supported Catholic Emancipation, voting for the motion to consider it on 6 March 1829. Henry Baring stood at the by-election, when Harvey's election was declared void in 1820. Baring became a member of Brooks's Club on 26 June 1812. In Parliament, he acted with the Whig party, but was a very unwilling attender. With regard to Catholic Emancipation, he seems to have been more liberal than Harvey. Nevertheless, he was basically absent from the divisions, because he understood that the measure was unpopular in Colchester. At the dissolution of Parliament in 1826, he retired from politics, and his seat was taken by

Kent, and was a staunch supporter of Liverpool's government and the Colchester Corporation. Sir George Henry Smyth, Andrew Spottiswoode, and Richard Sanderson were all similar to Davis and Wildman in policy. They were nominated by the Blue-party Corporation of Colchester, and opposed all measures of religious toleration and parliamentary reform. William Mayhew followed a different political career path from these Tories. He was a wine, spirit, and beer merchant in London but came from Coggeshall near Colchester. He was originally a staunch anti-Catholic Tory and, as an elector, voted for Tory candidates supported by the Corporation. At the anniversary dinner of the Chelmsford Pitt Club, held on 28 May 1823, he served as chairman. By 1830, however, he took an independent stance because of his hatred of the exclusive power of the Corporation. When he stood as MP for Colchester in the 1830 election, he opposed both Spottiswoode and the Whig candidate, D.W. Harvey, who, Mayhew considered, had betrayed provincial opinion in Colchester because of his compromised vote for Catholic Emancipation in 1829. Mayhew called himself a 'liberal Blue' supporting 'independent principles'. He was defeated in this election, but was successful in the 1831 general election. He was still sceptical of Harvey and local Whigs, but he strenuously supported the Reform Bills.<sup>13</sup>

The personal characteristics of these MPs reveal some important aspects of Tory politics in the selected boroughs. In Liverpool and Bristol, Tory MPs were well-informed economic experts and made efforts to sound out local opinion and bring wealth to local inhabitants in these commercial towns. In Colchester, most Tory MPs were tightly controlled by the Corporation. Some of them, and particularly those who

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Harvey. HoP, *Commons 1790-1820*, 'Daniel Whittle Harvey'; HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, 'Daniel Whittle Harvey' and 'Henry Baring'.

<sup>13</sup> HoP, *Commons 1790-1820*, 'James Beckford Wildman'; HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, 'James Beckford Wildman', 'Sir George Henry Smyth', 'Andrew Spottiswoode', 'Richard Sanderson', and 'William Mayhew'; Speight, 'Politics in Colchester', 101-104.

were returned during the last few years of unreformed Parliament, were even unknown to local inhabitants. In this context, the complaint of the Corporation was widely raised and led to the rise of an independent Tory, Mayhew. In Liverpool, the issue of Catholic Emancipation did not impact on the elections. By contrast, it was extremely important in Bristol and Colchester, where pro-Catholic MPs, regardless of whether they were Tory or Whig, had no chance to win the seat until 1830. The impact of the Reform Bills was different in these boroughs. In Bristol, R.H. Davis was ousted and the seats were taken by pro-reform Whigs. In Colchester, Tory candidates supported by the Corporation were defeated, while a pro-reform Tory, Mayhew, was returned. In Liverpool, Tory candidates retained the seats. They were all in favour of the Reform Bills and drew support widely from moderate Tories and moderate Whigs. The selected boroughs have been commonly categorised as ‘large, open, freeman’ boroughs, but they did have widely different characteristics, which led to the return of different types of Tory MPs.

### *Organisation*

In Liverpool, Bristol, and Colchester, Tory candidates could not effectively garner votes without the active support of some form of electoral organisation. In every single stage of the elections in these boroughs, election clubs played a significant role. As Frank O’Gorman has asserted, electoral committees were a vital body as well.<sup>14</sup> Election clubs, however, played a part through electoral committees in these populous boroughs, where there were various interests among the Tory leaders and also among the electors. Electoral committees, which were run exclusively by a small number of elite men only

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<sup>14</sup> O’Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 68.



during the election periods, were not strong enough to act as a platform for negotiations and mobilisation.

Liverpool was one of the most remarkable hotbeds of electoral associational culture in Britain. By the 1812 general election, election clubs were indispensable for canvassing in this constituency. Henry Brougham, a defeated Whig candidate at this election, expressed his surprise in a letter to Lord Grey: ‘You can have no idea of the nature of a Liverpool election; it is quite peculiar to the place. You have every night to go to the different clubs, benefit societies, &c., which meet and speechify’.<sup>15</sup> Local Tories were also in the same situation. When Huskisson stood in the 1823 by-election, John Gladstone, one of the most influential and wealthy local Tory merchants, wrote to him on 26 January that, ‘Mr. Canning passed thro’ the drudgery of several hours canvassing the Clubs during every night of the Election in 1812 ... it will be necessary for you to make yourself in some degree acquainted with your Constituents, and in doing so, to visit a few of the principal Clubs’.<sup>16</sup>

In Liverpool, candidates visited various election clubs throughout the whole period between 1812 and 1832, but it is worth pointing out that 1812 was a turning point for Tory electoral associational culture in this borough. In this year, two important platforms for local Tories were established. They were probably among ‘a few of the principal Clubs’ described in Gladstone’s letter above. In the first place, the Backbone Club was formed by Gladstone during the preparation for the general election. The principal members were drawn from the landed gentry and such upper-middle-class men as merchants and professionals. On the other hand, the entrance fee was low, less

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<sup>15</sup> 16 October 1812. *The Life and Times of Lord Brougham Written by Himself* (3 vols., Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1871), II, 62.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted from Veitch, ‘Huskisson and Liverpool’, 24-25.

than two shillings and six pence, which demonstrates that the Tories tried to collect as much support as possible from the lower middle classes and the (relatively well-off) working classes.<sup>17</sup> Second, the more active Canning Club was established under the presidency of the brewer, James Ackers, with the support of another fifty-five members, in the immediate aftermath of the election. It called the Backbone Club ‘Our Sister Club’, and emphasised its close relationship with it. In fact, the membership of these two clubs, especially among their leaders, largely overlapped.<sup>18</sup> The Canning Club was open every night and, by joining the club, each member probably hoped to build mutually supportive relations and also engage in negotiations over various personal and local issues.<sup>19</sup> These two Tory clubs thus provided a significant meeting place for local Tories drawn from various classes.

The most important activity performed by these clubs was electioneering. Despite its appellation, the Canning Club continuously supported Huskisson after Canning had left Liverpool in 1822. During the elections, the Backbone and the Canning Clubs both met every night, and the leading members discussed every aspect of electioneering. The Canning Club, for example, built up electoral funds, wrote invitation letters to the candidates, held meetings of canvassing captains and, if necessary, examined the poll books carefully ‘as to the Manner each Member of this Club who is a Freeman voted’.<sup>20</sup> These clubs also tried to appeal to the public by using the press. In January 1808, Gladstone and others established the *Liverpool Courier* under the editorship of Thomas Kaye. This weekly soon developed into the most influential local Tory newspaper. Kaye was one of the leading members of the Canning Club and, under instructions from

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<sup>17</sup> Whittingham-Jones, ‘Liverpool’s Political Clubs’, 119.

<sup>18</sup> Canning Club, Minutes, 221; *MP*, 11 January 1819.

<sup>19</sup> Whittingham-Jones, ‘Liverpool’s Political Clubs’, 122.

<sup>20</sup> Canning Club, Minutes, 40, 73, 147, 208, 222.

Gladstone, he published reports on various Tory political activities, such as the club's annual public dinners.<sup>21</sup> In the 1812 election, the poet, Silvester Richmond, who was a member of the Backbone Club, served as an anonymous activist to distribute Tory election squibs and satires.<sup>22</sup> Canning and Huskisson admitted the importance of these two clubs and they always visited them during elections.<sup>23</sup>

In addition, the Canning Cycle was also established in 1812. It was a separate and exclusive dining society for the local Tory elite and was the headquarters for the Canningites (and the Huskissonians). It dictated the whole of the election process and supervised the more popular Canning and Backbone Clubs.<sup>24</sup> In the 1818 election, for example, the secretary of the Canning Cycle, Charles Shand, urged the Canning Club to hold a meeting 'to consider the propriety of their appointing a Deputation to meet Deputations from the Canning Cycle and Backbone Club'.<sup>25</sup> The Canningite electoral associational culture was underpinned by an hierarchical power structure which established the Cycle in the leadership role.

The Gascoynite camp was mainly composed of leaders of the Liverpool Corporation and it could use its influence during the elections. Because of this, the development of the election clubs exclusively supporting the Gascoyne interest was quite slow. The result of the 1818 election, however, made Gascoyne and his principal supporters decide to establish their own electoral organisation. In this election, Gascoyne retained the seat by using the traditional methods of Corporation patronage.

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<sup>21</sup> Checkland, *The Gladstones*, 51, 65.

<sup>22</sup> Whittingham-Jones, 'Liverpool's Political Clubs', 121; James A. Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool: Historical and Topographical, including a History of the Dock Estate* (2 vols., London: Longmans, 1875), I, 303, 305, 343-344, 346.

<sup>23</sup> Whittingham-Jones, 'Liverpool's Political Clubs', 121-124.

<sup>24</sup> HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, 'Liverpool'; Veitch, 'Huskisson and Liverpool', 25; *LM*, 21 February 1823.

<sup>25</sup> Canning Club, Minutes, 129.

By comparison to the last election in 1812, however, the voting gap between Canning and him had widened, while that between him and the failed Whig candidate, Lord Sefton, had decreased.<sup>26</sup> In addition, the Gascoynites needed to deal with an increasing number of voters in this borough. The total number of voters in that election was 2,876, which was greater than ever before. The Gascoynites eventually formed the True Blue Club in July 1818. John Shaw Leigh, secretary of the club, was an efficient electoral agent acting to mobilise the voters and he would later be its president. With the aid of this club, Gascoyne easily retained his seat in the 1820 general election.<sup>27</sup>

In Bristol, the White Lion Club was a vital electioneering machine. ‘At every Bristol election except 1831’ in the early nineteenth century, according to John Phillips, ‘the White Lion Club wielded enormous power and orchestrated its efforts with remarkable efficiency and skill’. Another Tory club, the Stedfast Society, which had been established as early as 1737, was a significant meeting place for the local Tory elite. It supervised the less exclusive White Lion Club. The relationship of the Stedfast Society to the White Lion Club was quite similar to that of the Canning Cycle to the Canning Club. Two of the pivotal roles of the Stedfast Society were the selection of the candidate and the funding of electoral activities. In Bristol, there was also the Loyal and Constitutional Society, which had been founded in 1802. It met in the evening, and was a more popular club for those who needed to work in the daytime. The Stedfast Society met in the morning and the White Lion Club at 1 pm, which meant that the leisured classes were the main members of these clubs.<sup>28</sup>

The White Lion Club, controlled by the Stedfast Society and aided by the Loyal

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<sup>26</sup> Whittingham-Jones, ‘Liverpool’s Political Clubs’, 127.

<sup>27</sup> *Liverpool Saturday’s Advertiser*, 10 June 1826; HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, ‘Liverpool’ and ‘Isaac Gascoyne’.

<sup>28</sup> Phillips, *The Great Reform Bill*, 73-75; HoP, *Commons 1790-1820*, ‘Bristol’; HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, ‘Bristol’; *BJ*, 26 February 1820.

and Constitutional Society, provided the general electoral committee supporting R.H. Davis. To mobilise the electors effectively, the committee appointed parish committees as sub-electioneering bodies and sent them information about local voters based on the previous poll books. In addition, it managed Davis's schedule, because it was very important for the candidate to meet the electors in person and to show himself to the public. The committee calculated beforehand how long he should spend on meeting the electors, according to the size of each parish. It also ordered sub-committees to inform the voters (and inhabitants in general) of the candidate's public entry and his charring procession.<sup>29</sup> These activities of the electoral committee were supported by the legal advice of volunteer lawyers.<sup>30</sup>

With regard to the Tory electoral organisation in Colchester, the available primary sources are very limited. Nevertheless, it is clear that an election club played a central role there too. In this borough, the mayor and Corporation had the ultimate power to nominate a Tory candidate. Substantial negotiations, however, were conducted by the Freeman's Loyal True Blue Club, which met at a respectable inn, the Wagon and Horses. According to Martin Speight, the leadership of this club was composed of members of the Colchester Corporation, but 'the more and less fashionable' classes were also included. This club discussed the negotiations of the candidates and dealt with other electoral issues. The records of these discussions were kept secret and were passed over to the assembly of the Corporation in order to secure formal assent.<sup>31</sup> The club was not a secret society, however. The charring procession provided members with an occasion

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<sup>29</sup> Phillips, *The Great Reform Bill*, 75-76, 79; HoP, *Commons 1790-1820*, 'Bristol'; HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, 'Bristol'.

<sup>30</sup> *BJ*, 14 August 1830.

<sup>31</sup> Speight, 'Politics in Colchester', 140-141, 167, 171-174.

to show themselves in public.<sup>32</sup>

The comparison of these Tory clubs with their Whig counterparts demonstrates that the Tories were stronger in electoral activities. In Liverpool, local radical Whigs established the Concentric Society in the immediate aftermath of the 1812 general election. The core members were the Unitarian pastor, the Rev. William Shepherd, the editor of the *Liverpool Mercury*, Egerton Smith, and Colonel George Williams. They established an electoral committee for the Whig candidates in this constituency. At the annual dinners and regular meetings, this society showed strong sympathy towards the progressive 'Mountain' Whigs.<sup>33</sup> In terms of electoral politics, however, it did not play any part as an electioneering machine. With the decline of provincial radicalism, it put an end to its activities in December 1822. In Bristol, the Independent and Constitutional Club was formed to celebrate the success of Evan Baillie in 1802. It is doubtful, however, whether it was as effective an electoral organisation as the White Lion Club.<sup>34</sup> In Colchester, D.W. Harvey gained electoral support from the Colchester Independent Club, which was located in London. It seems, however, that the role of this club was very limited. Probably, it only provided his supporters in London with a meeting place and financial help to transport them to the borough. It was also divided into different commercial interests and social classes.<sup>35</sup>

These facts suggest that Toryism in Liverpool, Bristol, and Colchester was underpinned by flexible and sophisticated electoral machines. To gain wide support in these large boroughs, local Tories established popular election clubs, which were

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<sup>32</sup> *CG*, 10 June 1826.

<sup>33</sup> Henry Brougham and Thomas Creevey, both of whom were the failed candidates in the 1812 election, were members of the 'Mountain Whigs'. They were asked to be honorary members of this club, and accepted the offer. *LM*, 22 January 1813. For the 'Mountain Whigs', see Dean Rapp, 'The Left Wing Whigs: Whitbread, the Mountain and Reform, 1809-1815', *Journal of British Studies*, 21 (1982), 35-66.

<sup>34</sup> HoP, *Commons 1790-1820*, 'Bristol'; HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, 'Bristol'.

<sup>35</sup> HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, 'Colchester'; Speight, 'Politics in Colchester', 171-180.

controlled and managed by more elitist and closed associations. Tory election clubs were powerful and efficient. They met regularly, effectively collected funds, quickly mobilised their members by canvassing, and carefully examined the voting behaviour of the electors. These electoral activities were all necessary to retain the seats in these large boroughs. By these means, Tory election clubs were much better organised than their Whig counterparts. They were vital for the long-lasting hegemony of local Tories in these boroughs.

### *The Electors*

According to Frank O’Gorman, the franchise of English boroughs can be divided broadly into four types: corporation, burgage, scot and lot, and freeman.<sup>36</sup> According to this typology, the three selected boroughs were all freeman-boroughs. Martin Speight has succinctly pointed out a significant characteristic of the electors of this type of constituency: ‘The Freemen voters, unlike the post-1832 householders, were a class of electors based purely upon the accident of birth, or upon the fulfilment of an apprenticeship to a Freemen, and in consequence included members of all social classes from the labourers to the gentry’.<sup>37</sup> This section will therefore examine the occupational structure of the freeman-electors of the selected boroughs and investigate how diverse the electors were in terms of occupation. It will also analyse their voting behaviour and reveal who supported Tory candidates.

The freeman-voters were composed of men who were engaged in widely different occupations. In order to understand and compare the social and economic structure of the electorate of these boroughs, this thesis uses a scheme of classification designed by

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<sup>36</sup> O’Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 27.

<sup>37</sup> Speight, ‘Politics in Colchester’, 120.

O’Gorman. He has categorised the electors of England and Wales into six. The electors of the first category were ‘gentlemen and professionals’. They were mainly composed of the landed elite and the notables in the religious, civil, and legal establishments. They were placed in the highest rank in society. The second category included ‘merchants and manufactures’. They exerted a strong influence on local politics, and their power was significant, particularly in urban communities. The third category consisted of ‘retailers’. They ranked lower in the social structure than the first two, but they rapidly increased in number and extended their influence between the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The fourth category included ‘skilled craftsmen’. They were less influential than the retailers. They were, however, the largest group of the six and played a significant role in urban politics especially through the guilds. The electors of the fifth category were ‘unskilled workers and labourers’. They were, as electors, small in number and exerted a limited influence on the ‘official’ urban political procedures. The sixth and final category included ‘agriculturists’, such as farmers, husbandmen, and yeomen. They were a powerful group in county elections, but took a lesser role in boroughs.<sup>38</sup>

Table 3-4: Occupational Structure of the Electorate

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Liverpool	7.9%	7.1%	8.5%	71.3%	5.0%	0.3%
Bristol	10.8%	4.2%	16.3%	56.2%	10.4%	2.1%
Colchester	9.1%	1.6%	14.4%	39.7%	30.2%	5.0%
‘Various constituencies’	13.6%	5.8%	20.5%	39.5%	14.2%	6.4%

<sup>38</sup> O’Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 201-215, 394-399. John Phillips has adopted a very similar scheme of classification in order to analyse the occupational structure of the voters. He has also pointed out both the inherent drawbacks and significant advantages of the investigation of the occupational structure by means of poll books. Phillips, *The Great Reform Bill*, 240-252.



Table 3-4 classifies the electors of the three boroughs into the six categories, based on the examination of three poll books which recorded the voting behaviour of the electors in the 1818 general election.<sup>39</sup> The percentages of ‘various constituencies’ have been provided by O’Gorman, who has investigated the poll books of various types of English constituencies between 1747 and 1831 and has revealed the average percentages of the occupational structure of the voters in these constituencies.<sup>40</sup> They will be compared here with the percentages of the occupational structure of the electorate in the three selected boroughs. The occupational structure could change over time, but this table provides an important sample to compare the electors in these three boroughs.

This table reveals some important features of the occupational composition of the electors. In all of these boroughs, the largest part of the electorate was the ‘skilled craftsmen’. The proportion of them was, even if to a different extent in the three boroughs, larger than that in ‘various constituencies’. This suggests that local Tories needed to appeal seriously and actively to this group to win contested elections. With regard to other categories, Liverpool and Bristol showed a similar tendency. In these

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<sup>39</sup> *Poll book, Liverpool, 1818*; *Poll book, Bristol, 1818*; *Poll book, Colchester, 1818*.

<sup>40</sup> Frank O’Gorman has revealed the occupational structure of the electorate in twenty-five boroughs and one county in England by analysing the following poll books: the Abington poll book of the 1802 parliamentary election; Boston of 1826; Canterbury of 1830; Chester of 1747, 1784, 1812, 1818, and 1826; Cirencester of 1768, 1790, and 1802; Colchester of 1790, 1806, 1807, 1812, 1818, and 1820; Grantham of 1820; Great Yarmouth of 1754, 1795, and 1820; Grimsby of 1826; Ipswich of 1820; Leicester of 1820; Lincoln of 1826; Liverpool of 1780, 1784, 1790, 1802, and 1818; Minehead of 1768, 1796, and 1802; Newcastle-under-Lyme of 1790; Northampton of 1820; Nottingham of 1830; Norwich of 1818; Oxford of 1820; Preston of 1818 and 1820; Rochester of 1830; St. Albans of 1820, 1821, 1830, and 1831; Shrewsbury of 1806, 1807, 1812, 1814, 1819, 1826, 1830, and 1831; Southampton of 1774, 1790, 1794, 1806, 1812, 1818, 1820, and 1831; Wigan of 1830; and Lincolnshire of 1818 and 1823. Of these boroughs, Canterbury, Chester, Colchester, Great Yarmouth, Leicester, Lincoln, Liverpool, Nottingham, Norwich, and Oxford have been categorised as ‘large freeman’ boroughs; Ipswich, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Rochester, St. Albans, and Southampton as ‘medium freeman’ boroughs; Boston, Grantham, Grimsby, Shrewsbury, and Wigan as ‘small freeman’ boroughs; and Abington, Cirencester, Minehead, Northampton, and Preston as ‘scot and lot/householder’ boroughs. O’Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 201-215.

boroughs, the proportion of ‘gentlemen and professionals’, ‘retailers’, ‘unskilled workers’, and ‘agriculturists’ was, even if to a different extent, smaller than that in ‘various constituencies’. In Liverpool, however, the proportion of ‘merchants and manufacturers’ was higher than that in ‘various constituencies’, but that in Bristol was lower than that in ‘various constituencies’. In Colchester, ‘unskilled workers’ were numerous. The proportion of them was twice as large as that in ‘various constituencies’. The proportion of the ‘landed’ electors was smaller than that in ‘various constituencies’, but was larger than that in the other two boroughs. This was because Colchester was an agricultural market town. All in all, this table demonstrates that the composition of the electors in all three boroughs had different characteristics, which local Tory leaders in each borough needed to take into account. The fact that local Tories held a long-standing hegemony in the electoral politics in these three boroughs suggests that they were not associations exclusively supportive of and supported by the upper classes composed of the gentry and merchants, but were those who were careful about the opinions and attitudes of the middling-electors.

Table 3-5: Voting Behaviour of the Electors in Liverpool in 1818

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Canning (Tory)	152	126	134	1,094	79	3	1,588
Gascoyne (Tory)	145	117	111	943	66	2	1,384
Sefton (Whig)	67	73	106	892	60	2	1,200

Table 3-6: Voting Behaviour of the Electors in Bristol in 1818

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Davis (Tory)	314	121	513	1718	310	69	3,045
Protheroe (Whig)	238	83	390	1078	199	52	2,040

Baillie (Whig)	127	55	192	948	175	22	1,519
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Table 3-7: Voting Behaviour of the Electors in Colchester in 1818

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Wildman (Tory)	52	7	76	239	188	28	590
Harvey (Whig)	24	2	76	205	159	14	480
Wright (Whig)	17	6	14	53	46	14	150

By conducting an analysis of the relationship between the occupational structure and party voting, John Phillips has concluded that most British electors did not have their votes determined by occupation or class.<sup>41</sup> This conclusion can be applied to the electors in these three selected boroughs. Tables 3-5, 3-6, and 3-7 show how many votes the candidates in these boroughs gained from each of the six occupational categories in the 1818 general election.<sup>42</sup> According to these tables, these boroughs exhibited a similar tendency. The candidates who stood first, Canning, Davis, and Wildman, obtained the most votes from the electors of every occupational category. The candidates who stood third and lost the election gained the smallest number of votes from the electors of every occupational category, except for Wright, who gained more votes from ‘merchants and manufacturers’ than Harvey. This suggests that the occupation of a voter did not dictate his party preference, and that the Tory candidates were popular among the electors of all the occupational types in this election.

Table 3-8: Voting Patterns of 2,844 Electors in Liverpool in 1818

<sup>41</sup> Phillips, *The Great Reform Bill*, 257-271.

<sup>42</sup> The numbers of the votes in the tables are slightly smaller than those of the votes the candidates actually obtained. There are two reasons for this. First, the poll books used by this study did not record the occupations of some electors. Second, the method of the classification of the voters adopted by O’Gorman has a minor problem. Some occupations are classified into two categories out of the six. I have deliberately omitted these occupations from the tables. O’Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 394-399.

	Candidates	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Party	Canning (T)	6	6	14	121	11	1	159
Votes	Gascoyne (T)	4	2	2	36	6	0	50
	Canning & Gascoyne (T)	141	115	108	898	60	2	1,324
	Sefton (W)	62	68	94	817	52	2	1,095
Split	Canning & Sefton	5	5	12	75	8	0	105
Votes	Gascoyne & Sefton	0	0	1	9	0	0	10

Table 3-9: Voting Patterns of 3,716 Electors in Bristol in 1818

	Candidates	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Party	Davis (T)	37	17	28	69	13	4	168
Votes	Protheroe (W)	12	5	15	41	10	4	87
	Baillie (W)	74	29	76	322	61	5	567
	Protheroe & Baillie (W)	1	0	3	7	3	0	14
Split	Davis & Protheroe	225	78	372	1,030	186	48	1,939
Votes	Davis & Baillie	52	26	113	619	111	17	938

Table 3-10: Voting Patterns of 778 Electors in Colchester in 1818

	Candidates	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Party	Wildman (T)	27	2	18	44	27	9	127
Votes	Harvey (W)	12	2	27	46	26	3	116
	Wright (W)	4	3	3	5	4	6	25
	Harvey & Wright (W)	0	0	1	6	7	0	14
Split	Wildman & Harvey	12	2	48	153	126	11	352
Votes	Wildman & Wright	13	3	10	42	35	8	111

Another way of analysing voting behaviour usually sought by historians is to investigate the proportion of split, or cross-party, votes. It has been pointed out that the fewer split votes the electors cast, the more marked was their party preference. Seen from this perspective, the electoral experiences of selected boroughs were different. Table 3-8 shows how the electors in Liverpool cast their votes in the 1818 general

election. It clearly shows that most of them voted along party lines. The number of electors who split their votes was a mere 115, just about four per cent of the 2,844 electors. Only a few electors plumped for Canning or Gascoyne, but 1,324 voters, nearly half of the total number, cast their votes for both of them. Some 1,095 electors who cast a vote for Sefton decided not to cast their second vote.

In Bristol and Colchester, however, the voters did not express a definite party preference. According to Table 3-9, only 836 out of 3,716 voters (22.5 per cent) cast party votes in Bristol. More than half of the electors cast split their two votes between Davis and Protheroe. They did so, because Davis was the only Tory candidate who stood for the election and he and Protheroe adopted the same stance on several constitutional issues, such as parliamentary reform and Catholic Emancipation. This suggests that the political principles of the candidates were still important for many electors. Nevertheless, as many as about one-fourth of the electors split their votes for Davis and Baillie, both of whom had considerably different political principles. Out of the 3,045 votes which Davis gained, some 938 (30.8 per cent) came from split votes between him and Baillie. On the other hand, only fourteen electors voted for both the Whig candidates, Protheroe and Baillie. According to Table 3-10, the electors of Colchester, like those of Bristol, did not show any marked party preference. Only 282 of 778 voters (36.2 per cent) cast party votes. As many as 352 electors split their votes between Wildman and Harvey, who were both anti-Catholic, but showed an opposing attitude towards other important national issues.<sup>43</sup> They composed 59.7 per cent of the total votes which Wildman gained.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> According to Martin Speight, this 'apparently illogical sharing of votes' was seen in other elections in Colchester in the early nineteenth century. Speight, 'Politics in Colchester', 112-116.

<sup>44</sup> This result might have been different, if Wright had been an influential politician who expressed much stronger political opinions. He was actually very unpopular. He did not offer any particular policy and

An analysis of the voting behaviour of the electors in the three boroughs in the 1818 general election suggests that, although these constituencies have been similarly categorised as large, open, freeman boroughs which tended to create serious two-party conflict, they were actually quite different in the strength of the party preference of the electors. The voters in Liverpool showed a marked party preference. In Bristol and Colchester, however, there was a sizable number of electors who split their votes for the candidates who were expressing a completely different political attitude towards some major national issues. This suggests that these electors might destabilise the electoral hegemony of local Tories under specific circumstances.

## II

### ‘UNOFFICIAL’ PARTICIPANTS IN TORY ELECTORAL POLITICS:

#### WOMEN AND WORKING-CLASS MEN

To celebrate his victory in the 1826 contested general election, Isaac Gascoyne was chaired around the town. The procession started from the Golden Lion, in Dale Street, where his electoral committee and the True Blue Club met. It took almost four and half hours to process around several streets in the central area of Liverpool. The procession was ‘splendid and very numerous’, and the streets were ‘lined, and the windows on each side thronged with spectators, among whom the greatest hilarity and good humour

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was attacked even by another Whig camp supporting Harvey. Dixon Holmes, for example, ridiculed him as a ‘representative of the petty *squirearchy* of the country’. Harvey also compared his own principles of ‘the genuine whig school’ with Wright’s Whiggism of ‘the old school’. *The Late Elections. An Impartial Statement of All Proceedings Connected with the Progress and Result of the Late Election* (London: Pinnock and Maunder, 1818), 74. The result of this Colchester election might also have been different if another viable Tory candidate had stood for election.

seemed to prevail'. By the time Gascoyne finally arrived at his destination, the Adelphi Hotel, 'the concourse of people filled Ranelagh-place, and the streets leading therefrom to a considerable distance'. His appearance on the balcony of the hotel to give his final speech 'was hailed with enthusiastic bursts of applause from the surrounding throng'.<sup>45</sup>

This is a vivid description of the very large number of anonymous people who attended the celebration. There is no doubt that among these people were many 'unofficial' participants in electoral politics: men and women without the vote.<sup>46</sup> They were excluded from 'official' electoral politics, but could exercise some influence on it. They not only demonstrated their role at the final charring of the elected candidates, but also took part in many other election processes, such as attending the processions to the hustings and the candidates' daily addresses at the end of each polling day. In these processes, they could show their political opinions. Through an analysis of their political commitment, this section aims to reveal how the voters and non-voters were mutually related and how Tory electoral politics provided significant opportunities for negotiations between them.

The non-electors joined Tory electoral politics by wearing party colours. They put party colours on their clothing and accessories, including a hat and a handkerchief, or on electioneering materials, such as a cockade, a flag, and a ribbon to show their support for the Tory candidates. On 4 August 1830 in Bristol, for example, R.H. Davis headed over to the White Lion Club from his brother's house. Along the way, 'the procession began to move to the tune of "Hurrah for the bonnets of blue" ... (and) a wave of blue marked its progress amidst a dense mass of the populace'.<sup>47</sup> There was no

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<sup>45</sup> *Liverpool Saturday's Advertiser*, 17 June 1826.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *BJ*, 7 August 1830.

doubt that among ‘a dense mass of the populace’ were many non-electors. The chairing procession in Bristol at the end of the 1818 general election proved that women showed party colours too: ‘The windows of every house in the streets through which the procession passed were crowded with well-dressed females’, who supported J.B. Wildman, ‘exhibiting the colours of the party whose cause they had advocated’.<sup>48</sup>

There was no doubt that the importance of those ‘unofficial’ people was realised by the successful Tory candidates and their electoral committees. In the speech after the chairing procession in 1826 mentioned above, for example, Gascoyne did not forget to insist that his victory was brought about by the cooperation of the working classes.

Whence emanated that warmth of feeling which they [the lower orders of people] had displayed towards him [Gascoyne]? Was it that he was rich? Was it that he was powerful? No; but that they were graceful. They thought that he had done his duty; they were pleased with the efforts which he had made to serve them to the utmost of his abilities; they overrated his merits; and they thought they could hardly find any thing strong enough to express their gratitude. (*Much applause.*)<sup>49</sup>

This might have been mere flattery, but at least he did take notice of the working classes in front of him, many of whom probably responded to his address with ‘*Much applause*’. In addition, in the 1812 election, the Canningite committee also made prior attempts to pay attention to them by representing Canning as the ‘poor man’s great protector’.<sup>50</sup> In Bristol, local Tories showed similar attitudes towards the lower orders. In many

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<sup>48</sup> *CG*, 20 June 1818. Many similar occasions were reported. The case of the chairing procession celebrating the victory of Sir George Henry Smyth in the 1826 general election in Colchester can be seen in *ibid.*, 10 June 1826. After the 1826 general election in Liverpool, those women who supported Gascoyne showed his colour, blue, during his chairing procession. *Liverpool Saturday’s Advertiser*, 17 June 1826.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Squib book, Liverpool, 1812*, 37-38.



elections, the supporters of R.H. Davis stressed that he used his extensive expertise on trade and commerce to promote the welfare and prosperity of all classes in society from the rich to the poor in Bristol.<sup>51</sup> The addresses by Tory candidates in Colchester also showed sympathetic attitudes to the working classes. For instance, after the chairing procession in the 1818 general election, J.B. Wildman stated to ‘the populace’ in front of him that, ‘I trust that you will find me, upon all occasions, the real and true friend of the poor, – (*Loud applause*)’.<sup>52</sup>

Tory candidates also often paid attention to women. They admitted that women had some, even if a minor, influence on electoral politics or on MPs’ behaviour in Parliament. Three public speeches by Canning are cases in point. In the 1812 general election, he stated that, ‘I know that I have in the house of every man of you the zeal and good wishes of a wife and a daughter: incentives which, if it were necessary, would rouse you to fresh and successful exertions in my behalf’.<sup>53</sup> In the 1818 general election, he reminded his audience of the previous election:

I was not remiss in tracing to its true source the unexampled success which attended my first election. You who know how much I owed to the good wishes of the female part of the inhabitants of Liverpool, know also how gratefully and gladly I acknowledged the obligation.<sup>54</sup>

In the same election, Canning also insisted that, ‘Gentlemen ... though the day is not yet arrived on which ladies are allowed to come forward in their own persons to the bar, you are, nevertheless, to take them into your councils, and to rely upon their advice and

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<sup>51</sup> *Late Elections*, 37; *BJ*, 10 June 1826.

<sup>52</sup> *CG*, 20 June 1818.

<sup>53</sup> *Speeches of Canning in Liverpool*, 5, 9.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

upon their influence in the conduct and for the success of the election'. This statement clearly recognised that women were excluded from 'official' electoral politics and stood in an inferior position to men in politics, but it also stressed that men, who were accepted as the sole voters here, should not ignore the opinions of women, but rather take their advice and influence positively. In the same speech, he ridiculed radical reformers supporting universal suffrage, claiming that:

Gentlemen ... I have not been forgetful, elsewhere, of the claims of the female world to due participation in matters of election. Of the plans of parliamentary reform on which, in my place in Parliament, I have had occasion to comment, ... admitting the whole male population to a vote, presumptuously excluded women from a right of suffrage, falsely denominated universal. ... I do not mean to say, that even the association of the softer sex in the new system of elective franchise would entirely reconcile me to an extension of it which, I think, would be full of mischief. But there is one pledge which I am quite ready to give, and which, I trust, they will think satisfactory, – that I never will consent to any plan of universal suffrage in which *they* are *not* included.<sup>55</sup>

These claims could be regarded as mere rhetoric, but it does appear that in this election Canning did not ignore the opinion of women. He at least acknowledged the influence they might have over their menfolk.

The working classes and women also appeared as more important actors than more peaceful witnesses at elections. With regard to the working classes, as H.T. Dickinson has argued, 'the most common and the most effective form of plebeian politics was the crowd demonstration and the riot. Crowd activity, both peaceful and violent, was a major form of group expression by the common people of eighteenth-century Britain'.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 198-199.

<sup>56</sup> Dickinson, *The Politics of the People*, 125.

His argument can be applied to electoral politics in the period of this study. It seems that a riot by the working classes rarely occurred during the elections in Liverpool and Colchester, but Bristol often saw mob disturbances at elections. In the elections between 1812 and 1832, serious riots took place in the 1826 and the 1830 general elections. A detailed analysis of them will be conducted in the next section. What should be pointed out here, however, is that the Whig candidates, not the Tory ones, were the target of the rioters before 1830.<sup>57</sup> A notorious and devastating riot which occurred in October 1831 did severely attack the 'Ultra' Tory, Sir Charles Wetherell, but, according to John Phillips, he was quite popular in Bristol at the end of 1820s and he 'had been the darling of the Bristol mob as recently as 1829 for resigning his post as Attorney General in the Wellington administration to protest against Catholic emancipation'.<sup>58</sup> The 1831 riot demonstrated the decline of his popularity. Local Tories, however, were hardly attacked by riot until the issue of parliamentary reform became critical.

Some women, and upper-class and middle-class women in particular, played other roles in electoral politics in addition to being passive observers in streets and squares. For example, when the Gascoynites held a post-election public ball, on 19 November 1812, women were allowed to attend. The tickets for 'ladies' cost five shillings, less than half that of the tickets for gentlemen at ten shillings and six pence. Only wives and daughters of rich families could afford to buy them. The ball was lively and successful, and both sexes enjoyed it in the dancing room decorated with Gascoyne's partisan colour, blue.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> A rare case where local Tories were attacked by a mob occurred in the 1812 general election in Bristol. The main body of the rioters was, however, the 'gentry' friends of Henry Hunt, who 'broke the windows of the shops and houses of several gentlemen of known attachment to the Blue party'. *BJ*, 24 October 1812.

<sup>58</sup> Phillips, *The Great Reform Bill*, 67.

<sup>59</sup> *LC*, 11 and 25 November 1812.

Women were also noticed at public dinners. When the committee of the successful candidate (sometimes that of the failed candidate too) held public dinners at the conclusion of the election, women were normally excluded. They were not totally dismissed, however. In Liverpool, for instance, the health of the absent wife of the chairman was toasted, and ladies or women at large were given the local toast, 'The Lancashire Witches'.<sup>60</sup> Women were also occasionally permitted to attend election dinners. At the post-election dinner for J.E. Denison, held in December 1830 in Liverpool, 'great numbers of' ladies 'were met on the grand staircase by the stewards, and were conducted on the boxes'. They also wore the party colour of Denison. The 'boxes' were separate from where the men were seated. This provided a clear example of the separate spheres occupied by the two sexes. Nevertheless, this physical appearance of women was important, because they were normally excluded from the public dinners for their menfolk.<sup>61</sup>

Even if only to a limited extent, women were involved in club politics. The membership of election clubs in Liverpool was entirely male. The Canning Club, however, allowed women to participate in its activities, by choosing an annual officer, the lady patroness. Her only duty was to donate five pounds to the fund of the club, but she clearly believed that she was involved in politics.<sup>62</sup> In her letter to the Canning Club, written on 22 April 1818, Miss Shand stated that, 'With my sincere wishes that

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<sup>60</sup> For example, see the 1812 post-election dinner celebrating Gascoyne's victory. *Ibid.*, 25 Nov 1812. Those women who were regarded as the Lancashire witches or the Pendle witches, were brought to a series of trials in 1612. In early modern England, witchcraft had a fearful image. By the early nineteenth century, however, this image changed and the Lancashire witches were seen as part of the traditional culture of the local community. James Sharpe, 'Introduction: The Lancashire Witches in Historical Context', in Robert Poole (ed.), *The Lancashire Witches: Histories and Stories* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 1-18.

<sup>61</sup> In other constituencies, toasts for women, such as the wife of a candidate and the 'ladies' at large, were commonly given. See, as examples, the Bristol post-election dinners for R.H. Davis in 1820, 1826, and 1830. *BJ*, 18 March 1820, 24 June 1826, and 14 August 1830.

<sup>62</sup> Canning Club, Minutes, 47-50.

the loyal and patriotic sentiments which inspired an individual of the Society may prove a lasting bond of union and an insurmountable Barrier against all the attacks of its enemy'.<sup>63</sup> The committee of the club emphasised the importance of the political principles of the family to which the lady patroness belonged, stating that, 'The principles which have united that Society and the known patriotism and Loyalty which has ever distinguished your Family we are flattered in believing will make this appointment acceptable to you'.<sup>64</sup> At the anniversary dinner, the Canning Club always raised a toast to the lady patroness.<sup>65</sup> In addition to the Canning Club, the Gascoynite True Blue Club also had an annual lady patroness.<sup>66</sup>

Women in Bristol, like Miss Shand in Liverpool, demonstrated their opinions on politics in their letters. During the 1812 general election, for example, Mary Harcourt wrote to the Tory candidate, R.H. Davis, in order to suggest that friendly relations with the conservative Whig candidate, Edward Protheroe, would be beneficial to the Tories. She stated that:

I suppose by all that has occur'd I am to judge that Prothero [*sic*] stood on opposite interest but not Jacobin. In so far he is better than Romilly or Hunt. Pray let me know what are his declared political sentiments. I have read all your Bristol paper through and by part of it. I suppose Mr. Prothero opposition and in other parts I find him described as Ministerial.<sup>67</sup>

In Colchester, there was an occasion when a woman played a quasi-masculine role in giving a toast to the supporters of a Tory candidate. At the end of the 1826 election,

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<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 70-72.

<sup>65</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 31 August 1822.

<sup>66</sup> Whittingham-Jones, 'Liverpool's Political Clubs', 127.

<sup>67</sup> BRO, 41593/Co/7/14, Letter from Mary Harcourt at Nuneham to R.H. Davis at Clifton, 20 October 1812.

the chairing procession took place to celebrate the return of Sir George Henry Smyth. After that, 'four hundred gallons of strong beer' was provided to regale the populace; and 'on the first cask, being broached, a glass was handed to Lady Smyth, who very condescendingly drank to the health of Sir Henry's numerous supporters, which was answered by hearty cheers from the surrounding multitude'.<sup>68</sup>

This section has revealed that men and women without the vote were involved in Tory electoral politics. Of course, the experience of the non-voters was diverse, and the nature of 'unofficial' Tory politics cannot be easily described. The non-voters were not able to participate in electoral politics in the same way as the qualified voters were. Nevertheless, the candidates and the committees did not ignore the non-voters, but rather considered it important to gain their support. Considering that Toryism was strong in Liverpool, Bristol, and Colchester, it should be noted that such strength was underpinned by the support of not only the voters, but also the non-voters.

### III

#### NATIONAL ISSUES AND THE LOCAL CONTEXT

In Liverpool, Bristol, and Colchester, national issues were pervasive and raised major conflicts in elections. Between 1812 and 1832, there was no case where a specific local issue alone produced the main conflict in these boroughs. It is worth emphasising, however, that the ways and the extent to which national issues infiltrated into these constituencies depended on the local context. Different national issues were often

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<sup>68</sup> *CG*, 10 June 1826.

dominant in different constituencies. Specific local conditions were occasionally more important factors influencing the result of the election than were national issues. National issues and local conditions were intermingled in the constituencies. This section will therefore investigate and compare the various reactions of local Tories in these boroughs to national issues within the specific local context in the elections.

This section will be divided into three parts within a chronological perspective. First, the elections from 1812 to 1820 will be investigated. In this period, under the circumstances of the growth of provincial radicalism, two-party politics were significant in the three selected boroughs. Second, the elections which took place between 1821 and 1829 will be examined. In this period, two-party politics gradually declined, and attitudes to the main contentious issues were more diverse in these boroughs. Third, Tory electoral politics from 1830 to 1831 will be examined. Parliamentary reform, and the Reform Bills in particular, became the major national issue, and two-party politics nationally came back to the fore. In these selected constituencies, however, the impact of such a general trend was not the same.

#### *1812-1820*

In this period, the three selected constituencies saw the remarkable development of two-party politics. Every parliamentary election, except for the by-election in Colchester in March 1817, was a contested one. Various national issues were debated in these elections but, in the context of the growth of popular radicalism, parliamentary reform was the most important.

In Liverpool, this two-party competition was most heated. The Whig candidates, and Henry Brougham in particular, and their supporters, such as William Shepherd and

Colonel George Williams, insisted that the longlasting war with France had created serious problems over corruption and the scale of the national debt, and that parliamentary reform was vital to deal with these problems. Local Tories strongly opposed them. Of course, as has been seen in Chapter One, some local Tories supported moderate reform in the 1810s. There were thus some Tories in Liverpool supporting it as well. Nevertheless, they were aware of their differences from the Whigs with regard to parliamentary reform. In the 1812 election, for example, one of the Canningite squibs maintained that, ‘They [the Whig candidates] must be prepared to join with us in the cry for a Reform in Parliament, however they may differ from us as to the meaning of the term’.<sup>69</sup> Canning was more cautious. At the close of the fifth day’s poll, on 13 October 1812, Canning stated in a public speech:

Gentlemen, I will *not* support the question of parliamentary reform. I will not support it, because I am persuaded, that those who are most loud and, apparently, most solicitous in recommending it, do mean, and have, for years past, meant far other things than those simple words seem to intend; because I am persuaded, that that question cannot be stirred without stirring others which would shake the constitution to its very foundation; and because I am satisfied, that the House of Commons, as at present constituted, is adequate to all the functions which it is wisely and legitimately ordained to execute; that showy theories and fanciful schemes of arithmetical or geographical proportion would fail to produce any amelioration of the present frame of the House of Commons. I deny the grievance: I distrust the remedy.<sup>70</sup>

The Gascoynites adopted the same stance. Richard Gregson, for example, stated at the post-election dinner for Gascoyne that, ‘He [Gascoyne] was ... not only the

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<sup>69</sup> *Squib book, Liverpool, 1812*, 10.

<sup>70</sup> *Speeches of Canning in Liverpool*, 17.



Representative of their interests but likewise of their politics – of those politics which are for the Constitution as it now exists, and which spurn the idea of innovation, miscalled Reform'.<sup>71</sup> The Whigs were often attacked as unconstitutional 'republican', and labelled as 'democrats' and 'jacobins'.<sup>72</sup>

After the 1812 and 1816 elections, the growth of radicalism was more significant. By the 1820 general election, 'radical reform', which basically favoured universal manhood suffrage and annual parliaments, was commonly advocated. A series of political activities organised by radicals in the late 1810s, such as the Spa Fields riots in London in December 1816, the national radical meeting of the Hampden Club in January 1817, the 'March of the Blanketeers' in March 1817, the monster meeting at St. Peter's Field in August 1819, and the Cato Street Conspiracy in February 1820, made many people more conservative than radical. In this context, in the 1820 general election, local Tories began to attack radicalism, rather than Whiggism, severely.<sup>73</sup> Just before the opening of the 1820 general election, Canning gave a significant public address attacking radicalism. He emphasised that 'my declared opposition to the wild theories of undefined reform' was 'my public principles – my principles of toryism'.<sup>74</sup> The term, 'toryism', was still not a common or positive badge, but it was gradually used in the localities in this period.<sup>75</sup> By using this party label, Canning tried to formalise his political stance against radicalism.

In Colchester and Bristol, the term was not used in such a positive manner. As in Liverpool, however, local Tories in these two boroughs clearly opposed parliamentary reform, and radical reform in particular, in the late 1810s. In the 1818 general election

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<sup>71</sup> *LC*, 2 December 1812.

<sup>72</sup> *Squib book, Liverpool, 1812*, 63-64, 69, 71, 74-77; *Squib book, Liverpool, 1816*, 27-28, 40-41, 50.

<sup>73</sup> *Squib book, Liverpool, 1818*, 5, 21, 35-36, 43-44; *Squib book, Liverpool, 1820*, 27-28.

<sup>74</sup> *Speeches of Canning in Liverpool*, 248.

<sup>75</sup> Lee, *George Canning*, 82-85.

in Colchester, the Whig candidate, D.W. Harvey, attacked ‘the power of the Crown [which] has become overbearing’ and ‘the corrupt power of the Treasury’ and, in order to deal with these problems, he supported ‘Reform in Parliament which materially shortens its duration and extends the Elective Franchise’. Opposing him, J.B. Wildman declared his active support for the king and the constitution and insisted on the anti-radical measures of the Tory government.<sup>76</sup> In the elections in Bristol, three progressive Whigs, Sir Samuel Romilly, H.D. Baillie, and J.E. Baillie, and the radical, Henry Hunt, opposed crown influence and the corruption of ministers and supported parliamentary reform.<sup>77</sup> Reacting against them, R.H. Davis maintained in the 1818 election that ‘it shall ever be my anxious study to guard inviolate our admirable Constitution, and to watch over with zealous care the *real* liberties of the people’.<sup>78</sup> Clearly, parliamentary reform and popular radicalism were the main issues in the elections in the 1810s, and they created serious political tension between Tories and Whigs.

Another important national issue raised in many constituencies in this period was Catholic Emancipation.<sup>79</sup> Nevertheless, it had a different impact on the selected boroughs. In Colchester, every candidate, regardless of his party loyalty, opposed Catholic Emancipation. When Wildman stated in the 1818 general election that ‘he still remained a zealous and unchangeable supporter of the Protestant ascendancy both in

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<sup>76</sup> *CG*, 13 and 20 June 1818; *Late Elections*, 73-74; *CG*, 18 March 1820.

<sup>77</sup> For example, see Romilly’s support for parliamentary reform in *BJ*, 10 October 1812.

<sup>78</sup> *Late Elections*, 46.

<sup>79</sup> From 1812, this Catholic problem was discussed more seriously in the House of Commons. Until that time, the Pittite Tories felt difficulty in proposing an emancipation bill, because their leader, Pitt, had pledged to George III that he would not propose an emancipation measure again while the king was alive. The situation changed when the king became seriously ill in late 1810. It was clear that he would not come back to politics again, and a Regency began in 1811. From then on, pro-Catholic Tories as well as the Whig party were more actively involved in Catholic Emancipation, with an ‘open’ system formed by the government. Lee, *George Canning*, 87-93; Machin, *The Catholic Question*, 3-5, 13-15.

church and state, and pledged himself to oppose the Catholic claims',<sup>80</sup> he did not mean to distinguish himself from the other Whig candidates on this issue. In Bristol, where anti-Catholic feeling was very strong, Catholic Emancipation was a significant issue too. As in Colchester, it was unlikely that pro-Catholic candidates could win the seat in Bristol. Three pro-Catholic Whig candidates, Sir Samuel Romilly, H.D. Baillie, and J.E. Baillie, were defeated by a considerable margin. The successful candidates, R.H. Davis and a conservative Whig, never failed to declare their anti-Catholic sentiments. In the public nomination meeting in 1812, for example, Davis stated that, 'I will never consent to place power in the hands of the Roman Catholic, unless those necessary guards are granted which the security of our Protestant Church and State may require'.<sup>81</sup> In Liverpool, this issue was seldom raised. In the 1812 election, Canning clearly showed his pro-Catholic attitude,<sup>82</sup> but this was an exceptional case. A large majority of local Tories and the *Liverpool Courier* were anti-Catholic. Isaac Gascoyne and his friends were also anti-Catholic. In this situation, Canning and his pro-Catholic friends in Liverpool intentionally avoided pursuing this issue. S.G. Checkland has pointed out that, 'Canning was always aware that in Liverpool, even among his own supporters, a majority ... did not share his position on Catholic Emancipation. But for them the Catholic question was outweighed by others on which Canning could be very useful'.<sup>83</sup>

In Liverpool, local Tories made effective use of national issues, but the lack of viable Whig candidates helped the Tory candidates to win the seats. In the 1812 general election, local Whigs had recruited such excellent candidates as Henry Brougham and Thomas Creevey, but after this election they failed to find competitive candidates like

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<sup>80</sup> *Late Elections*, 73-74.

<sup>81</sup> *BJ*, 10 October 1812.

<sup>82</sup> *Speeches of Canning in Liverpool*, 18-23.

<sup>83</sup> Checkland, *The Gladstones*, 102.

these two. In the 1816 by-election, they supported Thomas Leyland, a Whig Councillor, but without his consent. He publicly declined his candidacy and did not show himself before the public as a candidate.<sup>84</sup> In the 1818 general election, Lord Sefton was a better prospective candidate, but *in absentia*. His son, Viscount Molyneux, conducted an election campaign on his behalf. Sefton was negative about this election, writing to Creevey one day after the conclusion of the election that, ‘I only consented to be nominated because they could get no one else’. He also told his son not to spend money on the election.<sup>85</sup>

The power of local Tories was greater with the strengthening of the unity of the Canningites and the Gascoynites in the 1818 and 1820 general elections. In the 1812 election, the contest was so heated and costly that the Canningites made an offer to the Whigs that votes should be split between Canning and Brougham by persuading Gascoyne and Creevey to withdraw.<sup>86</sup> Reacting to this, a pro-Gascoyne squib attacked Canning in the 1816 by-election, stating that, ‘You see what a cypher these men [the Canningites] have made your old and faithful Representative, General Gascoyne’.<sup>87</sup> In the elections in 1818 and 1820, the threat of radicalism brought the two Tory camps closer together. In the 1812 and the 1816 elections, the Whigs had attacked Canning almost exclusively, but they now launched an attack on Gascoyne. They regarded these two camps as ministerialists,<sup>88</sup> and warned that they made ‘an unrighteous Coalition’.<sup>89</sup> To counterattack it, a Tory squib insisted that:

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<sup>84</sup> *Speeches of Canning in Liverpool*, 116-117. It seems that Thomas Leyland had cast a vote for Gascoyne in the 1820 general election. Canning ridiculed this in his public speech. *Ibid.*, 273-274.

<sup>85</sup> HoP, *Commons 1790-1820*, ‘Liverpool’.

<sup>86</sup> Checkland, *The Gladstones*, 67-68.

<sup>87</sup> *Squib book Liverpool, 1816*, 6-7.

<sup>88</sup> *Squib book, Liverpool, 1820*, 5-6, 9, 15, 24, 59, 91.

<sup>89</sup> *Squib book, Liverpool, 1818*, 46.

Between the Candidates or their principal friends there is no coalition. If there be a coalition, it is a coalition of opinions, not of men; not of parties, but of principles. This is, in fact, a contest between the friends of order and good government, and the supporters of factious democracy.<sup>90</sup>

This shows that local Tories hesitated to regard the unity between the two Tory camps as a coalition or a party, but attempted to justify it by emphasising that they were connected chiefly by their shared political principles.

Even in Colchester, where the power of the Corporation was very strong and its political control was tight, Tory candidates regarded their own political principles as important. In the 1820 general election, the Corporation attempted to promote the coalition between Wildman and Major General Rebow in order to win both seats, but this attempt came undone. Rebow declined the offer for some reason, and Wildman was sceptical of the coalition itself. He ‘considered he was not acting handsomely by the Burgesses’ and ‘made up his mind, that no inducement whatever, and no expressions which had escaped him in the heat of the moment, should bind him to do that with them which he thought was trafficking with their interest’. When Sir Henry Russell was then proposed as a coalition partner, Wildman declined an alliance with him not only because of his sceptical attitude to coalition itself, but also because he considered it impossible to form any effective partnership with a gentleman whom he had never met.<sup>91</sup> This suggests that, even if a powerful patron initiated it, a political coalition was occasionally difficult to achieve, especially when candidates suspected that such a union was not underpinned by shared political principles.

In Bristol, the seat of R.H. Davis was secured, but his popularity temporarily

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<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 24. See also Canning’s claim about this issue in *Speeches of Canning in Liverpool*, 187.

<sup>91</sup> *BJ*, 18 March 1820.

declined in the 1820 election. He finished second in this election. This was mainly because of his failure in his funding speculations on Exchequer Bills. This failure made him retire from his widespread banking and merchant partnerships, which had been a significant source of his voting strength. It also made some Bristol Tories sceptical of his expertise about trade, finance, and commerce. In this election, the Stedfast Society therefore devised a plan to nominate Philip John Miles, a rich banker and merchant with West India interests, instead of Davis. Miles declined to stand, however, and so the society had to rely on Davis again. The repudiation of him by the society was not pervasive or lastlonging, but, because of this affair, many local Tory electors, at least temporarily, hesitated to cast their vote for Davis.<sup>92</sup> This shows that for Bristol Tories economic issues were as important as political and religious ones. To retain his seat, Davis needed to fulfil the various demands of local commercial people.

This section has examined the impact of national issues on Tory electoral politics in the 1810s. In the age of popular radicalism, two-party politics were very significant. Large numbers of local inhabitants in the selected boroughs tended to become more conservative, which gave local Tories an enormous advantage over their electoral behaviour. In Liverpool, the political unity between the friends of Canning and those of Gascoyne was effectively promoted in this context. In Colchester, however, local Tories failed to gain both seats. Despite the offer from the Colchester Corporation, Wildman declined a coalition with the candidates whose political principles were unknown to him.

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<sup>92</sup> Williams, 'Bristol in the General Elections', 193-197; HoP, *Commons 1790-1820*, 'Richard Hart Davis'; HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, 'Richard Hart Davis' and 'Bristol'; *BJ*, 4 March 1820. The following letter illustrates Davis's uneasiness: 'I am placed in an embarrassing situation. You must bear in mind that I was *originally* invited to offer myself as a Candidate by the *Stedfast Society* and that I have been supported by very liberal subscriptions from that body. ... If I were to promise that I would accept the invitation of my fellow citizens, without any reference to the *Stedfast Society*, and if my Election should be secured without the agency of the club, a discussion must be the consequence which never could be restored'. BRO, 41593/E/12/8, from R.H. Davis to Robert Jenkyns (27 February 1820).

He considered that a political union ought to be based on shared political principles. The impact of Catholic Emancipation was different in these constituencies. In Liverpool, the Catholic question did not become a major issue, whereas anti-Catholicism was so strong and widespread in Colchester and Bristol that MPs for these boroughs needed to be anti-Catholic. In Bristol, R.H. Davis and his friends did not have to find another Tory candidate, because an anti-Catholic Whig candidate was always elected with him. Davis was popular, not only because of his opposition to radicalism and Catholic Emancipation, but also because of his expertise in commercial and financial matters. His position was not completely stable and secure, however, once he had damaged the property of local inhabitants. This suggests that the fear of many electors over popular radicalism did not necessarily provide candidates with safe seats.

#### *1821-1829*

During the period between 1821 and 1829, three distinctive features can be commonly seen in Liverpool, Bristol, and Colchester. In the first place, two-party conflict declined remarkably at the constituency level as it did in Parliament. As a result, despite regional diversity, the elections generally tended to be less disputed or contested. Second, the elections took place less frequently: twice in Liverpool and Colchester, and once in Bristol. Third, national issues were still predominant in these three boroughs, but each constituency faced different national issues. This shows that Tory electoral politics in this period was markedly different from that in the previous period.

Between 1821 and 1829, Liverpool witnessed two parliamentary elections. The general election in 1826 was a contested one, but party conflict was much less serious. The number of votes cast was very small, and the length of polling was quite short.

Election squib books were not published. In the by-election in 1828, Huskisson was re-elected without a contest. In the 1820s, the Liverpoolian Whigs did not strenuously support parliamentary reform in the absence of a popular reform movement. Most of them were rather satisfied with the Tory party at Westminster pursuing liberal economic measures, and also with Huskisson as their representative. This situation significantly reduced the intense party politics which had been so remarkable in the 1810s.

In the 1826 general election, the main issue in Liverpool was the 1824 repeal of the Anti-Combination Acts and the amending Act of 1825.<sup>93</sup> Over this issue, many of the working classes showed their strong opposition to Huskisson. On 1 June 1826, the friends of Huskisson held a meeting at the Canning Club in order to prepare for the ensuing election.<sup>94</sup> There were about 150 people present, and two-thirds of them ‘consisted of merchants, – chiefly shipwrights, rope makers, and others connected with the shipping’.<sup>95</sup> Huskisson was nominated by Sir John Tobin, a Tory Councillor, and seconded by John Moss. The chairman, John Gladstone, declared that the legal expenses of the election should be met by means of a subscription. A sudden confusion then occurred. John Allen, ‘a tall man, in a blue jacket and trousers’,<sup>96</sup> stood up, and asked the chairman to read a newspaper on Huskisson’s opinion about the recent Combination

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<sup>93</sup> Under the social unease promoted by the French Revolution, the Anti-Combination Acts were passed in 1799-1800. They circumscribed the right of workers to combine. Along with the waning of radicalism at home, however, ‘Liberal’ Tory ministers supporting free trade repealed them in 1824, believing the theory of political economy that wages would be adjusted naturally by the market and that combinations of workers would not increase wages above it. Huskisson considered that ‘the laws against combinations have tended to multiply combinations ... (and) they had generally aggravated the evil they were intended to remove’. After the repeal, however, ministers witnessed the rash of strikes by trade unions and decided to pass the amending legislation in 1825. This Act confirmed that workers could legally combine ‘solely for the purpose of consulting upon and determining the rate of wages or prices’. This act made any form of picketing or coercion illegal, and workers found themselves protected inadequately. Eric J. Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State: Early Industrial Britain 1783-1870* (3rd edn., Harlow: Longman, 2001), 206-207, 224; *idem.*, *Britain before the Reform Act*, 55-56.

<sup>94</sup> HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, ‘Liverpool’.

<sup>95</sup> *Liverpool Commercial Chronicle*, 3 June 1826.

<sup>96</sup> Some historians have called him ‘William’ Allen. Checkland, *The Gladstones*, 154; HoP, *Commons 1820-1830*, ‘Liverpool’.



Act. He was a non-voting shipwright.<sup>97</sup> Gladstone prevented him from speaking, but some shouts of ‘go on! Go on!’ rose up from a number of merchants. After that, various clamours, such as ‘hear him! Hear him!’, ‘No Huskisson!’, ‘Gladstone for ever!’, and ‘No combination!’, followed. The friends of Huskisson gave up coping with the situation and left the room. After that, Allen read out the newspaper report:

Mr. Huskisson concluded in the following words, which well deserve the numerous attention of the working classes of the community: ... It is, (said Mr. Huskisson) peculiarly called for at the present moment, for, sure I am, that if the system of combination cannot be repressed by the interposition of the legislature, it must be repressed by giving increased facilities to the importation of foreign articles. ... I [Huskisson] am ready to say this, that if the shipwrights of England will not act in such a manner as allow the unshackled employment of capital in ship-building, and to leave the artificers at liberty to follow their own views of interest, Parliament must allow the introduction of foreign-built vessels. ... I would say the same to the operative classes in all branches of manufacture.<sup>98</sup>

The 1824 repeal of the Anti-Combination Acts is normally regarded as an example of the significant development of ‘Liberal Toryism’ in the mid-1820s. It led, however, to serious social problems. Demanding an increase in their wages, crowds created disturbances and, in Liverpool, there were strikes, intimidation, and fire-rising. Alarmed by this situation, Huskisson agreed to the restrictive act of 1825. Because of this, he was severely attacked by the working classes in the 1826 election.<sup>99</sup>

The other Tory MP, Isaac Gascoyne, however, adopted an opposite stance. In Parliament, he defended the right of the working classes to press for wage increases by

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<sup>97</sup> According to the poll books, he did not vote in the parliamentary elections of 1818 or 1830. His name was not listed in the ‘Unpolled Freeman’ of 1830. *Poll book, Liverpool, 1818*; *Poll book, Liverpool, 1830*.

<sup>98</sup> *Liverpool Commercial Chronicle*, 3 June 1826.

<sup>99</sup> Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool*, I, 151-155.

means of strike action.<sup>100</sup> In this election, he was a hero of the lower orders. He was followed by a huge number of operatives in his procession held on 9 June. He was also presented with a plate, on which the following words were inscribed: ‘Presented to General Isaac Gascoyne, M.P., by the under-mentioned Societies of Operative Mechanics in Liverpool, as a token of gratitude for his decided opposition to the re-enactment of the Combination Laws, 1825’.<sup>101</sup> On 2 June 1826, a large meeting was held in Moslake Fields to discuss the candidates to stand at the forthcoming election. There were 2,000 people in attendance, most of whom were from the working classes. At this meeting, at which the auctioneer Whig, Thomas Green, took the chair, Huskisson and his close friends, such as John Gladstone, James Acker, and John Bolton, were severely criticised. It was Gascoyne who was the celebrated hero at this meeting. Some attendants mentioned the name of the radical MP, Joseph Hume, as a prospective candidate in the election, but the meeting eventually resolved that Gascoyne and the barrister, Charles Wye Williams, should stand together as candidates for Liverpool. The colour adopted for Williams was ‘dark blue’, similar to Gascoyne’s colour.<sup>102</sup> Williams did not stand for election, but this episode demonstrates that the working classes could have an influence on electoral politics in support of the Tory Blue interest.

Huskisson confronted a serious challenge from many of the working classes, but his seat was not seriously threatened in the 1826 election. His Whig opponents could not find a viable candidate to contest his election. They were also not united on policy matters. Some of them even supported his liberal economic measures, and free trade in corn in particular.<sup>103</sup> On the other hand, Huskisson’s liberal attitude towards the

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<sup>100</sup> HoP, *Commons 1790-1820*, ‘Isaac Gascoyne’; HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, ‘Isaac Gascoyne’.

<sup>101</sup> Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool*, I, 400.

<sup>102</sup> *Liverpool Commercial Chronicle*, 3 June 1826; HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, ‘Liverpool’.

<sup>103</sup> *Liverpool Saturday’s Advertiser*, 17 June 1826.

economy was a concern among some Liverpool Tories. For example, John Gladstone, while opposing the 1815 Corn Law, hesitated to pursue a free trade policy aggressively.<sup>104</sup> In the immediate aftermath of the 1826 election, the *Liverpool Saturday's Advertiser* reported that, 'He [Gladstone] has ... declared his dissatisfaction with the modern theory of free trade, as expounded by Mr. Huskisson, and has avowed his intention to vote against the projected alteration of the corn laws'.<sup>105</sup> This conflict of opinions among the Tories, however, did not harm the position of Huskisson as an MP for Liverpool. While opposing free trade theory, Gladstone confirmed his support for Huskisson as he had done in previous elections.

In the 1828 by-election, Huskisson was re-elected easily. He was proposed by Colonel Bolton and seconded by Gladstone, and was also supported by many Whigs. The Whig member of the Common Council, William Wallace Currie, declared his support for Huskisson particularly because of his liberal stance on the Corn Laws and Catholic Emancipation. Unlike Canning, Huskisson was not attacked as a place-hunter by local Whigs.<sup>106</sup> Gladstone showed his concern about Huskisson's liberal policy again, but was still his active supporter.<sup>107</sup>

This examination of the elections held in this period in Liverpool shows that Tory MPs successfully retained their seats, but there was some disagreement among local Tories on economic issues in particular. It was not so deep or so wide as to dissolve the political union of local Tories, however. It might have been serious if local Whigs could have found their own influential candidate. Many of them, however, were satisfied with the liberal policies shaped by Huskisson. Under these circumstances, two-party politics

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<sup>104</sup> Checkland, *The Gladstones*, 148, 150.

<sup>105</sup> *Liverpool Saturday's Advertiser*, 24 June 1826.

<sup>106</sup> On the other hand, Huskisson emphasised that 'nothing should be done by me inconsistent with my attachment and fidelity to my lamented friend, Mr. Canning'. Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool*, I, 410.

<sup>107</sup> Checkland, *The Gladstones*, 157.

declined in this constituency during these years.

From 1821 to 1829, Colchester did not see any contested elections. In the 1826 general election, Catholic Emancipation was the most important issue. On 3 June 1826, the *Colchester Gazette* stated that this issue was ‘generally deemed requisite for the constituent to require any pledge from his Representative’.<sup>108</sup> Sir George Henry Smith, a staunch anti-Catholic Tory, was easily returned. D.W. Harvey insisted that, ‘The Catholic Question, he (Mr. H.) should never vote for unless requested so to do by his constituents’.<sup>109</sup> In April 1829, Smith resigned, because he had been disappointed with the passage of the Catholic Emancipation bill. In the by-election, Richard Sanderson, a candidate parachuted in by the Colchester Corporation, was returned. With regard to his political views, he pronounced on nothing but his wish to educate the poor and abolish slavery. He had been unknown to the electors before the election. There was a token challenge against his return from his brother, James Sanderson, and from William Mayhew, but this did not result in a contested election. With regard to future elections in Colchester, however, Mayhew’s opposition was significant. In the immediate aftermath of the election, under the banner of independent ‘blue’ Toryism, he announced the formation of a new club for the freemen of this borough living in London in order to attack both the undue influence of the Corporation and of Harvey.<sup>110</sup>

Bristol electoral politics in the 1826 general election hardly changed from that between 1812 and 1820. The most significant national issue in this election was the Catholic question. R.H. Davis was easily returned with the anti-Catholic Whig, Henry Bright. Davis consistently supported ‘our glorious Constitution in Church and State’ and

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<sup>108</sup> *CG*, 3 June 1826.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 June 1826.

<sup>110</sup> HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, ‘Richard Sanderson’, ‘William Mayhew’, and ‘Colchester’.

‘the Protestant Ascendancy’.<sup>111</sup> In this election, however, as in the 1820 general election, a local issue relating to trade and commerce was more important. By the time this election took place, the electors’ trust in Davis’s expertise and diligent activity to improve the economy of Bristol had been regained, and his popularity was largely restored. The Stedfast Society did not hesitate to nominate him for this election. In his open letter to the electors, he confidently stated that ‘the Nation is now enjoying ... Prosperity’. He also claimed that:

You are better judges, Gentlemen, than I can presume to be, how far my promises to watch over your Private and Local Interests have been fairly redeemed. – All I can venture to lay claim to, is a sincere and uniform endeavour at all times faithfully to discharge my duty in this respect to all my Constituents.<sup>112</sup>

Even the radical Whig newspaper, the *Bristol Mercury*, admitted that ‘he enjoyed the “universal esteem and affection” of his constituents, thanks to his “earnest attention” to their “private and commercial interests”’.<sup>113</sup>

On the other hand, Henry Bright was not popular, because the inhabitants of Bristol believed that he lacked the enthusiasm to promote Bristol’s economy. It was widely believed that he did not actively promote local businesses, particularly when he did not understand the concerns of the electors, and of merchants in particular, about the burden of the town dues.<sup>114</sup> In this election, he made a thoughtless remark about the life of the

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<sup>111</sup> *BJ*, 10 June 1826.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 May 1826.

<sup>113</sup> HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, ‘Bristol’.

<sup>114</sup> In the early 1820s, anxiety about the stagnant trade of Bristol grew particularly among local merchants. They considered that the burden of the port and town dues was the principal cause of the problem and, in 1823, they launched a campaign against these dues and even against the Bristol Corporation. The dispute remained unresolved until 1835, when all dues were decreased and later the dues on exports were completely abolished. Graham Bush, *Bristol and Its Municipal Government*

working classes too. As a result, a clamour against him arose.<sup>115</sup>

The other Whig candidate, Edward Protheroe, was fairly popular, particularly among local merchants. Since Davis had originally intended to withdraw his candidacy, the Stedfast Society had to find a successor. It put the name of Protheroe in the list. He was supported because of his opposition to Catholic Emancipation and his efforts to 'promote the general commercial interests of the city'. During this contested election, he drew support from both Tories and Whigs.<sup>116</sup> Several public notices, such as posters and cards, urged the electors to split their votes between Davis and Protheroe. The friends of Bright called Protheroe a 'Tory'. Nevertheless, Protheroe himself was not an active candidate in this election. When Parliament had been dissolved on 2 June 1826, he had already decided to retire from political life. His expertise in trade and commerce was still appealing to many of his friends, however. It seemed likely that he would win the contest. In fact, he led Bright until the end of the third day of the poll. Some 'unofficial' participants in electoral politics also supported him. In the evening of the first day of the poll, a crowd brutally attacked the Bush Tavern, where the headquarters for Bright were located. It was reported that they broke into pieces every window in the front of the building, and several people were badly wounded. They also destroyed the coach office and coffee room of the tavern whose contents were smashed or stolen. The major reasons for Protheroe's defeat were his lack of enthusiasm and the shortage of electoral funds among his supporters.<sup>117</sup>

From 1821 to 1829, the impact of national issues was clearly different in the selected boroughs, and two-party politics declined substantially at the local level as it

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*1820-1851* (Bristol: Bristol Record Society, 1976), 46-51; HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, 'Bristol'.

<sup>115</sup> *BJ*, 17 June 1826.

<sup>116</sup> HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, 'Bristol'.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

did in Parliament. This does not suggest that the electoral politics of local Tories in this period was not important. Liverpool and Colchester witnessed a significant change of Tory electoral politics. In Liverpool, 'Liberal' Tories began to be supported by some Whigs on several specific issues about the economy and religion. In Colchester, the hatred of and complaints against the Corporation were expressed even by some local Tories, who began to attack the unknown candidates parachuted in by the Corporation and to support an independent Tory, Mayhew. On the other hand, Bristol did not see a significant change of Tory electoral politics. A 'High' Tory, R.H. Davis, restored his popularity as an MP, by contributing to the local economy and strongly supporting the Protestant constitution. These different situations in these three boroughs at the end of this period would be a significant factor in the development of Tory electoral politics between 1830 and 1831.

### *1830-1831*

Between 1830 and 1831, two-party politics became nationally significant again. In these two years, elections took place more frequently than in the previous decade. In Liverpool, Bristol, and Colchester, every election except for the 1831 general election in Bristol was contested. In these constituencies, national issues were prominent particularly in the general elections. The 1830 general election took place in July and August after George IV had died on 26 June. In this election, various controversial issues were raised, but the call for retrenchment and tax reductions were probably the most significant in many constituencies. In addition, many other issues, such as slavery, parliamentary reform, and Catholic Emancipation, were also aired in many constituencies. The 1831 general election was something like a referendum on the

Reform Bills presented by Grey's administration.<sup>118</sup> Along with the general tendency of these elections, Tory electoral politics in the selected boroughs developed, but in different ways. As in the previous period, the local situation was a significant factor in Tory electoral politics as well as the national situation.

In the 1830 general election, Liverpool saw a contested election, but not a heated one. The election was over very quickly. The existing members, Gascoyne and Huskisson, were re-elected easily with the aid of votes from many local Whigs. Against them, the progressive Whig, Colonel George Williams, stood, but he did not receive much support even from the Whigs.

In this election, liberal financial and commercial measures and parliamentary reform were the main issues in Liverpool. With regard to the former, the Tory candidates showed a positive attitude. Huskisson could not travel to Liverpool because of illness, but he sent an open letter to reveal his basic political stance to the electors. In this letter, he stated that 'it is essential to lighten the pressure upon the springs of our productive industry'. He supported such measures as the reduction of taxation and the abolition of commercial monopolies. He emphasised his own commitment to both liberal measures and his loyalty to the constitution: 'the surest way to rivet the affections of a loyal people to institutions so naturally dear to them, is constantly to study how best to diminish the sufferings and multiply the comforts of the millions committed to their care'.<sup>119</sup> On the hustings, Sir John Tobin, who served as 'locum tenens' for Huskisson, read out Huskisson's additional insistence on 'strongly advocating a reduction of taxation, a more equal distribution of the burden of the State and the adoption of the system of free trade'. General Gascoyne also supported the

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<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 'Survey, V, General Elections, 1820-1831'.

<sup>119</sup> *The Huskisson Papers 1792-1830*, ed. Lewis Melville (London: Constable, 1931), 321-324.



policy of free trade with India.<sup>120</sup> Tory MPs were popular among the electors of all parties, because they made efforts to sound out local public opinion and introduced a system of freer trade and commerce. As shown in the letter by Huskisson above, it was believed that economic satisfaction was vital to maintain the present establishment.

The most significant feature of local Toryism in Liverpool in both the general election and the by-election held in 1830 was support for parliamentary reform. In the general election, Huskisson and Gascoyne supported moderate reform. Two competing Tory candidates who stood for the by-election, William Ewart and J.E. Denison, were active supporters of parliamentary reform. They were in favour of the Reform Bills. In Liverpool (especially in its electoral politics), it was the Tories, rather than the Whigs, who took the initiative in promoting parliamentary reform.

In the 1830 general election, Sir John Tobin accepted moderate reform. Gascoyne insisted on the desirability of a better system of representation and supported the representation of such growing manufacturing towns as Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, and Sheffield.<sup>121</sup> Even before the formation of Grey's Whig administration, the Liverpudlian Tories had already begun to support some degree of parliamentary reform.

After the death of Huskisson, a contested by-election took place in November 1830. This election witnessed some competition between the two parties, Tory and Whig, because William Ewart, who was supported by the progressive Whigs, competed with J.E. Denison, who was supported by the Canningite Tories, such as John Bolton and John Gladstone. Ewart attacked Denison and his friends, labelling them as a corrupt and bribing Junto supporting 'ministerial tyranny and excessive taxation'.<sup>122</sup> The election

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<sup>120</sup> Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool*, I, 417-418.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 418.

<sup>122</sup> *Squib book, Liverpool, 1830*, 31, 46, 53.

was not primarily a two-party contest, however. As seen in the first section of this chapter, both candidates had authentic Tory backgrounds and personal connections. In the initial declaration of his candidacy, Denison stated that, ‘I offer myself to you as a humble follower, at an unequal distance, of their [Canning and Huskisson] footsteps’.<sup>123</sup> He was supported not only by Bolton, Gladstone, and other Canningite Tories, such as Sir John Tobin and Charles Shand,<sup>124</sup> but also by such Gascoynites as J.S. Leigh and W. Foster, and the leading local Whig, Edward Rushton.<sup>125</sup> He wore the Canningite colour, red or scarlet,<sup>126</sup> and also the Gascoynite blue.<sup>127</sup> Ewart was the son of the leading Canningite, William Ewart. Like Denison, he represented himself as a Canningite by representing himself ‘as the humble follower of those free and enlarged opinions associated with the immortal names of Canning and of your late lamented Representative’.<sup>128</sup> He drew more support from the Whigs than Denison did, but he chose Tory blue, not Whig pink, as his party colour. His supporters identified themselves with ‘the blue party’ ‘in support of the good old cause of True Blue’.<sup>129</sup>

The pro-reform Toryism of these two Tory candidates was more remarkable than that of the local Tories in the 1830 general election. At a meeting of the Guardian Society on 2 November, Denison ‘was favourable to [a] moderate system of reform’ and ‘desirous to extend the franchise to ratepayers of £20’. He was also ‘happy to see representation given to Manchester and the other large towns’.<sup>130</sup> Likewise, Ewart, in his address after the charring procession, claimed that ‘the day is not far distant ... when

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<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 5, 13, 20, 31, 35, 51.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 31, 41, 51.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 8, 35, 37.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 12, 18, 28, 34; *Liverpool Chronicle*, 11 December 1830.

<sup>128</sup> *Squib book, Liverpool, 1830*, 3.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 16, 20, 32.

<sup>130</sup> Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool*, I, 421-422.

Manchester, and Birmingham, and Leeds will be fully and fairly represented in the legislation [*sic*] of Great Britain'.<sup>131</sup> These two candidates professed support for similar measures and both Whigs and Tories were found in both camps. The pro-Ewart camp's repudiation of Denison and his friends as a corrupt Junto was advanced because it could not find any significant difference with Denison on matters of policy.<sup>132</sup>

As they could not find a useful means of distinguishing each other, both camps eventually relied on the power of money. James Picton, in his memoir published in the late Victorian period, pointed out that about 3,000 out of 4,401 freemen who voted in this election were bribed and received 'sums varying from £5 to £40 each'. He estimated that Ewart spent £65,000 and Denison about £50,000.<sup>133</sup> This kind of 'venal' practice was occasionally seen in elections in the Hanoverian period.<sup>134</sup> In this case, however, the sum was huge. Because of the strong evidence of electoral 'bribery', this election was eventually declared void on 23 March 1831.

Table 3-11: How the electors who had voted in 1818 cast their votes in 1830

	For Ewart	For Denison	Abstained
'Tory' in 1818	48.2%	62.4%	60.9%
'Whig' in 1818	47.3%	33.6%	35.8%
Cross-party in 1818	4.4%	4.0%	3.4%

It has been suggested, however, that, despite the power of money, some electors might have cast their votes according to their political principles. Table 3-11 shows the ways in which the electors in Liverpool who had voted in the 1818 general election cast

<sup>131</sup> *Squib book, Liverpool, 1830*, 63.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>133</sup> Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool*, I, 424. Another estimate of the cost can be seen in HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, 'Liverpool'.

<sup>134</sup> O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 141-171.

their votes in this by-election. According to this table, out of the electors who had voted in 1818, but abstained from voting in 1830, more than sixty per cent of them were 'Tory' electors who had plumped for Canning or Gascoyne or had voted for both. It is impossible to fully understand why they gave up voting in 1830, but they might not have wished to vote for candidates who clearly showed a more progressive pro-reform attitude than they had expected. It is also important to look at the extent to which Ewart and Denison were supported by the electors who had voted in 1818. Out of the electors who had voted in 1818 and supported Ewart in 1830, nearly half of them were 'Tory' electors and almost the same proportion of them was composed of the 'Whig' electors who had plumped for Sefton in 1818. On the other hand, out of the electors who had voted in 1818 and supported Denison in 1830, more than sixty per cent were 'Tory'. This proves that the 'Tory' electors preferred Denison to Ewart. Since Denison was regarded as less progressive on reform issues than Ewart, this may be a reasonable conclusion. This analysis suggests that the political stance of Ewart and Denison, particularly on parliamentary reform, might be one of the important factors in shaping the voting behaviour of the electors.

The 1830 general election in Colchester was a three-cornered contest: Andrew Spottiswoode supported by the Corporation Blue interest; the Whig, D.W. Harvey; and the independent Tory, William Mayhew. No particular national issue was prominent. With regard to his political stance, Spottiswoode only declared 'his firm attachment to the Constitution in Church and State'.<sup>135</sup> His lack of any policy difference was ridiculed by Harvey: 'I ask him to state any instance where the question was that of reform, of economy in the public expenditure, or any other measure for the general benefit of the

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<sup>135</sup> *CG*, 7 August 1830.

country, he ever spoke – no!’<sup>136</sup> Spottiswoode was like Richard Sanderson in that he was a candidate parachuted in by the Corporation and was previously unknown to the electors.

The issue which Harvey strenuously supported was parliamentary reform. In his open letter to the electors, he stated that ‘the progress of national improvement depends mainly upon the people, for great as is the power of the Boroughmongers, it is yielding to the mighty current of public opinion, by which it must eventually be swept away’. He claimed that, in order to attack the ‘Boroughmongers’ and ‘all domestic despotisms’, it was necessary for ‘an improved representation of the people to be effected by more frequent elections – by an enlargement of constituent bodies – and by the extinction of those places which do not possess the inherent elements of renovation’.<sup>137</sup> His pro-reform policy was still not entrenched, however. Before Grey’s administration was established, the Colchester Whigs did support parliamentary reform as positively as in the 1818 general election.

The most significant feature in this election was the rise of William Mayhew. Just before the election, a meeting of ‘the FREE BURGESSES of COLCHESTER resident in London and its Vicinity’, held on 14 July at the Angel and Crown tavern, resolved to ‘pledge themselves to support with their PLUMPER VOTES and Interest, any Gentleman of Integrity and of Independent and Protestant Principles’.<sup>138</sup> This ‘Gentleman’ was Mayhew. He was nominated as a candidate because of his decision to refuse to cooperate with either the Corporation party or the local Whigs supporting Harvey. In the public election debate, in order to distinguish himself from the

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<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 July 1830.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 July 1830.

Corporation blue, he stated that, ‘I tell you that I am a blue, and shall ever remain so; and I am what is called a liberal blue ... to be a liberal blue is to entertain the principles which correspond with those of every good man’.<sup>139</sup> He was defeated in this election, finishing third with 303 votes. Nevertheless, at the meeting of the recently formed New Colchester Independent Club, held on 18 August 1830, he suggested that he would stand in the next election, stating that, ‘He [Mayhew] would never leave Colchester till he had made it independent’.<sup>140</sup>

In the 1830 general election in Bristol, the Catholic question was the major issue for local Tories, because the passage of the Emancipation bill had not meant the end of the Catholic issue. At the meeting of the parochial committees held at the White Lion, on 28 July 1830, John Bush stated:

[H]e [R.H. Davis] had consciously performed his duty in opposing Ministerial patronage and influence, by his determined resistance to Catholic Emancipation. (*Hear, hear.*) When he (Mr. B) recollected that 35,000 inhabitants of Bristol had signed the petition against that dangerous inroad on the Constitution, he was persuaded that they would rise en masse and support the election of Mr. Davis. (*Cheers.*)<sup>141</sup>

Davis’s uncompromising opposition to Catholic relief still underpinned his popularity. He was returned with 5,012 votes, the most numerous he had ever gained.<sup>142</sup> At the post-election dinner celebrating the return of Davis, he stated in the aftermath of the toast to the ‘Protestant Ascendancy’ that, ‘though they had manfully and conscientiously

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<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 August 1830.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 August 1830.

<sup>141</sup> *BJ*, 31 July 1830.

<sup>142</sup> His popularity was also underpinned by his careful attention to Bristol trade and commerce. At the meeting supporting Davis, for example, William Edward Acraman stated that Davis had contributed to Bristol’s economy by supporting the reduction of the sugar duty and by opposing the renewal of the East India Company’s Charter. *Ibid.*, 24 July 1830.

resisted the passing of the Catholic Relief Bill, they were bound, as good subjects, to obey the law; but he hoped they would always be watchful to uphold the Protestant cause, and prevent any future encroachment'.<sup>143</sup> Even the pro-Catholic Whig candidate, Edward Protheroe Jnr., needed to excuse himself, by claiming that, 'A sincere churchman, I have taken occasion to express my attachment to our ecclesiastical establishment'. He also stated that, 'In supporting the Catholic Relief Bill, I was not, I would beg to assure you, actuated by any indifference to the protestant faith, nor by any insensibility of the advantages we enjoy through the establishment of our holy church'.<sup>144</sup> Clearly, the Catholic question was still controversial in Bristol in 1830.

It has been claimed that the passage of the Catholic Emancipation bill undermined the trust of many Tories in the Wellington government and even shattered the unity of the Tory party.<sup>145</sup> Nevertheless, this was not the case in Bristol. At the post-election dinner, the toast to 'The Duke of Wellington and his Majesty's Ministers' was given. In proposing it, the chairman, Davis, 'said he wished to look forward, instead of looking back'. He went on to claim that, 'When they contemplated the agitated state of a neighbouring country [France], he was confident it would incite them to give their strongest support to his Majesty's Government, which would enable them to uphold the honor, dignity, and best interests of this country'. After Davis, William Purnell also stated that as 'the true adherents to our benevolent Constitution, and ... as ... the Government party, they had extended to all the right hand of friendship', and that, 'At the present moment there existed an imperious necessity for rallying round His

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<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 August 1830.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 July 1830.

<sup>145</sup> O'Gorman, *British Two-Party System*, 109-110; Brian W. Hill, *The Early Parties and Politics in Britain, 1688-1832* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 188.

Majesty's Government'.<sup>146</sup> Fearing a significant growth of the Political Unions in 1830, Davis and local Tories in Bristol expected that a massive reform movement in Britain would be strongly promoted by the July Revolution in France. To counter it, they favoured support for and cooperation with the Tory government. This suggests that, unlike Liverpool and Colchester, where pro-reform Toryism grew significantly and alarm over the July Revolution was hardly expressed by local Tories in the 1830 elections, local Bristol Tories increased their conservative attitudes.

In the 1830 general election in Bristol, the most serious conflict appeared between J.E. Baillie and Edward Protheroe Jnr. They competed for the second seat. They were both progressive Whigs, but adopted a different stance over the issue of slavery. Baillie was 'a slave-owner who was to receive almost £13,000 of the £20 million paid by the Government in competition to slave-owners after abolition'.<sup>147</sup> Naturally, he was supported by the Bristol West Indian interest. On the other hand, Protheroe was a more active abolitionist and supported by the independent Whig electors. Davis and his electoral committee, who were already confident of securing the seat, did not take pains to be involved in this issue. It seems, however, that they supported Baillie in an indirect way. They denied the existence of a coalition between Davis and Baillie and insisted on their own 'STRICT NEUTRALITY',<sup>148</sup> but many of their supporters were members of the West Indian interest. The electoral committee supporting Davis sent deputies to the post-electoral dinner in order to celebrate the return of Baillie.<sup>149</sup>

Both Baillie and Protheroe stated that they were abolitionists, but there was a significant difference between them. An anonymous writer calling himself 'A

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<sup>146</sup> *BJ*, 14 August 1830.

<sup>147</sup> Phillips, *The Great Reform Bill*, 91.

<sup>148</sup> *BJ*, 31 July 1830.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 August 1830.



FREEMAN' suggested that 'Mr. Baillie professes himself a friend to the ultimate extinction of Slavery, and the adoption of all moderate measures to effect this end', while Protheroe supported 'the amelioration of the condition of the Slaves, and the *earliest practicable* extinction of the system of Slavery itself'.<sup>150</sup> At the public nomination meeting, Protheroe stated that:

You will, I dare say, on the present occasion, hear that there exists no difference between my sentiments and those of my opponents; that they disapprove of slavery, that they desire its extinction, but that they would leave the conduct of the question to the time and pleasure of ministers. (*Hear, hear.*) ... I would not wait the good pleasure of the Government, I would support their good intentions, and would urge them and force them to action. (*Hear.*)

On the other hand, seconding the nomination of Baillie, Charles Pinney showed a sympathetic attitude towards the planters by insisting that, 'I have endeavoured to shew you that the planters have been traduced and misrepresented – that the English government was the original dealer in Slaves, and carried on the traffic contrary to the wish and petitions of the planters; and thus at present the only wise and safe plan is that recommended by the Government and concurred in by the planters'. He also warned the audience that a rash judgment would have a devastating impact on the economy of Bristol and lead to 'your own destruction', insisting that 'their employment is mainly derived from our intercourse with the West Indies'.<sup>151</sup>

It is difficult to assess how well Pinney represented the opinion of those who were involved in the West India trade. It is important to note, however, that some of them,

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<sup>150</sup> In this issue of the *BJ*, there were many other public comments on slavery offered by anonymous writers, which demonstrate the high level of interest of Bristolians in this issue. *Ibid.*, 31 July 1830.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

including working-class men, mobbed Protheroe. On 26 July, four days before polling commenced, the Bush Tavern, where the electoral committee supporting him was located, faced 'the blood-thirsty attack' committed 'by the Mob' who supported Baillie. It was reported that among the participants were 'regular bodies of sailors and men from the Shipping yards, armed with bludgeons, and excited by inflammatory representations'. Since another newspaper article reported that 'there were 27 casualties brought to the Infirmary on Monday [the 25th] evening', there must already have been a sense of unrest in the city before the attack on the Bush Tavern. In the evening (about half-past eight) of the 30th, the day of the nomination meeting, there was another disturbance, when Protheroe himself was attacked. When he was addressing a crowd from the windows of the Bush Tavern, 'some miscreant in the crowd' threw 'the Oak Round of a Ladder' or 'a bludgeon' at him. It hit his head, from which blood gushed, and he was carried into a surgeon's place nearby. The wound was not serious, but he could not appear on the hustings next day.<sup>152</sup> Evidently, tension between the supporters of Baillie and Protheroe was so high that many common people became involved in the riots. Many inhabitants of Bristol, regardless of whether they were voters or non-voters, supported slavery because of its influence on the local economy. This reveals an important aspect of conservative nature of Bristol, which underpinned the strength of pro-slavery Whigs and Tories in this borough.

In the parliamentary elections which took place in 1831 in the three selected boroughs, the Reform Bills were the most important issue. In these elections, three significant elements can be found commonly in the selected boroughs. First, every successful candidate, regardless of whether he was a Tory or a Whig, was in favour of

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<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

the Reform Bills. Second, the Tory candidates who were defeated in the elections all supported moderate reform, but failed to obtain enough votes to secure a seat. Third, in order to win in these boroughs where Toryism was powerful and influential, the candidates, whether Tory or Whig, needed to gain support from the 'Tory' electors who had severely attacked popular radicalism in the late 1810s and/or had strongly opposed Catholic Emancipation in the late 1820s.

In the 1831 general election in Bristol, two Whigs supporting the Reform Bills, James Evan Baillie and Edward Protheroe Jnr., were elected without a contest. When Parliament was dissolved on 23 April 1831, however, there was still the possibility that Davis would stand at this election. The meeting of 'the friends of the Blue Interest', held on the same day at the White Lion, decided to nominate Davis and established an electoral committee to support him. In his open letter to the freemen in Bristol, published on 25 April, Davis declared his candidacy. He stated that he himself was a reformer, but maintained that 'it has been my most anxious desire to distinguish between measures leading to a constitutional and therefore salutary Reform, and those which could, in my opinion, produce no other than Revolutionary Results, by destroying the balanced powers of the Constitution'. He also attempted to inform the electors that the Catholic question was still important in this election, insisting that the Reform Bills would 'threaten the Protestant Constitution from the Representation of Ireland by Roman Catholics'.<sup>153</sup> It is doubtful, however, whether he seriously considered the expression of his anti-Catholic attitude to be effective enough to gain much support from the voters. Before publishing this letter, he anticipated that he would not secure his seat. On 22 April, one day before the dissolution of Parliament, he wrote to the Duke of

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<sup>153</sup> *Bristol Mercury*, 26 April 1831.

Wellington: 'I am still ready to fight, but the atmosphere does not appear to be as clear as formerly ... This country will not enjoy an hour of safety until the Whigs are hurled from their seats'.<sup>154</sup> During the last twenty years, Davis had maintained his popularity by carefully sounding out local public opinion in Bristol on the economy and religion in particular. When he faced the enormous reform movement in 1831, however, he could not support it, but decided to withdraw from the contest.

The 1831 general election in Liverpool was a three-cornered contest between two 'Liberal' Tories, William Ewart and J.E. Denison, and a 'High' Tory, Isaac Gascoyne. The first two candidates advocated the Reform Bills, whereas Gascoyne supported 'such a moderate and well-considered alteration in the Representative System as the times and circumstances in which we live may require', but opposed 'the sweeping measure which was proposed to the late Parliament'.<sup>155</sup> The friends of Denison faced a problem when he considered standing for election in Nottinghamshire, but they, the friends of Ewart, and local Whigs all agreed to nominate and support both Ewart and Denison in order to prevent the return of Gascoyne.<sup>156</sup> This cross-party union proved very powerful. At the end of the election, Ewart and Denison obtained 1,919 and 1,890 votes respectively, and Gascoyne gained only 607.

Liverpool experienced another election in 1831, when Denison formally chose to sit for Nottinghamshire. Local Tories decided to nominate the Huskissonian, Viscount Sandon. He supported liberal foreign, commercial, and financial policies, the abolition of slavery, religious freedom, and the Reform Bills. In this election, he competed with a sugar refiner and radical Whig, Thomas Thornely. Sandon wore the Canningite colour,

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<sup>154</sup> HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, 'Richard Hart Davis'.

<sup>155</sup> *LC*, 27 April 1831.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 June 1831.

red, and gained firm and wide support from moderate Tories and moderate Whigs, who suspected that Thornely was threatening the constitution by supporting a more progressive reform measure than the Reform Bills.<sup>157</sup> He defeated Thornely with 1,519 votes, more than twice as many as the votes cast for the latter candidate, 670. In this borough, Toryism retained its hegemony over its representation even during the reform crisis.

In Colchester, a parliamentary election took place twice in 1831: at the general election in April and at a by-election in May. In both elections, the disfranchisement of the out-voters became a significant issue. The borough of Colchester included a large number of out-voters. In this election, the number of voters living in Colchester was 304, while there were 318 voters residing in London and 487 in other regions in the country.<sup>158</sup> Many of the out-voters strongly opposed the Reform Bills, because it was expected that they would be deprived of their vote as a result of the passage of the bills. Even at the meeting of the friends of the Whig candidate, D.W. Harvey, held on 28 April 1831, 'Mr. Willsher' expressed his hope that the bills 'never would pass', and also claimed that, 'I ask Mr. Harvey if he would like to give up his suffrage? I will not'.<sup>159</sup> The Tory candidates opposing the Reform Bills, Sir William Curtis standing for the general election and Richard Sanderson for the by-election, and their supporters therefore attempted to draw support from the out-voters by insisting that they were willing to preserve 'the RIGHTS and PRIVILEGES of the Burgesses of Colchester'. On the first day of the poll at the general election, Sir Henry Smyth claimed that, 'I would

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 June and 26 October 1831

<sup>158</sup> *Poll book, Colchester, 1831*, 34. The composition of the voters of Colchester in other general elections was: in 1812, 408 voters living in Colchester, 296 voters residing in London, and 702 in other regions in the country; in 1820, 443 in Colchester, 331 in London, and 608 in other regions; and in 1830, 450 in Colchester, 329 in London, and 459 in other regions. *Poll book, Colchester, 1812*, 3; *Poll book, Colchester, 1820*, 3; *Poll book, Colchester, 1830*, 38.

<sup>159</sup> *CG*, 30 April 1831.

support no bill which deprived men of rights they had inherited from their ancestors (applause)'.<sup>160</sup> This 'applause' following his address suggests that quite a few electors were ready to support Sir William Curtis because of their fear of being disenfranchised. This is why these two Tory candidates, while eventually defeated, obtained votes quite close to those cast for the successful candidates.<sup>161</sup>

Opposing this claim, the other candidates supporting the Reform Bills, William Mayhew and D.W. Harvey, insisted on a greater cause, namely the passage of the bills, and self-sacrifice. On the last polling day of the general election, Mayhew maintained that, 'I am willing to sacrifice [*sic*] my own franchise to secure theirs [that of the householders]'. At the meeting of his friends, held on 28 April, Harvey, responding to 'Mr. Willsher', maintained that:

He [Harvey] was now possessed of votes for Maldon, London, Sussex, and Essex, and by the Bill, he would lose all of them. But he would be sorry to object to the Bill on this account.<sup>162</sup>

The firm decision of these candidates to support the bills at the cost of their own votes was upheld by their close friends and other electors. At the meeting of Mayhew's friends living in London, held on 28 March, it was resolved that, even if they lost their vote, they would support him. On the first day of the general election, Edward Daniell, an attorney and close friend of Harvey, attempted to convince the out-voters that the impact of the disfranchisement on them would not be as massive as they thought, by

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<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 April 1831.

<sup>161</sup> It is ironic that the strength of Toryism in Colchester was recovered immediately after the passage of the Reform Acts, partly because the out-voters, many of whom had supported the Reform Bills in 1831, were deprived of the vote by this enactment. *Poll book, Colchester, 1831*, 34; Speight, 'Politics in Colchester', 117-120.

<sup>162</sup> *CG*, 30 April 1831.

insisting that:

If you get a Reformed Parliament who will lay the burthen of the taxes on the wealthy aristocrats, what is to prevent you from getting a house of £10 a year? If you are relieved from enormous burthens, you will get up in the world, and soon acquire a house of £10 a year and a vote. (Applause.)

This claim probably influenced the voting behaviour of the out-voters to some extent, because, following his address, ‘Mr. Osbourne’ insisted that, ‘I am an out voter – I am willing to give up my rights for the benefit of the country. (Applause)’.<sup>163</sup>

In order to be elected as MPs for these three selected boroughs, where Toryism was strong, the pro-reform candidates, regardless of whether they were Tory or Whig, needed to convince the ‘Tory’ electors of the necessity of the Reform Bills. In this respect, there is little doubt that the support of the king, William IV, for the bills gave an enormous advantage to the pro-reform candidates. The successful candidates and their friends very often employed such phrases as ‘the people and the King’ and ‘your King and Liberty’ in order to convince the voters that the reform movement was underpinned by patriotism and loyalism. At the meeting of the pro-Mayhew freemen of Colchester residing in the capital, held on 25 April 1831, William Buck, a printer, emphasised the change in circumstances: ‘Had they met formerly under that denomination [reformists] they would be denounced as traitors to their King, and enemies to church and state, and all existing institutions, but happily for the British nation these times were past’.<sup>164</sup>

By emphasising the important role of patriotism and loyalism in the reform

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<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 April 1831. It seems that this kind of self-sacrifice was seen in other constituencies which had many out-voters. At the meeting of the Colchester Independent Club supporting Harvey, held on 13 April 1831, ‘Mr. Mills’ stated that ‘the non-residents of that borough [Maldon] ... expressed their readiness to give up their rights’ in order to support the passage of the Reform Bills. *Ibid.*, 16 April 1831.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 April 1831.

campaign, the pro-reform candidates and their supporters also informed the electors of ‘an extinction of party differences’. In his open letter published on 12 March, Edward Baillie wrote to pro-reform inhabitants in Bristol ‘of all Parties’. One of the most important tasks he attempted to undertake by publishing this letter was to appeal to the Tories of the White Lion Club. He maintained that, ‘I do not believe that, in proclaiming their [the White Lion] determined opposition to new theories and dangerous innovations, such as universal suffrage, vote by ballot, and annual Parliaments, they ever intended to pledge themselves to rally round the patrons of corrupt boroughs, instead of taking their old loyal station by the side of the Throne’. He went on to state that, ‘To the Tory Reformers I say, then, with all respect, ... as you desire to maintain your old claims to constitutional loyalty, as you cherish the safety of our venerable institutions, ... refuse to lend the influence of your honourable names to prop and bolster up the disgraced and sinking cause of corruption’.<sup>165</sup> This clearly shows that the pro-reform candidates endeavoured to convince local Tories to support the Reform Bills.

A similar effort made by the pro-reform candidates can be seen in their emphasis on the impact of Pitt on the reform movement. The speech given by William Ewart at the Exchange in Liverpool on 25 April 1831 was a case in point. In order to justify parliamentary reform, he did not mention the names of Lord John Russell, Earl Grey, C.J Fox, or other Whig leaders or theorists. He did quote the views of Pitt for this purpose. In his addresses delivered in the 1831 general election, Pitt was actually the only authority he relied upon in order to convince the voters to support the Reform Bills:

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<sup>165</sup> *Bristol Mercury*, 15 March 1831. With regard to ‘an extinction of party differences’, an anonymous open letter written by a Gascoynite Tory also stated that ‘the question is not between whig and tory, ... but, I regret to say, between democracy and aristocracy’. *LC*, 11 May 1831.



Mr. Pitt had defined a proper House of Commons, in his most memorable speech on reform, to be “a representative assembly, freely chosen, between whom and the people there is the most intimate union and the closest possible sympathy.” This is what the House of Commons ought constitutionally to be, and this was his (Mr. Ewart’s) reason for supporting the bill. – (Cheers.)<sup>166</sup>

This claim might have resulted from his genuine respect for Pitt as a Canning-type Tory, but, at the same time, it might have been made to influence the ‘Tory’ electors or even non-electors who still vacillated over how to respond to the Reform Bills.

The fact that the successful candidates were all supporters of the Reform Bills suggests that a sizable number of ‘Tory’ electors voted for them. Some available sources support this. In the 1831 general election, an open letter written by an anonymous writer to the editor of the *Liverpool Courier* deplored the fact that many Tory electors who had actively supported Isaac Gascoyne shifted their political loyalty to the pro-reform candidates: ‘I most sincerely regret, that his [Gascoyne] former friends – friends who have hitherto always come forward, in the time of need, to support the good old cause – should at this moment not only have deserted him, but added insult to neglect’. In this election, the *Liverpool Courier* itself preferred Denison to Gascoyne. With regard to the willingness of Denison to be elected for Nottinghamshire rather than Liverpool, this influential local Tory newspaper stated that ‘we ... very much regret that the honourable gentleman could not accept of Liverpool ... because he had acquired the confidence and affection of the town in a very extraordinary degree’.<sup>167</sup> In the by-election, this newspaper vigorously supported Viscount Sandon, insisting that, ‘Here the party,

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<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 April 1831.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 May 1831.

usually known as the friends of Mr. Canning and Mr. Huskisson, will come in to good purpose ... Lord Sandon ought to be supported by all our Tories'.<sup>168</sup>

Similarly, in 1831, many Colchester Tories preferred to support the pro-reform candidates, and Mayhew in particular, rather than the Corporation Tory candidates. A comparative analysis of the poll books published in 1820 and 1831 reveals that more than twenty per cent of the voters who had plumped for the Corporation Tory candidate, J.B. Wildman, in the 1820 general election did vote for both Harvey and Mayhew or for one of them in the 1831 general election. Mayhew himself was one of those electors who had changed their political stance. In the 1820 general election, he had plumped for Wildman.<sup>169</sup> At the meeting of his friends in London, held on 28 March 1831, Mayhew insisted that:

There was a time when I was against Reform. I allude to that Reform which was advocated when Mr. Hunt was lord of the ascendant. (Cheers.) I have all along thought that some Reform must take place, and the plan of Reform brought forward by ministers, was an exceedingly good one. (Loud cheers.)<sup>170</sup>

Mayhew was one of the Tories who, strenuously opposing radical reform, had nevertheless supported some form of reform in the 1810s, and now in 1831 offered full support for the Reform Bills.

There is little doubt that one of the important reasons why large numbers of 'Tory' electors in these boroughs supported the Reform Bills was the profound change in the political situation. Facing the massive reform movement, for example, many electors yielded to expediency. Besides, as in the case of Colchester, the growing hatred of the

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<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 June 1831.

<sup>169</sup> *Poll book, Colchester, 1820; Poll book, Colchester, 1831.*

<sup>170</sup> *CG*, 2 April 1831.

exclusive power held by the Corporation persuaded local Tories to support the Reform Bills. More important, however, it was in their own political ideology that some local Tories attempted to find a reason to support reform. The *Liverpool Courier*, for example, stated that, through ‘conservative principles’, Lord Sandon, ‘embued with a strong but enlightened attachment to existing institutions, ... has long avowed the necessity of adapting the representation to the spirit of the times’. It also informed its readers that ‘we unite with you on the great *conservative* principle, and we join you in supporting a candidate who, though decidedly in favour of the reform bill, is as decided as ourselves in his determination to oppose all revolutionary projects’. It insisted on ‘the preservation and improvement’ without ‘altering the essential character, or destroying the old institutions of the country’.<sup>171</sup> This suggests that local Tories supported the Reform Bills, not because they had begun to uphold modern Whig principles or had defected to the Whig party, but because the principle of altering the representative system in a safe and stable way was firmly embedded in Tory ideology itself.

During this period from 1830 to 1831, Tory electoral politics developed differently in the selected boroughs. In Liverpool and Colchester, pro-reform Toryism became increasingly popular. In Liverpool, pro-reform candidates eventually occupied both seats by ousting a ‘High’ Tory, Gascoyne, and a radical Whig, Thornely. In Colchester, an independent ‘blue’ Tory, Mayhew, defeated the Corporation ‘blue’ Tory candidates in both the general election and the by-election of 1831, and was returned with a Whig MP, Harvey. In Bristol, the popularity of R.H. Davis reached its peak in 1830, but was completely lost in 1831, when pro-Catholic and pro-reform Whig candidates won the seats by gaining some votes cast by ‘Tory’ electors. The different results in these

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<sup>171</sup> *LC*, 1 and 15 June and 26 October 1831.

elections in the selected boroughs during this period clearly show the diversity and flexibility of Tory electoral politics.

## CONCLUSION

By looking at the electoral activities of local Tories in Liverpool, Bristol, and Colchester between 1812 and 1832 from different viewpoints, this chapter has revealed the strength, diversity, and flexibility of Tory electoral politics. In these boroughs, Toryism was similarly powerful and influential, but the characteristics of Tory MPs were fairly diverse, which reflected the different local political context in these boroughs. The strength of local Tories was underpinned by their election clubs, which were even more organised and sophisticated than those of their Whig opponents. Some of these Tory election clubs were so ‘popular’ that the middling voters and perhaps even some non-voters could become members. The analysis of the voting behaviour of the electors in the 1818 general election has revealed that Tory MPs gained numerous votes from every section of the freeman-voters, while the electors in the selected boroughs showed a different extent of a party preference. In Tory electoral politics, the non-voters played an important part and their support helped to underpin the strength of local Toryism.

The analysis of the impact of national issues on the selected boroughs has asserted the diversity and flexibility of Tory electoral politics. From 1812 to 1820, opposing popular radicalism, local Tories in these boroughs commonly consolidated and extended their power. The impact of Catholic Emancipation was different, however. In Colchester and Bristol, Catholic Emancipation was one of the most important national issues

affecting local politics, whereas it was not seriously discussed in Liverpool. The political principles of the Tory candidates were not the only decisive element in their victories, however. In order to be elected, they also needed to make every effort to promote the local economy. From 1821 to 1829, when popular radicalism declined and two-party politics became less significant, different national issues were important in Tory electoral politics in these boroughs. In this period, Liverpool and Colchester experienced significant changes in Tory electoral politics. In Liverpool, the 'Liberal' Tory MP, William Huskisson, began to be supported by local Whigs. In Colchester, the independent Tory, William Mayhew, and his supporters began to challenge the hegemony of the Colchester Corporation. On the other hand, Bristol did not witness a significant change of Tory electoral politics. Between 1830 and 1831, Tory electoral politics in these boroughs developed differently. In Liverpool and Colchester, pro-reform Toryism became increasingly popular. In Bristol, however, local Tories failed to find their own influential candidates. It is worth noting that some of the 'Tory' electors in these boroughs who had supported anti-radicalism and anti-Catholicism in the previous period did vote now for candidates supporting the Reform Bills.

## CHAPTER FOUR

*Tory Politics in Liverpool, 1815-1832:**Corporation Politics, Mayoral Elections, and Public Meetings*

This chapter seeks to reveal the extent and the ways in which local Tory politics concerned with urban authorities, principally the Corporation and mayor, were related to national politics. For this purpose, it focuses on Liverpool as a case study. A major task of this chapter is to investigate the Liverpool Common Council and the mayoral elections in this borough. Liverpool had the Corporation as a result of the charter initially given by King John in 1207. The Common Council, also known as the Town Council, was the pivotal organisation of the Corporation of Liverpool with the ultimate decision-making power within the town. It played a vital role in transforming Liverpool into one of the most prosperous and populous commercial towns in England by the early nineteenth century. On the other hand, it was a closed and self-elected oligarchy. Under a charter granted in 1695, the powers of the freemen were vested in the forty-one life-long Council members, most of whom were influential local merchants.<sup>1</sup> When one of the members died or showed his intention to withdraw from active involvement in the Council, a new member was selected from among the freemen of Liverpool with the nomination invited by (and, in case of a competition, the vote cast by) the Council

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<sup>1</sup> Of these forty-one members, thirty-nine were divided into the aldermen and the common councilmen. The number of each of these two was not fixed. The remaining two members, the mayor and recorder, seem to have belonged to neither the aldermen nor the common councilmen. In Liverpool, unlike many other towns, there were not two separate chambers: the court of aldermen and the common council. In this town, the Common Council was composed of the aldermen, the common councilmen, and the remaining officers, the mayor and recorder. Two bailiffs and the town clerk were common councilmen. The Council members who had served as mayor or as a bailiff became aldermen after their period of service.

members. In the Common Council, there were five major officers: the mayor, two bailiffs, the recorder, and the town clerk. On St. Luke's Day, 18 October, the first three were elected annually by the freemen, whose number increased from 3,500 to 5,350 between 1820 and 1832.<sup>2</sup> These three local magistrates, however, were only nominated from among the Council members.<sup>3</sup>

As well as the Common Council and the mayoral elections, this chapter will also examine public meetings held in Liverpool. Public meetings provided local inhabitants with a significant way of responding to national political issues. They were normally followed by addresses or petitions. They were not unimportant to the urban authorities, because their organisers requested the chief magistrate of each town, who was normally the mayor, to authorise them. If a public meeting gained his authorisation, it was considered to be an official gathering representing local public opinion.

## I

### CORPORATION POLITICS AND LIVERPUDLIAN TORIES

#### *Tory Dominance in the Common Council*

Many historians have pointed out that the Liverpool Common Council was an organisation dominated by local Tories. They still have not revealed, however, the extent to which such dominance was overwhelming in the early nineteenth century. The first task of this section is to uncover the party composition of the Common Council by

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<sup>2</sup> HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, 'Liverpool'.

<sup>3</sup> François Vigier, *Change and Apathy: Liverpool and Manchester during the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1970), chapter 3.

investigating the voting behaviour of the forty-one Council members in the parliamentary elections from three poll books made after the general elections in 1812 (two Tory and two Whig candidates) and 1818 (two Tory and one Whig candidates), and the 1816 by-election (one Tory and one Whig candidates).<sup>4</sup> As samples, Council members at four different years of 1815, 1820, 1825 and 1830, rather than those over the whole period between 1815 and 1832, are examined.

Table 4-1: Voting behaviour of Council members

	1815	1820	1825	1830
‘Tory’	29 (70.73%)	27 (65.85%)	27 (65.85%)	23 (56.09%)
‘Whig’	5 (12.19 %)	5 (12.19%)	4 (9.75%)	4 (9.75%)
Unidentifiable	7 (17.07 %)	9 (21.95%)	10 (24.39%)	14 (34.14%)

The result of the analysis is shown in Table 4-1. It supports the understanding offered by the existing literature. A ‘Tory’ is defined here as a person who voted at least once for Tory candidates, George Canning and General Isaac Gascoyne, in the three parliamentary elections. On the other hand, a ‘Whig’ voted at least once for Whig candidates, such as Henry Brougham and Thomas Creevey in 1812, Thomas Leyland in 1816, and the Earl of Sefton in 1818. Those Council members whose voting behaviour is not identifiable or who did not vote at all in these elections are shown as ‘Unidentifiable’. The number of the ‘Unidentifiable’ increases in the later elections, because there were many who became Council members in the 1820s without the experience of casting a vote in the 1810s as freemen. No case of cross-party voting (for example, in 1812, casting one vote for Canning and the other for Brougham) or

<sup>4</sup> LRO, 352 MIN/COU I/1, Liverpool Town Books, vol. 14, 533 (1815), vol. 15, 123 (1820) and 532 (1825), and vol. 16, 229 (1830). *Poll book, Liverpool, 1812; Poll book, Liverpool, 1816; Poll book, Liverpool, 1818.*



changing party loyalty in different elections (for example, voting for either or both of the Whig candidates in 1812, but voting for either or both of the Tory candidates in 1818) was found. According to this table, a large majority of the Council members can be regarded as ‘Tories’. There were some ‘Whigs’, but their number was small. This table also suggests that the configuration of power between the two parties in the Common Council was virtually constant during the whole period from 1815 to 1832.

Table 4-2: ‘Canningites’ and ‘Gascoynites’ among Council Tories<sup>5</sup>

	1815	1820	1825	1830
‘Canningites’	9 (31.03%)	9 (33.33%)	9 (33.33%)	7 (30.43%)
‘Gascoynites’	16 (55.17%)	14 (51.85%)	15 (55.55%)	12 (52.17%)
Unidentifiable	4 (13.79%)	4 (14.81%)	3 (11.11%)	4 (17.39%)
Total	29 (100%)	27 (100%)	27 (100%)	23 (100%)

The existing literature tends to show that these Tory members of the Common Council were mainly the friends of Isaac Gascoyne, rather than those of George Canning (or William Huskisson).<sup>6</sup> If we assume that each elector preferred to cast his votes from the polling bar of his favourite candidate,<sup>7</sup> the evidence suggested by previous studies can be supported. As Table 4-2 shows, more Tory Council members voted from Gascoyne’s bar than Canning’s. It is clear, however, that this inclination was

<sup>5</sup> A ‘Canningite’ is defined here as a freeman who plumped for Canning or who cast his votes for both Canning and Gascoyne from the former candidate’s polling bar. A ‘Gascoynite’ plumped for Gascoyne or voted for both Canning and Gascoyne from the latter candidate’s polling bar. Some voters’ loyalty was ‘Unidentifiable’, because, for example, they voted for both Canning and Gascoyne from the former’s polling bar at one parliamentary election, but from the latter’s bar at another parliamentary election.

<sup>6</sup> HoP, *Commons 1790-1820*, ‘Liverpool’; HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, ‘Liverpool’.

<sup>7</sup> The electors all had to have their votes cast officially at one point where the returning officer (the mayor) and his clerks kept the official list of votes cast. It appears, however, that in Liverpool candidates made their open polling lists at each candidate’s polling bar to check their lists against the official polling book. Polling bars were a device for administrative convenience in constituencies such as Liverpool with large electorates and multiple candidates. O’Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 131-134; HoP, *Commons 1790-1820*, ‘Liverpool’.

not absolute. Just over half of the Council Tories voted from Gascoyne's bar, while about one third of them voted from Canning's.

*Liverpudlian Tories' Political Attitudes in Council Politics*

The main duty of the Common Council of Liverpool was to deal with daily local issues affecting the everyday life of the town's inhabitants. Most of the issues discussed by the Council were basically non-political ones. This left little room for serious party politics. Nevertheless, the late 1810s provide one major exception. During the spread of post-war radicalism, the Common Council of Liverpool, dominated by the Tories, showed strong resistance to this development.

Although the specific arguments which the Tories advanced in the Common Council in this period cannot be known because of a lack of source materials, it is clear that the Common Council adopted a clear Tory stance particularly during the peaks of the radical movement in 1817 and 1819. In both years, it engaged itself in a nationwide campaign to present a loyal address to the Prince Regent, declaring its support for the existing constitution and its objection to radical reform. In February 1817, it showed a sympathetic attitude towards the Regent, who had been attacked on his return from the House of Lords at the opening of the new parliamentary session. It expressed the hope in its 'Loyal Address' that 'the wicked Perpetrators of this daring Outrage will justly feel the vengeance of the Laws so grossly violated'. It went on to demonstrate a determination 'to support to the utmost of our Power that glorious Constitution, and to resist all Designs that may create anarchy and confusion, and which most of the recent Meetings in various parts of this Kingdom called ... for a Reform in Parliament have

unhappily excited'.<sup>8</sup> The 'Peterloo Massacre', which occurred when efforts were made by local magistrates to disrupt a radical meeting at St. Peter's Field, Manchester, on 16 August 1819, provided the Common Council with another opportunity to show its respect for the existing constitution and its support for law and order. In the monthly meeting held in October that year, the Common Council adopted a loyal address which was then sent to the Regent. In this address, it insisted that 'sedition under the imposing mask of reform, and tumult under the specious pretext of legal assemblage are rapidly combining to alienate the affections of the people from their sovereign, and to endanger the existence of all civil and religious rights, ... to spread more widely the spirit of disaffection and discord, and to kindle more fiercely the flame of insurrection and rebellion in the country'. It also stated that 'such temperate, firm, and seasonable measures will be adopted, as may tend to bring to justice all who have really offended against the law, to preserve due order and obedience amongst the people, and to allay the progress of those factious and alarming combinations'.<sup>9</sup> These addresses adopted by the Common Council demonstrated its general support for the anti-radical measures presented to Parliament by the Tory government in this period.

Apart from these cases, it was extremely rare for the Common Council as a body to reveal its political opinions to the public, and it is difficult to understand what was going on behind the closed doors of the Common Council. The minutes of the monthly Council meetings, which were held on the first Wednesday in each month, are available. They do not, however, record the discussions which took place, only the resolutions reached. From the mid-1820s, however, the situation gradually changed. The Whig

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<sup>8</sup> Liverpool Town Books, vol. 14, 608-609.

<sup>9</sup> James A. Picton, *City of Liverpool: Municipal Archives and Records, from A.D. 1700 to the Passing of the Municipal Act, 1835*, (2 vols., Liverpool: Gilbert G. Walmsley, 1886), I, 297.

weekly newspaper, the *Liverpool Mercury*, began to publish a report of the Council's proceedings. Although a reporter was not admitted to the Council's meetings, it was widely believed that the Whig Councillor, William Wallace Currie, took notes of the debates and passed those on to the newspaper. This new practice was generally welcomed by other newspapers. For example, the Tory *Liverpool Courier* copied the *Mercury's* reports in its own papers.<sup>10</sup>

These newspaper reports show that most issues debated in the Council's monthly meetings were concerned with such mundane local government issues as the construction and renovation of docks and churches, the widening and conservation of streets and gardens, and financial proceedings. It was very unlikely that these issues produced decisions shaped by party politics.

It may be expected, however, that the issue of the elections of new Council members would have produced party political disputes, but this was not the case. In many cases, a Council member's usual party political opinion was not always relevant when it came to his choice of a new Council member. Other issues might influence how a Council member voted. At the meeting on 3 January 1827, for example, the election of a new member was held in the aftermath of the resignation of a Council Tory, Richard Golightly. Sir John Tobin, a Tory, proposed Dr. Brandreth, and this was seconded by another Tory, Peter Bourne. J.B. Hollinshead, who was also a Tory, however, opposed this proposition, because of Brandreth's occupation as a physician. He insisted that:

A merchant or other gentlemen, when wanted, might step to the anti-room, and return immediately; but suppose a physician, one of this limited number, to be sent for, in a case perhaps of life or death, could he refuse to go? Would

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<sup>10</sup> For example, see the *LC*, 10 January 1827.

humanity allow it? or would the Mayor and Council suffer him to stay? What is the consequence? – the Council must break up, and the public business be interrupted.

His claim was supported by the Tory, Thomas Case, as ‘unanswerable’, and also by the Whig merchant, W.W. Currie, as ‘conclusive’.<sup>11</sup> This case suggests that there was cross-party agreement that a Council member should have enough leisure time to attend assiduously to the Council’s business and should attend the meetings on a regular basis.

Another case also demonstrates that to be elected to the Council a man’s occupation could be more important than his political opinions. The meeting held on 1 November 1826 showed that a legal gentleman was considered improper as a Council member by a majority of the Council members. The death of a Tory Councillor, George Rowe, led to the election of his replacement at this meeting. The Tory, Peter Whitfield Brancker, proposed the Whig banker, Samuel Thompson, and this was seconded by George Drinkwater, a Tory merchant. Opposing this, Richard Leyland, a Tory,<sup>12</sup> proposed John Topham, a lawyer, which was seconded by the Tory, John Wright.<sup>13</sup> J.B. Hollinshead stated that it was not ‘by any means desirable to have them [professional men] in that room’. Like him, the town clerk, William Statham, ‘expressed the most unqualified surprise at the nomination of Mr. Topham’. He insisted that ‘if he were elected, the Council would see at once that a total change in the present arrangements must be the necessary consequence’. W.W. Currie also showed his opposition to ‘the admission of legal gentlemen into Council’.<sup>14</sup> No detailed reasons why members of the

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<sup>11</sup> *LM*, 5 January 1827.

<sup>12</sup> Richard Leyland did not vote in the parliamentary elections of 1812, 1816, or 1818, but was a supporter for Isaac Gascoyne. HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, ‘Liverpool’.

<sup>13</sup> The party loyalty of John Topham is not clear. He did not vote in the parliamentary elections of 1812, 1816, or 1818. In the 1830 by-election, he voted for William Ewart. *Poll book, Liverpool, 1830*, 71.

<sup>14</sup> Currie went on to state that, ‘If the Council wanted professional advice, the Town-clerk was, or ought

legal profession were regarded as ineligible to serve on the Council were provided at this meeting.<sup>15</sup> This case, however, shows that for the Council members the political opinions of the candidate were not always the most important qualifications required of a Council member.

As these cases demonstrate, most issues in the Common Council were not decided on a party political basis. Nevertheless, there were a few topics discussed in the Council which disclosed the party political attitudes of the Council Tories, such as the admission of reporters to its meetings, the need for a 'Reform in Council', and, finally, the Election Regulation Bill. These three issues, which were all related to the foundation or the basic rules of the organisation of the Common Council, were raised within the local political context, rather than under the influence of national politics.

During the latter half of the 1820s, debates about the admission of reporters took place at least three times at meetings of the Common Council. The first two cases were initiated by the Whigs. At the meeting held on 7 December 1825, two proposals for the introduction of an authorised reporter were offered by Whig reformers out-of-doors, such as Edward Rushton and Colonel George Williams. Rushton stated that 'the public took an increasing interest in [the Council's] proceedings', but the present way of reporting these was inadequate.<sup>16</sup> One year later, the Whig former mayor, Thomas Leyland, maintained at the monthly meeting that the reports inserted in the *Liverpool Mercury*, which 'were furnished by one of their body', were likely to be

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to be, able to instruct them, and if further advice were required, it might be best had out of doors'. *LM*, 3 November 1826.

<sup>15</sup> The Common Council was mainly composed of gentlemanly classes. Forty-one Council members in 1830 were composed of twenty-one esquires, eight merchants, four gentlemen, two bankers, two knights, one esquire and barrister at law, one esquire and banker, one broker, and one Council member whose occupation was unknown. The Council member who was an esquire and barrister was the recorder at this time.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 December 1825.

‘misrepresented’. He insisted that ‘an authorized statement of their proceedings might go forth to the public’, and that ‘a regular reporter should be admitted to the room’.<sup>17</sup>

The final case came forward at the meeting on 2 January 1828, in the immediate aftermath of the passage of the resolution ‘at the Dock Committee, to introduce a reporter at their weekly meetings’.<sup>18</sup>

In these three cases, the Whigs generally supported the admission of an authorised reporter. They placed particular emphasis on the importance of ‘the general principle of publicity’. At the meeting in January 1828, for example, W.W. Currie stated that ‘the more the proceedings of public estates are made known to, and under the eye of, the public ... the better will these be managed’.<sup>19</sup> Thomas Leyland, who had opposed the admission of a reporter at the 1825 meeting on the grounds that ‘there was no room for reporters in the present Council-room’,<sup>20</sup> became, a year later, the proposer for the opening up of the Council’s proceedings to the public. He stated that he ‘was an advocate, by all means, for the public knowing what passed in that room’.<sup>21</sup> The division lists show that the Council Whigs present generally voted for the admission with only a few exceptions.

The Council Tories’ attitude about this issue can be classified into two types. In the first place, a small number of them supported the admission of a reporter. For example, J.B. Hollinshead was in favour of it mainly because of its influence on fairness and impartiality. He regarded ‘the present imperfect reports’ as problematic and warned Council members that ‘their reporter ... always left out any good things which they

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 December 1826.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 January 1828.

<sup>19</sup> He went on to assert that, ‘The only cases where secrecy might be desirable, were those in which purchases were in contemplation, or plans under discussion affecting property’. *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 December 1825.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 December 1826.

said'. He added that 'he did not think the Council could admit an exclusive reporter, attached to any one paper, but that all the papers should enjoy the benefit of a report'.<sup>22</sup> After Hollinshead's death in 1827, Thomas Case led the pro-admission Tories who adopted a similar point of view to the Whigs. At the 1828 meeting, he insisted that 'the public should know what was going on' in the Council.<sup>23</sup>

On the other hand, a large majority of the Tories opposed the admission of a reporter to Council meetings for various reasons. At the 1825 meeting, the town clerk, William Statham, opposed it because it was incompatible with 'ancient custom'. George Drinkwater argued that it was 'better to submit to the lesser evil, than to admit a reporter'.<sup>24</sup> At the 1826 meeting, some Tories emphasised the importance of the closed nature of their meetings. Thomas Corrie, for example, opposed the admission of a reporter in terms of 'the Council-man's oath'. He maintained that 'it bound the members not to divulge any thing said in Council'. The mayor, Thomas Littledale, insisted that 'many things passed in Council which he thought should not be made public'.<sup>25</sup> At the 1828 meetings, many Tories opposed the passage of the Dock Committee's resolution, and insisted that it should be annulled. John Wright, for instance, maintained that 'the measure would be productive of the worst effect; that it would even be injurious to the property of the trust'. George Drinkwater insisted that 'the present measure was only the forerunner of demands of a very unpleasant nature', and that 'the admission of a

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 December 1825 and 8 December 1826.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 January 1828.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 December 1825.

<sup>25</sup> Against Thomas Littledale's claim, W.W Currie insisted that, 'it would be very easy for the reporter to be ordered to withdraw when any subject of a private nature was about to be discussed, in the same nature as strangers were desired to leave the gallery of the House of Commons'. Regarding the oath, Thomas Leyland maintained that 'the words "your own counsel and your fellows you shall not reveal or disclose without just cause or reasonable occasion," were not binding upon the secrecy of the members. Were not the council the judges of the "just cause and reasonable occasion," and was there any?' *Ibid.*, 8 December 1826.



reporter was fraught with danger'. Some Tories feared that the public reporting of the Council's proceedings would result in public opinion exercising too much influence over the Council's matters. Samuel Staniforth, stating that 'the publication of the Committee proceedings would be injurious', added that: 'We heard a great deal of public opinion, but ... the Trustees would not shrink from their duty from any consideration of what was said out of doors'. Thomas Brancker maintained that 'he was not to be moved by clamour out of doors to vote for that which he thought dangerous and improper'.<sup>26</sup> In each case, as a result of this Tory opposition, the motion requesting the admission of an authorised reporter was voted down.<sup>27</sup>

The second issue which showed various Tory opinions was what was called the 'Reform in Council'. This measure aimed to exclude from the Common Council those who held some contract with the Liverpool Corporation. It was proposed in the context of a prevailing criticism that the Common Council was a hotbed of corruption. Many Council Tories tried to evade such criticism of themselves by showing that they were prepared to contemplate an internal reform of the Common Council. The campaign was

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 January 1828.

<sup>27</sup> In the 1825 case, the result of the division was six to twenty-seven: in favour of the admission – Sir John Tobin, Charles Lawrence, J.B. Hollinshead, Edward Pearson, W.W. Currie, and William Earle; and against it – Henry Moss, George Irlam, Thomas Brancker, William Ripley, Richard Dawson, George Rowe, Charles Pole, John Shaw Leigh, Thomas Littleddale, Isaac Oldham Bold, John Dean Case, George Drinkwater, Nicholas Robinson, Thomas Corrie, William Statham, Richard Bullin, William Nicholson, Samuel Staniforth, John Bourne, John (or James) Clarke, James Gerard, Thomas (or William) Molyneux, Peter Whitfield Brancker, Thomas Leyland, John Shaw, Henry B. Hollinshead, and Peter Bourne, the mayor. In the 1826 case, the result of the division was five to twenty-two: in favour of the admission – John Ewart, Henry Moss, W.W. Currie, J.B. Hollinshead, and Thomas Leyland; and against it – Samuel Thompson, Thomas Colley Porter, William Ripley, Richard Dawson, Charles Pole, J.S. Leigh, J.D. Case, George Drinkwater, Nicholas Robinson, Thomas Corrie, William Statham, Thomas Brancker, Peter Bourne, Sir John Tobin, William Nicholson, Samuel Staniforth, Thomas (or William) Molyneux, P.W. Brancker, John Shaw, H.B. Hollinshead, Thomas Case, and Thomas Littleddale, the mayor. In the 1828 case, the result of the division was seven to twenty-three: in favour of the admission – Samuel Sandbach, George Irlam, William Earle, W.W. Currie, Charles Lawrence, Sir J. Tobin, and Thomas Case; and against it – Thomas Shawe, Richard Houghton, Henry Moss, Thomas Brancker, William Ripley, Charles Pole, J.S. Leigh, J.D. Case, George Drinkwater, Nicholas Robinson, Thomas Corrie, William Statham, I.O. Bold, Samuel Thompson, Peter Bourne, Thomas Littleddale, John Wright, Samuel Staniforth, John Bourne, John (or James) Clarke, P.W. Brancker, J.D. Case, and T.C. Porter, the mayor. *Ibid.*, 9 December 1825, 8 December 1826, and 4 January 1828.

initiated by a motion put forward by the Tory, Richard Leyland, at the monthly meeting held on 6 May 1829. He insisted that ‘in future, no member of Council, or person who shall be hereafter elected, shall be allowed either directly or indirectly to execute any work, or supply any materials, either by contract or otherwise, for which the Corporation are to pay’. Thomas Case, a Tory, seconded this motion. He suggested to Leyland, however, that ‘it would be necessary to specify the businesses, or works to which his motion referred, and that he could not second so general a wording’. Replying to him, Leyland identified ‘trades such as joiners, painters, plumbers, stonemasons, bricklayers, &c. and ... gas-manufactures’. He also added dock servants to this list. He farther showed his readiness to propose that ‘neither father nor son, nor two brothers, should be members of Council at the same time’. He hoped ‘to extend the circle out of which members were chosen, in order to have the benefit of a greater scope of opinion and talents in the service of the public’. Since the mayor’s demand to bring this motion forward ‘in a more definite shape’ was agreed by the Council, Richard Leyland and Thomas Case put the matter off until the next meeting.<sup>28</sup>

The other Tories were divided in their reaction to this reform measure. Some Tories opposed it. For example, T.C. Porter warned Council members that the measure ‘would put an end to that good-will and harmony that should exist in that room’. On the other hand, other Tories were prepared to contemplate more drastic reform. George Drinkwater, for instance, claimed that the Common Council ‘should certainly exclude from a seat any person accepting a place under the Corporation’.<sup>29</sup>

At the next meeting, held on 3 June 1829, owing to these various opinions, the Council Tories failed to find a position on which a majority of them could agree. As a

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 8 May 1829.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

result, this reform measure was defeated. According to the suggestion made by the mayor at the last meeting, Richard Leyland presented a motion ‘to exclude members of Council from having an interest in the execution of the great public works of which they had the control’. He added that ‘he did not think it necessary to include either coals, or gas, or insurance, or banking’. As at the previous meeting, Thomas Case seconded the motion. He stated that it should ‘go still further’, but ‘that, as it stood, it would be productive of important advantages’. Their proposal was supported by other Tories, such as the mayor, Nicholas Robinson, and R.B. Hollinshead. The latter feared that, ‘if lost, it would only hasten a reform from without’. He believed that even a partial or moderate reform measure would relieve the frustrations felt by a large number of Liverpool inhabitants out-of-doors. The motion was also supported by the Whig, W.W. Currie.<sup>30</sup>

There were many Council Tories who disagreed with the motion, however. On the one hand, some of them argued that the motion should have gone further. John Wright opposed it on the grounds that it was not comprehensive enough. He insisted that, ‘If there was to be reform, let it be a reform to the bottom’. George Drinkwater, as at the last meeting, disagreed with Leyland’s motion. He stated that it was ‘partial, unjust, and oppressive’. He also maintained that, ‘if reform is necessary, let it be general – let the bankers, and the other parties who are excepted, go out also’. He tried to justify his own argument in terms of the principle of ‘independence’. His claim may have been connected to the country ideology of the eighteenth century, which had supported such economical reform measures.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, other Tories were not convinced of the necessity of this reform. Samuel Staniforth, for example, stated that:

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 June 1829.

<sup>31</sup> Dickinson, *Liberty and Property*, chapter 5.

He did not see why those individuals who had acquired capital in trade should not avail themselves of that advantage, and offer to contract for the Corporation works. He thought such permission would rather be favourable, as it would extend the field of competition to the benefit of the public.<sup>32</sup>

The divisions on this reform showed that the Council Tories, many of whom were in favour of this reform measure, failed to reach an agreement over the extent of the reform to be undertaken. The motion was defeated by a clear majority: eighteen to eight.<sup>33</sup>

The third issue was over the Election Regulation Bill. This measure was regarded as necessary by many inhabitants of Liverpool, who had witnessed massive bribery during the 1827 mayoral election. At this contested election, two Tory Council men, T.C. Porter and Nicholas Robinson, opposed each other. Normally, a mayoral election of Liverpool lasted a single day. This election, however, lasted six days. Owing to the prolonged contest, the price of votes kept going up, beginning at six shillings and ending at thirty or forty pounds. It was reported that both sides spent between £8,000 or £10,000 each.<sup>34</sup> This corrupt Liverpool election quickly became a significant issue. For the same reason, the parliamentary elections in Liverpool were reviewed as well. In this year, the grand jury at the Quarter Sessions advanced ‘their protest against the disgraceful system of bribery practised at the elections for this borough, not only by the

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<sup>32</sup> *LM*, 5 June 1829.

<sup>33</sup> The Council men who supported the motion were: Anthony Molyneux, William Ripley, W.W. Currie, R.B. Hollinshead, Samuel Sandbach, Richard Leyland, Thomas Case, and Nicholas Robinson, the mayor. Those who were against it were: Richard Houghton, John Ewart, Henry Moss, Thomas Brancker, J.D. Case, George Drinkwater, Thomas Corrie, William Statham, T.C. Porter, Littledale, Peter Bourne, John Wright, Samuel Staniforth, John Bourne, P.W. Brancker, John Shaw, H.B. Hollinshead, and George Case. *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Municipal Corporations, (England and Wales.) Appendix to the First Report of the Commissioners. Part IV., Eastern and North-Western Circuits* (Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed, 30 March 1835), 2710; Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool*, I, 407-408.

friends of the candidates for the civic chair, but also by the partisans of the candidates for the representation of the borough in Parliament'.<sup>35</sup> The *Liverpool Courier* also articulated concern that 'the scenes of corruption and immorality ... will go far to sink the moral character of Liverpool', and expressed the hope 'that the influential individuals, in town will so far take the subject into consideration as to adopt such measures'.<sup>36</sup>

The Council Tories took a quick step to reform 'the disgraceful system of bribery'. They attempted to show their interest in contemplating internal reform. At the monthly meeting, held on 7 November 1827, the Tory mayor, T.C. Porter, issued a memorial which declared the need 'to prevent a repetition of scenes reflecting disgrace on the town, subversive of good order and morality ... undoubtedly rendering the borough liable to be disfranchised'.<sup>37</sup> At its next two meetings, the Common Council deprived three men of their freedom because of election fraud.<sup>38</sup>

Some Whig reformers out-of-doors wished to eliminate electoral corruption by extending the franchise. The reaction of the Council Tories to this illustrates the limits of their willingness to support reform. Francis Jordan, a leading local Whig, sent the mayor a letter, which included resolutions passed by a meeting held at the King's Arms. At the monthly meeting of the Common Council, held on 5 December 1827, the mayor presented these resolutions. One of the reformers' plans was to include in 'their intended bill ... a clause extending the right of voting for Mayor and members of Parliament, to the respectable classes in the town'. Another resolution demanded the reduction (or exemption) of 'the expense of young burgesses on taking up their freedom; by which

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 409. See also, *Municipal Corporations*, 2711.

<sup>36</sup> *LC*, 24 October 1827.

<sup>37</sup> *LM*, 9 November 1827.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 December 1827 and 4 January 1828.

means they would be independent of any candidates – to some of whom they now looked for discharging this expense at an election, and sold their votes for this consideration’.<sup>39</sup> Of these two requests, the town clerk, William Statham, took up only the latter. He insisted on his strong determination to resist any extension of the franchise. His cause was supported by a letter written by James Ritson and several petitions from shipwrights and ropers, all of which opposed any extension of the franchise. As a result, only the latter resolution was agreed by a majority of the Common Council. Observing the current of opinion in the Council members, W.W. Currie stated that, while he accepted the idea of an extension, ‘it was useless to divide on the question’.<sup>40</sup>

The project of this partial reform resulted in the Election Regulation Bill. Some Council Tories, and William Statham in particular, took the initiative on this. A petition was sent to the House of Commons by ‘the Mayor, Bailiffs and Burgesses of Liverpool’, which was presented on 4 February 1828. It was read a first time eight days later. The bill aimed at ‘providing a more convenient place, and making certain regulations for the elections of members to serve in Parliament for the borough of Liverpool ... and also of a mayor and bailiffs for the said borough’, ‘fixing a certain period within which persons admitted to the freedom of the borough shall be entitled to vote’, and ‘preventing frauds in the personations of voters’.<sup>41</sup> This suggests that the pro-reform Tories on the Council, while avoiding any extension of the franchise, expanded the scope of reform more

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<sup>39</sup> Newly admitted freemen had to pay £2 for registration, but many of them could not afford to do so. The Whigs who offered the resolution regarded as problematic a case in which a candidate could control a voter by paying the fee for him. According to Ramsay Muir, ‘Of the £2, £1 was for the stamp; the other £1 went to the Town Clerk’. At this council meeting, the town clerk, William Statham, stated ‘his perfect readiness to give up his share of the emolument, if the Council chose to reduce the expense to the charge merely for the stamps’. Vigier, *Change and Apathy*, 80; Ramsay Muir and Edith M. Platt, *A History of Municipal Government in Liverpool: From the earliest Times to the Municipal Reform Act of 1835* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1906), 135; *LM*, 7 December 1827.

<sup>40</sup> *LM*, 7 December 1827.

<sup>41</sup> *Municipal Corporations*, 2711.

widely than the original plan of simply reducing the expenses of men taking up their freedom.

Nevertheless, many Council Tories revealed a lukewarm or negative attitude towards the bill. The main reason for their objections came from their reluctance to alter the traditional method of election. At the monthly meeting, held on 5 March 1828, John Wright proposed a motion that the second reading in the Commons should be abandoned. He insisted that the clauses of the bill respecting the oath as well as on the issue of bribery and treating were too strict. His motion was seconded by Henry Blundell Hollinshead, who maintained that ‘the proposed alteration would deprive the burgesses of a day of festivity’.<sup>42</sup> At the previous meeting, he had also stated that the bill ‘was an infringement upon the good old practice’.<sup>43</sup>

As a result of this division, Wright’s motion was agreed by sixteen votes to twelve, and the bill was withdrawn,<sup>44</sup> although there were many Council Tories still in favour of the bill. Samuel Staniforth, for example, actively supported it, because he believed that it would lead to ‘the preservation of good order in the town’. The Whig Councillors generally supported the measure. Nevertheless, a majority of the Council men, most of whom were Tories, hesitated to take a step forward to carry out such a reform measure. A comprehensive reform was eventually postponed until the passage of the parliamentary Municipal Reform Act in 1835.

In conclusion, those three cases demonstrate an important aspect of the Council

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<sup>42</sup> *LM*, 5 March 1828.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 February 1828.

<sup>44</sup> These Council men who were supportive of Wright’s motion were: R.B. Hollinshead, Thomas Shawe, Richard Houghton, Henry Moss, Thomas Brancker, William Ripley, Charles Pole, J.S. Leigh, George Drinkwater, Nicholas Robinson, I.O. Bold, Peter Bourne, Sir J. Tobin, John Wright, John Bourne, H.B. Hollinshead, and T.C. Porter, the mayor. On the other hand, those who were in favour of the second reading were: Samuel Sandbach, Anthony Molyneux, George Irlam, William Earle, J.D. Case, W.W. Currie, Thomas Corrie, Edward Pearson, William Statham, Thomas Littledale, Charles Lawrence, Samuel Staniforth, and (George or Thomas) Case. *Ibid.*

Tories and the Common Council itself. In each local issue, there were conflicting opinions among the Tories. Some of them were active in proposing reform measures, while a majority of them opposed them. By offering a moderate reform policy, some reform-minded Tories tried to find a way of reaching an agreement among the Council members. Their efforts did not bear fruit, however. The negative attitude towards reform among many Tory members on the Council helped maintain the long established constitution of the Liverpool Corporation.

## II

### MAYORAL ELECTIONS AND LIVERPUDLIAN TORIES

#### *Tory Domination of the Mayoralty*

The annual mayoral elections in Liverpool provided a significant political moment for the inhabitants and the freeman-voters in particular. François Vigier has claimed that the mayor (and two bailiffs) had an insignificant role, when he points out that ‘the mayor and bailiffs were little more than the instruments of the council, in which all the governing powers of the borough were vested’.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, the elections to these offices gave each political camp an important opportunity to express its own opinions to the public. The main task of this section is to examine the ways in which Liverpoolian Tories worked on the mayoral elections and what kind of political attitudes they expressed. It will also consider the extent to which national politics influenced these local elections.

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<sup>45</sup> Vigier, *Change and Apathy*, 46.



Appendix B shows the results of the elections of the mayor and bailiffs which took place during the period between 1815 and 1832. Clearly, the Tories very largely dominated the mayoralty during these seventeen years. The Whigs won it on only two occasions, in 1820 and 1823. It should be noted, however, that, despite this domination by the Tories, there were ten contested elections over the period. Among these, a two-party contest took place five times – in 1818, 1819, 1820, 1829, and 1831. On the other hand, a contested election for the posts of the bailiffs hardly ever took place.<sup>46</sup> Like the mayoralty, the Tories largely dominated them. The Whigs, however, succeeded in getting their own candidates elected more often than in the case of the mayor.<sup>47</sup>

Appendix B suggests a correlation between national politics and the Liverpool mayoral elections in this seventeen-year period. When politics were heated at national level particularly in the late 1810s and for a few years around 1830, the local election tended to be fought out by the two rival parties. On the other hand, when the political temperature cooled at national level in the early and the mid-1820s, there were no contested mayoral elections or, if any, they were contests between Tory candidates. To consider this correlation, this section will be divided chronologically into three parts: the late 1810s; the early to mid-1820s; and the late 1820s and early 1830s.

#### *Mayoral Elections in the late 1810s*

Owing to a dearth of primary sources, it is difficult to discover the full details of the Liverpool mayoral elections held in the late 1810s. Reports in the available newspaper, the *Liverpool Mercury*, show some arguments advanced by the Whigs, but they do not

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<sup>46</sup> As far as I have discovered, the contested election over the posts of the bailiffs took place only once (in 1820) between 1815 and 1832.

<sup>47</sup> A lack of available primary sources makes it impossible to understand the ways in which the nomination of the candidates for the bailiffs was sought.

show how the Tories conducted their election campaigns.<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, this newspaper demonstrated that there was some degree of two-party rivalry, particularly at the elections held in 1818 and 1819.

Table 4-3: The results of the mayoral contested elections, 1815-1832

Years	Length	Candidates (Party)	Votes
1817	Two days	Thomas Case (T)	1,020
		J.B. Hollinshead (T)	912
1818	One day	J.B. Hollinshead (T)	382
		Charles Lawrence (W)	316
1819	One day	Sir John Tobin (T)	722
		Thomas Leyland (W)	683
1820	One day	Thomas Leyland (W)	124
		John Wright (T)	107
1821	Four days	Richard Bullin (T)	1,619
		William Molyneux (T)	1,567
1824	One day	J.B. Hollinshead (T)	300
		John Wright (T)	267
1826	One day	Thomas Littledale (T)	262
		George Drinkwater (T)	225
1827	Six days	Thomas Colley Porter (T)	1,780
		Nicholas Robinson (T)	1,765
1829	One day	Sir George Drinkwater (T)	208
		William Wallace Currie (W)	187
1831	One day	Samuel Sandbach (T)	691
		William Wallace Currie (W)	659

What has been clearly uncovered about the first two elections in 1815 and 1816 is

<sup>48</sup> The LRO holds the issues of *Bellinge's Liverpool Advertiser* from January 1818. This newspaper, however, did not report on the mayoral elections in any more detail than the *LM*. The Tory newspaper, the *LC*, is the best source to understand Tory politics in this town. As far as I know, however, neither libraries nor archives hold the issues of this newspaper between January 1815 and December 1825. The LRO holds its issues from January 1826.

that, as Appendix B shows, the Tories kept the mayoralty without a contest and maintained the posts of the bailiffs with one exception – the Whig, Richard Bullen, was elected bailiff in 1815. The 1817 mayoral election was a contest between different Tories. As Table 4-3 shows,<sup>49</sup> Thomas Case defeated J.B. Hollinshead by a majority of 108 votes – 1,020 to 912. The former was proposed by the Tory Council member, Samuel Staniforth, while the latter was nominated by the Tory poet and pamphleteer, Silvester Richmond. This election was significant in that it lasted more than one day for the first time since the 1797 election.<sup>50</sup>

At the two elections of 1818 and 1819, a two-party contest took place. As the 1818 election turned back to the usual practice of a one-day poll, the number of votes declined hugely, compared to the previous election. This suggests that the public interest in this election was lower. Nevertheless, a two-party conflict emerged and some important political issues were present at this election. The Tory candidate, J.B. Hollinshead, was proposed by John Gladstone, a leading Canningite, and this nomination was seconded by another Canningite Tory, John Tobin. Meanwhile, the Whig candidate, Charles Lawrence, was proposed by ‘Mr. Harvey’,<sup>51</sup> and this proposition was seconded by ‘Mr. Rushton’. The first names of these two supporters of Lawrence were not reported in the *Liverpool Mercury*. The two families, however, were locally famous for their support of Whig principles. Harvey attacked Hollinshead on the question of corruption. He suspected that the Tory candidate had used bribery when he had been a candidate at the previous mayoral election. This was similar to the language

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<sup>49</sup> At the mayoral elections, each elector had a single vote. Regarding the results of the elections which took place in 1817, 1818, 1819, 1820, 1821, and 1827, see Anon., *The Poll for the Election of Mayor of Liverpool, 1827* (Liverpool: J. Gore and Son, [1827]), 86; *LM*, 22 October 1824; *LC*, 25 October 1826, 21 October 1829, and 19 October 1831.

<sup>50</sup> *LM*, 24 October 1817.

<sup>51</sup> This ‘Harvey’ might be John Harvey, who proposed the Whig candidate, Thomas Leyland, at the 1819 mayoral election.

used by the Whigs to attack George Canning at the parliamentary elections in this borough in 1812, 1816, and 1818. Rushton provided an important comment about a Common Hall, which would be a critical issue in later years. He insisted that, ‘Mr. Lawrence would call a Common Hall, and by so doing effectively destroy the foul usurpation of the self-styled Common Council, who have invaded the rights, and destroyed the privileges of every Burgess in the town’.<sup>52</sup>

A Common Hall was the ancient form of the assembly of the freemen. Under the town’s charters which had been granted to Liverpool by King John and successive monarchs, the business of the Corporation of Liverpool had been conducted by general meetings of the burgesses held in the Common Hall, in which they annually elected the officers on St. Luke’s day and created by-laws. In the sixteenth century, because of the growth of the population of Liverpool, the burgesses considered it necessary to establish a select body. By 1579, the Common Hall created a Common Council, which was composed of the mayor, aldermen, and twenty-four others. The 1626 charter granted by Charles I did not mention any Common Council, but authorised the mayor, bailiffs, and burgesses to make by-laws. It seems that the burgesses still assembled to nominate a Common Council, which was nevertheless not based on any charter. In 1677, however, Charles II issued a new charter, by which the Common Council was given the supreme power of the Corporation and was authorised to elect the mayor, bailiffs, the Common Council itself and the freemen. The charter of William III issued in 1695 limited such powers of the Common Council as had been granted by the 1677 charter. It stipulated that the mayor and two bailiffs be chosen from among the Common Council, but that these three offices be elected by the freemen. It also determined the composition of the

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 October 1818.

Common Council: forty-one officers including the mayor and two bailiffs. It was problematic, however, partly because of the controversial clause 50, which stipulated that ‘whensoever it shall happen that any Mayor, Recorder, Common Clerk, or some or any of the Bailiffs, or of the Common Council of the said town ... die, or ... be removed, or depart, or refused to stand; that then, and in every such case, another fit person, or fit persons ... shall be elected, and sworn, and appointed, by such persons in such manner, time, and form, as in that particular was used and accustomed before the making of’ the charter of Charles II. The problem was that, before the charter of Charles II, a Common Council had not existed under the authorisation of any charter, but in accord with the custom or as the situation demanded.

The ambiguity of this clause, and a lack of detailed and clear official stipulation about the election of vacant Council members, left room for different interpretations of this charter and created a political conflict. Local Whigs stated that this clause justified the power of a Common Hall to elect men to vacant offices of the Common Council, and some of them insisted that it justified the ultimate power of a Common Hall to elect and control the Common Council and make by-laws. On the other hand, the Common Council insisted that the age-old custom of self-election had been practised since the Elizabethan period and had been officially granted by the 1695 charter. While admitting the annual election of the mayor and two bailiffs by the freemen, it thus continued to be a self-elected body until the early nineteenth century. For the Whigs, a significant anchorage was clause 39, which authorised the mayor, one of the bailiffs, and twenty-five freemen to serve as the Common Council ‘for the time being’. This clause did not call such a Common Council in case of an emergency a ‘Common Hall’, but local inhabitants in Liverpool preferred to do so. In the eighteenth century, a Common

Hall was actually held several times by invoking this clause. In 1735, for example, the Earl of Derby, the then mayor, agreed to hold a Common Hall with the concurrence of the bailiffs. It created various by-laws, one of which empowered the burgesses to manage the Corporation affairs. His death, however, made them abortive. The following year, the Common Council resumed all powers, and dismissed these two bailiffs on the ground that they had breached the trust of the Common Council. In 1791, a Common Hall was held again when requested by 1,028 signatures of burgesses. It abrogated the authority of the Common Council to fill the vacancy of its members and elected two gentlemen to fill the vacant seats. The Common Council, however, declared that this election was void.<sup>53</sup> As in the previous century, various opinions about the legitimacy of the summoning of a Common Hall were expressed by local Tories and Whigs in the mayoral elections between 1815 and 1832.

In the 1819 mayoral election, a two-party contest took place in the context of the ‘Peterloo Massacre’ and attracted more public interest than it had in 1818. As Table 4-3 shows, it was a one-day contested election, like the previous election. The number of votes cast, however, nearly doubled. Sir John Tobin, the president of the Canning Club, was proposed by ‘Mr. Irlam’, a Tory, and seconded by Adam Lodge, who would be the president of this club the following year.<sup>54</sup> Meanwhile, Thomas Leyland, the failed Whig candidate at the 1816 parliamentary by-election, was proposed by John Harvey, and seconded by Joshua Oglethorpe. The issues in dispute were similar to those at the

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<sup>53</sup> Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool*, I, 140-141, 183, 231-234; F.E. Sanderson, ‘The Structure of Politics in Liverpool 1780-1807’, *THSLC*, 127 (1978), 67-68; Vigier, *Change and Apathy*, 46, 71-72; Anon., *The Charter, Granted to the Burgesses of Liverpool, by William III. With Notes and Explanatory Remarks on the Same; also, the Charter of George II. The Order of Common Council, and the Petition for Obtaining that Charter, with the Report of the Attorney and Solicitor General thereon: Opinion of Counsel respecting the Power of Making By-Laws, and an Extract from the Act of 2 George III* (Liverpool: Egerton Smith and Co., 1810), 9-36, 62-84.

<sup>54</sup> Canning Club, Minutes, 195, 202.

last election. The *Liverpool Mercury* called the Tories ‘the bribing party’, and a Whig public letter regarded them as ‘a junta of *bons vivants*, consisting of detachments from the corporation, the Canning cycle, the Canning club, and the Backbone club’. For the *Liverpool Mercury*, the Whig voters were ‘the most independent portion of the electors, who to the number of 688 voted for Mr. LEYLAND, without receiving a sixpence, a pint of beer, or a promise of any description’.<sup>55</sup> The number referred to meant those voters who had supported Thomas Leyland against Canning at the 1816 by-election. For this Whig newspaper, the issues raised by this by-election and the 1819 mayoral election were closely connected.

In this mayoral election, the need for a Common Hall was also one of the issues raised. A Whig writer, calling himself ‘LUDLOW’, submitted a public letter to the *Liverpool Mercury*, ‘To the Freemen of Liverpool’ stating that:

The constitution of this borough ... is an admirable resemblance, and was founded on, the same solid principles of justice on which our forefathers established the inimitable constitution of our country. The charter by which you are incorporated invests you, assembled in Common Hall, with the supreme authority in the management of the town’s affairs; and ... *authorises you to elect* forty-one of yourselves to be a Common Council.

The writer claimed that, if a Tory candidate won, ‘you may submit to the will of a self-elected junto for ever’.<sup>56</sup> Toryism was connected to the existing, exclusive and closed nature of the Common Council. To reform this situation, the writer insisted, it was vital to summon a Common Hall. It could be maintained that the Whigs had some success at this election, because William Earle, from a Whig family, was elected as one

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<sup>55</sup> *LM*, 15 and 22 October 1819.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 October 1819.

of the bailiffs.

In this period, the impact of two-party politics on the mayoral elections of Liverpool was enormous. In these elections, local Tories and Whigs seriously competed with each other by using a language similar to that expressed in the parliamentary elections in Liverpool in this period. In these mayoral elections, a major issue was the summoning of a Common Hall, similar to demands for parliamentary reform during parliamentary elections in this constituency. The summoning of a Common Hall was strenuously demanded by local Whigs as something related to their national political objectives: defeating the Tories and establishing a better system of government.

#### *Mayoral Elections in the early and the mid-1820s*

The mayoral elections in Liverpool between 1820 and 1827 show that local two-party rivalry gradually receded into the background, which paralleled the situation at national level in this period. After the issue of the Queen Caroline affair, significant constitutional issues, and parliamentary reform in particular, gradually decreased in importance in the localities as well as at Westminster. In Liverpool in this period, as Table 4-3 shows, three mayoral elections in 1822, 1823, and 1825 ended without a contest. In the remaining five elections, a contest took place. Among them, however, there was only one Whig-Tory contest, which took place in 1820. Even this election demonstrated a gradual shift in accord with the general trend at national level. As Table 4-3 shows, the number of votes cast in this election was the smallest during the period from 1815 to 1832. This suggests low interest in the election among the freemen.

The two mayoral elections of 1821 and 1827, which lasted four and six days respectively, led to heated contests. The total number of freemen polled in each election



– 3,186 in 1821 and 3,545 in 1827 – was the largest ever at any election in this borough, whether municipal or parliamentary. Nevertheless, these elections did not demonstrate the existence of a serious two-party conflict. Margaret Escott has suggested that a two-party contest appeared, particularly between the Canningite Tories and the Whig reformers in these two elections,<sup>57</sup> but the analysis of the voting behaviour of the electors shows that her suggestion should be reviewed.

In these two elections, incidents of bribery were remarkable. In 1821, a vote was bought for six shillings at first, but it went up to half-sovereigns with free drink and ended at five or six pounds. In 1827, it went further, as we have seen above, reaching thirty or forty pounds in the end. These elections, and the latter in particular, made many electors feel dishonoured, and created a public mood in favour of the introduction of the Election Regulation Bill.

In the 1821 election, it seems that the Canningites and the Gascoynites opposed each other. Richard Bullin was the Gascoynite candidate. He was actually proposed by Sir John Tobin, a leading Canningite, although this nomination was seconded by the anti-Catholic Gascoynite Councillor, John Wright. William Molyneux was the other candidate. He was nominated by members of the Canning Cycle, which was a closed body composed of leading members of the Canning Club. At the nomination meeting, he was proposed by J.B. Hollinshead, who had cast votes for both Canning and Gascoyne from the former's bar at the 1812 election and plumped for Canning in the 1818 election. This proposal was seconded by the former president of the Canning Club, Adam Lodge.<sup>58</sup> It was anticipated that local Whigs would cast their votes for Bullin. As Margaret Escott has pointed out, William Shepherd, a Unitarian and local Whig leader,

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<sup>57</sup> HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, 'Liverpool'.

<sup>58</sup> *LM*, 19 October 1821.

Figure 4-1: 604 votes for Bullin

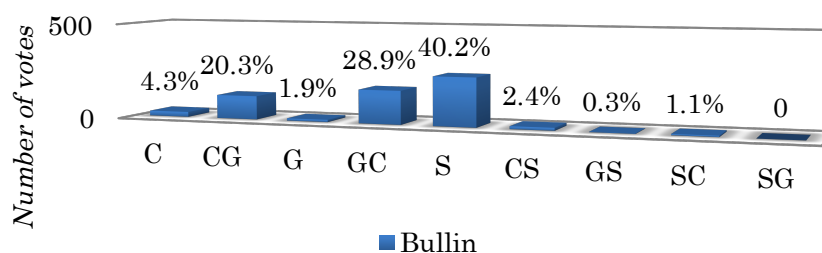
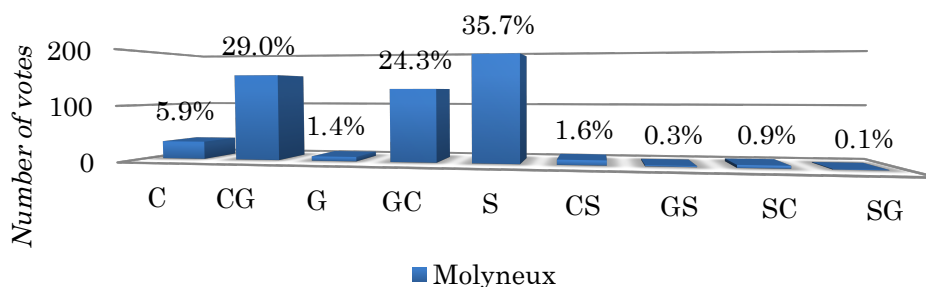


Figure 4-2: 534 votes for Molyneux



mobilised the Cheshire Whig Club to support Bullin.<sup>59</sup> The *Liverpool Mercury* expected that the Whig reformers would attack Molyneux, because of their hatred of ‘the ultra Canning party’ with ‘the highest Court flavour’. It opposed Hollinshead’s claim that there was ‘an unnatural coalition between the True Blue or Gascoyne Club, with the Concentric Society’, which was a political club of local Whigs. It anticipated, however, that many Whigs would give ‘their silent votes for Mr. Bullin’.<sup>60</sup>

The analysis of the voting behaviour with poll books assesses the extent to which this rivalry between the two Tory groups was common among freeman-voters at large. Figures 4-1 and 4-2 show the ways in which the supporters of Bullin and Molyneux voted in the 1818 general parliamentary election, in which strong party rivalry had emerged. There were 1,619 freemen who cast their vote for Bullin and 1,567 for

<sup>59</sup> HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, ‘Liverpool’.

<sup>60</sup> *LM*, 19 October 1821.

Molyneux in the 1821 mayoral election. Among these 3,186 freemen, 1,138 have been identified as those who voted in the 1818 election (604 for Bullin and 534 for Molyneux).<sup>61</sup> According to the classification by the poll book of the 1818 election, the voters are divided into eight groups: ‘C’, ‘CG’, ‘G’, ‘GC’, ‘S’, ‘CS’, ‘GS’, and ‘SC’. In the first place, among the 1,138 voters, fifty-eight plumped for Canning at the 1818 election, who are shown as ‘C’ (twenty-six for Bullin and thirty-two for Molyneux). Second, those 278 who cast votes for both Canning and Gascoyne from the former’s polling bar at the 1818 election are shown as ‘CG’ (123 for Bullin and 155 for Molyneux). Third, twenty plumped for Gascoyne, shown as ‘G’ (twelve for Bullin and eight for Molyneux). In the fourth place, those 305 freemen who voted for both Gascoyne and Canning from the former’s bar are shown as ‘GC’ (175 for Bullin and 130 for Molyneux). Fifth, there were 445 freemen who plumped for the Whig candidate, the Earl of Sefton, at the 1818 election, who are shown as ‘S’ (254 for Bullin and 191 for Molyneux). They are defined as ‘Whigs’. There were forty-one freemen who cast cross-party votes – those twenty-four who cast split votes for Canning and Sefton from the former’s bar shown as ‘CS’ (fifteen for Bullin and nine for Molyneux), those four who cast split votes for Gascoyne and Sefton from the former’s bar shown as ‘GS’ (two for each), those twelve who cast split votes for Sefton and Canning from the former’s bar shown as ‘SC’ (seven for Bullin and five for Molyneux), and the remaining one cast split votes for Sefton and Gascoyne from the former’s bar shown as ‘SG’ (for Molyneux).

Comparing these two tables yields two conclusions. First, if it is possible to say

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<sup>61</sup> For this identification, three pieces of information written in the poll books, each voter’s name, occupation, and abode, are examined. *Poll book, Liverpool, 1818*; Anon., *The Poll for the Election of Mayor for the Borough and Corporation of Liverpool, 1821* (Liverpool: J. Gore, [1821]).

that electors preferred to cast their votes from a polling bar of their favourite candidate, the rivalry between the ‘Canningites’ (‘C’ and ‘CG’) and the ‘Gascoynites’ (‘G’ and ‘GC’) was quite intense among the electors at large. As Figures 4-1 and 4-2 show, the proportion of the ‘Gascoynite’ votes which Bullin gained, 30.8 per cent, was larger than that of the ‘Canningite’ votes which he gained, 24.6 per cent. Meanwhile, the proportion of the ‘Canningite’ votes which Molyneux gained, 34.9 per cent, was larger than that of the ‘Gascoynite’ votes which he gained, 25.7 per cent. Second, a majority of the Whigs supported Bullin. The proportion of the ‘Whig’ votes which Bullin gained, 42.0 per cent, was larger than that of the ‘Whig’ votes for Molyneux, 35.7%. This suggests that the *Liverpool Mercury* made a correct assumption about the Whigs’ voting behaviour.

Despite these two elements, however, it needs to be remembered that the political rivalry between the ‘Canningites’ and the union of the ‘Gascoynites’ and the Whigs was not very intense. Molyneux gained support from not only the ‘Canningites’, but also from the ‘Gascoynites’, while Bullin gained support from not only the ‘Gascoynites’, but also from the ‘Canningites’. The difference of the votes which each candidate gained from each Tory camp was quite moderate. In addition, Molyneux gained considerable support from the ‘Whig’ voters. It is difficult to find such a strong hatred of the Whigs against the Canningites as Margaret Escott has emphasised. It is thus reasonable to conclude that party-political principles were not crucial when freemen decided their voting behaviour.

A similar conclusion can be drawn about the 1827 mayoral election. The process of the nomination of the candidates of this election showed that the rivalry between the Canningites and the Gascoyne camp seems to have existed to a certain degree, but was much less remarkable than in the 1821 election. Nicholas Robinson was nominated by

Figure 4-3: 320 votes for Porter

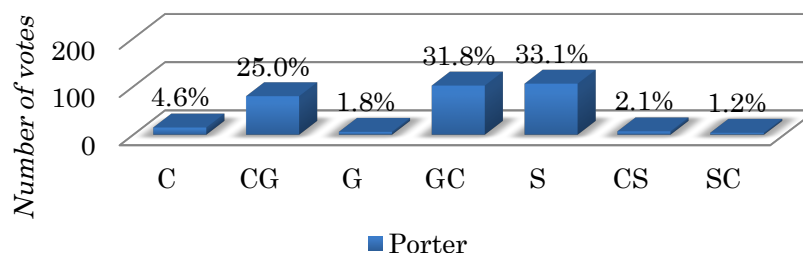
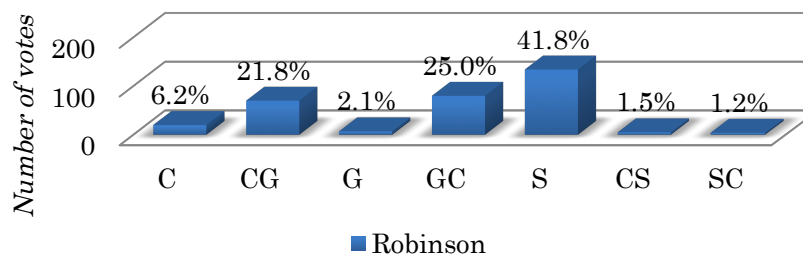


Figure 4-4: 320 votes for Robinson



the Canning Cycle, and his meeting was chaired by the former president of the Canning Club, Sir John Tobin. At the public nomination meeting, however, he was proposed by Richard Leyland, a Gascoynite Tory. He himself cast votes for both Gascoyne and Canning from the former's bar at the 1812 parliamentary election. On the other hand, Thomas Colley Porter was supported by the Gascoynite interest. An anti-Catholic Councillor, John Wright, who had cast votes for both Gascoyne and Canning from the former's bar at the 1812 and the 1818 elections, served as the chairman of Porter's meeting and proposed him as the candidate. Porter himself, however, cast votes for both Canning and Gascoyne from the former's bar at the 1818 parliamentary election.<sup>62</sup>

The analysis of the poll books reveals that the rivalry between the two Tory camps was not strong among the electors at large.<sup>63</sup> Figures 4-3 and 4-4 have been made in the

<sup>62</sup> *LM*, 26 October 1827.

<sup>63</sup> *Poll book, Liverpool, 1818*; Anon., *The Poll for the Election of Mayor of Liverpool, 1827*.

same way as Figures 4-1 and 4-2. Both candidates gained 320 votes from the freemen who are identified as those who had voted in the 1818 general election. Some 108 votes which Porter gained came from the 'Gascoynites' (33.6 per cent), while ninety-five votes were cast by the 'Canningites' (29.6 per cent). Meanwhile, Robinson gained ninety votes from the 'Canningites' (28.0 per cent) and eighty-seven votes from the 'Gascoynites' (27.1 per cent). This suggests that both candidates gained more votes from their own camp, but the difference of the votes which each candidate gained from each Tory camp was much smaller than in the 1821 election.

With regard to the Whigs' votes, Margaret Escott has suggested that, as in the 1821 election, the Whig reformers were in favour of the Gascoynite candidate, Porter. According to her, he was supported not only by the *Liverpool Mercury*, but also by the middle and lower classes, and the local special committee of the Cheshire Whig Club.<sup>64</sup> Nevertheless, this kind of organisational support from the Whigs was not remarkable among the 'Whig' voters at large. Porter gained 106 'Whig' votes (33.1 per cent), but a majority of the 'Whig' votes were cast for Robinson. This Canningite candidate gained 134 'Whig' votes, which constituted more than forty per cent of his total votes. All in all, it would be reasonable to conclude that party-political principles hardly influenced the voting behaviour at this mayoral election.

In the contested mayoral elections in this seven-year period between 1820 and 1827, some conflict emerged within not only the Tories, but also the Whigs. The 1820 election witnessed a distinction between the Council Whigs and Whig reformers out-of-doors. Edward Rushton, one of the leading Whigs out-of-doors, proposed the Council Whig, Edward Pearson, as a bailiff against the other candidates, such as

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<sup>64</sup> HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, 'Liverpool'. See also Checkland, *The Gladstones*, 178.

Richard Golightly and Thomas Littledale, both of whom were Tories. Rushton's intention was to win the election for mayor and one bailiff, which was an indispensable requirement for the summoning of a Common Hall according to clause 39 of the 1695 charter. The poll began, but in the middle of it Pearson withdrew his own candidacy, mainly because he stated 'he would vote, himself, for Mr. Littledale, which he did'.<sup>65</sup> He was inattentive to the demands of the Whigs out-of-doors.

The 1824 mayoral election also revealed different attitudes towards a Common Hall between the Council Whigs and some Whig leaders out-of-doors. In this election, the main issue was the summoning of a Common Hall, which was requested by a petition with some 778 signatures of freemen. This petitioning campaign resulted from increasing discontent among the dock ratepayers about the exclusive management of the Liverpool dock estate. From the establishment of the first Liverpool Dock Act of 1708, the Corporation, as the trustees, exercised the power to build the dock and to raise dues. The dock ratepayers, excluded from the management of the dock estate, were increasingly aggrieved by the early nineteenth century. In this tense situation, they took action in 1824 when they found many irregularities in the dock works. On 24 June, they held their annual meeting and decided to inform the Common Council of their demand for a better system of dock management. Some Whig leaders linked this demand to the more general objective of the summoning of a Common Hall to control the Common Council.<sup>66</sup> They expected that the mayor and bailiffs would meet the demand for the summoning of a Common Hall, because these three high posts of the Common Council were dominated by Whig Councillors. In the 1823 mayoral election, Charles Lawrence

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<sup>65</sup> *LM*, 20 October 1820.

<sup>66</sup> Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool*, I, 390-391; 'Liverpool: The Docks', in *A History of the County of Lancaster: Volume 4*, ed. William Farrer and J. Brownbill (London: Victoria County History, 1911), 41-43, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/lancs/vol4/pp41-43> [accessed 8 November 2015].

had been elected as mayor, and W. Earle and W.W. Currie had gained the posts of bailiffs. They, however, rejected the petition of these 778 freemen.<sup>67</sup>

In this context, some Whig leaders out-of-doors counted on the reform-minded Council Tories. In the 1824 mayoral election, the Tory, James Ackers, proposed as mayor J.B. Hollinshead, who was a Tory reformer, as his active support for introducing an authorised reporter to Council meetings had indicated. This proposal was seconded by Edward Rushton, a leading Whig. In his address, Rushton attacked the Council Whigs who had rejected the request to convene a Common Hall, and insisted that Hollinshead ‘would perform the duties of that office with satisfaction to the burgesses’. He claimed that there would be two major benefits produced by the summoning of a Common Hall. First, it would provide the freemen with the power of controlling Corporation business. Second, it would empower them to elect the members of the Common Council.

Mentioning these two, W.W. Currie revealed the reasons why he expressed his opposition to the summoning of a Common Hall by rejecting the petition. These reasons suggest that he was not a ‘reactionary’ Whig, but rather a progressive one. With regard to the first benefit mentioned by Rushton, Currie stated that ‘more good was to be obtained by maturing the system ... than by submitting the matter to public discussion’. He emphasised that the mayor and bailiffs were making efforts to improve the management of the Corporation business, and maintained that ‘it was not advisable to agitate again, at a Common-hall, those measures of improvement which had been adopted after painful, anxious, and prolonged deliberation’. On the other hand, he accepted the necessity of the publication of the Corporation accounts for the same

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<sup>67</sup> HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, ‘Liverpool’.



reason as he supported the introduction of the authorised reporter into the proceedings of the Common Council as has been seen above: ‘the conduct of the Council should be exposed to the public eye’. He was of the opinion that the freemen and other inhabitants would exercise vigilance and influence on the Corporation affairs to some extent. With regard to the second benefit, he acknowledged the defects in the representative system of the Common Council. He insisted, however, that ‘such defect could not be remedied by a Common-hall, but by a new charter’. He understood that a Common Hall would not create a fundamental solution for the defects without a new charter. He insisted on a new charter which would fully and clearly establish the rules for representation on the Common Council, rather than taking pains to seek for a better interpretation of the 1695 charter. He rejected the petition, but did support the introduction of a better representative system of the Common Council.<sup>68</sup>

By the end of 1827 at the latest, Currie probably began to support a new charter which would extend the franchise to all male householders. As seen in the previous section, when the requisitions sent by Francis Jordan, one of which demanded the extension of the franchise in the mayoral elections, were discussed at the Council meeting on 5 December 1827, Currie supported the idea of such an extension. Before these requisitions were submitted to the Common Council, they had been discussed at the public meeting at the York Hotel, held on 1 November. This meeting was organised by some Whig leaders, such as Francis Jordan, Thomas Bolton, Thomas Thornely, Francis Boulton, and William Rathbone, who supported the extension of the franchise to householders in order to reform the existing system of election which was liable to result to corruption and bribery.<sup>69</sup> There is little doubt that Currie was in tune with

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<sup>68</sup> *LM*, 22 October 1824.

<sup>69</sup> This meeting appointed the committee composed of Francis Jordan, Thomas Bolton, Thomas Thornely,

these progressive Whig leaders out-of-doors.

The proposal of J.B. Hollinshead as mayor was strongly supported by John Gladstone, a principal patron of George Canning. He agreed with Rushton by insisting that, ‘if he ... had had the honour to fill the office of Mayor, he should, for various cogent reasons, have been disposed to meet the wishes of the freemen, by complying with their requisition for convening a Common Hall. – (Applause)’. It should not be ignored, however, that, in this address, he supported only one of those two benefits of the summoning of a Common Hall mentioned by Rushton. Gladstone stated that it was important to publish the accounts of the Corporation and submit them ‘to the burgesses at large, assembled in Common-hall’. This was related to the first benefit articulated by Rushton. Gladstone, however, completely ignored the other benefit of the summoning of a Common Hall: the election of the Common Council. In this respect, his support for the summoning of a Common Hall was limited.<sup>70</sup> The ‘liberal’ Tories offered themselves as an alternative channel to take up reform measures out-of-doors, but the union between the liberal Tory Councillors and the Whigs out-of-doors lasted only temporarily and failed to produce any reforms. After this election, neither Hollinshead nor Gladstone took vigorous action to convene a Common Hall.<sup>71</sup>

In the mayoral elections in Liverpool in this period from 1820 to 1827, two-party politics considerably declined. This demonstrates that these mayoral elections were highly influenced by the trend of parliamentary politics at Westminster, which witnessed

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Francis Boulton, Henry Booth, Hardman Earle, John Cropper, J.A. Yates, William Rathbone, John Smith, Richard Radcliffe, Hugh Matthie, Geo. Jas. Duncan, and William Potter. M. Benson, J.B. Yates, ‘Mr. Clarke’, and ‘Mr. Mortimer’, delivered a speech to support the extension of the franchise. *Ibid.*, 2 November 1827.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 October 1824.

<sup>71</sup> With the introduction of a new Dock Act of 1825, the dock ratepayers were enabled to elect eight out of the twenty-one Councillors of the dock committee. Farrer and Brownbill, ‘Liverpool: The Docks’, 41-43.

much less serious disputes between the two national parties than in the earlier period. Between 1820 and 1827, five contested mayoral elections took place in Liverpool, but all of these except for the election in 1820 were fought between local Tories. In this context, a loose union between local Tories and local Whigs was, even though temporarily, created. What was remarkable in the mayoral elections in this period, and in 1824 in particular, was the expression of different attitudes towards the representation of the Common Council between the two sides of local Whigs. On the one hand, the progressive Whig leaders, and W.W. Currie in particular, demanded a new charter to reform the representation. On the other hand, other Whigs leaders tended to support the ancient right of the freemen to call a Common Hall. Many of their freeman supporters, while demanding to call a Common Hall, were unwilling to support the extension of the franchise, which might deprive them of their vote and thereby decrease their political importance. In the following four years, this gap between these two Whig camps was not narrowed, but rather was so wide as to prevent local Whigs at large from creating a combined force capable of attaining a better representative system of the Common Council and to improve the day-to-day management of Corporation business. Such disagreement undoubtedly helped maintain the dominance of local Tories over the mayoralty.

#### *Mayoral Elections between 1828 and 1832*

Between 1828 and 1832, when serious two-party politics re-emerged as a significant factor in national politics, local Tories in Liverpool showed their collective strength again by virtually dominating the posts of mayor and bailiffs. Except in 1831, major national issues themselves made little impact on the mayoral elections in Liverpool in

this period, but the critical issue of the summoning of a Common Hall provoked a political dispute between local Tories and local Whigs more intensely than in the previous period. This issue, however, was also a source of the division between two sections of Whigs.

The 1828 mayoral election did not produce a contest, perhaps because the previous contested election in 1827 was too devastating in terms of bribery and corruption. It is possible that leading local politicians intentionally avoided taking the risk of committing themselves to a contest. The following year, however, a contested election did take place. This election lasted only one day, with a small number of votes cast. Nevertheless, significant issues which had been absent in the previous year were present.

Before the mayoral election of 1829 took place, the situation of the Whigs was not very favourable. In early August 1829, the freemen of Liverpool held a meeting to request the mayor and bailiffs to summon a Common Hall. As one position on the Council was vacant after the withdrawal of Charles Horsfall, these freemen tried to exert 'our just rights, which our ancestors enjoyed, to elect to all vacancies in the Common Council'. According to the *Liverpool Mercury*, however, the meeting showed 'the apparent apathy of the majority to the recovery of their ancient privileges'. The request was eventually sent to the mayor and bailiffs with the name of four reformers, John Ewing, George Perry, James Wainwright, and Robert Brew. Nevertheless, at the monthly Council meeting held on 5 August, at which the vacant membership was discussed, the Council Tories, including the mayor and bailiffs, dismissed the request.<sup>72</sup>

In the aftermath of the cool reaction of the Common Council, the burgesses of

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<sup>72</sup> *LM*, 7 and 21 August 1829.

Liverpool, many of whom the *Liverpool Mercury* reported were ‘the lower and middle classes of freemen’, held another meeting at the Shipwrights’ Society on 20 August 1829. The room was completely full, with about 700 people present. These same four men were the major organisers. At this meeting, they repeated their arguments in support of the summoning of a Common Hall and in favour of restricting bribery and corruption in the elections. Originally, they intended to hold a joint meeting with influential local middle-class Whigs next day, but postponed it until 1 October, because they considered such a postponed meeting would have a more direct influence on the coming mayoral election.<sup>73</sup>

Some Tories reacted against this gradual re-awakening of a reform movement. The best example can be seen in a series of four public letters entitled ‘The Civic Chair’, which was written by ‘A BURGESS’ to ‘the Freemen of Liverpool’. They were published in the *Liverpool Courier* from mid-September to early October. The main argument of these letters revolved around criticism of W.W. Currie. Mentioning the reformers’ meeting held on 20 August, one of these public letters stated that, according to this meeting, ‘an independent Whiggish member of Council would be proposed to them for a Mayor, a man that would call a common hall’ for the next mayoral election.<sup>74</sup> As the *Liverpool Mercury* showed, the meeting did not uncover the name of the ‘independent Whiggish member of Council’.<sup>75</sup> The public letter insisted, however, that this member of the Common Council was Currie. This reasoning was not without merit. The editorial of this Whig newspaper, published on 28 August, maintained that ‘it is the intention of a considerable number of gentlemen to nominate and support Mr. W.

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 and 28 August 1829.

<sup>74</sup> *LC*, 16 September 1829.

<sup>75</sup> At the meeting, it was stated that, ‘They would be called upon to support a man of independent principles, who ... would call a Common Hall’. *LM*, 21 August 1829.

Wallace Currie, as a candidate for the Mayoralty on St. Luke's-day'.<sup>76</sup>

The main reason why these letters attacked Currie was that their author evidently regarded him as an untrustworthy politician. One of the examples of his untrustworthiness presented by the author was his attitude towards allowing a reporter to attend the monthly meetings of Council. According to the first letter, Currie had stated that freemen should be allowed to hear the meetings, if a new council room was established. Although a new room had already been provided by early August 1829 at the latest, he did not take any action to allow freemen to attend.<sup>77</sup> This author also asked why local Whigs still supported him, even though he was unwilling to call a Common Hall.<sup>78</sup>

After the criticism against this Whig politician, the author made a bitter attack on Whiggism in general. He insisted that:

I will trust neither whiggism or radicalism further than I can help it; past experience tells me, if I am wise, I will not. Let me recommend the same to you. ... Respect your character, assert your rights but submit not to be worked with as the *tools* (I trust I shall not have cause to say *fools*) of your whiggish radical demagogues. These men are now united with the Catholics ...

The claim that 'demagogues with visionary ideas' deceived the innocent and used them as their tools was created from a typical Tory mindset, as seen in Chapter One.<sup>79</sup> Besides, in the context in which the Catholic Emancipation bill was passed, in April 1829, the hatred against the Whigs was connected to a sense of marked hostility to the Catholics. He went on to insist that, 'If you desire a radical government, then these

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 August 1829.

<sup>77</sup> *LC*, 16 September 1829; *LM*, 7 August 1829.

<sup>78</sup> *LC*, 23 September 1829.

<sup>79</sup> For example, see 31, 41-42 in Chapter One.

[whiggish radical demagogues] are your men; but if you wish to have a candid, plain dealing, liberal tory for your Chief Magistrate, have a little patience, and the choice will be afforded you'. For this author, under the Tory hegemony of the Common Council, 'the corporate funds are *now* freely and liberally, as well as judiciously applied in all directions, as they ought to be, for the improvement of the town'. With regard to a Common Hall, he did not show a positive or negative attitude. He stated that, 'if he [a candid, plain dealing, liberal tory] will not promise to call a common hall, unless serous abuses can be shown to exist ... he will profess no more than he means to perform, and prove himself, if elected by you, the faithful, honest guardian of your honour and interests'.<sup>80</sup> In the subsequent letters, he strongly supported the Tory candidate, George Drinkwater.<sup>81</sup>

On St. Luke's Day, John Gladstone, proposing Drinkwater as a candidate for mayor, advanced a similar argument:

The public had lately heard much respecting common halls and meeting for parliamentary reform ... [H]e (Mr. Gladstone) could not take on himself to pledge Mr. Drinkwater to the convening of a common hall or the calling of a meeting to promote the cause of parliamentary reform. But he (Mr. Gladstone) had no hesitation in pledging himself, that Mr. Drinkwater would discharge the duties of that office, should it be the pleasure of the burgesses to place him in the civic chair, zealously, honestly, and fearlessly.

At the 1824 mayoral election, Gladstone had taken a more positive stance towards the opening of a Common Hall. Five years later, however, his attitude had turned ambiguous. The only measure that he supported clearly was the public reporting of the

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<sup>80</sup> *LC*, 16 September 1829.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 September and 7 October 1829.

Council meetings. With regard to the reasons for his support for Drinkwater's candidacy, he stated, like the author of the public letters, that sound local governance would result from the mayor's personal qualities, rather than from some reform measures.<sup>82</sup> His ambivalent attitude towards a Common Hall suggests that local Tories gradually hesitated to support this liberal measure, fearing the growth of the popular political movement.

At the public meeting of the burgesses in Liverpool held at the Music Hall on 1 October, some middle-class Whig leaders, such as Edward Rushton, William Rathbone, Colonel George Williams, and William Shepherd, focused on attacking the Common Council for maintaining the 'system of self-election' and on requesting the convening of a Common Hall. It seems that they intentionally did not put the issue of the extension of the franchise in their request. Before the meeting, there was a campaign seeking to petition the king for a new town charter, which would extend the elective franchise in Liverpool to all householders.<sup>83</sup> The *Liverpool Mercury* was a major actor in this campaign.<sup>84</sup> It expected, however, that the meeting at the Music Hall would not discuss it, because: 'Freemen ... are too apt to regard their franchise as an exclusive privilege, from which they have some individual advantage to expect, rather than as a right in which others ought to participate who are now excluded'.<sup>85</sup> Avoiding this issue with which many freemen could not agree, these Whig leaders chose the summoning of a Common Hall as the main focus in order to gain support from the freemen at the approaching mayoral election.

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 October 1829.

<sup>83</sup> *LM*, 2 October 1829.

<sup>84</sup> In the immediate aftermath of the 1827 mayoral election, the *LM* insisted that in order to eliminate bribery it was necessary to gain 'a new charter, which should extend the suffrage to householders'. The newspaper also insisted on the importance of 'the system of ballot' and one-day elections. *Ibid.*, 26 October 1827.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 October 1829.



To justify the request for the summoning of a Common Hall, these local Whigs relied on clause 39 of the 1695 charter. At the public meeting to consider ‘the best mode of procuring the restoration of their rights and devising a better system of management for the Corporate Estates’, held on 1 October 1829, John Ashton Yates, the Whig broker and chairman of this meeting, stated that, ‘by a special clause in the charter granted by Charles I, and confirmed by that granted by William III, that power was vested in the mayor, bailiffs, and burgesses at large convened by public notice’. Edward Rushton also stated that:

[A]fter the Restoration they [the inhabitants of Liverpool] were treated to a new charter; and among all the flagitious acts of Charles II, this was the most flagitious – for it struck at the root of local freedom, and placed in the hands of a junta all the power inherited by the burgesses, by a right as sacred as that of the King to his throne. (*Applause.*) This charter was repealed by William III, and a new one granted which restored to the burgesses their rights, privileges, and immunities, and on this charter the Common Council now pretended to act, and yet persevered in withholding every one of those privileges and immunities.<sup>86</sup>

This Whig meeting led to a counter argument advanced by local Tories. For example, the *Liverpool Courier*, while showing an ambiguous stance towards the convening of a Common Hall, opposed Rushton’s interpretation of the charter:

If the charter of William had been sought with reference to any such grievance being relieved as had been inflict by the charter of Charles II ... the grievance would have passed away, by the privilege being restored ... The fact, too, that the uniform practice of the Council, through so long a course of time, has been conscientiously believed, and is still believed, to be perfectly legal, is an

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

additional proof to what has been just stated, that no such course of proceeding as that now claimed, in order to constitute a Council, was ever contemplated in the charter of William.

This Tory newspaper showed opposition to any extension of the franchise. Like the author of the public letters, it supported ‘The general conduct of the Corporation in its administration [which] has conferred splendour upon the town, and watched over its interests with an efficiency which has commanded the admiration of the country and of foreigners’. The attitude of paying more attention to the merits of the existing system rather than to its faults demonstrated the political stance of many local Tories in this period. They hesitated to support the opening of a Common Hall and the extension of the franchise to all householders. By taking such a conservative stance, they virtually supported the maintenance of local constitutional practices.

More significant arguments were not provided by either political party on St. Luke’s Day, partly because the election ended early at around half-past one o’clock, with the victory going to Drinkwater. It is not clear why the Whigs gave up the contest at such an early stage. It is estimated, however, that they still faced grave difficulty in uniting local Whigs at large. To challenge the hegemony of the Council Tories, local Whigs needed to overcome this difficulty and to seek for a political objective agreed by them in concert. After their defeat in this mayoral election, however, they renewed their efforts to send a petition to Parliament to gain a new charter which would extend the franchise to all householders.<sup>87</sup> This probably widened the gap between the two Whig divisions.

The major issue in the 1831 mayoral election was parliamentary reform. The first

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<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 October 1829.

Reform Bills, which had been presented by Lord John Russell to the House of Commons on 1 March, had a massive impact on local politics in Liverpool. In addition, there was another important factor peculiar to this borough. In the same week as the mayoral election took place, a parliamentary by-election was held. In this by-election, Viscount Sandon, a Huskissonian Tory who supported the Reform Bills, defeated the radical Whig, Thomas Thornely. In this context, the 1831 mayoral election became a heated one involving a considerable number of voters.

In this election, the extension of the franchise in the mayoral elections was not a major issue. In March, the application demanding it was presented to the Common Council. It was defeated, however, at the monthly meeting of the Common Council, because the Council members agreed that the Reform Bills ‘might supersede the necessity of such a step as that recommended’.<sup>88</sup>

Local Whig leaders called on W.W. Currie to step forward as their candidate again,<sup>89</sup> but it seems that they failed to persuade the freemen to support the extension of the franchise in the mayoral elections. At the meeting of his friends held on 11 October, there were a thousand inhabitants in Liverpool present, many of whom, so the *Liverpool Mercury* reported, were freemen of ‘the labouring classes’. The issue of a Common Hall created a serious problem for local Whigs. James Wainwright stated that he ‘wished to know whether Mr. Currie would pledge himself to call a Common Hall if he were elected’. The ‘*loud cheering*’ took place in the immediate aftermath of his statement. Meanwhile, when William Rathbone, one of the Whig leaders, insisted that it was ‘unwise to require such a pledge from Mr. Currie’, the voices of ‘*No, no*’ created ‘*much*

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<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 March 1831.

<sup>89</sup> On the polling day, W.W. Currie was proposed by Francis Jordan and this nomination was seconded by Captain Colquitt. *Ibid.*, 21 October 1831.

*confusion*'. This demonstrates that many of the 'labouring-class' freemen present still stuck resolutely to the summoning of a Common Hall. They did not support the extension of the franchise, which suggests that the gap between the two sides of local Whigs was not reduced.

As the issue of a Common Hall would not secure support for Currie, the Whig leaders preferred to advance parliamentary reform, and the Reform Bills in particular, as the most important issue, because it would offer a broader platform of support from a large majority of local Whigs and their freeman supporters. It is assumed that many of the freemen who were unwilling to support the extension of the franchise in the mayoral elections supported the Reform Bills, because with regard to the franchise in the mayoral elections it was unclear to what extent it would be extended (or limited), whereas the Reform Bills clearly aimed to extend the franchise to £10 householders in the boroughs and, more important, allow the existing freemen and their sons and apprentices to possess the vote if they were resident in the boroughs.<sup>90</sup> The chairman, John Ewart, a Council member, offered three major reasons for supporting Currie as the Whig candidate: he was an advocate of the admission of a reporter at the monthly Council meetings, and he supported both free trade and parliamentary reform. Thomas Thornely, the failed candidate for the 1831 by-election, supported Currie, stating that:

What they wanted on this occasion, – on the most momentous crisis that ever occurred in the history of their country since any of them were born – was a man qualified to meet the exigencies of the times. (*Applause.*) The question of parliamentary reform had been frequently before the public ... but now people of England, the House of Commons, and the King, were in favour of reform ... (*Cheers.*)

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<sup>90</sup> Michael Brock, *The Great Reform Act* (London: Hutchinson, 1973), 264; John Cannon, *Parliamentary Reform, 1640-1832* (Cambridge: CUP, 1973), 209, 219, 229.

He ended his speech by emphasising that this contest was a serious battle between ‘Tory principles’ and ‘liberal principles’.<sup>91</sup>

The Council Tories and their supporters did not show as clear a political attitude as the Whigs did. Probably, they intentionally did so, because they feared that, if the Reform Bills were raised as the main issue, they would lose many votes from moderate Tories supporting the bills. As has been seen in Chapter Three,<sup>92</sup> the successful Tory candidates for the parliamentary elections between 1830 and 1831, William Ewart, J.E. Denison, and Viscount Sandon, were all in favour of the Reform Bills, and large numbers of the ‘Tory’ electors who had opposed popular radicalism in the 1810s and Catholic Emancipation in the late 1820s supported these candidates. Nevertheless, there were still many Tories in Liverpool who opposed the Reform Bills. The attitude of the Tory candidate for this mayoral election, Samuel Sandbach, towards the bills was not clear, but the Tory alderman, John Wright, who nominated him, strongly opposed them. At the meeting of the friends of Sandbach, held on 13 October 1831, they therefore emphasised that the political principles of the candidates were unimportant in this election. T.B. Horsfall, for example, maintained that ‘there was a party who tried to make this contested election a political one, but ... that was not suitable for the mayoral election’. James Heyworth also claimed that ‘in the election of chief magistrate, it was not important nor requisite to look to the political principles of the candidate’.<sup>93</sup>

In addition, the meaning and intentions of political remarks made by the friends of Sandbach were deliberately ambiguous. At their meeting, for example, Heyworth

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<sup>91</sup> *LM*, 14 October 1831.

<sup>92</sup> See 144, 201-202, 205-207 in Chapter Three.

<sup>93</sup> *LC*, 19 October 1831.

maintained that, 'These were evidently times of great excitement, where extremes of opinion meet us on the right hand and on the left, and in which it was of the highest moment to the peace and welfare of the community that we should consult means of allaying, rather than of increasing, that excitement which prevails'. On election day, while the Whigs put the emphasis on parliamentary reform, John Wright merely insisted that the Tory candidate 'had been the warm and constant friend of all those institutions which every man there belonging to the town must be as proud as he was that it was so conspicuous for'. Following him, Joshua Lace, seconding the nomination of Sandbach, stated that, 'Whatever might be the state of public agitation, they ought to elect a man who was totally unbiased'.<sup>94</sup> The friends of Sandbach and Sandbach himself did not make any remarks on the Reform Bills, the extension of the franchise in the mayoral elections, or even the summoning of a Common Hall. Knowing that there was considerable tension among local Whigs, they intentionally avoided raising a political issue which might bring the Whigs and their candidate a significant advantage in this election. Sandbach eventually defeated Currie, even though by a narrow margin.

At the mayoral elections held in the four-year period between 1828 and 1832, and in 1829 and 1831 in particular, a two-party conflict became significant again. This was related to the re-emergence of serious party rivalry at national level. Two things peculiar to the local context in Liverpool should be emphasised, however. First, the mayoral elections in this period revealed the weakness of local Whigs, which had gradually appeared in the previous period. They eagerly challenged the hegemony of local Tories in the Common Council, but they were divided on the issue of a Common Hall. On the one hand, some Whig leaders began to make efforts to gain a new town charter which

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

would extend the franchise in the mayoral elections. On the other hand, many of their freeman supporters, fearing the loss of their vote, clung to their privilege to call a Common Hall. In the 1831 mayoral election, local Whigs attempted to unite themselves by focusing on the Reform Bills as the main issue. This attempt might be quite successful, but they failed to defeat the Tory candidate. Second, many of the local Tories who were deeply involved in the mayoral elections in this period fostered their conservative attitude towards reform measures. They supported only a few of them, such as the introduction of the authorised reporter into the proceedings of the monthly Council meetings, but they avoided expressing the firm and active support for the summoning of a Common Hall, which had been demanded by them in the mid-1820s. They insisted on the importance of the maintenance of the established order and claimed that even the current system of local government produced a steady and gradual improvement in prosperity and freedom in the borough. As Chapter Three has emphasised, a sizable number of local Tories in Liverpool supported the Reform Bills. Other local Tories, however, still hesitated to step forward to support them and instead became more conservative than before. It was in the mayoral elections and, as we shall see in the following section, at public meetings that these more conservative Tories played a significant part.

### III

#### PUBLIC MEETINGS AND LIVERPUDLIAN TORIES

The public meetings held in Liverpool during the period from 1815 to 1832 reveal a

microcosm of the national picture of Tory politics. The nature of Toryism in Liverpool seen in the public meetings held in this town shifted over time. First, when a nation-wide radical movement was active in the late 1810s, local Tories were firmly united against such reformers. The Tory mayors repeatedly rejected requests by the Whig reformers to hold public meetings in support of parliamentary reform campaigns. Without the authorisation of the mayor, local Whigs had to hold their own meetings, at which Tories were not present.

In the second place, many public meetings held in Liverpool during the 1820s were characterised as cross-party gatherings. At this time, and in the mid-1820s in particular, less controversial party issues, such as Greek independence and that of the Spanish and Portuguese colonies in North and South America, provided a platform for the two local parties, Tory and Whig, to discuss them together and to reach a certain measure of agreement. The Corn Laws, which were another important issue in the period of 'Liberal' Toryism, led to a serious conflict in many regions where local Tories held political hegemony. This was not the case in Liverpool, however. The leaders of the local Tories there were mainly merchants, and most of them supported the review of the restrictions on corn imports. Nevertheless, party spirit grew again little by little towards the end of the 1820s, particularly after the establishment of Canning's administration in April 1827.

Finally, the issue of the Reform Bills had an impact on the nature of Toryism in Liverpool. During the closing years of the era of the unreformed Parliament, many requests by local Whigs to organise public meetings to discuss parliamentary reform were rejected by the town's Tory mayors, as had happened in the late 1810s. Local Tory leaders did not attend these meetings. Instead, they began to hold their own



anti-Reform-Bill public meetings. These meetings, however, were so small and uninfluential that they did not change the political atmosphere in Liverpool in which Tory MPs and many 'Tory' voters actively supported the Reform Bills. The public meetings which took place at this period revealed a high level of political partisanship, but at the same time they did demonstrate the divisive political situation faced by local Tories.

*Anti-Radical Tory Attitudes at the Public Meetings in the late 1810s*

Like many other regions, the radical reform movement had grown in Liverpool by early 1817. Reacting to it, Liverpoolian Tories developed their own loyal attitudes. In October 1816, the Tory mayor, Sir William Burton, had accepted the local Whig reformers' request to hold a public meeting at the Town Hall to consider 'the general distress of the country, and of this town in particular' and 'the best means which could be devised to alleviate them'. A mob attack on the Prince Regent on 28 January 1817, however, increased the wariness of local Tories. In February, the next Tory mayor, John Wright, rejected another request by local Whigs to hold a public meeting in order to take into consideration a pro-reform petition to Parliament. Because of this, local Whigs held their own open-air meeting, chaired by a leading Whig reformer, Colonel George Williams, in Clayton Square, on 14 February, without the authorisation of the mayor. On 10 March, a petition with 14,000 signatures, which demanded parliamentary reform, was presented to the House of Commons by the Earl of Sefton. The success of this local campaign organised by local Whigs provoked alarm among the Tories in Liverpool.<sup>95</sup>

In addition, there was another issue which prompted the development of local

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<sup>95</sup> *LM*, 18 October 1816; Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool*, I, 335.

Toryism. On 25 February, there was a general meeting of the county of Lancaster, which was held at the Court House in Preston. It was convened by the High Sheriff to consider ‘the propriety of addressing the Prince Regent on the late atrocious outrage offered to his royal person, and of expressing our ardent attachment to his Majesty’s person and government’. As the purpose of this meeting demonstrated, the outcome of the meeting ought to have been the unity of local loyalists. In spite of the aggressive argument of William Hulton, an active Tory politician of the Pitt Clubs of Bolton and of Manchester,<sup>96</sup> however, the amendment submitted by Dr. Crompton, a Liverpool Whig, was agreed. A significant portion of the amendment, including the demand of a measure of parliamentary reform, showed that:

The middling classes amongst us are impoverished by excessive taxation. The means of our master manufacturers are so lamentably diminished that they cannot find employment for their work-men, thousands of whom are suffering the extremely of famine ... [W]e anticipate those wise and practical reforms which will give additional security to our glorious constitution, revive the hopes and confidence of the country, and insure to your R[oyal] H[ighness] the love and gratitude of the people.

In addition to Dr. Crompton, there were several Whig reformers from Liverpool present at this meeting.<sup>97</sup>

The reaction of the Liverpool Tories to this event occurred quickly. The Common Council of Liverpool had already sent a loyal address to the Regent in February. Local Tories, however, decided to show their strong spirit of loyalism in the form of a public declaration. They quickly collected 3,934 signatures by the beginning of March from

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<sup>96</sup> List of Members, Resolutions of the Bolton Pitt Club, 17 May 1813; MPC records, List of the Members of the Manchester Pitt Club, 4 of May 1827.

<sup>97</sup> *LM*, 28 February and 7 March 1817.

‘the Worshipful Mayor, Merchants, Bankers, Clergy, and other respectable Inhabitants of the Town of Liverpool’. This suggests that most of the people who signed this declaration belonged to the higher social classes. The declaration, however, attempted to represent itself as the general opinion of the town, insisting that it was an outcome of ‘the united exertions of all ranks and degrees of men amongst us’. It supported ‘the direction of a wise and enlightened policy in the Executive Government’ for ‘the public peace’ and ‘our civil liberties’. It attacked the radical and Whig reformers by insisting that ‘we have beheld the mischievous arts of designing men, who have taken advantage of the prevailing distress, to disseminate amongst the people the most atrocious doctrines, under the specious form of Constitutional Principles; but which, in reality, have no other tendency or object, than the subversion of social order, and the overthrow of that unrivalled Constitution which has stood the test of ages’.<sup>98</sup>

The Tories not only opposed reform campaigns, but also suggested ‘practical’ measures to eliminate the existing distress facing the lower orders. For example, the 1817 declaration admitted the existence of an economic downturn, and supported the policy of ‘the reduction of the public expenditure’ to decrease the burden of taxes on poor people. At a public meeting, held on 18 October 1816, William Dutton insisted on the need to tackle the problem of unemployment in order ‘to mitigate the distress of the poor’, whereas, he claimed, ‘a reform in Parliament’ would have no practical effect. These actions suggest that the Tories preferred the implementation of economic or charitable measures in order to lift the poor out of poverty, rather than proposals to give them the franchise.<sup>99</sup>

Liverpool’s Tory mayors repeatedly rejected the requests of local Whig reformers

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<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 March 1817; Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool*, I, 335.

<sup>99</sup> *LM*, 18 October 1816 and 7 March 1817.

to hold public meetings in favour of parliamentary reform during the following few years. For example, on 23 August 1819, in the immediate aftermath of the 'Peterloo Massacre', local Liverpool Whigs presented a request to hold a public meeting 'vindicating those who are friendly to the constitutional measure of a reform in Parliament'. This request was rejected by the mayor, J.B. Hollinshead. Shortly afterwards, on 30 August, the Whig reformers organised an open-air meeting in Clayton Square, chaired by Colonel Williams, without the mayor's authorisation. While an address to the Regent calling for parliamentary reform was agreed, local Tories exercised vigilance in order to prevent the meeting resulting in public disorder, by deploying the Liverpool Light Horse and a large number of special constables. In September, another request by local Whigs to hold a public meeting was presented to the mayor. It aimed to enquire into the actions of the Manchester magistrates at St. Peter's Field, Manchester, following the 'Peterloo Massacre'. The request was turned down by the mayor. On 29 September, local Whigs re-launched an open-air meeting in Clayton Square, chaired by William Shepherd. They adopted an address to the Regent supported by about 10,400 signatures.<sup>100</sup>

There was also a case in 1821 when local Tories turned out at a Whig public meeting and disturbed its proceedings. Those successful petitions which had secured a large number of signatures probably heightened awareness among the Tories. In addition, a newly-elected Whig mayor, Thomas Leyland, accepted a request by local Whigs to hold a public meeting in order to show their opposition to the government's 'odious and unconstitutional' proceedings against Queen Caroline. This public meeting was held on 27 December 1820 at the Town Hall. According to the *Liverpool Mercury*,

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<sup>100</sup> Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool*, I, 356-357.

at the dinner meeting of the ‘Canning Club, or Place-hunting Association’, John Gladstone revealed a plan ‘for hiring a number of poor men to support “Church and King”’ in order to ‘obtain a forced majority, and carry a Tory address’ at the coming public meeting.<sup>101</sup> This Whig newspaper reported the situation around the Town Hall on the day of the public meeting, by describing how:

Early on Wednesday a number of shipwrights, painters, coopers, and other workmen in the employ of the members of the Canning Club, were seen taking possession, in mechanical order, of the door of the Town Hall. Some of the men were spoken to as to their object; they said they were neither King nor Government men, but their masters had ordered them to attend, and they could not quarrel with their bread!<sup>102</sup>

In view of this newspaper’s partisan politics, it is not clear to what extent this report was accurate. Other source material, however, described a remarkable degree of party rivalry at this public meeting: local Tories and local Whigs were seated facing each other, and the proceedings of the meeting ended in a disturbance.<sup>103</sup> According to the *Liverpool Mercury*, ‘the organized party’ of the Tories realised that it was difficult to gain their own address, because the address presented by Thomas Booth ended with ‘the predominance of applause’. The ‘next best thing that should be done was to break up the meeting by clamour’. Particularly in the middle of the speech of William Shepherd, who seconded Booth’s address, tumults and confusions occurred continuously on the Tory side of the bench. The mayor ordered the special constables to deal with these, but the

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<sup>101</sup> *LM*, 29 December 1820. At the ninth anniversary dinner meeting of the Canning Club, held on 21 December 1821, John Gladstone strongly opposed ‘modern or Radical Reformers’, but hesitated to attack Queen Caroline. For him, ‘this unfortunate lady’ was ‘the tool of the party’. Her immoral conduct was misrepresented. Probably, this attitude resulted from his care for George Canning, who stood by her side and left the government over the issue, the so-called Queen Caroline affair. *MP*, 1 January 1821.

<sup>102</sup> *LM*, 29 December 1820.

<sup>103</sup> For example, see Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool*, I, 375-376.

‘pressure became dangerous’. In this situation, he had to dissolve the meeting in the middle of proceedings. The *Liverpool Mercury* described how ‘Cheers for the King were called for by one party; cheers for the Queen and the People by others; and a conflict of cheers, groans and hisses terminated the meeting’.<sup>104</sup>

After this public meeting, local Tories showed their strong anti-radicalism by adopting a loyal address to the king. The address was initiated by Gladstone at the request of ministers, and was ‘extensively signed’ by prominent inhabitants of Liverpool.<sup>105</sup> At the anniversary dinner of the Canning Club in December 1820, Gladstone maintained that the ‘Address to the Throne ... coming from so respectable a body ... will, I doubt not, be productive of much good. It is by such declarations ... that loyal men become known to each other, and to the country at large’.<sup>106</sup>

The examination of the public meetings held in Liverpool in the late 1810s reveals that two-party politics were very significant in Liverpool. Political opinions expressed by local Tories in this period were strongly influenced by national politics. For local Tories as well as local Whigs, the public meetings served as one of the most important political arenas to show their political opinions and activities to local people and even to the country at large. This examination also reveals the important role of the mayors in these public meetings. Whether they accepted or rejected a request to hold a public meeting was a significant political issue. This critical political situation created by serious two-party politics did not continue into the following decade, however. Nevertheless, some important elements of two-party politics still remained at the public meetings held in these years.

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<sup>104</sup> *LM*, 29 December 1820. The mayor, Thomas Leyland, rejected a second request by the Whigs to hold a public meeting. HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, ‘Liverpool’; Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool*, I, 376.

<sup>105</sup> HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, ‘Liverpool’.

<sup>106</sup> *MP*, 1 January 1821.

*Two Types of Toryism, 'Liberal' and 'Ultra', at the Public Meetings in the 1820s*

By contrast with the late 1810s, the requests by Whigs to hold public meetings were accepted by the Tory mayors in the 1820s. The major topics of public meetings held at this period shifted from constitutional politics to matters of foreign diplomacy, the economy, and charity. These meetings supported, for example, the subscription to remove the distress of the peasants in Ireland (May 1822), a request that the Assizes being held at Lancaster should be conducted at a convenient district in south Lancashire (April 1823), the establishment of the Liverpool Apprentices and Mechanics Library (January 1824), the independence of Greece as well as of the Spanish and Portuguese colonies (February and June 1824), the opposition to the window tax (March 1825), the subscription to aid the unemployed weavers and manufactures (May 1826), and support for free trade with China and India and opposition to the monopoly of the East India Company (January 1829). Most of these meetings were held at the Town Hall of Liverpool.<sup>107</sup> As the Council Whig, W.W. Currie, admitted in 1826, Liverpool was 'in a state of profound peace; political rancour and party violence were extinct'.<sup>108</sup> This change in the political situation helped persuade local Tories to appear at public meetings. At these cross-party gatherings, both political parties, Tory and Whig, reached a certain measure of agreement on these issues.

Nevertheless, it is still important to note that local Tories delivered conflicting opinions at some public meetings in this decade. One remarkable example can be seen in a public meeting on the Corn Laws held on 8 April 1825. The Tory mayor, J.B.

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<sup>107</sup> Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool*, I, 380, 385-386, 389-390, 392-393, 398, 415; *LM*, 17 May 1822, 9 and 23 January 1824, 18 March 1825, 5 May 1826, and 30 January 1829.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 April 1825.

Hollinshead, took the chair at this meeting. As the first resolution, moved by the Council Whig, W.W. Currie, proposed that ‘this Meeting views with great satisfaction the beneficial changes now in course of adoption by his Majesty’s Government, in the Commercial Policy of the Country’, this cross-party gathering wished to express support for this ‘Liberal-Tory’ measure offered by the government. ‘Mr. Lafone’, a farmer, opposed it, however, because of its effect on the employment of the poor. He stated that ‘by the importation of foreign corn, they [labourers] were deprived of employment, there would be an overplus of labour in the market, and the poor would be involved in distress’. ‘Mr. Bryans’ also opposed the alteration, and presented an amendment maintaining that ‘the present system of corn laws’ was the best, because ‘it worked well both for the agricultural and manufacturing interests’.<sup>109</sup> According to him, Great Britain and Ireland were capable of producing sufficient corn by themselves and ‘at prices which no class, even of the manufacturing community, could by any means complain of’. Against them, the landowning Council Tory, Thomas Case, offered a counter-argument. He admitted that ‘a moderate import duty should be imposed’, but still insisted on an alteration to secure stability in the price of corn. He claimed that:

[T]he poor had been brought into their present state by the rapid changes in the price of corn, which was sometimes high, and sometimes low. Wages did not rise as the price of corn rose; and the interval was one of grievous distress to the labouring classes. The poor ... had been ground down by the operation of the corn laws. The yeomanry had been destroyed and the farmers ruined, by the rapid alterations in price which had taken place since their enactment; and the landowner had not been benefited.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> The available poll books do not show that any freeman with the name of ‘Lafone’ or ‘Bryans’ voted in the parliamentary elections in 1812, 1816, or 1818.

<sup>110</sup> At another point during this meeting, he also maintained that, ‘with the view of keeping corn at a steady price’ and ‘to keep all classes of the community supplied with corn at steady price’, he supported an alteration of the Corn Laws.



This suggests that an alteration of the Corn Laws was supported not only by Tory merchants, but also by Tory landowners in Liverpool. After Case's address, the mayor rejected the amendment provided by Bryans.<sup>111</sup>

Two other controversial public meetings were held over the evaluation of George Canning's politics: the first, in May 1827, to congratulate the king on the establishment of Canning's administration; and the second, in August the same year, to mourn his death. They were cross-party meetings, chaired by the Tory mayor, Thomas Littledale, in the Town Hall. The opening of the first meeting was requested of the mayor by a cross-party private meeting chaired by John Gladstone.<sup>112</sup> At the public meeting, Gladstone moved an address in supporting Canning's public principles, particularly regarding his positive attitude towards Catholic Emancipation and his liberal commercial system as well as his objection to foreign despotism represented by the Holy Alliance. He also attacked those Tory ex-ministers who had withdrawn from office in order to show their disagreement with Canning. This motion was seconded 'without hesitation' by William Shepherd, a close ally of the Whig, Henry Brougham. The Tory merchant, Cyrus Morrall, however, opposed the motion.<sup>113</sup> He maintained that the Tory ex-ministers should also be admired because of their support for several liberal measures: for example, the improvement in the criminal law and opposition to foreign

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 April 1825. At the 1826 meeting there was a dispute among the Whigs. Henry Booth supported the alteration, insisting that, 'The present administration was friendly to the principles of free trade generally, and ... they were particularly so with regard to corn'. He also showed his respect for William Huskisson, who, he argued, supported the 'liberal system of commercial policy'. On the other hand, Dr. Crompton insisted on the necessity for 'a total abolition of the corn laws'. In spite of these conflicting opinions at these meetings, a huge majority composed of Tories and Whigs supported the idea of altering the existing system of the Corn Laws. *Ibid.*, 17 November 1826.

<sup>112</sup> *LC*, 2 May 1827.

<sup>113</sup> According to the poll books, Cyrus Morrall cast votes for both Gascoyne and Canning from the former's bar in the parliamentary general elections of 1812 and 1818. In the 1816 by-election, he voted for Canning.

despotism. He insisted that ‘the retirement of Lord Eldon, of the Duke of Wellington, of Lord Bathurst, and of the other members of the late Government, was a subject of congratulation, connected as they were with the most brilliant period of our history’. He also stated that it was strange to see those who had opposed Canning for a long time cheer him at this meeting. His speech was generally received by the audience with ‘*Hisses, partial applause, and cries of “Hear, hear”*’, and ‘*Mixed applause and disapprobation*’. This reaction shows that parts of his audience supported his opinions while others opposed them. ‘Mr. Tinley’ also opposed Canning, by taking up an ‘Ultra-Tory’ stance.<sup>114</sup> He claimed that it was ‘the duty of every Protestant to stand up and oppose that gentleman’s [Canning’s] pretensions’ in favour of Catholic Emancipation. He opposed Canning’s commercial policy too. He maintained that ‘it had reduced the manufactures of the country to the lowest degree of depression, and was bringing down the shipping and mercantile interests in like manner’. He went on to state that Canning ‘had driven out of employ both ships and seamen without number, and was compelling the latter to resort to the service of those foreigners’. The reaction to his speech was more negative than in the case of Morrall, but there were still some members of the audience who supported him. Gladstone’s motion was eventually agreed to by a large majority. The views of Morrell and Tinley, however, show that there were some divisions in the Tory ranks.<sup>115</sup>

The reaction of the *Liverpool Courier* to the issues of Catholic Emancipation and liberal commercial policy are a good way to assess the extent to which ‘Ultra’ Toryism was popular among the Tories in Liverpool. As the most influential local Tory

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<sup>114</sup> According to the poll books, ‘Mr. Tinley’ did not vote in the 1812, 1816, or 1818 parliamentary elections.

<sup>115</sup> *LM*, 11 May 1827.

newspaper, the *Liverpool Courier* put forward its own opinions to a wide range of Tory readers. With regard to Catholic Emancipation, this Tory newspaper showed a negative attitude. It was satisfied when Canning's administration left the Catholic question as an 'open' issue, not a united cabinet one, as Liverpool's government had done. It supported the privileged position of the established Church of England. In this newspaper's opinion, Lord Eldon was 'entitled to the gratitude of every Protestant' for his firm opposition to Catholic Emancipation.<sup>116</sup> It opposed the admission of Catholics to Parliament. Over the question of the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, it maintained that:

The Catholics of this town have had a meeting to make common cause with the Protestant Dissenters, to petition Parliament for a repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts ... The history of the events which brought on the revolution of 1688, is not so forgotten by the public, nor by the Dissenters themselves, as to make this stale and threadbare pretence take. Popery will assimilate with any party, if it can assail and weaken the Protestant establishment, which is at once the best guard to the liberties of the Dissenters, and the most powerful barrier against that infusion of intolerance and bigotry into Parliament, which would give quite another character to its proceedings on all questions of religious liberty.<sup>117</sup>

In addition, at the height of the debates on Catholic Emancipation, in the early months of 1829, this newspaper published many anti-Catholic letters sent in by the public.<sup>118</sup> It also supported an anti-Catholic petition with about 33,000 signatures, which was sent to Lord Eldon in April 1829.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> *LC*, 18 and 25 April 1827.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 November 1827. Meanwhile, the *LC* displayed a lukewarm attitude towards the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. *Ibid.*, 26 March 1828.

<sup>118</sup> For example, see *ibid.*, 18 March and 8 April 1829.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 and 8 April 1829. Despite this petition, with a sizable number of signatures, the issue of

On the other hand, with regard to the country's commercial policy, the *Liverpool Courier* adopted a liberal stance. The issue of the Corn Laws is a case in point. The editorial comment supported the public meeting for an alteration of the Corn Laws which was held in Liverpool in November 1826. It stressed the importance of the principle of free trade by maintaining that:

The principle of freedom in trade is enlightened and sound; the time, and measure, and circumstances of its application is wholly a practical point, to be determined between Government and practical men ... That which connects a perfect free trade, as soon as it can be safely acted upon with sound philosophy is that it necessarily leads every nation to pursue that course of industry most easy and natural to it, and, therefore, most profitable, whether manufactures, or agriculture, or mining, or all in different proportions. The productions of skill and the soil are, in that case, varied according to that diversity which climate, capital, mental improvement, geographical relations, and geological structure, have impressed upon them; and its own peculiar branch is most advantageously pursued by every people. Some clashing of interests will always remain; but the artificial laws which have regulated trade have made it every where the subject of passion and short-sighted policy, and not of nature; and the war of interests has been, consequently, carried for beyond the necessity of the case, and has served to render commerce, which ought to unite and to blend the interests of nations, dissocializing and selfish.

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Catholic Emancipation did not result in as intense a religious cleavage in Liverpool as in other regions in Lancashire. Despite a considerable number of Irish Catholics, at 24,156 in 1833, about fifteen per cent of the whole population, Liverpool did not witness serious anti-Catholic campaigns until the post-1835 period when the Municipal Corporation Act turned the Catholics into an influential political force and the potato famine brought about the influx of Irish immigrants into Liverpool in 1845-49. In Liverpool in the early nineteenth century, strong anti-Catholicism appeared just occasionally and temporarily. See Neil Collins, *Politics and Elections in Nineteenth-Century Liverpool* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1994), 2, 3, 19-21; Neal, *Sectarian Violence*, 15-16, 30-31, 37-41; D. Ben Rees, *Local and Parliamentary Politics in Liverpool from 1800 to 1900* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1999), 6-7, 31. According to John Belchem, the estimated number of Irish Catholics in Liverpool was 4,950 in 1800, 8,244 in 1810, 11,016 in 1820, 18,900 in 1830 and 24,156 in 1833. From 1841, the census began to record the place of birth of the population. According to it, the number of Irish-born residents of Liverpool, which does not include the Liverpool-born Irish, was 49,639 in 1841, 83,813 in 1851, 83,941 in 1861, 76,761 in 1871, and 66,071 in 1891. John Belchem, *Irish, Catholic and Scouse: The History of the Liverpool-Irish, 1800-1939* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 7-8.

With the relaxation of the restrictions enhanced by the existing Corn Law system, the newspaper expected that:

The price of corn would advance in other countries, and thus afford new encouragement to its growth, and discourage and cramp their domestic manufactures, whilst it would diminish the danger upon our own agriculturists. The price of labour, also, would approach nearer an equality, and give us the full advantage of our machinery.<sup>120</sup>

These two cases suggest that, for the Tories in Liverpool, the differences between 'Liberal' and 'Ultra' were not fixed and permanent, and that the Tories could change their stance between 'Liberal' and 'Ultra' according to the nature of a particular political issue.

The two public meetings evaluating Canning's politics demonstrate that, while there was a broad political platform on which local Tories and local Whigs could reach a certain measure of agreement, there still remained some elements of a two-party division. At the meeting in May 1827, Colonel Williams pointed out the 'two strong reasons for continuing his violent opposition to him [Canning]', which were 'his determination to oppose Parliamentary Reform, and the repeal of those infernal acts, the Corporation and Test Acts'.<sup>121</sup> At the public meeting held on August 1827, the radical Whigs, such as Thomas Smith and Joseph Mitchell, opposed the project to commemorate Canning's achievements. They attacked him because he had supported an 'all-pervading system of taxation' and the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in the late 1810s. Smith's amendment to the resolution put forward at the meeting was rejected

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<sup>120</sup> *LC*, 22 November 1826.

<sup>121</sup> *LM*, 11 May 1827. The same claim was made by Edward Rushton at the public meeting held on 27 August 1827, which celebrated the life of Canning. *Ibid.*, 31 August 1827.

by a large majority, although his speech was received with ‘*some cheers*’. Some of the audience clearly supported his stance against Canning.<sup>122</sup>

On the Tory side, the *Liverpool Courier* is probably the best source for an understanding of the consistent partisanship of the Tories in the 1820s. For this newspaper, the difference between Toryism and Whiggism, rather than between ‘Liberal’ and ‘Ultra’ types of Toryism, was more important. After the public meeting summoned on Canning’s death, which was held on 27 August 1827, the *Liverpool Courier* published an editorial comment. It insisted that the most brilliant contribution of Canning to the country in general, as well as to Liverpool in particular, was his ‘patriotism and genuine constitutional principles, over the radicalism and Whig-radicalism’. As ‘the head of those who rallied round the standard of sound principles and constitutional loyalty’ in Liverpool, he fought ‘the advocates of the misleading and hollow theories’. It went on to claim that, ‘This struggle could not be forgotten in Liverpool’. It also stated that he had been consistent in political, economic, and foreign matters. His consistency had resulted from his support for ‘the principles of Mr. Pitt, being, indeed, but special applications of the same set of principles; on none of them did he symbolize with the Whig-radicals of the country’. It applied this argument to the issue of Catholic Emancipation too. It maintained that:

The same may be said of Catholic concessions, in which he differed most from his constitutional friends. He differed from them; but he differed more from the low Whigs even on this subject, and had guards and reservations, and checks, as much opposed to the nimble nonsense of their sweeping generalities as light to darkness.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> *LC*, 5 September 1827.

In a subsequent issue, this newspaper pointed out the likelihood that Canning would not have supported a far-reaching measure of Catholic Emancipation:

We have all along said, that there was an equal degree of trickery in the Whigs and Catholics, in holding up Mr. Canning as the patron and advocate of their principles and pretensions ... [Nevertheless] no bill which Mr. Canning *would* have carried, granting him the power to carry any bill, which we do not believe, could have satisfied the Catholics.<sup>124</sup>

In another editorial comment on the Pitt Clubs, the *Liverpool Courier* expressed its high hopes that various types of Tories would unite on political issues. As Chapter Two has demonstrated,<sup>125</sup> the Pitt Clubs began a severe attack against Canning when he had assumed the premiership. This newspaper, however, urged them to stop their violent attacks on Canning and the Canningites, because the Pitt Clubs and the Canningites held basic political principles in common.

We have no want of heart to Pitt principles. We think them, generally taken, the only ones on which the safety of the monarchy, and the strength and glory of the nation, can rest; but we are not bound, on this account, to applaud meetings held under the profession of Pitt principles, in which friends of that illustrious statesman [the Canningites] are attacked. Nor are we bound to be foremost in censuring them, since we agree so much with the members of those clubs, but think that some of them, from the influence of party feelings, and a combination of exciting circumstances, have got into a quarrel with men too faithful to all the leading principles of that statesman as they themselves.

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<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 November 1827.

<sup>125</sup> See 127-128 in Chapter Two.

The *Liverpool Courier* went on to argue that the Canningites were not Whig, but Tory, and that the Tories should unite on a broad political platform.

Had we indulged in the absurd notion, that Mr. Canning and Mr. Huskisson had gone over to the Whigs, we had ceased to advocate their cause; but as we never indulged in that Whig dream, we do not partake of the excitement produced by that hallucination. We regard the division among our Tory statesmen as a great evil to the country, which we have no desire to aid in perpetuating.<sup>126</sup>

The *Liverpool Courier* was fully aware of the conflicting opinions expressed by local Tories particularly about the economy and religion. It considered, however, that such disputes were created merely in a specific situation and did not mean a fundamental difference of political principles among the Tories. For this newspaper, an essential political distinction did exist between the Tories and the Whigs.

In the 1820s, there was a broad political platform on which the Whigs and the 'Liberal' Tories could cooperate. Beyond this, however, 'Ultra' Toryism developed differently and attacked some liberal measures. Nevertheless, a significant number of local Tories in Liverpool still understood politics in terms of a two-party conflict. They believed that there was a fundamental difference between Tories and Whigs, and hoped that the 'Liberal' and 'Ultra' Tories would re-unite. For them, the political principles which had developed over the struggles in the late 1810s explained why the Tories should turn their backs on a fundamental reform of the constitution. At the time of the national crisis over the Reform Bills, in the early 1830s, a re-union of the 'Liberal' and 'Ultra' Tories was attempted. It was successful, but only to a limited extent.

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<sup>126</sup> *LC*, 11 June 1828.



*Reunification of the Tories at the Public Meetings in the early 1830s*

In the early 1830s, public meetings held in Liverpool were seldom cross-party ones, and were no longer a place at which the Tories and the Whigs discussed political issues together. Each of these political parties began to hold its own separate public meeting. In these years, as in the late 1810s, the request by Whig reformers to hold public meetings, such as those to celebrate the July Revolution in France and the coronation of William IV, were again rejected by Liverpool's Tory mayors. Local Tories did not attend these unauthorised public meetings. Party-political rivalry in Liverpool was becoming more intense in this period than in the 1820s. Some local Tory leaders organised their own public meetings in order to oppose the Reform Bills. In this process, they attempted to recover their political strength.

The political tensions between local Tories and local Whigs in Liverpool were heightened over reactions to the July Revolution in France. On 5 August 1830, the Whigs sent to the mayor, Sir George Drinkwater, their request, with about 200 signatures, for a public meeting to celebrate the 'constitutional' change of the French monarchy. He, however, declined to authorise it, probably because he feared that the meeting would excite local public opinion to support the reform movement in Britain. The mayor seems to have declined to take the chair at a public meeting for the first time in eleven years, since September 1819. On 11 August 1830, the Whigs held their own meeting at the King's Arms, chaired by W.W. Currie, to 'consider of the necessary means to afford the inhabitants of Liverpool an opportunity to express their opinions with respect to the recent glorious and constitutional struggle in France'. The meeting consisted of about 100 'most respectable gentlemen'. At this meeting, the Whigs attacked the mayor and his 'bad advisers' in the Council. The *Liverpool Mercury*

claimed that ‘there is something degrading in thus soliciting any man for permission to meet publicly to express the sense of the town upon a grand question’.<sup>127</sup> On 14 August, the Whigs held their public meeting in the Music Hall with about 2,000 ‘respectable’ people attending under the chairmanship of W.W. Currie.<sup>128</sup>

In Liverpool, the Whig-initiated public meeting celebrating the July Revolution did not directly result in promoting the reform movement in Britain.<sup>129</sup> The impact of the July Revolution on the reform issue should not be overstated. This event in France, however, did prompt the *Liverpool Mercury* to declare its support for the vote by ballot in parliamentary elections. This newspaper stated that ‘the mighty revolution which has just taken place in France is to be ascribed in a great measure to the operation of the secret registry of votes’. It hoped that the system of secret voting would be introduced into Britain. It believed that under this system ‘Mr. Brougham would have been elected for Liverpool in 1812’.<sup>130</sup> This statement was echoed by a majority of the Whigs who attended a pro-reform meeting held in the Music Hall on 14 December 1830. They agreed that voting by ballot was vital to producing a fair system of representation.<sup>131</sup> This did not produce a critical division between the Whigs and the Tories in Liverpool, however. Interestingly, it seems that some local Tories did not reject the idea of the secret ballot in principle. In its editorial about this Whig-dominated meeting, the *Liverpool Courier* stated that, ‘Adopt it [the ballot] in connexion with popular suffrage, and you effect a revolution; but if the elective qualification were fixed sufficiently high, perhaps it might be safe’. For this Tory newspaper, adopting the secret ballot under

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<sup>127</sup> *LM*, 13 August 1830.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 August 1830.

<sup>129</sup> With regard to the impact of the July Revolution on the reform movement in Britain, see Roland Quinault, ‘The French Revolution of 1830 and Parliamentary Reform’, *History*, 79 (1994), 377-393.

<sup>130</sup> *LM*, 20 August 1830.

<sup>131</sup> Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool*, I, 425-426.

certain conditions might be effective in preventing the bribery and corruption occasionally seen in the mayoral and parliamentary elections. The *Liverpool Courier* insisted that ‘good reformers’ should be circumspect about the timing of reforms, particularly at a time when the radical reformers were demanding ‘sweeping changes in the elective franchise’. Nevertheless, it still supported moderate reform measures, such as extending the vote to the ‘respectable classes’, the distribution of parliamentary seats to large manufacturing towns, including Manchester, and the vote by ballot cast by ‘respectable’ constituents.<sup>132</sup>

The first Reform Bills presented to the House of Commons on 1 March 1831 prompted not only local Whig leaders, but also the Council Tories and their friends, to organise public meetings. The former quickly held several public meetings to support the passage of the bills.<sup>133</sup> The latter, while still supporting moderate reform, severely attacked the bills, claiming that they would ruin the delicate balance of the three components of the legislature, the Houses of Commons and Lords and the king, and make ‘a violent move’ towards democracy. A public letter written by ‘E.W.’ demanded that ‘a counter petition be immediately set on foot’.<sup>134</sup> On 18 March 1831, the Tories held a meeting at the Clarendon Rooms in order ‘to consider the propriety of petitioning the legislature for a modification of the reform bill now before the House of Commons’. This meeting was chaired by Cyrus Morrall, who had supported Tory ex-ministers at the public meeting held in May 1827 in order to celebrate the creation of Canning’s administration. Present were ‘highly respectable’ gentlemen, including some members of the Common Council. They unanimously approved the anti-Reform-Bill petition, but

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<sup>132</sup> *LC*, 22 December 1830.

<sup>133</sup> Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool*, I, 429; HoP, *Commons 1820-1832*, ‘Liverpool’.

<sup>134</sup> *LC*, 9 and 16 March 1831.

the number present was small, at about thirty, which indicates the unpopularity of this meeting. The anti-Reform-Bill petition was unanimously approved by those present at this meeting, however.<sup>135</sup> On the same day, another petition was adopted by the Common Council. It claimed that the English and Welsh Reform Bill should be modified, because it would interfere with the privileges of the Liverpool Corporation.<sup>136</sup> These petitions clearly show that the issue of the Reform Bills divided local Whigs from the Council Tories, rather than the local Tories at large.

Later in the year, the political tensions between local Whigs and the Council Tories in Liverpool increased. A significant event was the coronation of the new king, William IV, which was celebrated on 8 September 1831. As he supported the Reform Bills, the Whig leaders in Liverpool attempted to connect loyalism to their reform campaign. On 3 September, they held a meeting and sent to the mayor, Thomas Brancker, a request to hold a public meeting. He refused, however, because he considered that such a meeting would assume 'a party character'. This raised strong opposition from the wider public in Liverpool. At meetings, held on 5, 6, and 7 September, local Whigs and their supporters clearly showed their opposition to the mayor and the Corporation.<sup>137</sup> At the third meeting, Francis Jordan stated that 'there was in the Common Council a junta of individuals ever ready to advocate Tory principles'. Following him, J. Ashton Yates also attacked 'the Mayor, the Common Council – the leading men of the town' who opposed the Reform Bills. This attack on the Corporation was linked to the earlier opposition to George IV. At the first meeting, Egerton Smith, the editor of the *Liverpool Mercury*,

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<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 March 1831.

<sup>136</sup> Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool*, I, 427.

<sup>137</sup> The first meeting was held at the Clarendon Rooms to receive the answer of the mayor. The next one was held in Queen Square, composed of 'a very considerable assemblage of mechanics and others'. It was reported that they numbered 2,000 or 3,000. The third one was 'a general meeting of the inhabitants' in Clayton Square. The number of participants was 'at least 5,000'. *LM*, 9 September 1831.

stated that ‘the Corporation ... had given £500, and had been very enthusiastic in doing honour to the late King, who was then committing an act of the most base and flagitious nature towards his wife’. It was natural for them to compare him unfavourably with his younger brother, William IV. At the third meeting, Thomas Baines maintained that, ‘They ought to show more loyalty on this occasion than they did at the coronation of George IV, for to the latest records of English history the reign of William IV would be looked upon as one of the brightest periods of that history’. At these meetings, the new king was celebrated as ‘a reforming King’ supporting ‘a reforming ministry’ and ‘a bill for reform’. At the same meeting, Richard Yates hoped that ‘the great measure of parliamentary reform introduced during the reign of King William IV would have produced such an accession to the comfort, welfare, and prosperity of the kingdom’, and, at the first meeting, John Smith proposed a toast to ‘William the Reformer’.<sup>138</sup>

The Whigs in Liverpool organised a loyal procession on 8 September. It was joined by deputations not only of all the trades and friendly societies in Liverpool, but also of the Irish societies and the Highlanders. As at the election processions, women and ‘ladies’ in particular waved scarves and gave cheers from windows. After the procession, the Whigs organised a large ‘public meeting’ in Clayton Square. At this meeting, about 15,000 people were present. This meeting was an ‘unofficial’ public meeting, because it was not authorised by the mayor. Local Whigs, however, attempted to represent the meeting as embodying the ‘collective local opinion’ of Liverpool.<sup>139</sup>

The mayor and Corporation joined neither the procession nor the following meeting. The Common Council, however, agreed to send its own ‘loyal’ addresses to the king and queen. When the mayor, Thomas Brancker, presented the address to William

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<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 September 1831.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

IV in person at a levée on 13 September, John Ewart, leading a deputation from the meeting held after the procession, presented another address to the king. This ‘double presentation’ from Liverpool clearly shows how divided pro-reform public opinion and the Council Tories in Liverpool were over the Reform Bills.

The Council Tories and their friends attempted to counter the reform campaign initiated by local Whigs. They held a meeting at the Clarendon Rooms, on 21 November 1831, to ‘take into consideration the propriety of transmitting an address to his Majesty on the subject of reform and the present state of the country’. This meeting was significant, because it promoted the re-union of the anti-Catholic Gascoynites with the pro-Catholic Canningites to some extent. There were many anti-Catholic members of the Common Council present at this meeting, while its main speaker was the pro-Catholic Tory, John Gladstone. The chair was taken by Sir Thomas Brancker, the former mayor, who had rejected the request of the Whigs to hold a public meeting to celebrate the coronation of William IV.<sup>140</sup> This meeting helped the Tory leaders in Liverpool to develop a certain kind of conservatism. Despite its active support for pro-Reform-Bill Tory MPs, and Viscount Sandon in particular, the *Liverpool Courier*, sincerely hoping for the reunion of local Tories at large, did not oppose this meeting. Rather, it admired the ‘respectable’ gentlemen present at this meeting as a political group connected ‘by the fundamental maxim of conservation’.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> In addition to these gentlemen, the *LM* listed those present at this meeting as: John Moss, John Wright, Thomas Foster, John Bourne, Peter Bourne, William Thompson, George Grant, [George?] Irlam, [T.B.?] Horsfall, [Samuel?] Sandbach, jun., T.O. Cooper, Rev. Jonathan Brooks, Rev. Augustus Campbell, Rev. E. Hull and Rev. T. Bold. *LM*, 25 November 1831.

<sup>141</sup> *LC*, 23 November 1831. The *LC* was concerned about the ‘revolutionary tendency; not revolution itself’ of the Reform Bills. During the general election in May 1831, it was more critical of them than later in the year. It also criticised the Wellington government: ‘We blame the last Ministry for not taking the measure of reform into their own hands, in which it would, at least, have been safe’. By the time the by-election took place in Liverpool in October 1831, however, it saw public opinion broadly supporting the Reform Bills and considered it impossible to stop their passage. This is why it hoped that as many pro-reform Tory MPs as possible would be elected so that they could cope with the bills with ‘the most

The major aim of the address was to express ‘the conservative principle’ of supporting the existing British constitution in this time of danger, when ‘tumult and disorder, riot, and a disregard for the laws’ prevailed. At the same time, the address claimed that the British constitution should be preserved, but some measure of moderate reform was vital, because of ‘those defects which the lapse of time has unavoidably occasioned in the constitution of the country’. When he proposed the address, Gladstone also insisted that parliamentary reform was necessary because ‘the present state of the public feeling’ strongly advocated it. The address detailed some proposals for reform:

The representation in the House of Commons of those great towns which have so increased in wealth and population as to require especial guardians of their important local interests might, we think, be safely substituted for that of such boroughs as have sunk into decay, or have lost so much of their former importance as to leave them no fair claims to their present share in the representation; and the more general extension of the elective franchise applied upon an equitable principle, and on a scale adapted with due regard to the fair influence of property, might be conferred with advantage, and is what the present state of the country, from its great increase both in population and opulence, may justly claim.

With regard to the extension of the franchise, Gladstone opposed ‘a universal rule’ in the electoral system, which he considered the Reform Bills would establish. He supported a practical system built on the principle that the different circumstances of each constituency should be considered. He stated that ‘we are of opinion that the qualification ought to be regulated in proportion to the nature of the rents paid in the lesser and larger places, for we know that rents are universally low in small towns, and

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careful and moderate management’ in order to prevent them from producing far-reaching and destabilising effects on the representative system and the constitution. *Ibid.*, 9 March, 4 May, 22 June, and 26 October 1831.

increase as they ascend in the scale of prosperity, importance, and population'.<sup>142</sup>

This part of the address supporting reform within the existing constitution crystallised the developing 'conservative principle' in Tory ranks. Because of this, the *Liverpool Courier*, believing that the fundamental principle of conservatism was 'preservation and improvement', supported this meeting.<sup>143</sup> The political stance adopted at this meeting was shared by other Liverpoolian Tories. A letter written by 'Z', published in the *Liverpool Courier*, stated that 'in short it is only by a moderate procedure that reform in reality can be obtained', and insisted on the importance of 'the principle of universal application, *that real reform must be moderate*'. For the writer, it was 'conservative principles', including support for moderate reform, that were 'the safeguard of the constitution at the Revolution of 1688' and that 'formed the peculiarity of the English Government when it was considered the best illustration of those maxims of wise and cautious legislation which philosophy and experience had furnished'.<sup>144</sup>

Although this meeting was important in that it gave the pro-Catholic and anti-Catholic Tories a degree of unity and helped them to articulate a certain type of conservatism, there is no doubt that it was unpopular. The number of participants was only about 100, much smaller than that at pro-reform public meetings. The address adopted by this meeting secured only about 1,500 signatures.<sup>145</sup> These numbers show that this address gained less support from the inhabitants of Liverpool than the loyal address adopted in March 1817, which had collected 3,934 signatures.

The evidence in this section has established a different picture from that presented in the previous chapter. In this period between 1830 and 1832, local Tories in Liverpool

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<sup>142</sup> *LM*, 25 November 1831.

<sup>143</sup> *LC*, 26 October 1831.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 January 1832.

<sup>145</sup> This address was presented to William IV by Lord Skelmersdale on 14 December 1831. Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool*, I, 440-441.



were broadly divided into two groups. On the one hand, Tory MPs and large numbers of ‘Tory’ electors supported the Reform Bills in the parliamentary elections. On the other hand, the Council Tories and their friends, while supporting moderate reform, opposed the Reform Bills. They were involved strenuously in the organisation of anti-Reform-Bill public meetings. The *Liverpool Courier* supported both groups of local Tories. For this Tory newspaper, anti-Reform-Bill public meetings and pro-Reform-Bill Tory electoral politics provided different results based on the same conservative principles. The Council Tories and their friends, however, were very unpopular and had a limited number of supporters at the public meetings. They failed to prevent cross-party local public opinion expressing support for the Reform Bills.

#### CONCLUSION

By looking at the activities of the Tories in Liverpool in its local governance from such perspectives as Corporation politics, the mayoral elections, and public meetings, this chapter has examined the extent and the ways in which national political issues infiltrated into local politics. The analysis shows that the impact of national politics was diverse. The Common Council, when dealing with everyday local issues, was seldom influenced by national politics. Because of this, it is difficult to find the Council members regularly divided in their management of the Corporation along party lines. Nevertheless, when they considered it desirable to express their loyalism or conservatism in the late 1810s and early 1830s, and when they discussed the foundation or the basic rules of the organisation of the Common Council, party politics became

more significant. Mayoral elections and the call for public meetings, however, were influenced to a greater extent by the party political rivalry at Westminster. The intensity of party politics in the mayoral elections and over the need for public meetings fluctuated according to the situation in Parliament.

By conducting this examination, this chapter has also revealed some important aspects of Toryism in Liverpool which have not been discovered in the previous chapter. The Common Council was a fundamental base for local Toryism. Over the constitutional issues of provincial radicalism in the late 1810s and the Reform Bills of the early 1830s, it always opposed them. When some reform measures concerning the composition of the Common Council were discussed in the 1820s, they were supported by the Whigs and by some Tories on the Council, but they were defeated by a majority of Tory Councillors. The preservation of the established order was their core objective. Similar characteristics can be seen in the mayoral elections. With regard to the issue of the summoning of a Common Hall, the Whigs out-of-doors calling for it could occasionally count on the support of some liberal Council Tories and their close friends. Such a cross-party collaborative relationship, however, lasted only temporarily. When the popular political movement for reform became strong between 1829 and 1831, the Council Tories and their friends expressed a more conservative response. The analysis of public meetings has demonstrated that local Tories operated within an issue-oriented party structure. They showed collective action in order to oppose popular radicalism in the late 1810s. When constitutional issues were discussed less frequently in the mid-1820s, however, they began to reveal their divided 'Liberal' and 'Ultra' attitudes concerning religion and the economy. Nevertheless, it has been shown that such divisions were not crucial and that the differences between 'Tory' and 'Whig' attitudes

were much greater than these internal Tory divisions. Reacting against the Reform Bills, the Council Tories and their friends, regardless of their differing opinions on religion and the economy, were firmly united. They were not mere reactionaries, however. They believed that a willingness to consider moderate reform was one of the essential attributes of those who upheld 'conservative principles'. They did not regard the Reform Bills as moderate. Their political stance was not supported by a large majority of local Liverpool inhabitants or even by many 'Tory' electors, who did act together in support of the Reform Bills.

## CONCLUSION

Between 1815 and 1832, British urban communities witnessed the significant development of provincial Toryism. In large towns in Britain, and the towns examined by this thesis in particular, local Tories possessed considerable political strength. One of the devices which underpinned their political significance was the provincial press. In Bristol, Colchester, and Edinburgh, local Tories published provincial newspapers and pamphlets to express their own political views and to influence local public opinion. *Blackwood's* was a Tory magazine published in Edinburgh, but it was very successful and influential and gained readers across Britain. Clubs and societies were also an important political medium which revealed the strength of local Tories. The Pitt Clubs, the True Blue Clubs, the King and Constitution Clubs, the Brunswick Clubs, and the Orange Lodges were established widely across Britain. They offered significant rallying points for local Tories and helped them to confront their political opponents. Parliamentary elections were one of the most important political battlefields in the localities. In electoral politics in Liverpool, Bristol, and Colchester, Toryism was powerful. In these large, open, freeman boroughs, where two-party politics were significant and contested elections frequently took place, local Tories gained and retained political significance in these elections, except for a few years, with the aid of sophisticated and effective electoral organisations. In these boroughs, Tory candidates gained wide support from voters in every social section and even from the male and female non-voters. Moreover, in some areas of local politics in which the local government was deeply involved, local Tories also showed their strength. In Liverpool, the Common Council, the pivotal organisation of the local Corporation, was virtually

dominated by them. By retaining the highest offices of the town, local Tories secured considerable influence over Corporation politics, the mayoral elections, and local public meetings.

The development of provincial Toryism was greatly promoted by the increasing impact of national issues on local politics. In the period between 1815 and 1832, national politics were infiltrating so deeply and widely into the localities that two-party politics became serious in many of the urban centres. The nature and character of local politics changed along with the general trend in national politics. Despite the connection between national and local politics, however, it is also important to note that national issues were raised in the localities in a different way and to a different extent. In a particular local context, local Tories provoked diverse and flexible reactions to national politics.

In the 1810s, and during the post-war era in particular, popular radicalism grew substantially. This led to strong and organised opposition by many inhabitants in various regions in Britain. In these years, some significant characteristics of provincial Toryism were developed particularly in terms of identity and organisation. By reacting to this popular radical reform movement, local Tories developed a set of core beliefs that can be regarded as the Tory worldview. In this period, many Tory clubs and societies were established particularly in the north-west of England where popular radicalism and local Whigs were influential. They were not mere social gatherings for drinking and eating or recreational events. They were actually important meeting places where local Tories seriously discussed national and local politics. They also provided local Tories with important opportunities to express their political opinions and to take vigorous action in order to attack their political opponents. In the parliamentary elections in Liverpool,

Bristol, and Colchester, national issues were pervasive and created major conflicts. In Liverpool, the two Tory camps of the Canningites and the Gascoynites gradually strengthened their unity in order to create a coherent alliance against Whig candidates. In this period, national issues also impacted upon Corporation politics and the mayoral elections in Liverpool. The Common Council sent loyal addresses to the Regent in 1817 and 1819 in order to express its firm support for the British constitution. In the mayoral elections, the charge of 'corruption' was often made by local Whigs to attack Tory candidates, as in the parliamentary elections in this borough. In the mayoral elections in Liverpool, the local issue of when and how to summon a Common Hall became highly important. It divided local public opinion along party lines to a considerable extent. At local public meetings in this borough, a strongly anti-radical brand of Toryism clearly developed. The two local parties in Liverpool, Tory and Whig, seldom organised public meetings together. Local Whigs, who were not authorised by Tory mayors to hold pro-reform public meetings, convened their own open-air public meetings. When these two parties attended a public meeting together, serious disputes and even disorderly behaviour occurred.

The significant growth of popular radicalism generally helped local Tories to unite more firmly, whereas another important issue, Catholic Emancipation, had different consequences for the Tories outside Parliament. It created a division within the London Pitt Club and made some 'Liberal' Tory MPs, such as George Canning and Viscount Castlereagh, leave it, but it did not cause a decisive division within local Tory clubs and societies. In the elections, it did not become a major issue in Liverpool, even though the two Tory camps, the Canningites and the Gascoynites, held different opinions on it. It was one of the most important issues in Colchester and Bristol, however.

Anti-Catholicism was so strong in these two constituencies that the candidates, regardless of whether they were Tory or Whig, needed to be anti-Catholic in order to secure their parliamentary seats. In addition, despite the fact that the fear of popular radicalism prompted large numbers of local inhabitants to become more conservative, which gave local Tories an enormous advantage over electoral politics, the seats of Tory candidates were not always easily secured. In the 1820 election, for example, the popularity of R.H. Davis temporarily declined, because his financial mismanagement had harmed local trade and commerce in Bristol. To retain the seat, he needed to fulfil the various economic demands of the local inhabitants.

In the early and mid-1820s, serious two-party politics at Westminster and active popular radicalism in the country declined. Because of this considerable change in national politics, two-party rivalry in the urban centres steadily became less intense than in the 1810s. In the parliamentary elections in Liverpool, Bristol, and Colchester, and in the mayoral elections in Liverpool, contests took place less frequently. Many of the Tory clubs and societies gradually became less active. In some regions, the Tories and the Whigs supported each other. In Liverpool, William Huskisson, the 'Liberal' Tory MP for this borough, gained cross-party support because of his liberal stance on financial and commercial measures. In the 1824 mayoral election in Liverpool, some local Whigs supported the liberal Tory candidate, J.B. Hollinshead, expecting that he would call a Common Hall. The main topics of public meetings in Liverpool shifted from constitutional politics to matters of foreign diplomacy, the economy, and charity. Local Tories began to attend public meetings with local Whigs and the two groups reached a measure of cross-party agreement on these issues. At the monthly meetings of the Common Council of Liverpool in these years, national issues, or local issues related to

them, were not discussed. The Council members therefore seldom engaged in the management of the Corporation business on a party political basis.

In the context of the decline of two-party rivalry, local Tories revealed different attitudes towards some major national issues. On the issue of the abolition of slavery, the provincial Tory press in Bristol, Colchester, and Edinburgh expressed different opinions. The *Bristol Journal* completely opposed it, whereas the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* and *Blackwood's* supported the gradual and conditional emancipation of the slaves. The *Colchester Gazette* adopted the most progressive stance, supporting immediate abolition. In the parliamentary elections in Liverpool, Bristol, and Colchester, different national issues were raised. In Liverpool, the different attitude of local Tories towards the economy became clear. In the 1826 general election, for example, the issues of the Anti-Combination Acts and free trade divided local Tories. At the public meeting on the alteration of the Corn Laws, held in 1825, local Tories held conflicting opinions. There were also cases where local Tories opposed each other without differing on any particular political issue. When the two Tory camps, the Canningites and the Gascoynites, competed in the 1821 and the 1827 mayoral elections in Liverpool, many freeman electors were influenced by money rather than by strong political principles.

From the late 1820s to the early 1830s, two significant national issues, Catholic Emancipation and parliamentary reform, provoked strong reactions among local Tories. With regard to the former issue, local Tories were broadly divided, but a large majority of them opposed it. In Bristol, Colchester, and Edinburgh, a huge amount of pamphlets, books, broadsides, and other printed materials was published to support the Established Churches and the Protestant constitution. The *Bristol Journal*, the *Colchester Gazette*, and *Blackwood's* played a significant role in promoting the anti-Catholic campaign in



the localities. In the late 1820s, the existing Tory clubs and societies resumed their strenuous activity and were deeply involved in the anti-Catholic associational movement with the newly established Protestant Brunswick Clubs. By contrast, in the mayoral and parliamentary elections in Liverpool, Catholic Emancipation did not become a major issue. Strong anti-Catholic sentiment, however, was expressed at local public meetings in this borough and in the editorials of and open letters to the *Liverpool Courier*. The nationwide anti-Catholic campaign, however, failed to change the conciliatory attitude adopted by the Wellington government towards Irish Catholics. Nevertheless, even after the passage of the Catholic Emancipation bill, this issue was still significant in the parliamentary elections held in Bristol and Colchester.

On the other hand, it is worth noting that there were pro-Catholic Tories in the localities. They were a small minority of local Tories, and many of them, as shown by the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*, had been anti-Catholic until this issue became extremely critical in the late 1820s. They took less decisive political action than anti-Catholic Tories did: for example, they did not establish pro-Catholic associations. They did insist, however, that the conciliatory measure adopted by the Wellington government was necessary for expedient reasons, and they therefore changed their attitude towards the issue.

Between 1830 and 1832, parliamentary reform, and the Reform Bills in particular, also broadly divided local Tories. A majority of them opposed the bills. A large number of local Tory newspapers and pamphlets were published to express anti-Reform-Bill attitudes. In some constituencies, anti-Catholicism was linked to the opposition to the Reform Bills. R.H. Davis, for example, opposed the Irish Reform Bill, because he believed it would threaten the Protestant constitution. In the political situation in which

the king, the government led by Earl Grey, a majority of MPs, and public opinion at large supported the Reform Bills, however, these anti-Reform-Bill Tories were in a minority. The Tory clubs and societies operating in this period, while helping pro-Catholic and anti-Catholic Tories to re-unite, were small in number. In Liverpool, the Council Tories and their friends attempted to forge a political movement to oppose the Reform Bills, but failed to draw firm and wide support from the local inhabitants.

On the other hand, it is important to note that some local Tories reacted flexibly to pro-reform public opinion by actively supporting the Reform Bills. The Tory MPs in Liverpool and Colchester elected between 1830 and 1831, William Ewart, J.E. Denison, Viscount Sandon, and William Mayhew, were all in favour of them. They, and even Whig MPs in Colchester and Bristol, were, though to a different extent, supported by some of the 'Tory' electors who had opposed popular radicalism in the 1810s and had expressed an anti-Catholic attitude in the late 1820s. The *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* was one of the Tory publications which supported the passage of the Reform Bills. The *Liverpool Courier* showed a more ambivalent attitude towards this issue, but strongly supported Viscount Sandon in the 1831 by-election of Liverpool.

Between the late 1820s and the early 1830s, two-party rivalry and national issues made some impact on Corporation politics in Liverpool. In this period, four local issues related to the constitution of the Liverpool Corporation – the admission of authorised reporters, the 'Reform in Council', the Election Regulation Bill, and the summoning of a Common Hall – were raised. The first two issues were not raised under the direct influence of national politics, but the Councillors were broadly divided along party lines. The remaining two issues were influenced more clearly by national politics. Over these two issues, the extension of the franchise had implications for the national question of

parliamentary reform. Some Tories, showing flexible attitudes towards these four issues, attempted to reform the constitution of the Corporation to a modest extent, but this attempt was resisted by a large majority of the more strongly Tory Council members.

Such different reactions provoked by local Tories from 1815 to 1832 were related to significant features of party politics at this time. The Tories in the localities (and even in Parliament) were issue-oriented political associations. They were involved in political activities without any central decision-making organisation or leadership at Westminster. They engaged in politics on their own initiative and still prided their independence. This was closely connected to their scepticism or even hatred of 'party'. They actually dealt with the finances of the newspapers, clubs and societies, and election committees by themselves without the aid of the government or the national party. The London Pitt Club, the metropolitan Brunswick Club, and the British Grand Orange Lodge influenced their local counterparts, but only to a minor extent.

Despite the diversity of provincial Tory politics, however, local Tories developed their political beliefs, organisations, and actions by creating an identity and networks which connected them with each other nationally. Such a connection was forged particularly by the distribution of the printed materials and the establishment of clubs and societies. Newspaper reporting, for example, helped local Tories know what was going on in Tory politics in neighbouring and even remote regions. The Tory clubs and societies were not only a provincial meeting place for the Tories, but also helped them recognise that they were loosely connected regionally and even on a pan-British scale. Thus, although local Tories took political action on a voluntary basis, they belonged to a political association expanding nationally.

In addition, local Tories had some political views in common, even though they

adopted different, or sometimes conflicting, attitudes towards some important national issues, such as the abolition of slavery, Catholic Emancipation, and the Reform Bills. These differing attitudes were shaped, however, by a different application of the core principles of Toryism: the Tory worldview. Besides, the local Tories, in general, approved of the ‘principles of Pitt’ and ‘conservative principles’, but they sometimes used these flexibly in the local press, clubs and societies, and parliamentary elections. The ‘principles of Pitt’ could be interpreted quite widely to oppose popular radicalism and the Reform Bills and yet to accept modest reforms which would not destroy the stability of the constitution. These principles could also be used to support a Protestant constitution, while acknowledging that some concessions to Catholics might be expedient. In a similar manner, ‘conservative principles’ could be appealed to in order to oppose parliamentary reform, but occasionally could be used to support more modest reforms in order to preserve the fundamental nature of the constitution. It is worth noting, however, that, while local Tories articulated these principles for various purposes, they did not adopt the ‘principles of Fox’ or the views of distinguished Whig theorists, particularly when they attempted to justify their ideological support for Catholic Emancipation or for a more extensive parliamentary reform. They admitted that there were different ways of interpreting the ‘principles of Pitt’ or ‘conservative principles’, but they fully realised that they differed from the Whigs on principle. They were never ‘liberal’ in their politics nor ready to support expansive reforms as a matter of politics. They regarded their beliefs and ideas as based on the ‘principles of Pitt’ or on ‘conservative principles’ and saw these as very different from the ‘principles of Fox’ or the liberal political theories advanced by some Whig writers.<sup>1</sup> They wanted to

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<sup>1</sup> As seen in Chapter One (esp. 59-60), there were some cases where local Tories applied ‘the old Whig principle’ to their opposition to Catholic Emancipation. In Bristol, the anti-Catholic Dissenting minister,

conserve the existing constitution in church and state and sometimes supported modest or expedient reforms to achieve this. They feared that the reforms favoured by the Whigs would produce dangerous changes little different from the feared proposals of the popular radicals.

Putting the evidence presented by the thesis in the historiographical context of provincial Toryism or the 'popular conservatism' in this period from 1815 to 1832, there are two points to be emphasised. First, provincial Toryism needs to be interpreted as a quite robust and resilient political movement. Historians have claimed that the Tories were socially too exclusive to build a favourable relationship with the middle and working classes in the localities. This thesis has shown, however, that local Tories actually supported, and were supported by, not only the landed elite and the upper-middle classes, but also the middling and working classes and even the male and female non-voters to a certain extent. Provincial Toryism was a political movement initiated and dominated by the propertied classes, but it drew support from other classes in British society. In addition, a dominant narrative of the Tories in the early nineteenth century presented by many historians tends to emphasise their increasing unpopularity towards the end of the 1820s. It can be seen, however, that some Tories supported Catholic Emancipation, the abolition of slavery, and the Reform Bills by adopting their own principles of Toryism. Moreover, many of the local Tories who strongly opposed these issues on principle cannot be regarded simply as 'reactionaries'. They attempted to deal with these problems in their own way, but within their general worldview. They supported 'moderate', 'gradual', 'safe', and 'practical' measures for change. Over the

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William Thorpe, also relied on the late Whig theorists, such as John Locke and Algernon Sydney, to advance his argument in favour of the maintenance of the Protestant constitution. Nevertheless, these cases were very exceptional.

issue of the Reform Bills, for example, a majority of local Tories opposed them, but they did not oppose *all* plans for parliamentary reform. They actually put forward alternative ideas of moderate reform. As the *Liverpool Courier* emphasised,<sup>2</sup> the ‘conservative principle’ was composed of both ‘preservation and improvement’. Over the issue of Catholic Emancipation, local Tories considered that this question resulted from the difficulty of earning a livelihood encountered by the Catholics in Ireland. They therefore insisted that economic and philanthropic prescriptions, instead of proposals to grant political rights to them, could be much more effective ways of improving their lives and conditions.

Second, the long-term implication about the identity and organisation of provincial Toryism in the period between 1815 and 1832 for the development of Conservatism in the Victorian era need to be discussed. Historians have claimed that, under the reformed system of representation after 1832, party political identity and organisation became significant at grass-roots level in Britain. The development of party politics in the early Victorian period should not be underestimated. The new political practices, and voter registration in particular, made a massive impact on local politics: ‘Involving every voter in every constituency, the new registration system extended, rather than limited, both the regularity and the complexity of activity associated with electoral participation, and greatly intensified political awareness’.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, it can be shown that the development of the political identity and organisation of local Tories between 1815 and 1832 provided a significant springboard for local Conservative politics in the post-1832 period in many respects. Among these developments were the following three. First, as Michael Ledger-Lomas has emphasised, the cult of Pitt, while not always producing the

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<sup>2</sup> See 208 in Chapter Three.

<sup>3</sup> Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work*, 19.

same consequences, continued to play a significant part in the developing identity and policies of the Conservatives in the early Victorian era.<sup>4</sup> Second, with regard to a conservative associational culture, when local Conservatives later established and managed the Conservative Clubs and Associations, they probably drew important lessons from their involvement in the Tory clubs and societies of the pre-1832 period (and perhaps even from the Reeves' societies of the 1790s).<sup>5</sup> As in the early nineteenth century, the election clubs played a vital role at every stage of electoral politics in the post-1832 period. For example, John Phillips has revealed: 'The White Lion's activities on behalf of [Sir Richard] Vyvyan in 1832 matched their efforts for [R.H.] Davis beginning in 1812, and continued unabated during the 1830s'.<sup>6</sup> Third, with regard to political ideology, between 1815 and 1832, local Tories provided some embryonic ideas which would develop fully in the Victorian period: for example, ideas about paternal government and radical Toryism. These suggest that provincial Toryism in the period from 1815 to 1832 played a formative role in the political culture of local Conservatism

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<sup>4</sup> Michael Ledger-Lomas, 'The Character of Pitt the Younger and Party Politics, 1830-1860', *Historical Journal*, 47 (2004), 641-661.

<sup>5</sup> Some Tory clubs and societies seem to have provided a structural foundation for the Conservative Clubs and Associations. For example, the Edinburgh Conservative Association, established in May 1835, might derive from the Pitt Club of Scotland, which disbanded in the same month. After the passage of the Reform Acts, some members of this Pitt Club proposed that it should transform itself 'into the active organ of a political party and of existing statesmen'. This proposition was declined, but it is important that some members of the club discussed the establishment of a new political club just before its closure. Many of the committee members who spent one year preparing for the establishment of the Edinburgh Conservative Association were previously members of the Pitt Club of Scotland. In addition to this committee, 'an interim committee for the formation of the Association' included members of the club. The fund of the Pitt Club of Scotland may have been transferred to the Edinburgh Conservative Association. In a letter written to the Earl of Dalhousie on 2 May 1835, Alexander Maconochie proposed that 'the greater portion of our [Pitt Club's] funds should be handed over [to] a conservative club'. NRS, GD45/14/529, concerning the Dissolution of the Pitt Club of Scotland (May 1835); NRS, GD45/1/251, Notes on negotiations for forming a Conservative Association or Club in Edinburgh, June 8-26, 1835; 'Rules of the Pitt Club of Scotland, formed on 20th May, 1814; and Office-Bearers for the Year ... 1820 to ... 1821; List of Members ... 1821', (Edinburgh, s.n., 1821); NRS, GD23/6/701, Letter, Sir George Leith (hon. interim secretary) to James Grant of Bught, Inverness, informing him of resolutions adopted at a meeting at Edinburgh on 26th May 1835, for formation of 'The General Conservative Association of Scotland', and inviting his accession thereto; NRS, GD/224/582/9/19, Papers relating to the Edinburgh Conservative Club, 1834-1836; NRS, GD224/508/1/71-2, William Burn, Architect, 1832-1834.

<sup>6</sup> Phillips, *The Great Reform Bill*, 80.

which developed under the reformed system of representation in the post-1832 period.



## Appendix A

### Election Results in Liverpool, Bristol, and Colchester in 1812-1831

(T) stands for 'Tory', (W) 'Whig', and (R) 'Radical'.

#### ***General Elections***

October 1812

<i>Liverpool</i>		<i>Bristol</i>		<i>Colchester</i>	
<b>George Canning (T)</b>	<b>1,631</b>	<b>Richard Hart Davis (T)</b>	<b>2,899</b>	<b>Hart Davis (T)</b>	<b>810</b>
<b>Isaac Gascoyne (T)</b>	<b>1,532</b>	<b>Edward Protheroe (W)</b>	<b>2,429</b>	<b>Robert Thornton (T)</b>	<b>737</b>
Henry Brougham (W)	1,131	Sir Samuel Romilly (W)	1,677	Daniel W. Harvey (W)	704
Thomas Creevey (W)	1,068	Henry Hunt (R)	477		
Banastre Tarleton (W)	11				

June 1818

<i>Liverpool</i>		<i>Bristol</i>		<i>Colchester</i>	
<b>George Canning (T)</b>	<b>1,654</b>	<b>Richard Hart Davis (T)</b>	<b>3,377</b>	<b>J.B. Wildman (T)</b>	<b>613</b>
<b>Isaac Gascoyne (T)</b>	<b>1,444</b>	<b>Edward Protheroe (W)</b>	<b>2,259</b>	<b>Daniel W. Harvey (W)</b>	<b>503</b>
Earl of Sefton (W)	1,280	Hugh Duncan Baillie (W)	1,684	Peter Wright (W)	160
Arthur Heywood (W)	8				
George Williams (W)	2				
John Bolton (T)	1				
Ralph Benson (T)	1				
Sir William Barton (T)	1				
John B. Aspinall (T)	1				

March 1820

<i>Liverpool</i>		<i>Bristol</i>		<i>Colchester</i>	
<b>George Canning (T)</b>	<b>1,635</b>	<b>Henry Bright (W)</b>	<b>2,997</b>	<b>Daniel W. Harvey* (W)</b>	<b>702</b>
<b>Isaac Gascoyne (T)</b>	<b>1,532</b>	<b>Richard Hart Davis (T)</b>	<b>2,811</b>	<b>J.B. Wildman (T)</b>	<b>663</b>
Dr. Peter Crompton (W)	345	James Evan Baillie (W)	115	Sir Henry Russell, Bt. (T)	498
Thomas Leyland (W)	125				

\* Harvey's election was declared void on 30 June 1820, and then the Whig candidate Henry Baring was elected without contest on 14 July 1820.

## June 1826

<i>Liverpool</i>		<i>Bristol</i>		<i>Colchester</i>	
<b>William Huskisson (T)</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>Richard Hart Davis (T)</b>	<b>3,887</b>	<b>Sir George H. Smyth, Bt. (T)</b>	-
<b>Isaac Gascoyne (T)</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>Henry Bright (W)</b>	<b>2,315</b>	<b>Daniel W. Harvey (W)</b>	-
John Bolton (T)	21	Edward Protheroe (W)	1,873		
Frederick Gascoyne (T)	13				
John Wright (T)	3				
George Williams (W)	2				

## August 1830

<i>Liverpool</i>		<i>Bristol</i>		<i>Colchester</i>	
<b>Isaac Gascoyne (T)</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>Richard Hart Davis (T)</b>	<b>5,012</b>	<b>Daniel W. Harvey (W)</b>	<b>650</b>
<b>William Huskisson (T)</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>James Evan Baillie (W)</b>	<b>3,377</b>	<b>Andrew Spottiswoode (T)*</b>	<b>571</b>
George Williams (W)	83	Edward Protheroe, Jr. (W)	2,840	William Mayhew (T)	303
		James Acland (R)	25		

\* Spottiswoode's election was declared void on 21 March 1831.

## April-May 1831

<i>Liverpool</i>		<i>Bristol</i>		<i>Colchester</i>	
<b>William Ewart (T)</b>	<b>1,919</b>	<b>James Evan Baillie (W)</b>	-	<b>Daniel W. Harvey (W)</b>	<b>617</b>
<b>John Evelyn Denison (T)</b>	<b>1,890</b>	<b>Edward Protheroe, Jr. (W)</b>	-	<b>William Mayhew (T)</b>	<b>595</b>
Isaac Gascoyne (T)	607			Richard Sanderson (T)	524
William Rathbone (W)	-				

***By-Elections***

## Liverpool

June 1816 <sup>1</sup>	<b>George Canning (T)</b>	<b>1,280</b>
	Thomas Leyland (W)	738
February 1823 <sup>2</sup>	<b>William Huskisson (T)</b>	<b>236</b>
	William Molyneux, Visct. Molyneux (W)	31
	Dr. Peter Crompton (W)	-
February 1828 <sup>3</sup>	<b>William Huskisson (T)</b>	-

<sup>1</sup> It was the re-election after Canning had been appointed to office.

<sup>2</sup> This by-election took place after Canning had been appointed to office and he had left Liverpool.

November 1830 <sup>4</sup>	<b>William Ewart (T)</b>	<b>2,186</b>
	John Evelyn Denison (T)	2,149
October 1831 <sup>5</sup>	<b>Dudley Ryder, Viscount Sandon (T)</b>	<b>1,519</b>
	Thomas Thornely (R)	670

## Bristol

July 1812 <sup>6</sup>	<b>Richard Hart Davis (T)</b>	<b>1,907</b>
	Henry Hunt (R)	235

## Colchester

June 1812 <sup>7</sup>	<b>Hart Davis (T)</b>	-
March 1817 <sup>8</sup>	<b>Sir William Burroughs, Bt. (T)</b>	-
February 1818 <sup>9</sup>	<b>James Beckford Wildman (T)</b>	<b>274</b>
	Daniel Whittle Harvey (W)	182
April 1829 <sup>10</sup>	<b>Richard Sanderson (T)</b>	-
April 1831 <sup>11</sup>	<b>William Mayhew (W)</b>	<b>604</b>
	Sir William Curtis, Bt. (T)	490

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<sup>3</sup> Huskisson was appointed Colonel Secretary.

<sup>4</sup> After the death of Huskisson, this by-election took place. Ewart was elected, but the election was declared void on 23 March 1831. No writ was issued before the dissolution.

<sup>5</sup> This by-election took place because Denison had chosen to sit for Nottinghamshire.

<sup>6</sup> This by-election took place after Charles Bragge (also called Bragge Bathurst) had been appointed to office.

<sup>7</sup> This by-election took place after Richard Hart Davis had vacated his seat. He was elected an MP for Bristol in July 1812.

<sup>8</sup> This by-election took place after Robert Thornton had vacated his seat. He would never be an MP for any constituency.

<sup>9</sup> This by-election took place after Hart Davis had vacated his seat. He would never be an MP for any constituency later.

<sup>10</sup> This by-election took place after Sir George Henry Smyth had vacated his seat because he had been disappointed with the passage of the Catholic Emancipation bill. He would be elected as an MP for Colchester again in 1835, and continued that political career until January 1850.

<sup>11</sup> This by-election took place because Andrew Spottiswoode's election had been declared void on 21 March 1831. The 1831 general election happened just after this by-election.

## Appendix B

### Liverpool Mayors and Bailiffs, 1815-1832

In the years in boldface, the contested elections took place.

1815–16

- Mayor – Sir William Barton (T)
- Bailiffs – Richard Bullen (W), and J.B. Hollinshead (T)

1816–17

- Mayor – John Wright (T)
- Bailiffs –George Drinkwater (T) and J.D. Case (T)

**1817–18**

- Mayor – Thomas Case (T), who defeated J.B. Hollinshead (T)
- Bailiffs – Richard Golightly (T) and William Wallace Currie (W)

**1818–19**

- Mayor – Jonathan Blundell Hollinshead (T), who defeated Charles Lawrence (W)
- Bailiffs –William Molyneux (T) and Nicholas Robinson (T)

**1819–20**

- Mayor – Sir John Tobin (T), who defeated Thomas Leyland (W)
- Bailiffs – Thomas Corrie (T) and William Earle, Jun. (W)

**1820–21**

- Mayor – Thomas Leyland (W), who defeated John Wright (T)
- Bailiffs – R. Golightly (T) and T. Littledale (T)

**1821–22**

- Mayor – Richard Bullin (T), who defeated William Molyneux (T)
- Bailiffs – Peter Bourne (T) and Charles Pole (T)

1822–23

- Mayor – William Molyneux (T)
- Bailiffs –John Shaw Leigh (T) and Richard Dawson (T)

1823–24

- Mayor – Charles Lawrence (W)
- Bailiffs – William Earle junior (W) and William Wallace Currie (W)

**1824–25**

- Mayor – Jonathan Blundell Hollinshead (T), who defeated John Wright (T)
- Bailiffs – William Ripley (T) and Thomas Brancker (T)

1825–26

- Mayor – Peter Bourne (T)
- Bailiffs – George Rowe (T) and Henry Moss (T)

**1826–27**

- Mayor – Thomas Littledale (T), who defeated George Drinkwater (T)
- Bailiffs – Thomas Branker (T) and John Ewart (W)

**1827–28**

- Mayor – Thomas Colley Porter (T), who defeated Nicholas Robinson (T)
- Bailiffs – Richard Leyland (T) and Samuel Thompson (W)

1828–29

- Mayor – Nicholas Robinson (T)
- Bailiffs – Samuel Sandbach (T) and Mr. R.B.B. Hollinshead (T)

**1829–30**

- Mayor – Sir George Drinkwater (T), who defeated W.W. Currie (W)
- Bailiffs – Charles Horsfall (T) and Richard Houghton (T)

1830–31

- Mayor – Sir Thomas Branker (T)
- Bailiffs – Thomas Foster (T) and Anthony Molyneux (T)

**1831–32**

- Mayor – Samuel Sandbach (T), who defeated W.W. Currie (W)
- Bailiffs – Thomas Shaw (T) and Henry Ashton (?)

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