
THE TEXTURE OF CONTENTION IN BRITAIN, 1828-1829

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Briefing Paper No. 10

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9. "Enumerating and Coding Contentious Gatherings in Nineteenth-Century Britain," by Charles Tilly and R.A. Schweitzer, February 1980: issued as CRSO Working Paper #210.

10. "The Texture of Contention in Britain, 1828-1829," by R.A. Schweitzer, Charles Tilly, and John Boyd, April 1980; issued as CRSO Working Paper #211.

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THE FINE GRAIN OF BRITISH CONTENTION

"It was because England had a bloody revolution in the seventeenth century," Keith Thomas has written,

> that she escaped one in the nineteenth. It is true that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the classes in possession of political power always managed to yield before it was too late. But sometimes they cut it very fine. Much evidence can be accumulated to show the intensity of democratic agitation and revolutionary feeling in working-class England, especially between 1790 and 1822. These were years of underground conspiracy, harsh political repression, the suspension of many civil rights, and much popular demonstration. Although most working-class reformers saw themselves as reasserting traditional liberties in the face of upper-class reaction, there was also a small nucleus of revolutionaries who hoped for a coup d' état and a proletarian insurrection. The years 1831-1832, when the Reform Bills were at stake, can be plausibly regarded as a revolutionary crisis, held in check by the "constitutional" element among the reformers and averted in the nick of time by the surrender of the king and lords to extraparliamentary pressure. "We were within a moment of general rebellion," wrote Francis Place, the organizer of reform (Thomas 1978: 70).

The period around 1830, then, brought a crest of conflict and of demands for change in Britain. Keith Thomas is far from alone in thinking so.

After the French Revolution of July, 1830, Francis Place himself spoke the language of revolution -- at least when it served his purpose. At the start of November 1830, he wrote to Joseph Hume:

> There must be a radical change, not a sham reform but a radical change

> from the top to the bottom, and this you may if you please call a Revolution. The whole scheme of our Government is essentially corrupt, and no corrupt system ever yet reformed itself. Our System could not reform itself if it would. Take away the corruption and nothing remains. His Dukeship and his coadjutors know this as well as I do, but they think they can continue to cajole the people. Catholic Emancipation was to appease them. Repeal of Taxes on Beer and on Leather was to satisfy them . . . But we are told; if all concession be refused the people will become outrageous, and no one can tell what may follow. Yes, I think any one can tell. There will be much grumbling and meeting and petitioning will follow. They will become more and more dissatisfied, and in time they will use force and after a while they will triumph. This is inevitable (British Library, ADD. MS. 35148, Place Papers, vol. LXXIX, Place to Hume, 1 Nov 30).

Although Francis Place was eventually to take his distance from the Mob and its methods, he knew what he was talking about in 1830. Over the next two years of agitation for reform, he was to show himself a skilled broker and manipulator of popular demands for change. And for the last few decades, he had been a close observer, and sometime organizer, of popular contention. He knew that the ordinary people of Britain readily took up the cudgels for their own rights and interests.

They did. Well outside the arenas of Reform and national politics, the British people of the 1820s and 1830s kept up a continuous cadence of demands, protests, and struggles for advantage. It is illuminating to place the great national contests over Reform, Catholic Emancipation and other issues in the context of everyday contention. It is illuminating because the juxtaposition of the mundane and the extraordinary struggles of the time demonstrates a

certain order in the events which authorities, like subsequent historians, were inclined to dismiss as "riot". It is illuminating because the juxtaposition reveals some continuity between great events and small. It is illuminating, finally, because the close study of everyday conflicts provides a means of tracing the rise and fall of issues which exercised ordinary people, but which did not always find pamphleteers and memorialists to articulate what was at stake.

Some long-forgotten events of January, 1828 illustrate what one can learn about the small-scale contention of the time. The Grantham Bankers' Brawl, for example. In its time, the brawl stirred up a section of Lincolnshire, and even attracted the attention of England's national newspapers. The "bankers" were not financiers, but laborers who worked on the banks, levees and dykes of the Ancholme River; they also went by the name of "dykers". They were a mobile lot, with a reputation for drinking, brawling and thievery.

A little over 150 years ago, a large group of bankers gathered at Grantham, near Lincoln, for the funeral of a fellow-worker. It was Friday, the 18th of January 1828. Four days before, on Monday the 14th, two of their number had been committed to Kirton Gaol for a riot at the Crown Inn. Word had been going round that the dykers were planning to revenge themselves on the local constables for the two arrests. No doubt the perfidy of the constables was one of the main topics of conversation during, and especially after, the funeral, when the workers went to drink away their grief. Worried about what was to come, the Grantham constable called up the town's special constables -- the farmers deputized for just such occasions -- and lodged them in private rooms of the pub where the dykers were drinking.

Not long after, according to the Morning Chronicle of 26 January, the workmen staged a sham fight, then turned it into an attack on the constables.

"Hedge-stakes, rails, and iron-bars, torn from the windows," reports the Chronicle,

> were hurled with the most dreadful imprecations upon the heads and persons of the constables; they, in return, repelled the riotous assailants for an hour with their staves only, but as the night grew very dark, the horrid yells and overpowering numbers of the bankers so intimidated some of the defendants, that it became necessary to fire a pistol over their heads, in the hope that the certain knowledge of fire-arms being possessed would check their fury. The cry of 'Murder the constables, they have only powder,' and an immediate violent rush inside and outside the house, obliged someone to load his pistol and defend his person. A small slug entered the side of one man, whose unfortunate situation immediately engaged the attention of his rioting companions; and from that time, with the exception of a few random blows with cudgels, the tumult subsided.

Mr. Gunning, the local surgeon, took over the care of the black-and-blue citizen-policemen, as "nearly fifty" of the dykers fled the area. Next morning the magistrates sent to Brigg for a detachment of troops, whose arrival put Grantham back under control of the authorities (Morning Chronicle 24 Jan. 1828, 26 Jan. 1828; Times [of London] 26 Jan. 1828; Annual Register 1828:9).

Measured against national politics or the history of the working class, the affray of Grantham was a trivial affair. Yet it tells us something about the small-scale conflicts of the time: the prominence of the pub, the importance to workmen of ceremonies such as the funeral (not to mention the collective drinking which so regularly followed the ceremonies), the involvement of nonprofessional civilian forces in the maintenance of public

order, and so on through the details of the story. The little event in Grantham gives us an impression of the day-to-day contention of the time.

Consider another example. Three days after the bankers' brawl, citizens of the fishing towns of Chatham, Rochester and vicinity, in Kent, gathered in the large room of the Sun Tavern, Chatham, to discuss the distress of their neighbors in Queenborough. The mayor and council of Queenborough were enforcing an 1820 by-law so rigorously -- "arbitrarily", said several of the speakers at the meeting -- that the local oystermen were out of work and on their way to starvation. Witness after witness testified to the self-seeking cruelty of Queenborough's Mayor Greet in this and other regards. "I speak here," said Queenborough fisherman Edward Skey,

> Where the nature of oyster fisheries is well known and the advantage of their management for the common good is felt. I ask you how your fishery could go on if you had anyone over you who had the power or inclination to say to you, 'You shall only put your nets over in such a manner, and at such times as I please'? How could your commerce go on if any man was over you who would say to the captains whose ships frequent your waters, 'You shall not anchor here, unless you employ the men I please to point out to you. You shall not be freighted here unless I permit you; only such vessels as I please shall carry your goods to town.' (Hear, Hear.) Not only on board we hear this, but on shore. What can be done in a town where a man can say, 'Your house is an eye-sore to me; I will not give it a licence,' and shut it up? Which of you would advance your capital there? (Hear.) There are individuals who would advance their principal there, but they are afraid. What we seek is not charity, but work (Times, 24 January 1828).

The discussion and testimony continued in this vein. Considering the

bitterness of the indictment against the municipal officers of Queenborough, the outcome was mild: a resolution calling for aid to the poor residents of the parish, and a subscription opened in their behalf (see also Morning Chronicle 24 January 1828).

The indignant meeting in Chatham adds something to our understanding of nineteenth-century British contention. In the 1820s, an extremely common way of organizing around a public concern -- probably more common, relative to other means of action, than today -- was to announce an open meeting of all citizens interested in the problem, to hear a series of informed speakers, to debate the possible means of action, to pass a resolution giving the sense of the meeting, then to undertake some action agreeable to most people present. A subscription was only one possible action; other possibilities included the framing of a petition to the authorities, the sending of a delegation, the mounting of a new association, the initiation of a lawsuit, and so on through a whole repertoire of actions. That is what Francis Place meant by "grumbling, meeting, and petitioning".

In the case of Chatham and Rochester, the proceedings were angry but decorous. The decorum distinguished the meeting at Chatham's Sun Tavern from the earlier set-to at Grantham's Crown Tavern. Other meetings ended up looking more like brawls, especially when a group of opponents arrived to interrupt the movement toward a resolution or a petition. Nevertheless, the participants typically did what they could to silence or expel the malcontents, and then to get on with the main business of the meeting. They knew their agenda.

Not that every angry gathering involved a well-defined body of citizens, or an agenda set in advance. A few weeks after the Grantham and Chatham affairs, a crowd assembled at Union Hall, London, to await the hearing of some

tavern-keepers who were being prosecuted for serving drink illegally. The crowd was sympathetic with the "licensed victuallers" and hostile to Johnson, the informer who had sworn out the complaints. In fact, Johnson had failed to appear at an earlier hearing out of fear "of personal violence towards him by the mob that assembled in front of the office on that occasion" (Morning Chronicle, 14 February 1828). He was right to be afraid; this time when he arrived late, "apparently labouring under great agitation and alarm,"

> He said, that he had been shamefully treated by the mob. 'I was thrown down (said he) into the mud, and when down, was kicked in a most cowardly manner; my clothes are covered with mire, and in fact my life has been placed in jeopardy.' Johnson added, that he had subsequently found his witness, but when he ventured to approach the office, he met with a reception, that was quite enough to deter even a bolder and stronger man than he pretended to be, to encounter it a second time (Morning Chronicle, 14 February 1828).

London crowds, in short, knew how to take direct action in support of their sympathies.

SMALL SCALE MOBILIZATION

Although the year 1828 had its daily conflicts, it was not an especially turbulent year. Local struggles continued at roughly the same pace into 1829. About a year after the Grantham incident, for example, the Morning Chronicle printed an account (conveniently lifted from the Leeds Mercury) of a boxing match fought in a field near the crossroads of Bramham Moor. At the time, such matches were a popular entertainment throughout Britain. Spectators would form a ring around the combatants, who fought free style -- punching and kicking until one was eliminated by unconsciousness or death. At Bramham, the local magistrate, William Markham, had decided to put an end

to the matches; the crowds involved often damaged local property. Mr. Markham

> . . . entered the ring, attended only by his bailiff George King, with a degree of intrepidity which reflects the highest honour upon his personal courage, though the discretion of venturing into such an assembly, unsupported by a strong body of police-officers, may be doubted.

Markham made an attempt to stop the fighters:

> 'My lads, this fight shall not go on--I am a magistrate of the West Riding, and am come to stop it.' This was said loud enough to be heard by those to who it was addressed, but they did not desist. He then held up a stick which he had in his hand, and said, 'In the King's name I command you to disperse, and return every one peaceably to your own home.' (January 13, 1829)

The crowd, of some 1500 to 2000 persons, began cries of "Down him!" and "Knock him down!" The seconds and other ring attendants began to use abusive language and threats. Remaining persistent, Markham was finally struck by a tall man. A general attack on Markham followed. While making his escape, the magistrate was struck with bludgeons on the head and had his hand severely cut. Upon completion of the fight, which lasted some sixty rounds, the victors returned to Leeds by coach. There they were arrested by the chief constable, who had been informed of the late outrages upon the magistrate. A number of other persons were finally taken into custody and bound over for trial at the York Assizes.

This sort of event, while not uncommon for the period, does point out some of the problems faced by local peace-officers later in 1829 and again in 1830, during the famous "Swing Riots". Such items as insufficient police/constabulary forces and the unwillingness of local inhabitants to obey the magistrate when their goals were in conflict are only two of the recurring themes that later reappeared.

Four days later, on January 10th, the Times reports that at Cheltenham in

Gloucester, the Assembly rooms were "numerously and respectably" filled by inhabitants to consider petitioning Parliament for repeal of House and Window Duties. The chairman, T. Gray Esq., stated that the people gathered did not wish to stop bearing their full share of paying for the administration of government, but they thought it time that "some mitigation of taxation...be considered." The speaker went on to say that "...we cannot help thinking that after fourteen years of peace, and now when returns of the revenue again exhibit so gratifying a result, we have a reasonable ground to claim some exemption from those dead weights upon our property of which we now complain." A petition was proposed and read, expressing "surprise and regret" over the continuing duties on windows. After other speeches, a proposal was put from the chair concerning the adoption of the petition, which having been proposed was agreed to without a dissenting voice. It was then ordered that the petition should lie on the table in the assembly hall for signatures until the opening of the next session of Parliament.

While this meeting is not a major national event, it does serve to illustrate the point that many citizens were concerned over the state of a growing national government that they could not control. One way to influence decision-making on the national level was by petitioning Parliament. This strategy becomes clear when we note that the majority of all contentious gatherings enumerated are petition meetings. (We will define what we mean by a "contentious gathering" with care later on; for the moment, it will do to imagine an occasion on which a number of people gathered, and aimed demands complaints and other sorts of claims, by word or deed, at other people.) Many of these are organized more on the scale of a national issue, such as the repeal of the Test & Corporation Acts or Catholic Emancipation.

The January 12, 1829 edition of the London Times reports a strike-related incident which occurred in Norwich, Norfolk:

> A large body of weavers paraded the streets on Monday, with three persons tied into a donkey-cart, with a label purporting them to have taken work under price. They were continually hooted, and all kinds of filth thrown at them by the persons who accompanied the cart. We understand another person was taken out of his loom in his shirt-sleeves, and carried some distance.--Norwich Mercury.

The most fascinating aspect of this event is the type of punishment inflicted on the hapless weavers by their angry fellow-tradesmen. The forced journey by donkey-cart will be recognized as "rough music," a form of collective action in which public ridicule, sometimes combined with physical abuse, was used to chastise individuals who had somehow offended the community* Previous to the 19th century, offenses punishable by "rough music" had tended to be of a moral nature, i.e., an old man marrying a young woman; but the central issue in the Norwich weavers' parade was clearly a labor dispute. For this reason, the event serves to illustrate a transitional phase in the evolution of collective issues and actions. The Norwich weavers have taken a step away from older forms of collective action, and have moved a step closer to such modern forms of collectivity as the strike and street demonstration that would become accepted later in the century.

LARGE SCALE MOBILIZATION

The six events of early 1828 and '29 were small, and without any durable consequences. There were, however, many other gatherings that dealt directly with the period's great issues; the repeal of the Test & Corporation Acts, Catholic Emancipation and important labor conflicts such as the Coventry weavers' wage disputes.

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*See Thompson, 1972.

On February 21, 1828, Lord John Russell brought forward a motion in Parliament to repeal the Test & Corporation Acts. These acts had, over the years, compounded to bar religious dissenters from enjoying equal rights within the eyes of the law. On February 26th a Parliamentary Committee of the Whole was formed to consider the repeal. The final bill, with amendments, was agreed to by Commons on May 2nd and received the royal assent on May 9th.

Beginning in the early days of February and continuing throughout the debate on the proposed repeal in March and April, Parliament was inundated by a steady stream of petitions requesting repeal. During this time, numerous meetings were convened throughout Britain for the purpose of drafting petitions to Lords and Commons. The counties with the highest number of meetings were Middlesex, with 33, and the West Riding of Yorkshire, with 11.

It should be noted that the majority of counties participated in this petition-meeting movement. Most of these meetings were organized by various Protestant dissenting groups, who would obviously be motivated to secure repeal. An example of such a meeting is one which was held at the King's Head Tavern in the Poultry, London, on February 4, 1828. The participants were members of the "Committee appointed to conduct the application to Parliament for the repeal of the Corporation and Tests Acts." The committee consisted of "deputies" from several congregations of Presbyterian, Independent, and Baptist dissenters, along with a deputation of dissenting ministers and others representing various interested groups. The committee resolved as follows:

> "--That we hail with high gratification the nearly unanimous determination of the Corporation of the City of London, founded upon their resolutions of May last, to petition both Houses of Parliament for the Repeal of the Corporation and Test acts, which are at the same time an unnecessary and impolite restriction both upon the prerogative of the Crown and the privileges of corporate bodies, and an intolerable grievance, and an unmerited stigma on Protestant Dissenters." Morning Chronicle, February 6, 1828

Table one below is designed to show the large extent of mobilization

over the Test & Corporation Acts repeal bill. It first lists all the counties of Great Britain. Next are presented the number of meetings that favored repeal held in each county. Following that are the total amount of all gatherings that we noted from the searching of our sources. We have developed the term "contentious gathering" to define these cases. The third column notes information on the relative weight of the repeal issue in each county by giving the rate of gatherings per 100 thousand population.

Overall, in Britain, the repeal issue is quite important; nearly 29% of all gatherings recorded for the year 1828 were related to the Test & Corporation Acts. Similarly, if we look at the total number of petitions presented to Parliament for the year (session February through July) we see that of 4,579, 26% concerned the Repeal Bill. Using this method, when we look ahead to 1829, we can see the dramatic increase in the importance of the Catholic question. Almost exactly the same number of petitions were presented the following year (4,542), but the total percent of Catholic-related petitions rose to nearly 70%. Most of these were against concessions to the Catholics. There were also some 260 gatherings over that issue in 1829.

The Catholic situation became heightened by the election of Daniel O'Connell to an Irish seat in Parliament. O'Connell was a Catholic and therefore unable to hold office under current law. Prime Minister Wellington saw the gravity of the crisis and decided to try to undertake a change in the status of Catholics by allowing the papists more rights, thinking this would reduce the harsh reaction of the Irish if O'Connell was not allowed to take his seat in Commons. The King was convinced to allow discussion of the issue within the cabinet. Robert Peel was drafted to bring up the bill in Commons. With a great deal of favorable petitioning coming from the Irish, the British Protestants began a movement based on the highly organized Irish Catholic

TABLE 1
TEST AND CORPORATION ACTS CONTENTION

Total Contentious Gatherings per County, Test & Corporation Contentious Gatherings per county and their rate per one hundred thousand people. Great Britain 1828.

England	T&C Meetings	Total CG's	T&C Meetings per 100ths population
1. Bedford	0	1	.00
2. Berkshire	2	10	1.38
3. Buckingham	3	6	2.06
4. Cambridge	1	4	.70
5. Cheshire	0	11	.00
6. Cornwall	3	4	1.00
7. Cumberland	0	3	.00
8. Derby	6	7	2.54
9. Devonshire	8	16	1.62
10. Dorset	3	16	1.89
11. Durham	0	3	.00
12. Essex	9	13	2.84
13. Gloucester	6	9	1.55
14. Hampshire	2	13	.64
15. Hereford	0	0	.00
16. Hertford	0	0	.00
17. Huntington	1	2	1.89
18. Kent	3	24	.63
19. Lancashire	9	38	.67
20. Leicester	3	6	1.52
21. Lincoln	4	5	1.26
22. Middlesex	33	217	2.43
23. Monmouth	1	6	1.02
24. Norfolk	1	4	.26
25. Northampton	0	8	.00
26. Northumberland	9	16	4.04
27. Nottingham	2	4	.89
28 Oxford	0	2	.00
29. Rutland	0	0	.00
30. Shropshire	2	5	.90
31. Somerset	5	5	1.24
32. Stafford	2	3	.49
33. Suffolk	4	12	1.35
34 Surrey	4	11	.83
35. Sussex	5	8	1.84
36. Warwick	2	8	.59
37. Westmorland	0	0	.00
38. Wiltshire	8	8	3.33
39. Worcestershire	2	9	.95
40. Yorkshire: East Riding	1	4	.59
41. Yorkshire: North Riding	4	5	2.11
42. Yorkshire: West Riding	11	29	1.13

TEST AND CORPORATION ACTS
Contentious Gatherings per County 1828, Great Britain

Wales	T&C Meetings	Total CG's	T&C Meetings per 100ths population
43. Anglesey	1	1	2.07
44. Brecknock	0	0	0
45. Caernarvon	0	1	0
46. Cardigan	1	1	1.55
47. Carmarthen	0	0	0
48. Denbigh	1	3	1.21
49. Flint	1	1	1.66
50. Glamorgan	5	5	3.96
51. Merioneth	0	0	0
52. Montgomery	0	0	0
53. Pembroke	8	8	9.89
54. Radnor	0	1	0
Scotland			
55. Aberdeen	0	1	0
56. Angus/~~Forfar~~	0	2	0
57. Argyll	0	0	0
58. Ayrshire	0	0	0
59. Banffshire	0	0	0
60. Berwick	0	0	0
61. Buteshire	0	0	0
62. Caithness	0	0	0
63. Clackmannan	0	0	0
64. Dumfries	1	2	1.36
65. Dunbarton	0	0	0
66. East Lothian	0	1	0
67. Fifeshire	0	0	0
68. Inverness	0	1	0
69. Kincardine	0	0	0
70. Kinross	0	0	0
71. Kirkcudbright	0	0	0
72. Lanarkshire	2	2	0.63
73. Midlothian	3	9	1.37
74. Morayshire	0	0	0
75. Nairnshire	0	0	0
76. Orkney & Shetland	0	0	0
77. Peebles	0	0	0
78. Perth	1	1	0.70
79. Renfrew	0	0	0
80. Ross & Cromarty	0	0	0
81. Roxburgh	0	0	0
82. Selkirk	0	0	0
83. Shetland	0	0	0
84. Stirling	0	0	0
85. Sutherland	0	0	0
86. West Lothian & Linlithgow	0	0	0
87. Wigtown	0	0	0

Association. Their idea was to organize, meet and petition against the bill. At the head of this movement were the infamous Brunswick Clubs. Their largest gathering was in October of 1828, in Kent, on the heath near Maidstone. Accounts differ, but it is estimated that over 20,000 persons attended. While there was some opposition from radical Catholics and reformers Cobbett and Henry Hunt, an anti-Catholic petition was agreed upon and presented to Parliament. While this gathering was atypical of the majority, one staged at Sheffield on February 18th, 1829, illustrates both the more common characteristics and the emotions of the townspeople during this turbulent time. The Morning Chronicle of February 20th reports that:

> Wednesday, a Meeting of the Inhabitants of Sheffield took place at the Sessions House, for the purpose of Petitioning his Majesty and both Houses of Parliament against the admission of Catholics to legislative and political power. The Meeting caused much commotion in the town, as the majority of the inhabitants were on the liberal side of the question; they had convened a Meeting in favour of civil and religious liberty on the same day, but the collision of the conflicting parties, it was supposed, might cause a disturbance, and the Protestant Meeting was, therefore, postponed till Friday. The Rev. G. Chandler took the Chair.

Common Britons were clearly divided, as the article shows. They were also getting used to mobilizing over national issues. If nothing else, the organizational efforts around Test & Corporation and Catholic Emancipation gave people a prototypical set of circumstances on which to build when the issue of reform arose in late 1830.

Britain also experienced serious conflicts which did not involve Parliament as directly. Labor problems accounted for a significant number of gatherings during 1829. One illustration of labor-related collective action is the wage dispute between journeyman weavers and manufacturers in the Coventry area. Coventry, a commercial town in the county of Warwick, is located at the center

of Great Britain. Coventry weavers had long been noted for their expertise in ribbon-weaving. A large number of manufacturers had established shops in town, and employed journeymen both from Coventry and from the smaller neighboring villages. In spite of their reputation for producing excellent cloth, local manufacturers in the late 1820's were finding it difficult to compete with imported merchandise, which could be sold cheaply due to low labor costs abroad. Another economic factor was the engine-loom, a recent development in weaving. It was a device on which four or five ribbons could be woven at once. Engine-loom operators received twice the normal wage for producing four times as much as hand-loom operators. Thus, the value of labor was greatly reduced while the stock-pile of surplus merchandise grew steadily higher.

Manufacturers attempted to recover their losses by subjecting their employees to a series of wage reductions. Economic hardship among the weavers reached a crisis during the early months of 1829, when journeyman weavers petitioned Parliament for control of imported goods. In May, weavers began to organize and resolved not to accept the offered wage, to collect a strike fund, and to inform others in the area of their actions and ask for support.

The summer months passed calmly; however after the second wage reduction in six weeks, the weavers turned out in protest on September 15th. They drew up their own price list and many manufacturers agreed to it. One who didn't had his country house attacked by an angry mob.

> "... the country residence of Mr. R. Woodcock, situate at the bottom of Hershallcommon, one mile a half from Coventry; hither they repaired; but that gentlemen not appearing, they commenced operations on his garden, destroying the trees, overturned a beehive, threw about the fruit, and then smashed the windows in the house." London Times 09-09-1829

Other mobs took control of the bridges leading into the town and halted any

weavers bringing in work under price. The violence escalated. Strike-breakers were "donkeyed" and shop windows were broken.

> On Monday, several hundred persons assembled on the road leading from Bedworth to Coventry, with a flag, carried by two men, bearing the following incription, "Jackass them that works" a donkey was led by the side of their standard bearers, who carried the decree on their flag into effect, both on men and women. Tickets for bread were distributed at differ (sic) houses, for persons in distress. Morning Chronicle 10-03-1829

Yet another turn-out was staged in Coventry on September 29, after certain masters refused to abide by a price list agreed on during the preceeding week. Following a meeting at which they resolved on a general strike, the weavers demonstrated in the streets. Constables arrived and seized placards from a few boys. The local magistrates dispersed the crowd. On the following day, at an illegal meeting, the strikers appointed a committee to negotiate a new, lower price list with the manufacturers. They also resolved to ask the mayor and magistrates to convene a meeting. The desired meeting took place on the same day. Deputations of weavers from Coventry and the surrounding area reached an agreement with the manufacturers. Work resumed. The next day, the committee published a vote of thanks to the mayor for his assistance in negotiations. They also resolved that there would be no further wage reductions. Once begun, negotiations had been concluded with surprising speed and efficiency. Mobilization of the weavers through strikes, meetings, and street demonstrations, had yielded successful results*

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* The Authors wish to thank Ann Matheson for her assistance in writing the Coventry Materials.

Coventry was not alone. In the North, the London area, and East Anglia, during the fall of 1829, industrial conflict became more intense than it had been for some time. In Norwich and vicinity, for example, journeymen and master weavers struggled over the price the masters should pay for woven silk. The organized workers kept their weaker brethren in line by entering the weavers' cottages and cutting under-priced work from the looms. On the ninth of September 1829, the Morning Chronicle relayed a report from the Essex Hearld:

> NORWICH WEAVERS. -- On Tuesday last, parties of weavers assembled at the entrances of Norwich, and examined the carriers' carts, in search of pieces of goods manufactured in the country for Norwich masters, with the avowed intention of destroying them. A numerous body of operatives took a case of silk from a constable, which had been marked at the under price, and destroyed it. Men in disguise have, during the week, entered houses in Norwich and its neighbourhood, and cut work from the looms, on pretence of its being taken under the scale agreed to. Morning Chronicle, 9 Sept. 1829 p. 1

"Tuesday last" was the first of September. The Magistrates had, the following day, issued an order in this form:

> WHEREAS
>
> Tyrrell King, one of the Constables of this City, was on Tuesday evening last, between 4 and 6 o'clock attacked by a numerous body of persons riotously assembled, and a cane of Silk intended to be wrought into a Bombazine taken from him and destroyed by them.
>
> THIS IS TO GIVE NOTICE,
>
> that the Magistrates are determined to put the Laws for the protection of persons and their property into execution and do hereby offer a REWARD OF
>
> FIVE POUNDS

to any person, Constable, or otherwise, who shall apprehend any offenders guilty of such outrages, to be paid on conviction (P.R.O., H.O. 52: 5 [Public Record Office, London; Home Office Papers, series 52, no. 5]).

In a time when police worked mainly for fees rather than salaries, the reward poster stating the Magistrates' order was a standard sequel to such a violent encounter, just as it was to a robbery or a murder in which the perpetrator had gotten away.

In the case at hand, someone from Norwich (very likely a master weaver or merchant) complained to the Home Secretary, Robert Peel, that the police had not done their duty. The mayor's reply to the accusation not only denied the charge, but also gave an illuminating glimpse of the continuous interaction between the weavers and the local authorities out of which the attack on the constable had emerged. On the sixth of October, 1829, mayor J. D. Springfield wrote to Peel that

> Since my entry into Office on the 16th of June only one case of a Tumultuous assembly have come to my knowledge, viz. on the evening of the first of Septr. and immediately on receiving information of which I set off and arrived on the spot <u>within ten minutes</u>, and by taking into custody <u>with my own hand</u> two young fellows who refused to depart and speaking a few words to the others, they quietly dispersed and in one or two hours the street was perfectly <u>clear and quiet</u>. On the following day we issued the enclosed Bill no. 1 [the notice quoted above] from the public office. On the morning of the 5th ult. I received information that some works had been destroyed on the Looms. I immediately went to the spot with my informant about 7 o'clock in the morning to receive informations, and the same morning issued my warrant

for the apprehension of two suspected persons who when before us clearly proved an Alibi to the satisfaction of a very full Bench of Magistrates. This is the only case in which a Deposition have been made before me of Work being cut, but I have heard of three or four others and believe in all five or six cases of the kind may have taken place; when they have occurred however in all cases, it has been before the nightly watch were on duty, and suddenly, without previous Riot or Tumult, so that no Police can detect it, unless we could obtain Depositions and identify the offenders. The Weavers have for a considerable time held monthly meetings, but in no instance have the smallest disorder arisen at them. Nevertheless, as the cutting of four looms in one cottage occurred on the Friday previous to the usual monthly meeting, after consulting with my Brother Magistrates on the Saturday, I requested that the meeting might not take place. The Weavers in ready obedience immediately issued the enclosed Bill No. 2 [announcing that "the Meeting at the Pantheon will be postponed until further notice"] and effectively prevented it (P.R.O., H.O. 52:5)

Two weeks later, continued the mayor, the weavers applied for permission to meet. They received permission, and deliberated peacefully, as the mayor and a sheriff waiting outside. The mayor conceded that he had not made a show of force with his police "for the obvious reason, that a Police form'd wholly from a Manufacturing Population if paraded, is much more likely to increase than allay an excitement on manufacturing prices, but I have privately on two or three occasions, selected a few of the best officers, and in the evening patroled the suspected points." The mayor's response to an anonymous criticism reveals the continuous tactical maneuvering which

surrounded the worker-master conflicts of 1829. It places the search and seizure of September first into its context of negotiation and mutual surveillance. Without that context, the news account alone could easily give the impression of an isolated, impulsive action. Within the context, we still do not know the states of mind of the assembled weavers, but we do know that the attack on Constable King formed part of an organized struggle to sustain the price of the weavers' work.

In cases where the mayors, magistrates or merchants involved did not unburden themselves in writing -- or at least in writing that has survived in today's archives -- the clustering of newsworthy events sometimes provides a similar sense of the context. Consider, for example, this list of work-related "contentious gatherings" in the vicinity of Manchester reported in the press from July through December 1829.

DATE	PLACE	ACTION OR ISSUE
6 July	Barnsley	meeting for relief of linen weavers
8 July	Leeds	meeting supporting the working classes
24 July	Manchester	attacks on machines
25 August	Manchester	opposition to knobsticks
31 August	Manchester	attack by weavers
1 Sept	Manchester	seizure of goods
3 Sept	Manchester	wages meeting
5 Sept	Manchester	strike
9 Sept	Barnsley	action against scabs
10 Sept	Barnsley	action against scabs
14 Sept	Manchester	action against knobsticks
14 Sept	Barnsley	meeting about workers' distress
18 Sept	Manchester	turnout

21 Sept	Barnsley	meeting against wage cuts
24 Sept	Barnsley	meeting to support weavers
30 Sept	Manchester	meeting to form a union
1 Oct	Dodworth	action against working weavers
3 Oct	Manchester	meeting about wages
9 Oct	Barnsley	meeting against wage reduction
10 Oct	Barnsley	action against working weavers
10 Oct	Barnsley	meeting against return to work
15 Oct	Barnsley	meeting for striking weavers
14 Nov	Oldham	turnout
16 Nov	Manchester	meeting in favor of wage strike
25 Nov	Oldham	action against knobsticks

("Knobstick" was, of course, a contemporary word for "scab".) Even these laconic summaries make it clear that sustained struggles between workers and employers were occurring in Manchester and Barnsley, and that from late August to mid-October the region was locked in conflict. In fact, major strikes were going on in Manchester, Barnsley, Oldham, and elsewhere in the region from early in 1829. If we search London's Times and Morning Chronicle not only for news of those events which qualify as "contentious gatherings" but also for other mentions of industrial conflict in the North, we find almost daily reports -- for instance, thirty-odd reports from Manchester alone. Cumulatively, the news accounts portray a continuous series of struggles in which the region's masters sought to cut wages, break the newly-forming unions and employ knobsticks as the region's spinners tried to fight the wage reductions and maintain a united front against the masters. In that context, the "contentious gatherings" are but the visible peaks of a mountain range.

When local conflicts clustered like those in the region of Manchester they became, perforce, national events. The national press kept them in the public eye, Parliament discussed them, and the government's agents did what they could to contain them. The correspondence of local magistrates with the Home Secretary weighed the possibilities of repression and mediation. From Stockport, for example, Justice of the Peace S.P. Hunphreys wrote that:

> In consequence of some disturbances which have occurred lately in the Town of Stockport I am induced to submit to your consideration the almost absolute necessity that exists of enlarging the Barracks situated about 1/2 a mile from the Town. At the moment two thirds of the working classes have struck work. Six companies of the 87th foot are quartered at the Barracks & in the Town. The barracks will only contain two companies & seven officers & the other four companies are billeted at the Ale Houses & Inns & are frequently brought into contact with the very Persons from whom they ought to be separated . . . (P.R.O. H.O. 40:23, 10 February 1829)

A month later, that same magistrate and two of his colleagues were transmitting a memorial of the cotton manufacturers and master spinners against a "general combination entered into by the operatives to control the masters in the management of their establishments" -- the journeymen had struck against the reduction in wages agreed upon by the same manufacturers and masters. In Stockport, by contrast with the apparently conciliatory approach of Norwich's mayor, the magistrates seem to have aligned themselves with the manufacturers and to have applied the full force of the law against workers.

Although the record has breaks in it, the accumulation of evidence from periodicals and archives suffices to portray the continual play of threat, negotiation, mediation, repression, and direct action which produced the

clusters of "contentious gatherings" involving workers and their employers. It suffices to reveal variations in the repressive strategies of different authorities. It suffices, finally, to show us the national connections of local events -- not only in the reporting by national newspapers, not only in the frequent addressing of demands to Parliament, but also in the anxious consultation between the Home Secretary and local officials.

STUDYING THE CONTENTION OF 1828 AND 1829

All of the events we have just reviewed, plus hundreds of others that orbit around the major political issues of the day, such as Test & Corporation Acts and Catholic Emancipation, brought groups of British citizens into the taverns and streets to voice their opinions, grievances and demands. In small ways and large, these gatherings were an essential part of the day-to-day political process in Great Britain.

We are studying a great many such gatherings in order to improve our understanding of that day-to-day British political process, and to increase our comprehension of collective action and contention in general . By closely examining numerous individual events, we hope to keep contact with the striving of everyday life, and yet to work toward the identification of the general patterns which sum up and constrain the everyday striving.

Some simple questions are worth answering. Which, for example, is more common: the type of workmen's vengeance that occured in Grantham, the type of decorous meeting that occurred in Chatham, or the type of mob action against an unpopular figure that occurred in London? In what other ways did the English, Welsh and Scots commonly band together to voice their discontent -- or, for that matter, their support for one cause or another? How did English, Welsh and Scots <u>differ</u> in those regards?

Behind these simple questions lie more complex ones: How did an aggrieved group's previous experience with the authorities affect which course of action it took? What distinguished violent gatherings from nonviolent ones? How restricted and standardized were the means that any particular group adopted when it had an interest to pursue, and how did that vary from one type of group to another? These questions, clearly enough, carry us over into queries about the British political process in general, and from there into reflections on the operation of conflict, repression and collective action in any time and place. The study of these contentious gatherings is simply a special case of the study of contention as a whole.

Three large questions about contention as a general phenomenon guide our research The three overlap. FIRST: How did the character and outcome of interactions with authorities shape the ways that ordinary people pursued their shared interests? Did repression tend to diminish a group's collective action, and facilitation to increase it? Did the selectivity of repression and facilitation significantly influence people's choice of means for collective action? This set of problems leads us to such concrete historical questions as whether the vigorous repression of the multiple rural rebellions of 1830 visibly altered the way rural people dealt with declining wages and competition from agricultural machinery after 1830. SECOND: What accounts for variations and changes in the "repertoires" of means of collective action employed by different groups of people? Is it true, for example, that during the period under study some well-established forms of action (such as donkeying, the direct attack on people who withheld food from the local market, and the use of public ceremonies to press claims for justice or power) were declining rapidly, while a new repertoire (including meeting, petitioning, and demonstrating) was rapidly standardizing? If so, how and why? THIRD: What relationship is there among the sorts of interests that people share, the way

they organize around those interests, and the forms of action they adopt in pursuit of their interests? Did rural artisans and rural cultivators, for example, typically organize in contrasting ways, adopt distinctly different tactics, articulate their demands and complaints in separate vocabularies? Or were the routines and structures of British politics so standardized as to push divergent groups to act in similar ways? These are, at once, pressing questions about nineteenth-century British politics and about contention in general.

Following these dual concerns -- with nineteenth-century Britain and with contention in general -- we are undertaking the uniform enumeration, description and analysis of a very large series of contentious gatherings which took place from 1828 through 1834. A "contentious gathering", in the finicky definition adopted for this purpose, is any occasion on which ten or more persons outside the government gather in the same publicly-accessible place and make a visible claim which would, if realized, affect the interests of some specific person(s) or group(s) outside their own number. The contentious gatherings in the sample are all events meeting the definition which:

a. occurred in England, Wales or Scotland;

b. began on some day from 1 January 1828 through 31 December 1834;

c. were mentioned in one of the following seven periodicals: The Morning Chronicle, the Times, the Annual Register, Gentleman's Magazine, the Mirror of Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, or Votes and Proceedings of the House of Commons.

When the set is complete, it will probably include about 12,000 such events, distributed quite unevenly over the seven years. No doubt more than 5,000 of the events will turn up in the two turbulent years of 1830 and 1831 alone. By contrast, 1828, 1829 were (as we shall see) calm years, yielding only a few hundred events which meet our criteria for contentious gatherings. (Much more

detail on definitions and procedures appears in Tilly & Schweitzer 1980.)

To manage the evidence concerning these many events and their British context, we have created a computer-based system for the entry, analysis and retrieval of data. In essence, we apply a standard questionnaire to each contentious gathering, place the replies to the questionnaire in the computer, then instruct the machine to regroup and summarize the observations (along with complementary information about the settings in which the events took place) in accordance with the major questions we are currently pursuing. Some of the computer-based procedures are unconventional in this sort of research. For one thing, instead of coding the information about the events numerically (e.g., for locality: 01 = London, 02 - Manchester, etc.) we record the key words themselves in a simplified and standardized format. For each field of data, we then construct a dictionary containing all the permissible words. The dictionary serves for searches of the data file, for machine-based coding and recoding, and for various forms of quality control.

Again, instead of hand-coding, keypunching and producing cards or tape, we enter our responses to the questionnaire directly into disk storage via a cathode-ray terminal in which the coder works at a keyboard, using a display screen that displays an abbreviated form of the questionnaire, relevant supplementary information, and the coder's own responses. Finally, the computer system makes it possible to prepare maps and other graphic displays directly from the data files. The summaries and tabulations reported later in this paper come from this computer-based procedure.

The two computer produced maps that follow are designed to give the reader a first grasp of the distribution of events in our sample. As you will read further on, there are noticeable clusters of events in and around London and in the Lancashire area for both years. Also notable is that patterns shift from year to year, producing an ever-changing scene of contention in each different area of Britain.

FIGURE 2

CONTENTIOUS GATHERINGS IN GREAT BRITAIN.

INTENSITY BY COUNTY FOR 1828

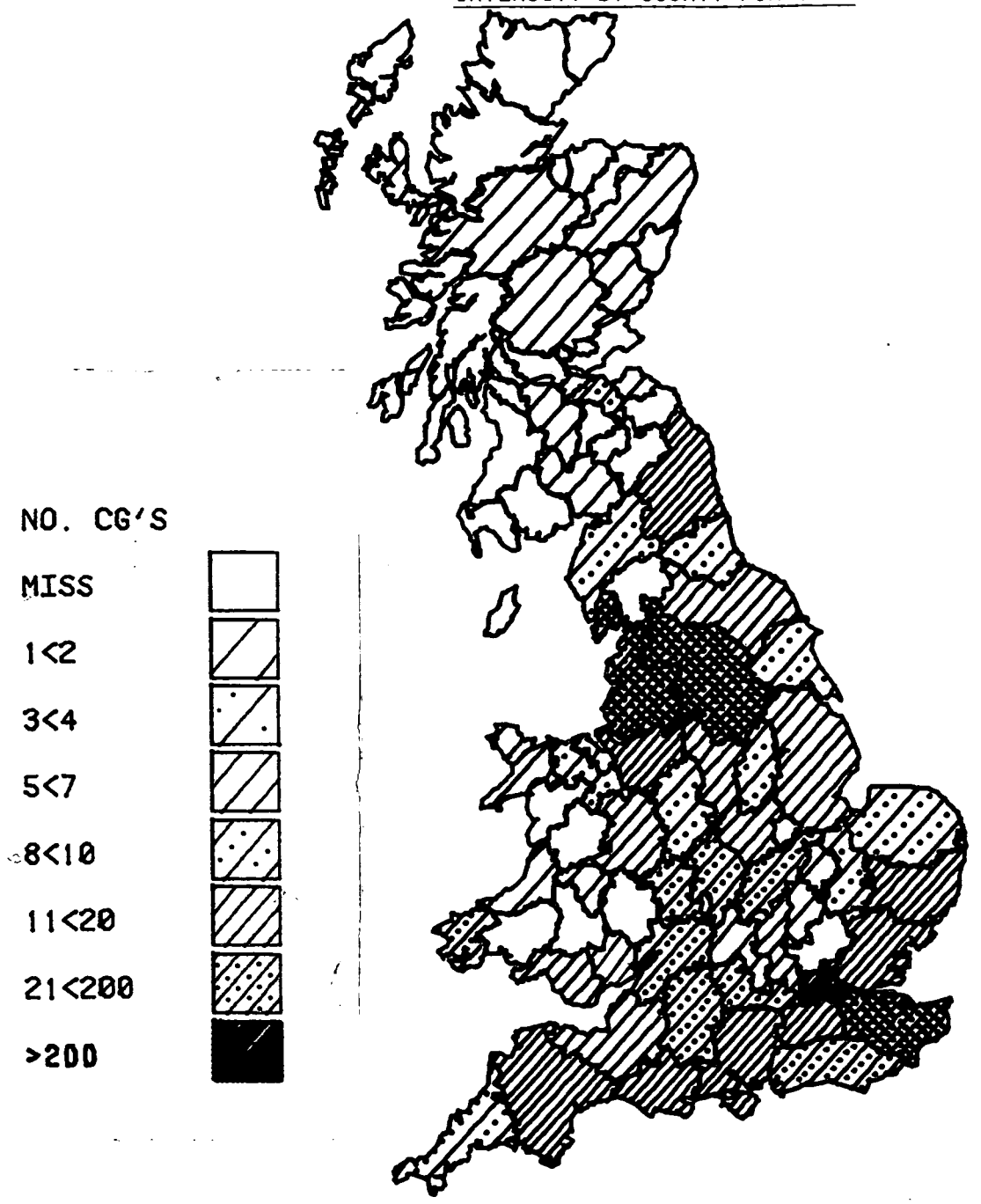
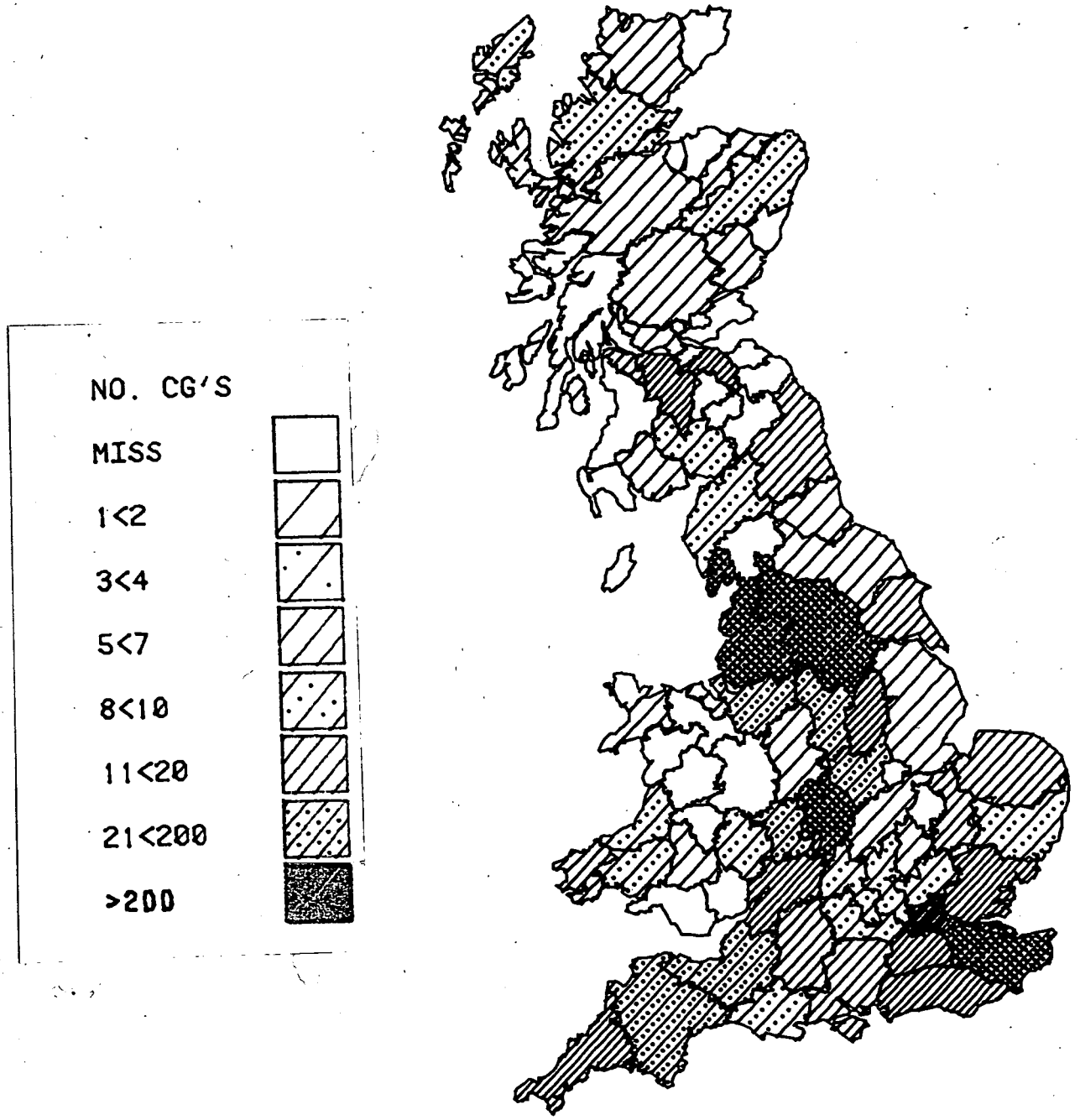


FIGURE 3

CONTENTIOUS GATHERINGS IN GREAT BRITAIN.

INTENSITY BY COUNTY FOR 1829.



THE COLLECTIVE BIOGRAPHY OF CONTENTIOUS GATHERINGS

The study as a whole falls into the tradition of collective biography, even though the units being studied are events rather than the more usual persons or groups. In its simplest terms, collective biography consists of assembling uniform descriptions of the experiences of many individuals in order to detect both aggregate patterns and major variations in experience. In historical demography, for example, investigators transcribe records of individual births, deaths, and marriages, then aggregate them into collective rates of fertility, mortality, and nuptiality, into summaries of life expectancy, or into group differentials in these respects. In the historical study of class structure and social mobility, investigators go from individual entries in censuses, tax rolls or city directories to general portrayals of the frequency of upward or downward mobility, of ethnic differentials in wealth, occupation or residence, and the like. One of the attractive features of collective biography as an historical approach is that it provides a middle ground between the telling (but possibly unrepresentative) particular case and the weighty (but rather abstract) overall average. Better, collective biography provides a bridge between the two: one can keep the richness and idiosyncrasy of the individual while establishing a clear sense of the relationship between the individual and the whole.

Collective biographers have dealt much less frequently with events and political processes than with individual persons and demographic processes. Nevertheless, there are some fine recent models for students of politics. One of the best is Michelle Perrot's Les ouvriers en grève; the book offers a collective portrait of the roughly 3,000 strikes which took place in France from 1870 to 1890. It uses its correlations and tabulations as the starting-point of a fascinating exploration of particular conflicts, major issues

between employers and workers, the processes by which strikes developed, and working-class life in general. The contentious gatherings of Great Britain should lend themselves to the same combination of rigorous analysis and qualitative reconstruction.

Certainly the period from 1828 to 1834 is as promising a seven-year span as we are likely to find in nineteenth-century Britain. 1828 to 1829 do not give us a very clear picture of what comes later, for they were relatively calm years. Nevertheless, the issues of those years' contentious gatherings -- religious liberty, parish government, the rights of workers, and others -- carried over into the following period. Between 1828 and 1834 came the great struggle over Parliamentary Reform, the widespread 1830 uprising of agricultural workers (sometimes known as the Swing Rebellion, for the mythical avenger Captain Swing), the preparation of the 1834 Poor Law, and other decisive conflicts. The period provides an exceptional opportunity to consider the connections, if any, between the small-scale, ostensibly trivial and unpolitical contention exemplified by our gatherings in Grantham, Chatham, London, Bramham, Cheltenham and elsewhere, and the Great Events which figure in any account of nineteenth-century Britain. By the same token, it offers a splendid opportunity to evaluate -- and to reformulate -- general arguments concerning the character of contention, repression and power.

We hope, then, to describe the contentious gatherings of 1828 to 1834, to trace out their connections with the British context of the time, to consider their implications for the character of nineteenth-century politics in Britain as a whole, and to use them as a prism for the examination of general models of political processes. Other papers in this series deal with the immediate British context, with nineteenth-century politics, and with general models.

The purpose of this paper, however, is much more modest. It is simply to begin the description of the events themselves. It offers an enumeration of the contentious gatherings of 1828 and 1829, provides some information on the reliability of that enumeration, builds up some crude cross-tabulations of characteristics of the events, and identifies some problems for further investigation.

READING THE SOURCES*

The agenda just described is a formidable one. In order to do a complete job, the gathering of the base materials is of prime importance. Great care is needed in selecting and processing primary source materials. As we discovered, it is no easy task. The job proved much harder and required a greater amount of consideration than we had planned. We had the object clearly in mind: to denote any article, in the seven sources we had chosen, that mentioned a contentious gathering (see definition above). But the problem of how to do this was complex; to develop a method by which we could be assured that we were removing from the sources the highest possible amount of materials without spending an excessive amount of time reviewing them.

The earliest reading instructions and removal coversheets were prepared before the GBS project had started and were tested on small scale research. Frank Munger, a doctoral candidate, was studying collective action occuring in Lancashire, England. He hired student assistants to read the Lancaster Gazette** As his research came to a close, the Great Britain Study began. Researchers at GBS adopted the Munger reading instructions to the new study and ran tests to

* For a more complete explanation of this problem see: R. A. Schweitzer, "Source Reading For Contentious Gatherings in Nineteenth-Century British Newspapers" CRSO working paper #186, December 1978.

** Frank Munger, "Popular Protest and its Suppression in Early Nineteenth-Century Lancashire, England: A Study of Theories of Protest and Repression," unpublished doctoral dissertation in sociology, University of Michigan, 1977.

determine their effectiveness. Ten readers scanned selected sources and indicated articles that they felt pertained to the study. The results of this first test were discouraging: on the average, readers were able to identify only 36% of the articles that should have been identified. A second test raised the average to 50%. After considering many alternatives, we determined to focus on the following areas:

a. clearer and more comprehensive instructions for the readers.

b. a more systematic sample recording sheet (coversheet).

c. more frequent checking of readers by giving "test" reading-blocks.

d. breaking down the reading into small assignments.

e. checking over each "reading-block" (ten consecutive published newspaper days) that had been read to note problems.

f. more personal contact with each reader.

g. more frequent discussion of problems.

h. more selective screening of people hired to read.

i. reading done close-at-hand, rather than at the library, to allow for better supervision and quicker attention to questions.

Along with these changes, we provided readers with more detailed information about the type of articles needed for the study. Readers were given lists of major British cities, counties, and London parishes. A list of Irish place-names were included, so that events taking place in Ireland could be immediately excluded by readers. We also compiled a list of words, taken from the Oxford English Dictionary, that connote a group of ten or more people. These lists, combined with similar pertinent information, enabled readers to make more informed decisions as to which articles qualified. Once again we tested our revised procedures and instructions. This time, readers achieved an average inclusion rate of more than 92%. Using this new system, plus some tinkering improvements made over the months, we have settled upon a set of procedures that we feel is excellent for removing materials from lumpy sources.

Since the quantity of data gathered depends on the quality of each individual reader, we pay careful attention to selecting and training our staff. Most readers are students who work on the project part-time. Teaching them to read selectively for our study requires, perhaps, a greater investment in time and money than might be expected for many other kinds of work-study positions. For this reason, we seek a certain commitment when screening job applicants. Interviewers explain the scope of the study and describe readers' duties. They emphasize that the job is not easy; it requires concentration, attention to details, and informed decision-making. On the other hand, it provides students with an opportunity to learn how historical data can be gathered. Reading newspaper reports from another era also lends a sense of historical immediacy -- history first-hand -- that readers often find intriguing. During the interview, each prospective employee is given a copy of our reader instructions and historical background papers, and is briefed on training procedures.

Training begins with a "test day." After reviewing instructional material, the new employee reads on microfilm one edition, that is one "day", from the Morning Chronicle. The reader is instructed to fill out a coversheet for each article he/she believes fits the criteria of the study. This "test day" has been previously read by experienced readers, and all pertinent articles have already been incorporated into our data set. The "test day" is specifically selected to include events that will test a reader's ability to apply the rules. This exercise accomplishes two objectives: (1) it gives the prospective reader a clear idea of what the work will entail, and (2) it enables us to judge the person's potential by comparing his/her first effort with the work of others who have read the same material. As it turns out, this test reading is a very good gauge of how well a reader will perform on a daily basis. Those whose scores on the test are high, tend to become particularly efficient readers in the

future. Those who score within the top 40% also do well on the job, sometimes improving considerably with experience. Those whose test scores are low usually do not prove to be effective readers. They may, instead, be more suited for other tasks.

After the test reading is completed, a discussion session with the reader is set up. This will include a review of materials the reader neglected to include, and a decision to let him/her continue reading or to move him/her to to less difficult work. After officially being hired, the worker is given five days in a section of newspaper that has previsously been enumerated. Upon completion, this material is checked over against our ideal list of included articles. The articles missed are pointed out to the reader as well as the forms that were not completed correctly per the instructions. Readers are then asked to explain why they failed to include any articles they had noticed, but then excluded.

Through this type of dialogue, workers can begin to get an understanding of what materials they miss that we include and an idea of the complexities of the job. Each assignment is scored on a percentage basis. We are satisfied to have the reader working in the 90 percent inclusion range. Usually the assignments consist of a 5-day reading test, then a second 5 days if the first was not a score of at least 90 percent, a 10-day test scored exactly like the 5, and successive 10-day tests until a score of 90 percent or above is reached. This usually occurs upon completion of the first 10-day test. Readers who require the third and fourth test may need intensive instructions or may be better utilized at other tasks.

Once a score of 92 percent or better is reached, the reader is given regular 10-day assignments of new newspaper reading that will be used in the data set. As each 10-day block is completed and turned in, it is also checked

against whatever materials we have on hand from sample readings done before this type of checking system was initiated. Percentage scores are determined, and the reader is consulted as to why he/she missed anything from the first reading, and on incorrectly completed coversheets. If a reader scores less than 92 percent on a block, the reader is asked to read the materials again to ensure a high inclusion level. As a further check, after a few assignments, we give the reader a block (unbeknownst to the reader) for which we have intensive information. In the training process we inform the reader that we will be slipping in unannounced test blocks. This is done as a check against the reader's general level of competence. It is scored just like the 5 - and 10 - day tests. Again, a level of 92 percent is required.

This elaborate set of procedures, of checks and counterchecks, has proven worthwhile. Reading levels have remained high. Separate random checks produce no new startling information.

If these procedures seem incredibly long it is only because it takes a great deal of energy and thought to produce data that can be considered usable in describing the agenda we set out.

INTERACTIVE, DIRECT-ENTRY CODING *

From the diligent reading of our seven sources, we have collected approximately 150,000 articles that in some way relate to contentious gatherings. With these in hand, we begin to collate the scattered materials into sets of articles that pertain to a single event (actions around a particular issue, occurring in a continous time span, involving basically the same set of claim-makers). Once we have all the articles together that pertain to a single event (the packet is called a dossier) we enumerate the groups involved in the event ("formations") and their actions that are claim-related ("action phases"). As with the source reading, there is also a set of checks and reviews on the enumerations. After we have a sufficient amount of articles assembled into dossiers, usually at least 200, we are then ready to begin coding.

The coding forms resemble a questionnaire. Questions are asked about 1) the event as a whole, 2) each formation involved in the action, 3) each action phase, 4) each source that makes up the dossier, and 5) any comments that need to be placed into the permanent record. (For a complete set of coding forms see Schweitzer-Simmons paper.) This coding is not the standard numeric format used by most researchers, but an alphanumeric system. All of the codes can be answered in plain English if the coder chooses. Or he/she can use a numeric code to convey the same as the alphabetic. For example, he could answer the question, "what day does this event occur?" by writing "Sunday" or by writing in the number 7 which means Sunday. Coding involves three choices of forms (formats): 1. the LONG form, which is the complete set of all questions, 2. the SHORT form which is a less complex version of the long form and is

*For a more comprehensive summary of these materials see "Interactive, Direct Entry Approaches to Contentious Gathering Event Files," R.A. Schweitzer & Steven C. Simmons, CRSO working paper #183 October 1978.

used by experienced coders on less complex events, and 3. DIRECT ENTRY, which is actually not a form, but a way of entering data into the computer files without any pre-coding. Most simple petition meetings are coded and entered in this manner. Since we have a computer system that collects data by asking for the answers exactly as they appear on the questionnaire, simple events can be coded, entered, and transmitted to the main computer in a single operation. We have also developed a system that will take entered data and store it on tape casettes, while not connected to the main computer. In this way, we can send large amounts of data in batches to our main data files at a higher speed when rates are lower. This enables us to save up to 60% of normal computing costs.

Throughout the aforementioned process, there has been a gradual change in the structure of the events for which we are trying to collect data. They started out as fluid periodical accounts packed with editorial comments, rich historical and personal insights, and much useless information. At the coding stage, the materials must be fitted into a much more regular format if we are to be able to analyze them as a collective whole. What we are trying to do is take an emotion-filled event and transcribe it mechanically without losing the richness that is there to begin with. One way to do this is by <u>not</u> reducing data to numbers that are not already intrinsically numbers in the accounts. Lists of names are taken directly from the text and literal quotes are used to describe the actions taking place. The data we enter uses an entry program that reproduces the questions that appear on the long form questionnaire. This data is stored in a card image format; but it does not read like a card image, nor is it a fixed length. Three operations occur to the data upon entry. First, data are broken down by category, then the program converts the data into a number for storage. Second, data that can not be so categorized are reorganized so that

they will take up less storage space. Third, the literal data are handled in one of two ways: they can be stored if they are short enough, and if not, longer literal data are placed in an external file and the line number of that file is stored with the card image. In that way we can save space both in the event file and in the external file.

Along with the storage of data, the entry program performs some error-checking as the data are entered. This greatly increases the accuracy of the data and makes "cleaning" much less tiresome than conventional methods. The program can check many items, such as the identification number (CGID) to see that it is properly recording the year and month of the event. For example, there can be no month 13 or day 32; the program will give an error message to the enterer at that point. With the use of this system our data cleaning has proven to be much more efficient, and the amounts of corrections made are very small as compared to standard data cleaning.

There are a number of software programs that are in use to operate our system, as well as a variety of hardware. The master system is the Michigan Terminal System (MTS) operated by the University. Within this system we use two special data manipulation programs, MICRO and MIDAS.

MICRO is the data base system that stores all of our preliminary work. It is a system that is designed for handling and manipulating large data bases to allow easy storage, correction and modification. While it has some statistical functions, it is not designed as an analytic tool. MIDAS, Michigan Interactive Data Analysis System, has an extensive set of statistical functions that are available for use with simple commands. The two systems have an interface to allow the reading of data from MICRO to MIDAS for analysis. In addition, we have designed a number of special programs to work on the data as they move through the system. The particular programs we are using do not export easily;

they are specific to the hardware (currently an Amdahl V-7 main computer, a set of Ontel OP-1R CRT terminals, a printer, and Tektronix graphics equipment for mapping and graphing) available to us at the University of Michigan. But the principles involved will generalize readily to any other environment in which interactive computing and word-processing capacity come together.

One of the advantages of working with words is that it makes machine-assisted cataloging easy. Here, for example, is a straightforward listing of the "major issue" field of some of the contentious gatherings we have identified for November and December 1829:

MAJOR ISSUES FOR CONTENTIOUS GATHERINGS ENUMERATED IN NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 1829.

TABLE 2

DATE: Year, Month, Day	ISSUE
829111302	POACHING
829111401	TURNOUT
829111602	TURNOUT
829111802	POACHING
829112001	GOVERNMENT PRO
829112501	POACHING
829112502	KNOBSTICKS ANTI
829112601	GOVERNMENT ANTI
829113001	CAPTURE EXTORTER
829120101	SOLDIER VS BOATMEN
829120201	SMUGGLING
829120202	EAST INDIA CO. ANTI
829120203	GOVERNMENT PRO
829120301	BRAWL
829120401	APPREHEND KILLER
829120701	SUPPORT OF GOVERNMENT
829120801	GOVERNMENT ANTI
829121001	GOVERNMENT PRO
829121101	RELIEF TO DISTRESSED
829121201	BRAWL
829121202	POACHING
829121401	POACHING
829121502	MALT AND BEER DUTIES ANTI
829121503	POACHING
829121504	POACHING
829121701	SILK CUTTING
829121901	MALT AND BEER DUTIES ANTI
829122101	GOVERNMENT PRO
829122102	GOVERNMENT ANTI
829122103	GOVERNMENT PRO
829122104	GOVERNMENT ANTI
829122105	WARDMOTE
829122106	WARDMOTE
829122107	WARDMOTE
829122108	WARDMOTE
829122109	WARDMOTE
829122111	WARDMOTE
829122112	WARDMOTE
829122113	WARDMOTE
829122114	WARDMOTE
829122115	WARDMOTE
829122116	WARDMOTE
829122117	WARDMOTE
829122118	WARDMOTE
829133119	WARDMOTE
829122120	WARDMOTE
829122121	WARDMOTE
829122122	WARDMOTE
829122123	WARDMOTE
829122201	SILK CUTTING MANUFACTURER ANTI
829122301	GOVERNMENT PRO
829122302	GOVERNMENT PRO
829122303	ELECTIVE FRANCHISE ANTI
829122304	GOVERNMENT PRO
829122305	MALT DUTY ANTI
829122307	GOVERNMENT PRO

(The code number 829111302 means, you remember, that the event in question is the second contentious gathering we enumerated for 13 November 1829: 11/13/29, #02.) The "major issue" is our arbitrary, standardized label for the whole event -- sometimes misleading for analysis, but very useful for quick reference. The list gives some sense of the variety of contention. Some events are very local in scope; poaching, smuggling and brawls usually fall into this category. Others cover a wider range; wardmotes (meetings of parishioners in London wards at year's end), silk-cutting and relief of the distressed are examples. Still others refer to problems of a national scale; malt and beer duties, support of government and the East India Company charter renewal were these sorts of issues in 1829. The machine-generated catalog gives a good preliminary sense of the issues around which people were contending at the time.

A word-oriented individual record likewise conveys the texture of an event in a way that numerical coding cannot. Consider, for example, contentious gathering 829121201, represented by the word "brawl" in our listing of major issues. 12 December 1829 was market day in Baldock, Hertford. Some "able-bodied paupers" filled the Sun Tavern. When their beer was delivered, " . . . a man requiring the money . . . the parties knocked him down and beat him . . . ill-treatment extended to other persons, and induced the landlord to call in the civil power. The paupers resisted, knocked the constable down, and took from him his staff, and attacked those who rendered him assistance." Our excerpt from the machine record shows how we transcribed the account. In the following days, as the record shows, nine of the group were finally arrested and lodged in the local jail. The article also notes that "There is scarcely a night but thefts of poultry, or some other property, take place . . . " The reporter attributes all the trouble in a normally quiet place to umemployment. The situation, he says, comes about because the local trustees do not allow the

FIGURE 4

EXCERPT FROM MACHINE RECORD OF 829121201

CGID	829121201
Coder	KAB1
FORMNO	1
Name	Able-Bodied Paupers
Overlap-No	None
Relation	Both claim
Relatext	
FNAMEXT	Paupers of this Parish, the Parties, the Men
INP1-EXT	
GRID	TL215265
GRID-DEFAULT	County
County	16
Town	Baldock
Parish	—
Place	Baldock
LGuess	Cnty
Restype	P Town
Reset	"A Num
FMSZEXT	NO
Number	NO
Numbext	—
Part Low	Unknown
Part Hi	Unknown
Part No	Unknown
Part-How	Imp-to-Judge
Part-Ext	—
Persondy	Unknown
Personhr	Unknown
Pers-how	Unknown
Perhext	—
Arrests	7
Arrbasis	Text com
Arrext	"Seven of the number were caught the next morning."
Wounded	Unknown
Woubasis	Textcom
Wouext	"An outrageous attack was made"

FIGURE 4 (CONT.)

EXCERPT FROM MACHINE RECORD OF 829121201

Killed	None
Kibasis	Text
KillExt	—
Enterer	
Entry Date	
CGID	829121201
Coder	KAB1
FORMNO	2
Name	Man, & Other persons
OVERLAP-NO	None
Relation	OBJ Claim
Relatext	—
FNAMEXT	—
INDI-EXT	—
GRID	TL215265
GRID-DEFAULT	CNTY
County	16
Town	Baldock
Parish	—
Place	Baldock
L Guess	None
Restype	P Town
Resext	—
FMSZEXT	Man & Other persons; at the Sun Public House
Number	No
Numbext	—
Part-Low	Unknown
Part-Hi	Unknown
Part-No	Unknown
Part-How	IMP TO JUDGE
Part Ext	—
Persondy	UNKNOWN
Person hr	UNKNOWN
Pers-How	UNKNOWN
PerHext.	—
Arrests	NONE

FIGURE 4 (CONT.)

EXCERPT FROM MACHINE RECORD OF 829121201

Arrbasis	Text
Arrext	—
Wounded	UNKNOWN
Woubasis	Textcom
WouExt	"The Parties knocked him down (the man) and beat him: which ill-treatment extended to other persons
Killed	None
Kilbasis	Text
KillExt	—
Enterer	—
Entry Date	—

paupers to farm the land set aside for the benefit of the poor, but occupy the land themselves. Thus we see an ostensibly trivial and local conflict which calls attention to a larger division within the local community, and in Britain as a whole. Machine processing of the evidence does not guarantee, to be sure, our noticing those wider connections. But once we suspect their existence, the availability of word-oriented and machine-assisted catalogs makes the tracing of those connections easier.

PRELIMINARY QUALITY CONTROLS

Aside from the details on individual contentious gatherings, the appendices of this paper contain information on the quality of our data. Appendix 3 reports several efforts to examine the process by which we identify events. We first concern ourselves with the amount of searching required to identify an average event. In our wide initial scan of the Morning Chronicle and the Times for a sample period in 1828, we abstracted 2,765 different articles containing possible references to contentious gatherings. Noting that the papers appeared six times per week, we can see that there were an average of 8.9 articles that interested us per day and 4.5 per newspaper issue. Of the 2,765 articles, closer screening and collation with other accounts indicated that 855 refered to occurrences that met our criteria qualifying them as contentious gatherings. Those 855 mentions concerned 348 separate events. Many of the articles pertain to the same event. Each event, then, has an average of 2.5 articles. Thus in the two newspapers:

> 11 or 12 days' reading produced about 100 mentions of possible contentious gatherings.
>
> Of those 100 possibilities, about 30 turned out to refer to events meeting our criteria.
>
> Those 30 reports concerned 12 or 13 separate events.
>
> As a rule of thumb, we might therefore expect to locate one qualifying event for every eight abstracts made.

For the 595 contentious gatherings noted in our seven sources for 1828, we find that we are relying on a single account 377 times (63%). This is due to the fact that many of the reports are from the Votes and Proceedings of the House of Commons. They are petitions presented to that body, thus making them not available to any of the other parliamentary reporters.

Table A-4 in the appendix will suggest approximately how long of a period is

necessary to survey a source in order to identify all the articles pertaining to a certain contentious gathering. For a set of precisely-dated events reported in the Times and Morning Chronicle, advance notices (especially in the form of meeting announcements) appear up to 29 days before the actual gathering occurs; 14 percent of our articles were advance notices of one type or another. Because of trial procedures, petitions finding their way to Parliament after the meeting to draw them, and the like, mentions continued to be located long after the actual contentious gathering occurred. Some eight percent of all mentions appeared more than one month after the event in question happened. The compilation suggests that in order to identify 95 percent of all the references to an event on any particular date it is necessary to survey four months of newspaper: one month prior to the event and three months after the date.

Another analysis in the appendix is one dealing with source relationships or overlaps. Table A-7 reports that in 1828 the Chronicle had 104 articles pertaining to contentious gatherings that no other source had. That figure rose in the following year to 114. The Times had 85 and 120 while the Mirror of Parliament had 49 and 22. Hansard's, the Gentleman's Magazine and the Annual Register, in contrast, did not have a single article that was not also mentioned in one of the other sources. In 1829 only the GM & the AR had no unique reports. The fact that a source does not have any CG's unique to itself does not mean that reading it was a wasted effort. All the sources provide important additional details for the enumeration of events in each data set. As the chart shows the two newspapers have a great deal of overlap between them, but also have a good deal of independent reporting of articles not in other sources. Overall most sources tend to overlap more with the newspapers than with the parliamentary reporters. That is especially so in 1828. The following year there is more of an overlap among the parliamentary reporters, possibly because of the interest in the issues then being debated. See table A-7 appendix 3 for more details.

Appendix 5 reports some results concerning the reliability of the coding process. It relates the outcome of a code/recode comparison of 55 events in the 1828 data set. In this first round of coding, 3.3 percent of the judgments made were definite errors: incorrect dates, wrong localities, and so on. Another 4.5 percent were unreliable in the sense that two instructed coders produced different judgments. In some of these cases, both judgments were actually acceptable; the use of slightly different words to describe the same action, for example. In the most pessimistic interpretation, then, the reliability of this preliminary coding effort was:

100.0 - (3.3 + 4.5) = 92.2 percent.

That figure is lower than we are willing to accept in the long run. We believe it possible to raise that score well above 95 percent, via a combination of:

1. clarification of our basic instructions and procedures;
2. standardized training;
3. continuous consultation with coders;
4. machine-based automatic prompting, consistency-checking and evaluation of coding results.

In fact (as the data on recoding in Appendix 5 indicate) our more experienced coders now have error rates running from 0.5 to 3.8 percent. We believe inter-coder agreements are rising as well. Since the original testing of the coding procedures, we have made no specific tests to check coding reliability, but we have instituted some procedures that tend to catch and correct any coding errors before they have a chance to be placed into the computer data set. One of the most important is a checking system that allows the most experienced coders the chance to review all of the newly-coded events before they are entered into the data set. They can make corrections and compile unofficial scores on all the newer coders. Meetings are held, and discussions serve to clarify rules and

policies. Reports of this system are most favorable. The final data as they appear on file are remarkably clean; free of mistakes and wild codes. And, of course, we are continuing the routine comparisons among the six sources and between them and other sources beyond the years 1828 and 29.

With regard to coding reliability, we are continuing along the path of quality control that we have already begun. We are attempting to automate a significant part of our reliability-checking by such devices as the automatic comparison of multiple codings of the same event, the operation of a disk file for the continuous monitoring of our coders' performance, and the building of extensive consistency checks into the routine of coder-machine interaction. We hope, finally, to use the great flexibility of our machine-stored dictionaries to identify alternate codings which are essentially interchangeable, and to estimate the effects of various types of unreliability on our analyses of the evidence.

That leads us to the issue of validity. It is possible to have enumeration and coding procedures which are highly reliable (in the sense that they produce essentially the same results in trial after trial) and yet to have the sources or methods introduce a systematic distortion of the reality. Now, validity is an inherently controversial notion; it requires some access to the truth. We can nevertheless make a few steps toward the validation of our evidence by comparing our description of what went on in some event or in some set of events with: a) the accounts of professional historians of the period, and b) portions of the material available to those professional historians. In particular, the comparisons between our accounts and those one can reconstruct from the papers of the Home Office and the Metropolitan Police serve not only to check our enumerations of events, but also to validate the descriptions of those events offered by our sources.

More quality control checks are being performed. As far as the initial enumeration of events is concerned, we do further comparisons with periodicals whose selectivity is presumably different from those we have examined so far: newspapers from other regions, labor periodicals, and so on. We are making comparisons between the events in our samples and those mentioned in the papers of the Home Office and of the Metropolitan Police. In a few cases, we are able to compare our enumerations with those of other scholars whose concerns overlap our own; the outstanding example is the analysis of the 1830 agrarian conflicts (the Swing Rebellion) by E.J. Hobsbawm and George Rudé. At present some graduate students are undertaking sustained studies of particular groups and localities, not only looking at contention, but repression and a wide range of collective action. These studies should make it possible to situate the discontinuous events we are examining within continuous historical experiences.

The reliability of our data depends heavily on the reliability of our sources. In order to test our sources for the amount of materials they have as compared to any others we conducted parallel readings in an important regional newspaper (Lancaster Gazette) and an influential newspaper of political commentary (Cobbett's Political Register). We have read the Gazette for 1828 and 1829; the complete results are shown on maps in Appendix 4. In 1828 there were 33 noted contentious gatherings taken from the Gazette 23 of which were already noted in our standard seven sources. For the following year 101 CG's were noted, 87 of which we also had enumerated. For a two year period in which we found over 1200 events the Lancaster Gazette only found 134, 24 of which we did not have. The maps in the appendix show the regional extent of those 24 gatherings. All were very near the home city of the paper. Content also was regional, as most events were small scale and not concerned with national issues. Cobbett's tabloid was even less notable for mentions of contention. We read the whole series for

1828 and noted only 16 total gatherings, 12 of which we already had.

Although we intend to continue similar comparisons, particularly in Scottish and other regional papers and in the Public Record Office papers (Home Office, etc.), we find these above mentioned results encouraging. They suggest that our seven sources are more comprehensive than any likely competitors, and that their selectivity is not so great as to block the sorts of regional and temporal comparisons we have in mind.

From the review of sources we feel that our collection of contentious gatherings is superior to any feasible alternative. No archival source or series of archival sources can rival these periodicals. While we do not have all contentious gatherings that occurred in Great Britain from 1828 to 1834 we have an excellent sample of them. However the sample is almost certainly selective in the following ways:

1) overrepresentation of urban events;

2) overrepresentation of London metropolitan events, especially along communication lines such as roads and waterways;

3) reporting bias toward larger events (larger in personnel & time expended);

4) more events reported that have a national political context;

5) reporting violent events over nonviolent;

6) reporting bias toward meetings, especially ones that send petitions;

7) more reporting of events that are part of a national campaign or are a series of actions such as the Swing Riots or an election.

Nonetheless, for most purposes we do not need an unbiased sample to analyze. For even if the above seven are true we do have many examples of rural events, non-London events, small scale events and meetings without petitions. Underrepresentation is not unrepresentation.

This sample of contentious gatherings, then, has some gaps and biases.

Like all historical evidence, one must use it with care. Yet the material is dense, rich and precise enough to provide an ample picture of day-to-day contention in the Britain of 1828 and 1829. It also offers an unparalleled opportunity to trace connections between conflicts on the small scale and the large. In fact, one of the more surprising conclusions which emerges from this large accumulation of evidence is the considerable connection between the issues which exercise national leaders and activate Parliament, on the one hand, and the stakes, timing and personnel of local conflicts, on the other. To see that more clearly, let us turn to a general review of contention in 1828 and 1829 throughout Great Britain.

BRITAIN IN 1828 AND 1829

At the end of the 1820s, Great Britain was a nation (some would say three nations, or more) of 16 million people. The number was growing fast: up from 10.5 million in 1801, on its way to 20.8 million in 1851. Of 1831's total of 16.3 million, Wales had some 800 thousand people, Scotland about 2.4 million, and England the great majority: 13.1 million. Those people were already disproportionately concentrated in the London region and in the industrial areas of Lancashire, Yorkshire and Scotland. We say "already" because as of 1828 and 1829 the great nineteenth-century movement of urban-industrial concentration still had far to go. In 1801, about one person in six (16.5 percent) had lived in a city of 20,000 or more; in 1831, the figure was one in four (24.6 percent); in 1851, one in three (34.0 percent).

As of 1828, then, more than three quarters of the population of Great Britain lived in the countryside or in smaller towns. At that point in time, Britain's families split about evenly among three broad economic categories: 1) agriculture, 2) trade and manufacturing, 3) services; at the census of 1831, the figures were a million families in agriculture, 1.4 million in trade,

manufactures and handicraft, another million in "other industries", which were chiefly services. The agricultural sector was leveling off while the manufacturing and service sectors were growing rapidly. Factories were shooting up, manufacturing was moving into the cities from the hamlets and small towns where it had thrived in the eighteenth century, and a disciplined, fragmented sort of work was displacing the artisanal and domestic forms of production which had prevailed until then. By the standards of the time, Great Britain was the world's leading example of urbanization and industrialization.

This fast-changing country was much divided by class, region and faith. E.P. Thompson's The Making of the English Working Class protrays a division between workers and authorities which, at the end of the 1820s, was growing ever wider and deeper. Even if we exclude turbulent Ireland (a difficult thing to do in the Great Britain of the 1820s), the extent of cleavage by region and tongue was remarkable for so small a space. The regional and linguistic segregation of Great Britain, moreover, overlapped to some extent with its segregation by religion. Large communities of Anglicans, Dissenters and Catholics confronted each other in the presence of many smaller religious groupings. Britain fragmented in other ways as well.

As it happens, the chief divisions which had been visible in the national politics of the years leading up to 1828 and 1829, aside from party factions within the privileged classes, followed the lines of religion and social class. The "Irish Question" gained some of its acuteness from hostility between British and Irish workers within Great Britain, and acquired much of its immediacy from the massive mobilization of the Irish in Ireland behind such leaders as Daniel O'Connell. Yet in the British national politics of the 1820s the question pivoted on the political representation of Roman Catholics. The

possible admission of Catholics to public office, however, challenged a structure which legally excluded not only Catholics but Protestant Dissenters, Jews, and other faiths. (That the legal principle had frequently been compromised by ad hoc legislation and administrative arrangement did not diminish its salience in the politics of the time.) At the same time, workers were pressing for the right to organize around work-related issues, and to exert political pressure, as varying coalitions of middle-class reformers and artisans agitated to broaden the suffrage, reform Parliament, and introduce greater popular representation into other levels of government. The big manufacturers, increasingly aware of the effects of high food prices on their labor costs, pressed for the importation of continental grain. By that pressure they set themselves against large landlords and the landlords' farmers, who profited from their protected position in the domestic grain market.

As the year 1828 opened, the Duke of Wellington became Prime Minister. During the year, Wellington was preoccupied with British rule in Ireland, but had plenty of political business at home. As Robert Peel said in his memoirs, the ministry formed with forebodings of deep division:

> I had no desire whatever to resume office, and I foresaw great difficulty in the conduct of public affairs, on account of the state of parties and the position of public men in reference to the state of Ireland and the Catholic question. It appeared to me on the one hand that the attempt to form an united Government on the principle of resistance to the claims of the Roman Catholics was perfectly hopeless. In the preceding year the measure of concession had been negatived in the House of Commons by a majority of four votes only in a very full House, the numbers being 276 to 272. On the other hand it was very doubtful whether, after the events which had succeeded the retirement of Lord Liverpool -- the schism among

> the members of his administration -- the adherence of some to Mr. Canning -- the separation of others -- they could now be reunited in office (Peel, Jan, 1828: 13).

In Parliament, Wellington, a Tory, faced a formidable Whig opposition. From the beginning, the Duke found himself trying to check, preempt or outflank demands for reform: for repeal of the Corn Laws which protected the big grain producers against lower-priced foreign grain; for Catholic Emancipation; for repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts; for reform of parish government; for Reform in general. In other words: for free trade and the manufacturing interest, for the political rights of religious minorities, for the right of the citizens of local communities to govern their own affairs, for the broadening and equalization of parliamentary representation -- for the most part, standard demands of nineteenth-century liberals.

Much of the parliamentary maneuvering of 1828 and 1829 consisted of Wellington's feints, jabs and timely retreats on these and related issues. Test Act repeal came in May of 1828, a compromise Corn Law in July 1828, Catholic Emancipation in March and April 1829. The law permitting Catholics to sit in Parliament only passed after great organizing efforts of O'Connell and his Catholic Association in Ireland, after the crisis precipitated by the partly fortuitous election of O'Connell to Parliament from County Clare, after a wide mobilization and counter-mobilization around the Catholic Question in England, and after prolonged maneuvering in and around Parliament The same set of issues, as we shall see, recurred in the public discussion and popular political action of the time. In fact, there was a surprising correspondence between the general themes of popular contention and of contention in Parliament.

The historian who cares to practice a little "adumbrationism" can easily see in the struggles of 1828 and 1829 foreshadowings of the great movements

soon to come: the industrial conflicts and agrarian rebellions of 1830, the great mobilization for Reform in 1831 and 1832, the pressure for factory legislation and revision of the Poor Law, perhaps even Chartism. Robert Peel's organization of the Metropolitan Police in 1829, for example, opened a new era in governmental control of public order just as working-class challenges to that order were reviving. The broad, effective organization of the Catholic Association in Ireland (and the British government's yielding to its implicit threat of Irish rebellion) provided a model for Reform agitation. As Michael Brock reports,

> O'Connell's success in enforcing his demands led to the founding in July 1829 of the London Radical Reform Association. It was to imitate his 'catholic rent' of a penny. At the Leicester Reform dinner in August 1829 one of the city's Members, Robert Otway Cave, recommended 'the establishment of a club or committee, resembling the Catholic Association, to take advantage of every favourable opportunity for working Reform' (Brock 1973: 58).

The most influential Reform version of the Catholic Association was Thomas Attwood's Birmingham Political Union, founded at the tail end of our period: December, 1829 and January 1830 (see Flick 1978).

Although the class conflict and class rhetoric of later years did not yet pervade the public life of 1828 and 1829, a careful reader can again find adumbrations of struggles to come in the pamphlets and papers of the time. In 1828 and 1829, this was the tone of the Cooperator:

> The capitalists produce nothing themselves; they are fed, clothed and lodged by the working classes . . . In the present form of society, the workmen are entirely in the power of the capitalists, who are incessantly playing at what is called profit and loss -- and the workmen are the . .

> counters, which are pitched backwards and forwards with this unfortunate difference -- that the counters do not eat and drink as workmen do, and therefore don't mind being thrown aside at the end of the game. The game could not be played without the counters; and capitalists could not play at profit and loss without the workmen. But the workmen are as much in the power of the capitalists, as the counters are in that of the players; and if the capitalists do not want them, they must go to the wall ... . We claim for the workman the rights of a rational and moral agent . . . the being whose exertions produce all the wealth of the world -- we claim for him the rights of a man, and deprecate the philosophy which would make him an article of merchandize, to be bought and sold, multiplied or diminished, by no other rules than those which serve to decide the manufacture of a hat (Hollis 1973: 50-51).

Thus, in the Britain of 1828 and 1829, the language of class conflict was available, if not dominant.

THE EVENTS OF 1828 AND 1829

In order to better understand the nature of contention in 1828 and 1829, let us examine the types of gatherings that occurred and the number of times each type was enumerated. Our total enumeration of events amounts to 595 for the year 1828 and 641 for 1829. Although a review of our early work is planned and minor adjustments may be indicated, we believe these figures to be very nearly exact. Listed below are our fourteen working categories of events, with an illustration for each type:

1. Conflicts of Poachers and Gameskeepers. G.H. Crutchley's game preserves were invaded by a gang of 15 poachers on the night of January 6, 1828. Gameskeeper Godfrey and his assistants came upon the group who were firing at some birds. The poachers, in turn, fired at the keepers, injuring one and driving off some of the others. Of those keepers who stayed to fight, one was severely beaten with a gun. The poachers escaped.

2. Fights Between Smugglers and Custom Officers. During the night of January 4, 1828, on the Sussex coast, a "company," or land gang, rushed upon the beach to receive their cargo of spirits, but were intercepted by the Coast Blocade. "A desperate fight took place." Four men were killed and many were wounded, as the Coast Blockade was repulsed and the smugglers made off with their goods.

3. Brawls in Drinking Places. On Christmas Day, 1828, in Portsmouth, a brawl took place between soldiers and sailors. One soldier was killed, and several sailors were wounded.

4. Other Violent Gatherings. At St. Martin's Parish, London, in April, 1828, the Select Vestry held a closed meeting to nominate parish officials. A number of Open Vestry men, attempting to disrupt the meeting, clashed with beadles and constables. A "general rush took place," and "sundry blows fell upon the heads of the besieging party."

5. Attacks on Blacklegs and Other Unplanned Gatherings. On Saturday, September 5, 1829, an assemblage of striking spinners appeared at the mills of Messrs. Standford and Green in Manchester. Their purpose was to intimidate those spinners who were still working. The "knobsticks" (strike-breakers) left work an hour early that day to avoid the "turnouts". However, the striking spinners had set up a watch and quickly assembled to attack the knobsticks in their Hackney coaches, and the police escort. Stones and other missiles were thrown. Many coach windows were broken. As the coaches sped off, the mob followed, hooting and throwing stones.

6. Unplanned Market Gatherings. An example is the common food riot where groups of market-goers seize items and sell them at a forced reduced rate, i.e., taking bread from the baker's shop and distributing it to the crowd for a fixed price.

7. Other Unplanned Gatherings. A crowd collected around a member of the New Police in Holborn, London, on the night of November 3, 1829, and taunted him because he had recently been charged with stealing some mutton. The crowd grew to great numbers and called out, "How did you like the mutton yesterday?" The chief offender was taken into custody.

8. Authorized Celebrations. November 10, 1828, Lord Mayor's Day, included processions, speeches and a gala dinner at the Guild Hall. The festivities were accompanied by cheering crowds.

9. Delegations. Certain gentlemen and merchants interested in the West Indian Islands waited upon the Duke of Wellington on March 12, 1828, to discuss the colonial policy.

10. Parades, Demonstrations and Rallies. A rally was held for the Duke of Sussex at Trinity College, Cambridge. The Senate house was crowded and the Duke was received with loud cheers.

11. Strikes and Turnouts. Sixteen prisoners at the House of Corrections refused to work on the treadmill. (After one ringleader was flogged and others kept in solitary confinement, they "came to their senses.")

12. Pre-Planned Meetings of Named Associations. The British Catholic Association met on January 22, 1828, in Bloomsbury, to petition Parliament for Catholic rights.

13. Pre-Planned Meetings of Public Assemblies. A pre-announced meeting took place on August 2, 1828, in Leeds, Yorkshire, regarding the wool trade, where it was decided to oppose any additional duty on imports of foreign wool.

14. Other Pre-Planned Meetings. One such meeting was noted in a petition presented by Mr. Calcraft, from the inhabitants of Dorchester, in favor of Catholic Emancipation.

GEOGRAPHICAL AND TEMPORAL DISTRIBUTION OF EVENTS

The tables which follow regroup the contentious gatherings of each year (1828 & 1829) in two ways: by region and by time period.

Eight geographical areas of Great Britain have been selected to display the fourteen categories of contention. (See Table #3, entitled "Contentious Gatherings Listed by Event Types in Eight Geographic Areas for 1828.") This chart presents a simple format by which one can denote types of contention that are prevalent in the selected area. For example, Middlesex county, which includes most of metropolitan London, has almost as much contention as the category "Other England", while all of Wales and Scotland combined have only slightly more contention than the county of Kent in the year 1828.

If we compare 1828 to 1829 we see that Middlesex diminished somewhat in importance (3.1%) but Scotland's level of action has increased somewhat, up 33 gatherings (6 violent and 26 meetings), or 4.6% of the total for the year. Other notable items in the two-year comparison are the drop in smuggling and poaching, plus the large increase in "other violent gatherings". The largest single-category increase was in meetings, due in part to the Catholic Emanicipation question before Parliament. When we look more closely at the meeting categories, we see some shifting occurring. There is a drop in the number of pre-planned meetings of named associations. This is due to the fact in 1828 there was a bill in Parliament to regulate "friendly societies." The societies, most of which had a formal name, petitioned Parliament against

the bill. This situation did not occur in 1829 when the largest piece of legislation was the Catholic Emanicipation bill; it was backed not by named groups but by individuals who called town and area meetings to send their support to Parliament. That would account for the increase in the category of meetings of public assemblies. In Wales, where that type of standardized meeting was less likely to occur because of the scattered population, there was an increase of "other pre-planned meetings." We might also note the doubling in the category of Parades, Rallies, & Demonstrations. This increase is due to the increased election activity in 1829. Listed below are the eight geographical areas in rank order, denoting their increase in total contentious gatherings.

GEOGRAPHIC AREA	CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF CG'S 1828 TO 1829
SCOTLAND	+33
OTHER ENGLAND	+23
LANCASHIRE	+14
DORSET	+13
HAMPSHIRE	+ 8
KENT	+ 5
MIDDLESEX	- 3
WALES	- 5

Table #5, "Percentage Distribution of Contentious Gatherings in Great Britain, by Type and Area," used the 14 categories of contention and the eight geographical areas, just as chart one did. Here we have presented the data in a percentage format. This enables viewing the internal changes within the

geographical areas from year to year. Named association meetings were the most frequent contention in Middlesex in 1828, but in 1829 there was a more general split among all types of meetings. Dorset on the other hand had nearly a majority of its contention in the demonstration category in '28, but shifted to other pre-planned meetings for '29. Hampshire and Scotland's style of contention remained the same for the two years, mostly meetings. While the other areas did some shifting, it was among the meeting types and that can be attributed to the reasons mentioned above.

The seventh table in this series, "Contentious Gatherings Listed by Event Type In A Monthly Distribution for 1828", denotes some different, yet equally interesting, results. The poaching category, for example, shows us that this activity was mainly carried out in the colder months; no events were reported for the months of March through September. This is in contrast to the other violent events that have a more even spread over both years. It is also notable that almost half of all events in September of both years were of a violent nature. In 1828 the summer months were relatively quiet, while in the next year the same period saw an increase in violent conflicts. There is either too little evidence or uncertain information for the two categories of Delegations and Market Conflicts & Strikes to see any formal patterns. Meetings, however, present us with some enlightening information.

If we locate the high points of numbers of meetings in both years (February in 1828 and February-March in 1829) and compare them to a chart of total petitions presented to Parliament for the same period, we can see a striking relationship. The high periods of petitions presented and contentious gatherings recorded as meetings are at, or near, the same time. If we note the issues of these meetings, we can further see that almost all of them deal with Parliamentary issues. This fact shows a strong relationship between the majority

of contention in Britain and the happenings in Lords and Commons. As the debates warm up about a particular issue, be it Test & Corporation or Catholic Emanicipation, the gatherings in the country-side increase to try to influence the debates in Westminister. In periods when the legislature is not in session the amount of meetings drops off to a trickle.

If we consolidate the contentious gatherings into three broad categories -- meetings of named associations, other meetings, and all other CG's -- the impact of national politics on the rhythm of contention becomes obvious. Figure 5 displays the flow of the three classes of events over the twenty-four months of 1828 and 1829. For comparison, it also shows the duration of the two sessions of Parliament. Two linked facts immediately strike the eye:

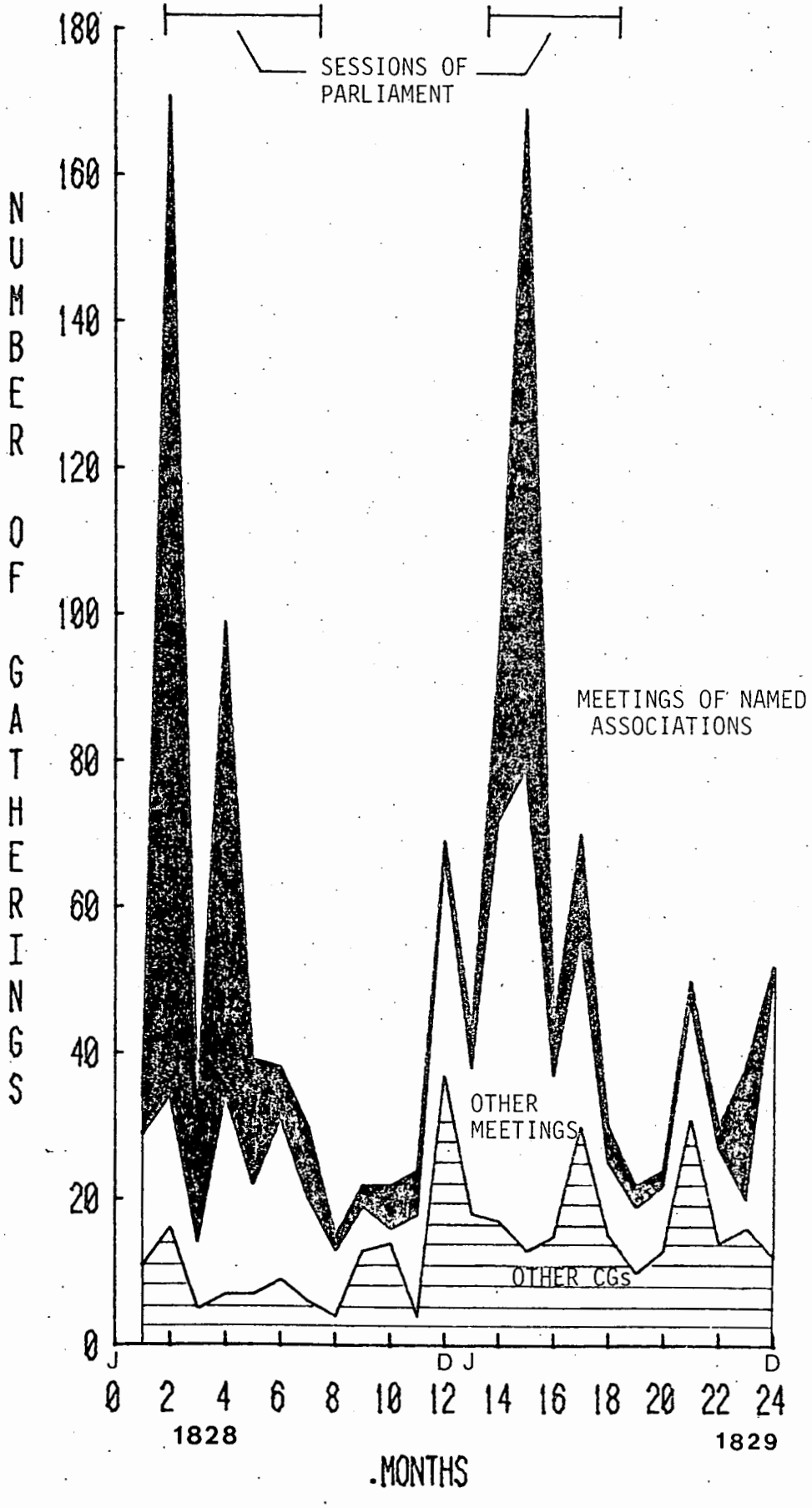
1. The number of meetings of named associations which qualify as contentious gatherings varies enormously from month to month; in our sample, that fluctuation accounts for most of the month-to-month variation in the total number of CGs'

2. Those meetings are heavily concentrated in the periods when Parliament was in session.

The three peaks of CGs correspond to the major parliamentary debates over the Test and Corporation Act repeal (February 1828) and Catholic Emancipation (April 1828 and May 1829). In fact, a large share of all the meetings concerned those very issues. Over the two years as a whole, we classified Test and Corporation as the "major issue" of 183 events, and Catholic Emancipation as the major issue of a full 275 events. Many of these events came to our attention, indeed, because the meeting sent a petition to Parliament stating a position on one issue or the other.

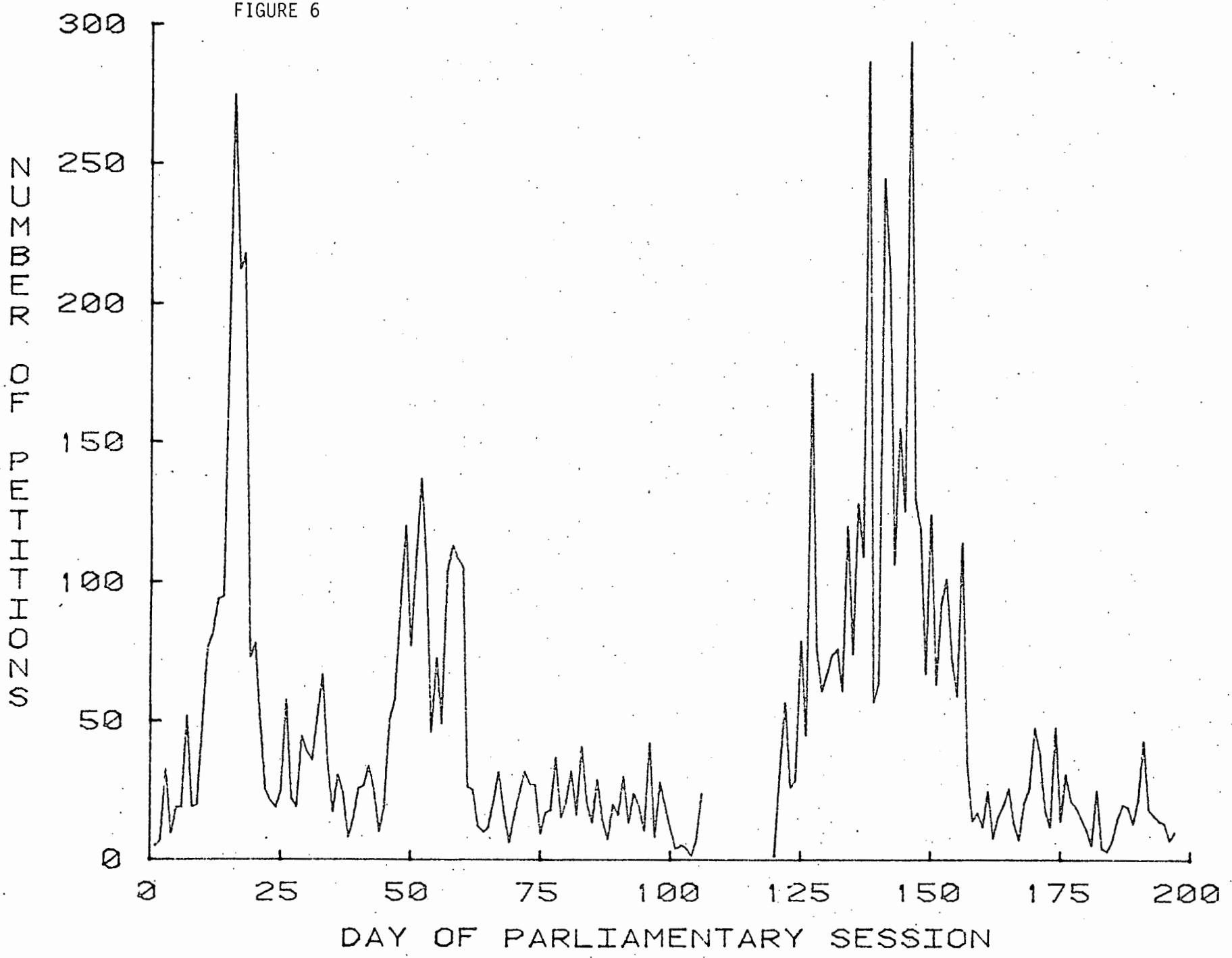
As a result of these connections, the tempo of petitioning and the overall tempo of contention showed a remarkable correspondence to each other. Figure 6 presents the day-by-day fluctuations in the number of petitions registered by Parliament during its sessions of 1828 and 1829; the numbers include

FIGURE 5 TYPES OF CONTENTIOUS GATHERINGS BY MONTH, 1828-1829



TOTAL PETITIONS PRESENTED, 1828 & 1829

FIGURE 6



all petitions, regardless of whether they came from meetings which qualify as contentious gatherings, and regardless of the topic they concerned. The same three peaks of activity appear clearly; they center on February 1828, April 1828, and March 1829. Nor is that a coincidence: the petitions arriving in February 1828 dealt especially with the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, and were mainly favorable; the petitions arriving in April 1828 dealt chiefly with Catholic Emancipation, and were preponderantly favorable; those arriving in March 1829 likewise tended to concern Catholic Emancipation, but were now largely unfavorable. During the many months that Parliament was avoiding the issue, Brunswick Clubs and other anti-Catholic groups were organizing campaigns of meetings, petitions and propaganda against the bill. Those campaigns accelerated as Parliament moved toward a decision -- in the event of a reluctant decision in favor of seating Catholics while disbanding the Catholic Association. The tempos of national issues dominated petitions to Parliament as they dominated the overall ups and downs of contentious gatherings.

Nonetheless, other sorts of contentious gatherings varied in partial independence of national politics. The three largest clusters of "other CGs" were the 37 of December 1828, the 31 of May 1829 and the 31 of September 1829. In December 1828, a combination of frequent encounters between hunters and game wardens with parades, rallies and similar events in the course of local elections brought the totals up. In May 1829, a surge of strikes and other workers' actions throughout England produced an unusual number of contentious gatherings. In September of the same year, industrial conflict played an even more important part than in May. Poaching incidents, local elections and worker-owned struggles sometimes responded to national politics and sometimes became issues for national politics, but they also had their own rhythms.

Looking at the distribution of major issues over the two year period will show the changes we've just discussed. At a glance one can see that Wales in

1828 had the vast majority of its issues as Test & Corporation Acts repeal. This is understandable and explainable because of the large numbers of dissenters residing in that area. What is not so explainable is the way Middlesex seems to act very much like the "Other England" area in having a large number of issues occupying the minds of its populace. It is possible that this variety is caused by a reporting bias toward the London metropolitan area; that remains to be proven or disproven.

What do we mean by "major issue?" It is simply a label attached to each contentious gathering noting the central theme that the gathering is taking place over. For example, if a group of inhabitants of London gather to petition Parliament to grant Catholics equal rights, the issue would be "Catholic Rights Pro." If the petition was in favor of the Catholic Emancipation Act the issue would read "Catholic Emancipation Pro". In order to give some insight as to what issues were the most popular within eight selected geographical areas, we used our graphic equipment and scaled some pie graphs. The diameter of the pies on any particular page is proportional to the number of gatherings in that geographical area. The number of gatherings is printed following the name of the region next to each pie. Within each pie, the major issues for all gatherings are noted by wedges that show their relative weight among all issues for that unit in that year. For example, the pies for 1829 of Lancashire and Kent show that Kent had approximately half as many events as did Lancashire, because the circle or pie representing Kent is half the size of the Lancashire pie. For internal division of the pies, look at Hampshire and note that the two main issues for that county were the repeal of the Test & Corporation Acts and the Friendly Society Bill in Parliament. Other single issues were also important to county residents, as they make up the third category of the pie.

The two maps seen earlier in Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the distribution

FIGURE 7

MAJOR ISSUES BY REGION, 1828

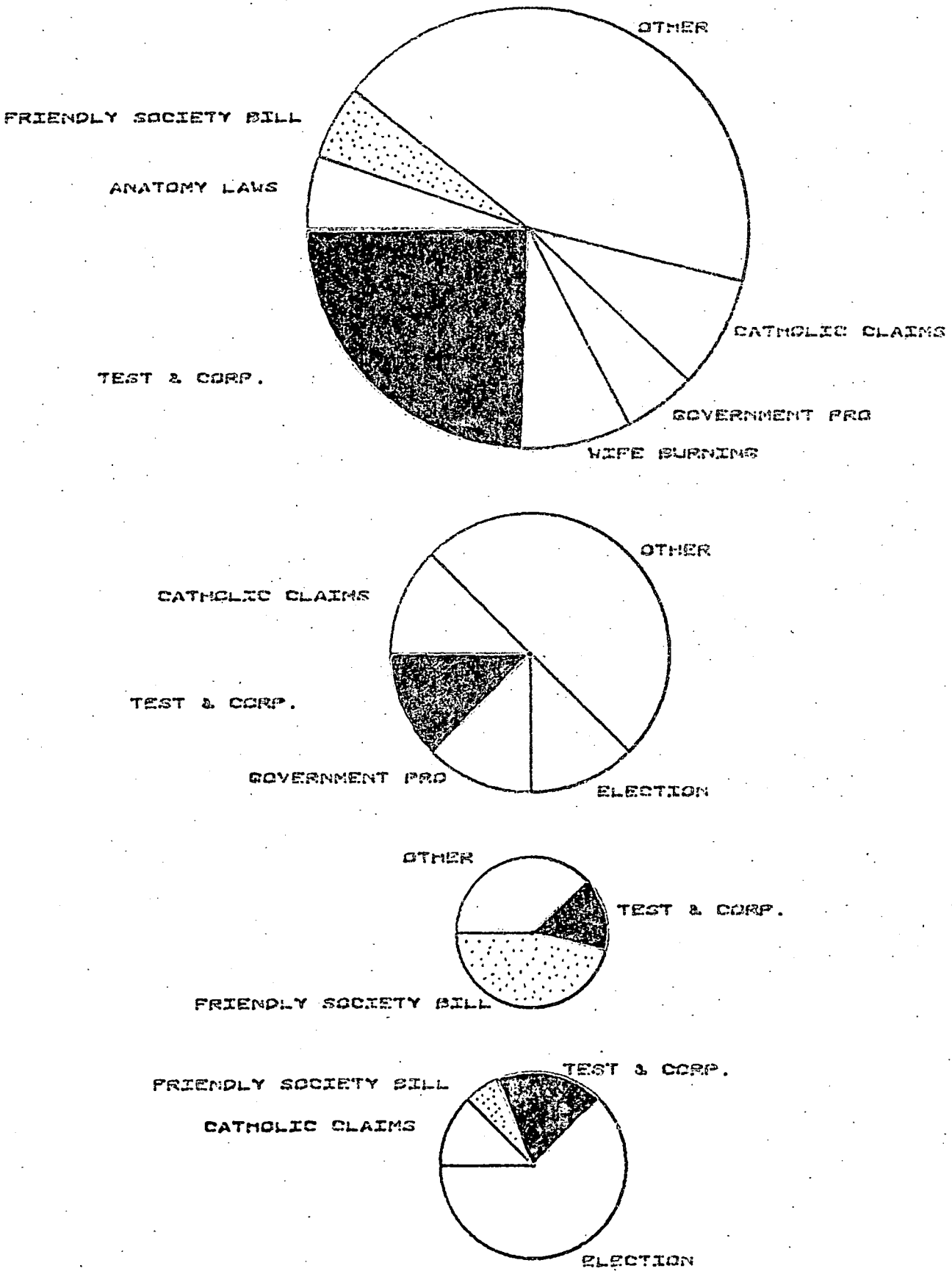


FIGURE 7

MAJOR ISSUES BY REGION, 1828

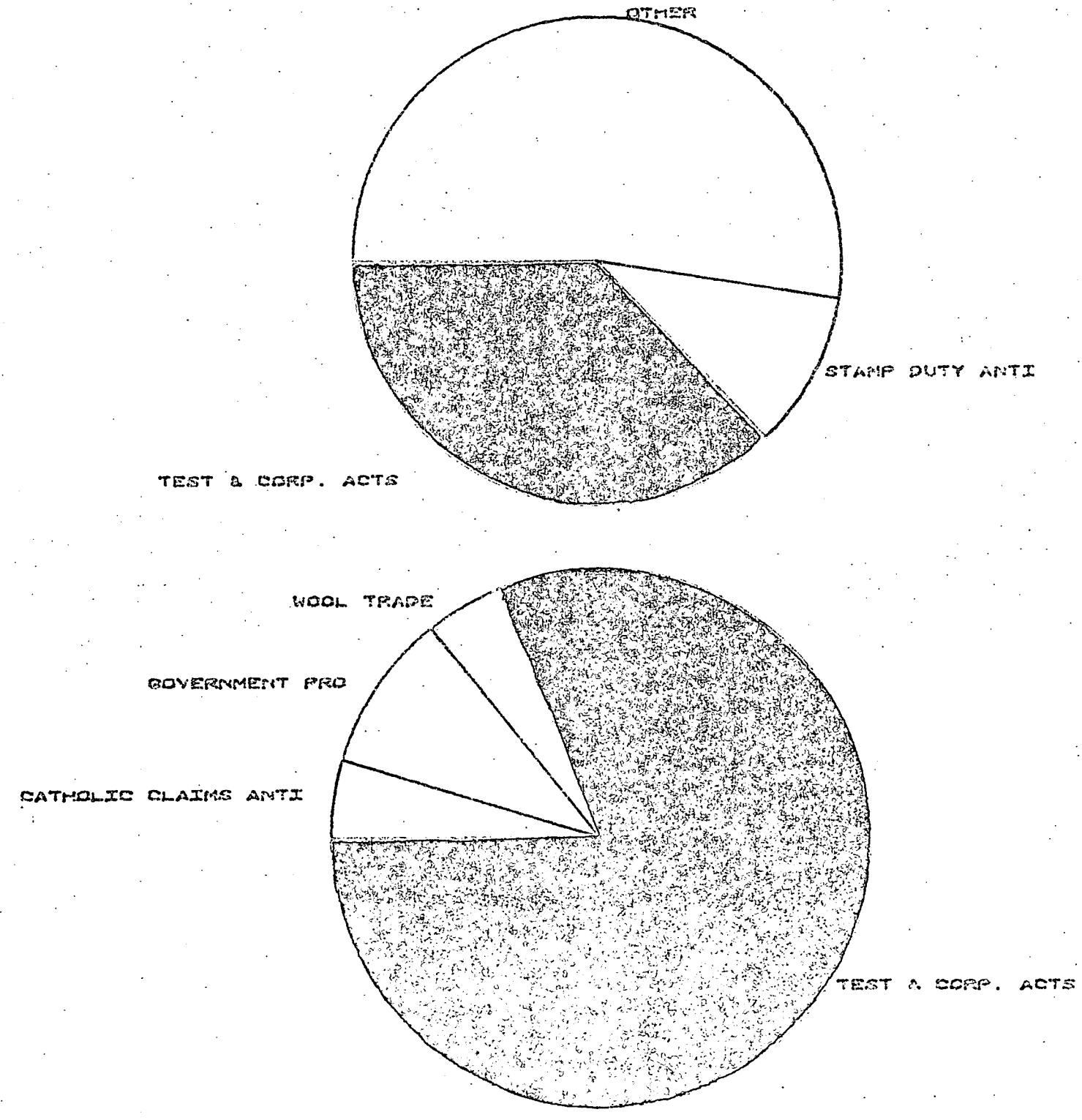
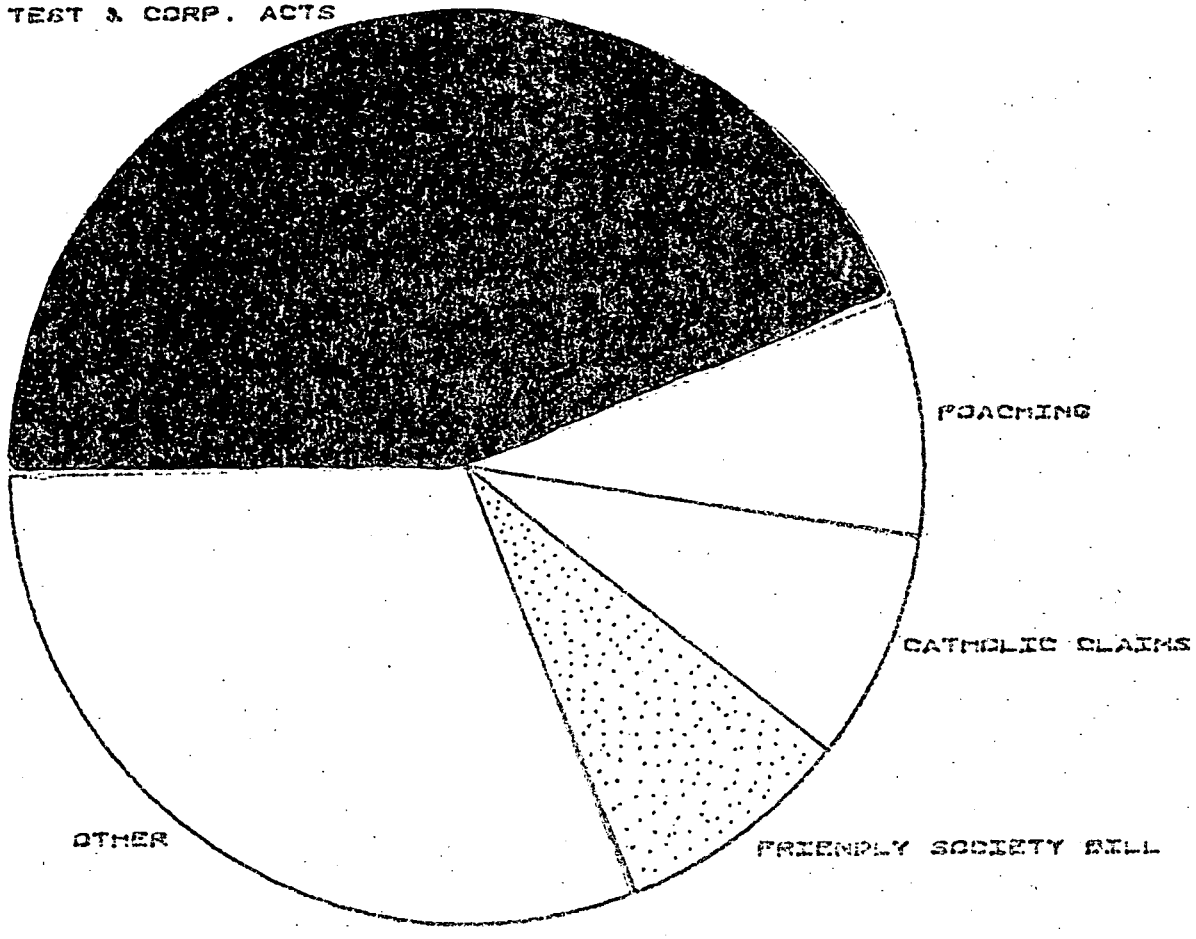
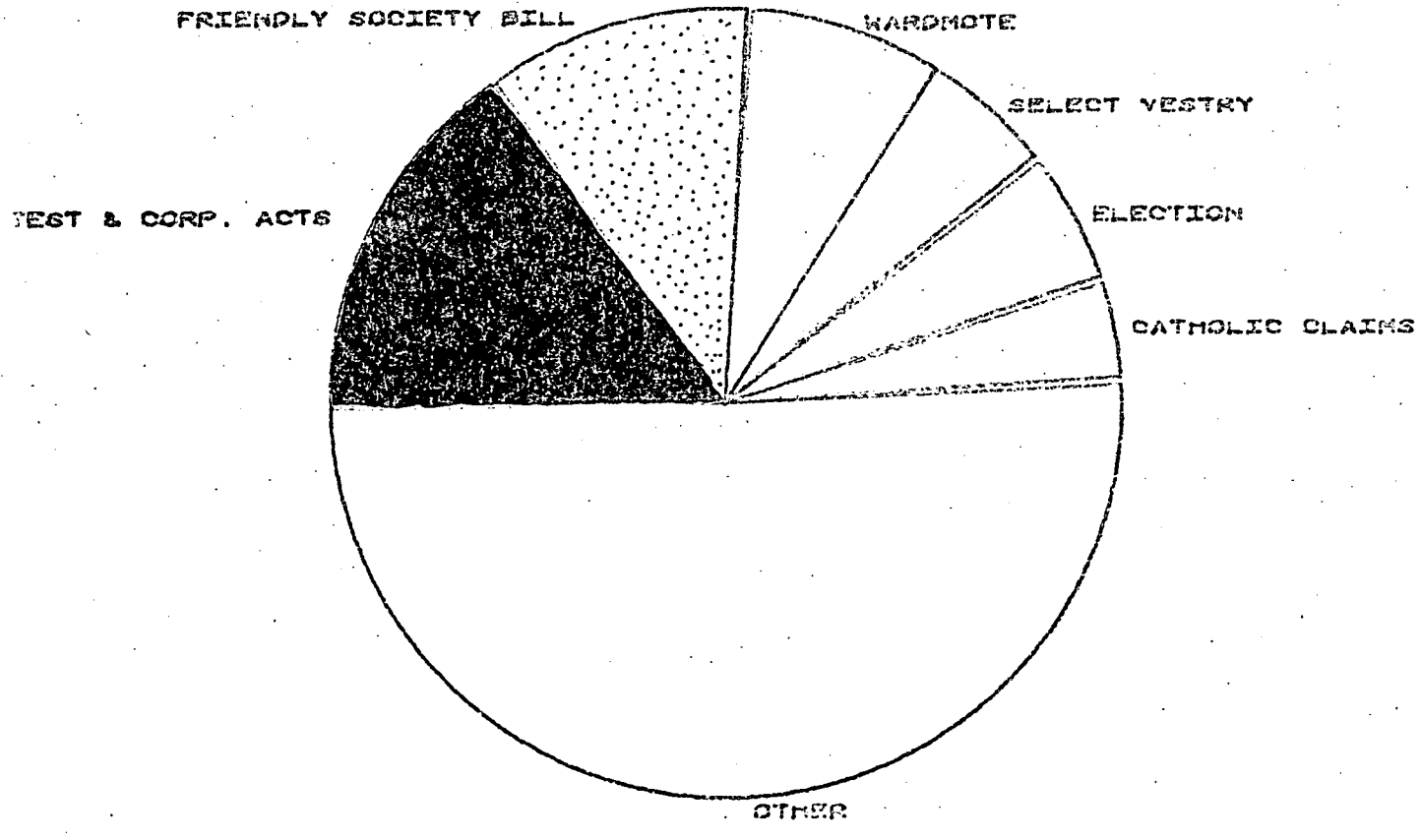


FIGURE 7 MAJOR ISSUES BY REGION, 1828 71



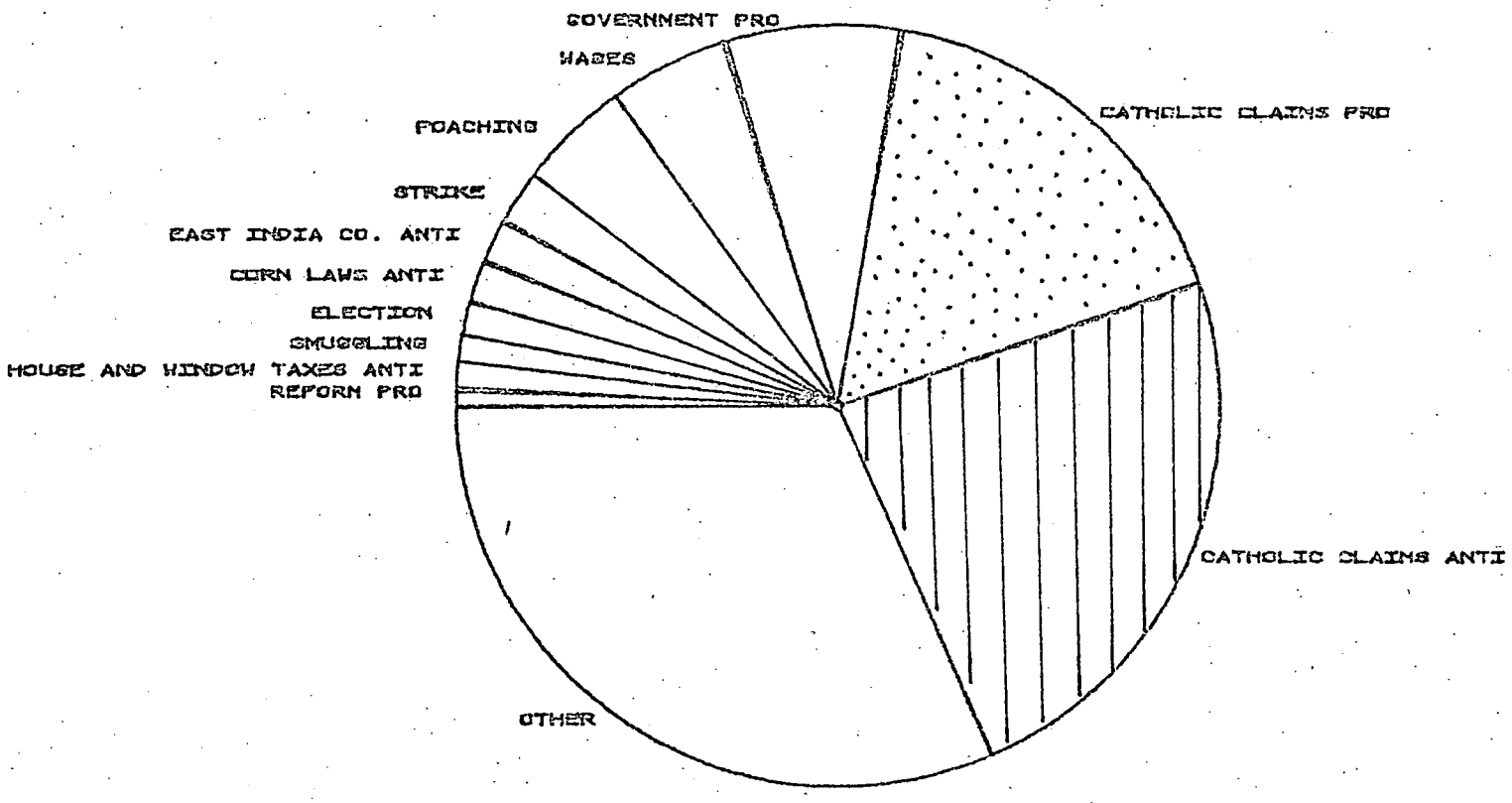
OTHER ENGLAND 247



MIDDLESEX 217

FIGURE 8

MAJOR ISSUES BY REGION, 1829



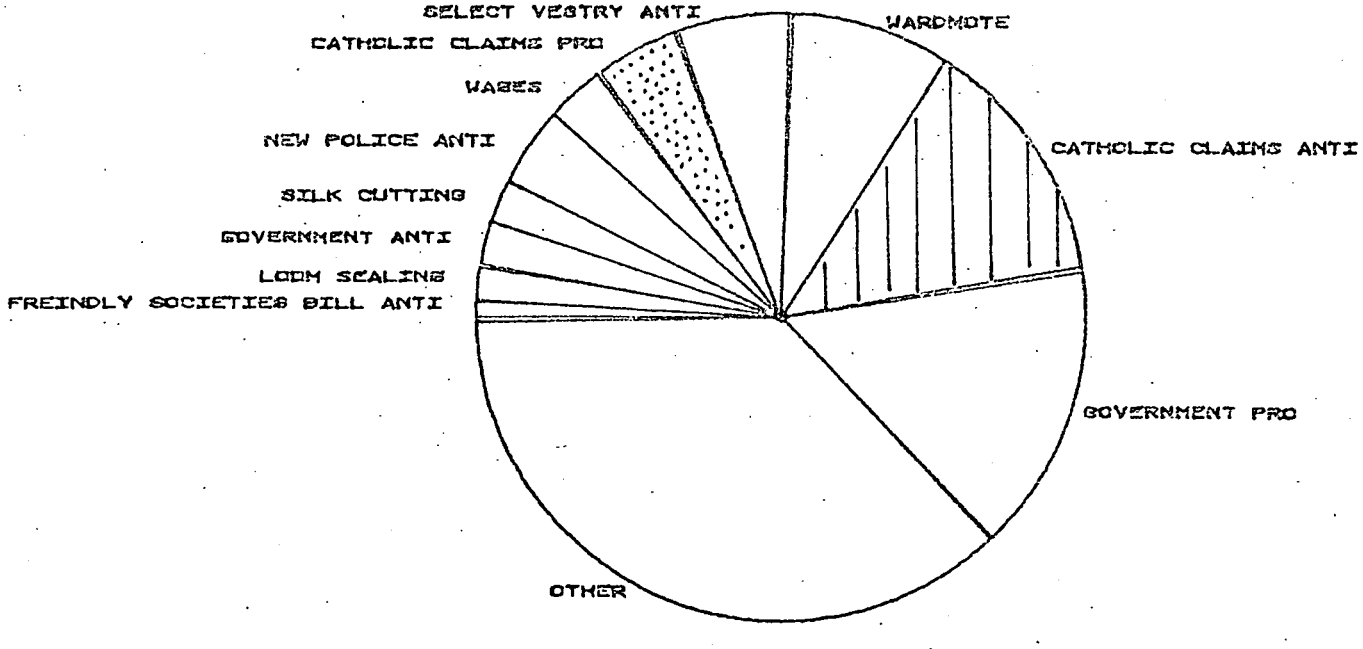


FIGURE 8 MAJOR ISSUES BY REGION, 1829

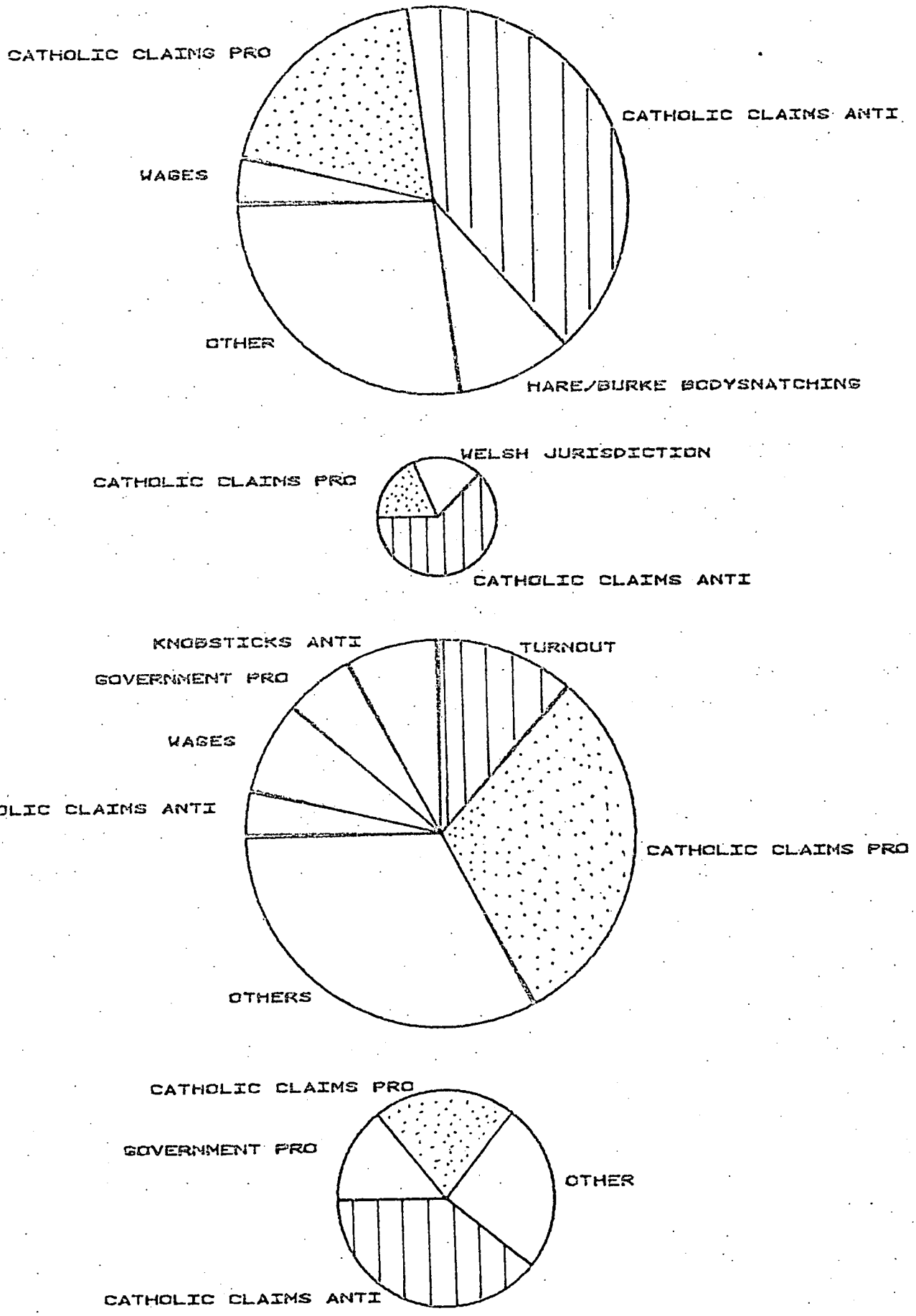
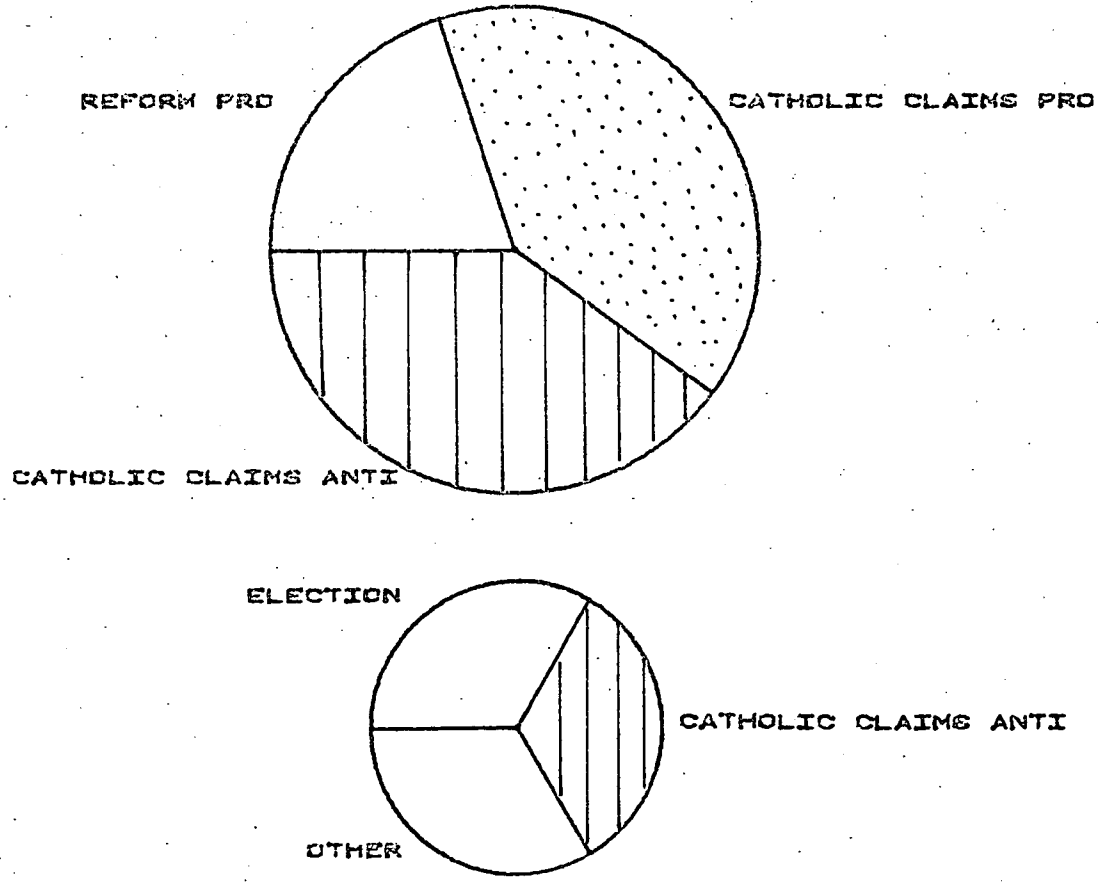


FIGURE 8

MAJOR ISSUES BY REGION, 1829



of contention in 1828 and 1829. These maps were prepared by our computing staff, with the assistance of graphics terminal and plotter. The data are translated from our basic data files and plotted on pre-made computer outline maps of Great Britain*. On the '28 map, two clusters appear, indicating high concentrations of contentious activities,-one in the Middlesex, London area, and the other in the industrial north of Britain: Chester, Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire. In the following year, the pattern is the same, but with the addition of Warwick as an expecially active area. Although the year 1828 was not a time of major industrial conflict, it is interesting to note that the north contributed a good percent of Britain's contention for both years. Given the patterns of activity in the London area in both years, it is a bit surprising to find no contention in Hertford in 1828, and in 1829 there was very little there and in the north of London. There is a notable lack of gatherings in Scotland or Wales in 1828; and, while the level does increase somewhat in Scotland the next year, there is still little contention in these two areas in 1829. In 1828, only one county in Scotland -- Edinburgh -- had more than two CG's and the following year, 27 of the 33 counties still had fewer than two. Wales is made up of twelve counties. In 1828, nine of these counties had no gatherings for the entire year. The next year, the figure remained low, at 8 counties with one or less.

This picture changes when we correct for population. In terms of events per one hundred thousand people, these were the leading counties in both years:

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* The authors wish to thank Chris McKesson for his work in producing these maps and the materials for our graphic displays.

1828		1829	
Middlesex	15.9	Middlesex	15.8
Dorset	10.3	Bute (Scotland)	7.0
Pembroke (Wales)	9.9	Sussex	6.9
Northumberland	7.1	Warwick	6.8
Berkshire	6.8	Kent	6.1
Monmouth	6.1	Pembroke (Wales)	6.1
Kent	5.3	Lanark (Scotland)	5.7
Northampton	4.5	Edinburgh (Scotland)	5.0
Worcester	4.3	Cambridge	4.8

See Table A-1 on page 108 for details. In these comparisons the same clusters around London stand out, more so in 1829; but because of its large population, the industrial north slips out of the list. Lancashire has 2.8 & 3.8 events per 100 thousand people in those two years. Wales, with Pembroke, looks more turbulent when the figures are adjusted; and Scotland has three counties on the list for 1829.

We have taken the data for two years, bent and stretched it into geographical areas and event types then placed it into maps, pies and tables to view it. We have drawn some parallels and conclusions, but all this still leads us into thinking "what else?"

Table 3

CONTENTIOUS GATHERINGS LISTED BY EVENT TYPES IN EIGHT GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS FOR 1828

Type of Gathering	Middlesex	Dorset	Hampshire	Kent	Lancashire	Other England	Wales	Scotland	TOTAL
1. Poachers vs. Gameskeepers	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	20
2. Smugglers vs. Customs	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	3
3. Brawls in Drinking Places	4	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	6
4. Other Violent Gatherings	22	0	1	1	2	17	0	3	46
5. Attacks on Blacklegs and Other Unplanned Gatherings	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
6. Market Conflicts	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
7. Other Unplanned Gatherings	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	3
8. Authorized Celebrations	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
9. Delegations	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	5
10. Parades, Demonstrations, Rallies	15	7	0	2	4	9	2	2	41
11. Strikes, Turnouts	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
12. Pre-Planned Meetings of Named Associations	88	4	9	7	15	143	16	7	289
13. Pre-Planned Meetings of Public Assemblies	31	1	1	3	1	6	0	1	44
14. Other Pre-Planned Meetings	49	4	2	9	15	42	2	6	129
TOTAL	217	16	13	24	38	247	21	19	595
Percentage of Total	36.5	2.7	2.2	4.0	6.4	41.5	3.5	3.2	100

Table 4

CONTENTIOUS GATHERINGS LISTED BY EVENT TYPES IN EIGHT GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS FOR 1829

Type of Event	Middlesex	Dorset	Hampshire	Kent	Lancashire	Other England	Wales	Scotland	Total
Poachers vs. Gameskeepers	0	0	0	0	1	13	0	0	14
Smugglers vs. Customs	1	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	5
Brawls in Drinking Places	3	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	6
Other Violent Gatherings	33	1	0	2	10	47	1	9	103
Attacks on Blacklegs and Other Unplanned Gatherings	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Market Conflicts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Unplanned Gatherings	18	0	0	2	6	14	0	1	41
Authorized Celebrations	2	0	0	1	0	4	0	0	7
Delegations	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Parades, Demonstrations, Rallies	9	0	0	0	1	10	0	0	20
Strikes, Turnouts	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	3
Pre-Planned Meetings of Named Associations	49	0	3	9	16	49	5	18	149
Pre-Planned Meetings of Public Assemblies	62	0	0	7	5	42	4	9	129
Other Pre-Planned Meetings	35	2	2	8	8	85	6	14	160
Total	214	3	5	29	52	270	16	52	641
Percentage of Total	33.4	0.5	0.8	4.5	8.1	42.1	2.5	8.1	100

Table 5

CONTENTIOUS GATHERINGS, PERCENT DISTRIBUTION, LISTED BY EVENT TYPES IN EIGHT GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS FOR 1828

Type of Gathering	Middlesex	Dorset	Hampshire	Kent	Lancashire	Other England	Wales	Scotland	Total	N
Poachers vs. Gameskeepers	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	8.09	.00	.00	3.4	20
Smugglers vs. Customs	.46	.00	.00	.00	.00	.40	4.76	.00	.05	3
Brawls in Drinking Places	1.84	.00	.00	.00	.00	.80	.00	.00	.1	6
Other Violent Gatherings	10.13	.00	7.69	4.16	5.26	6.88	.00	15.78	7.7	46
Attacks on Blacklegs and Other Unplanned Gatherings	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.40	.00	.00	.02	1
Market Conflicts	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	1.21	.00	.00	.05	3
Other Unplanned Gatherings	.00	.00	.00	8.33	.00	.40	.00	.00	.05	3
Authorized Celebrations	1.38	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.05	3
Delegations	1.38	.00	.00	.00	.00	.80	.00	.00	.08	5
Parades, Demonstrations, Rallies	6.91	43.75	.00	8.33	10.52	3.64	9.52	10.52	6.9	41
Strikes, Turnouts	.46	.00	.00	.00	2.63	.00	.00	.00	.03	2
Pre-Planned Meetings of Named Associations	40.55	25.00	69.23	29.16	39.47	57.89	76.19	36.84	48.6	289
Pre-Planned Meetings of Public Assemblies	14.28	6.25	7.69	12.50	2.63	2.42	.00	5.26	7.4	44
Other Pre-Planned Meetings	22.58	25.00	15.38	37.50	39.47	17.00	9.52	31.57	21.7	129
TOTAL	99.97	100.00	99.99	99.98	99.98	99.93	99.99	99.97	99.98	—
N	217	16	13	24	38	247	21	19	595	595

Table 6

CONTENTIOUS GATHERINGS, PERCENT DISTRIBUTION, LISTED BY EVENT TYPES IN EIGHT GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS FOR 1829

Type of Event	Middlesex	Dorset	Hampshire	Kent	Lancashire	Other England	Wales	Scotland	Total	N
Poachers vs. Gameskeepers	.00	.00	.00	.00	1.92	4.81	.00	.00	2.2	14
Smugglers vs. Customs	.46	.00	.00	.00	.00	1.48	.00	.00	0.8	5
Brawls in Drinking Places	1.40	.00	.00	.00	3.84	.37	.00	.00	0.9	6
Other Violent Gatherings	15.42	33.33	.00	6.89	19.23	17.40	6.25	17.39	16.1	103
Attacks on Blacklegs and Other Unplanned Gatherings	.00	.00	.00	.00	1.92	.00	.00	1.92	0.3	2
Market Conflicts	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	0.0	0
Other Unplanned Gatherings	8.41	.00	.00	6.89	11.53	5.18	.00	1.92	6.4	41
Authorized Celebrations	.93	.00	.00	3.44	.00	1.48	.00	.00	1.1	7
Delegations	.46	.00	.00	.00	1.92	.00	.00	.00	0.3	2
Parades, Demonstrations, Rallies	4.20	.00	.00	.00	1.92	3.70	.00	.00	3.1	20
Strikes, Turnouts	.46	.00	.00	.00	1.92	.37	.00	.00	0.5	3
Pre-Planned Meetings of Named Associations	22.89	.00	60.00	31.03	30.76	18.14	31.25	34.61	23.2	149
Pre-Planned Meetings of Public Assemblies	28.97	.00	.00	24.13	9.61	15.55	25.00	17.30	20.1	129
Other Pre-Planned Meetings	16.35	66.66	40.00	27.58	15.38	31.48	37.50	26.92	25.0	160
Total	99.95	99.99	100.00	99.96	99.95	99.96	100.00	99.97	100	-
N	214	3	5	29	52	270	16	52	641	641

Table 7

CONTENTIOUS GATHERINGS LISTED BY EVENT TYPE IN A MONTHLY DISTRIBUTION, FOR 1828

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	TOTAL
1. Poachers vs. Gameskeepers	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	14	20
2. Smugglers vs. Customs	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
3. Brawls in Drinking Places	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	6
4. Other Violent Gatherings	2	6	3	4	2	4	2	1	9	7	1	5	46
5. Attacks on Blacklegs and Other Unplanned Gatherings	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
6. Market Conflicts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
7. Other Unplanned Gatherings	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	3
8. Authorized Celebrations	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	3
9. Delegations	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
10. Parades, Demonstrations, Rallies	1	9	1	2	1	3	3	1	4	4	2	10	41
11. Strikes, Turnouts	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
12. Pre-Planned Meetings of Named Associations	5	147	19	65	17	7	10	1	3	7	6	2	289
13. Pre-Planned Meetings of Public Assemblies	6	2	4	6	1	3	2	1	2	0	1	16	44
14. Other Pre-Planned Meetings	12	6	5	21	14	19	12	8	4	1	13	14	129
TOTAL	34	171	33	99	39	38	30	14	22	22	24	69	595
Percentage of Total	5.7	28.7	5.6	16.7	6.6	6.4	5.0	2.4	3.7	3.7	4.0	11.5	100

Table 8

CONTENTIOUS GATHERINGS LISTED BY EVENT TYPE IN A MONTHLY DISTRIBUTION, FOR 1829

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	TOTAL
1. Poachers vs. Gameskeepers	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	4	14
2. Smugglers vs. Customs	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	5
3. Brawls in Drinking Places	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	6
4. Other Violent Gatherings	9	6	5	9	18	8	5	6	21	8	5	3	103
5. Attacks on Black-legs and Other Unplanned Gatherings	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
6. Market Conflicts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7. Other Unplanned Gatherings	3	1	4	3	7	3	2	4	6	3	4	1	41
8. Authorized Celebrations	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	3	0	0	1	7
9. Delegations	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
10. Parades, Demonstrations, Rallies	4	8	1	1	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	20
11. Strikes, Turnouts	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3
12. Pre-Planned Meetings of Named Associations	2	22	90	7	14	5	2	2	2	1	0	2	149
13. Pre-Planned Meetings of Public Assemblies	5	12	30	10	13	5	6	6	5	4	2	31	129
14. Other Pre-Planned Meetings	15	43	36	12	12	6	3	4	11	9	2	7	160
TOTAL	40	94	169	44	70	30	21	24	49	28	20	52	641
Percentage of Total	6.2	14.7	26.4	6.9	10.9	4.7	3.3	3.7	7.6	4.4	3.1	8.1	100

Future Work

Some of this study's future work follows obviously from the material presented in this report: direct extrapolations of the same efforts, visible next steps, refinements, verifications and corrections of the work already done. Under extrapolations, we are continuing the enumeration, documentation, coding and cataloging of contentious gatherings through the end of 1834. Evident next steps include 1) the organization of evidence concerning the characteristics of the counties, cities, parishes and other geographic units in which different sorts of events occurred; 2) integrating more of the available archival material into our dossiers for individual events; 3) finding ways of linking related sets of events (the Swing Rebellion, mobilization for Reform, CGs growing from continuing strikes, etc.) to each other and treating them as clusters. Necessary refinements are legion, as is no doubt clear to any thoughtful reader of this report; they center on a) identifying the biases of our sample and b) bringing our analyses up to the sophistication and complexity of the evidence now on hand. The classifications of events used in this report, for example, served well as bases for a first search of the data, but they correspond poorly to the lineaments of the data as well as to the notion of "repertoires" of contention. Sharp-eyed readers probably noticed that our tabulations for 1828 and 1829 enumerated only five strikes and turnouts, while our discussions of major issues and of individual events revealed the presence of many more contentious gatherings which involved owner-worker conflict; that discrepancy, and many others, make the development of new categories urgent.

Beyond extrapolations, next steps and refinements, however, we face some serious choices. On the one hand, we want the evidence we have spent so much

effort assembling to be suitable -- and available -- for a wide variety of inquiries into political processes and into nineteenth-century Britain. On the other hand, we want to pursue the major problems which got the effort started: the impact of interactions with authorities on ordinary people's collective action; variations and changes in the repertoires of collective action employed by different groups of people; connections among people's interests, their social organization, and the forms of action they adopt in pursuit of their interests. And the pursuit of those problems entails further choices.

Our responses to the need for evidence of wide utility are many-faceted. We are being punctilious about documenting our procedures and the characteristics of our data. We are enlisting the collaboration of other researchers who will use our evidence, test the utility of the formats we have devised for the recording and storage of the evidence, link the data to other sets of observations concerning nineteenth-century Britain, and create parallel sets of evidence for other times and places. We are moving toward making the machine-readable portions of our evidence readily accessible to scholars outside our own group, both by placing copies of major files in public depositories and by creating compact subsets which transfer easily to other researchers. (So far, our most important completed step in this direction has been the creation of a file, available in Michigan's MIDAS format, which contains slightly-truncated records for a random ten percent sample of all contentious gatherings enumerated for 1828 and 1829.) Finally, we are issuing frequent provisional reports of the work -- like this one -- in order to elicit proposals and criticisms from potential users of our evidence and our findings.

When a choice is necessary, nevertheless, the theoretical and substantive problems with which we began -- interactions with authorities, variations and changes in repertoires, links among interests, organization and action -- take priority. Our strategy, in general, is not to aim the entire body of evidence at a single, massive, definitive analysis. It is, instead, to carry out a series of analyses each of which combines theoretical relevance with historical coherence. We examine the impact of interactions with authorities in two complementary ways: a) studying the responses of authorities to different sorts of actions carried on by different sorts of people: against whom and what does the Home Secretary send troops? When do the Magistrates summon constables, call out the militia, attempt negotiation, agree to speak for aggrieved parties? b) analyzing the relationship, if any, between the involvement of authorities in one set of events and the behavior of participants in another, usually later, set of events: does vigorous repression of one form of action reduce the likelihood that people will use that same form the next time, and increase the likelihood that they will turn to some other form already in their repertoire? Does the relative success of a given form of action increase the likelihood that people in similar circumstances elsewhere will adopt that form?

Variations and changes in repertoires call for a somewhat different series of analyses: tracing the rise, fall, diffusion and evolution of particular forms of action such as the electoral rally or the turnout/strike; singling out individual localities and groups to follow their repertoires from 1828 through 1834; using our detailed observations of formations and action-phases within individual events to decompose major types of action into their elements and, if possible, to discover the connections between gross

forms of action, on the one hand, and the symbols, rhetoric, grievances, demands and identities articulated by the participants.

To trace the links among people's interests, organization and forms of action requires some solution, however provisional, to a thorny problem: identifying shared interests. Our reply to the difficulty is characteristically ambivalent. Sometimes we impute interests to people on the basis of general ideas concerning their social positions, especially their position in the organization of production. In that case, the imputed interest becomes an hypothesis to be verified by the reliability with which it predicts the organization and action of the people in question. Sometimes we infer those interests from the demands, grievances, proposals, analyses and beliefs people articulate in the course of the events we are studying. In that case, we are either examining the correspondences among the articulated interests, organization and forms of action observable within the same events or -- better -- using the articulation of interests over one period of time to anticipate the organization and action of subsequent periods.

More concretely and historically, the analyses we are undertaking cluster into these categories:

1. before/during/after studies of significant crises and transformations -- for example, determining whether the mobilization and ultimate success of the movement for Reform altered the forms, personnel and outcomes of routine contention;

2. tracing the links within large series of events -- for example, examining the interaction among supporters of Catholic Emancipation, opponents of Catholic Emancipation, and parliamentary factions during 1828 and 1829;

3. following the connections between particular sets of local conflicts and national politics -- for example, by seeing whether the shift from one government to the next produced visible alterations in the forms and intensities of working-class contention;

4. watching the impact of significant changes in repression and facilitation -- for example, following the establishment of the New Police and reactions to it;

5. comparisons of the forms, intensities of contention in localities, groups and periods which ought, in principle, to differ significantly from each other -- for example, investigating whether the conflicts of London involved Parliament and national authorities more frequently than did the conflicts of other cities.

The agenda is broad. Yet it excludes many possibilities: inquiring how close Britain came to revolution in 1832, determining how the geography of British cities shaped their patterns of conflict, studying the roles of particular leaders such as Francis Place, William Cobbett and Robert Peel in major movements, and many others. With effort and ingenuity, the data concerning contentious gatherings lend themselves to those inquiries as well. For those inquiries, we look to other scholars.

Conclusions

In his review of "popular disturbances" in England from 1700 to 1870, John Stevenson concludes that the first half of the nineteenth century brought a considerable decline in the frequency of violent conflict. Stevenson considers, and rejects, the common idea that the police were the decisive instrument of that decline:

> Nevertheless, there had been a decline in popular disorder. This, however, was at least as much a result of cultural changes within English society as it was of the purely technical solution of the use of professional police forces. In perhaps the most detailed studies we have of this process, it has been recognised that the authorities were only able to operate with relative economy of force within a cultural context which permitted them to do so. Hence from one perspective,

> the most significant feature of English development is not that disturbances occurred but that they did not occur more often . . . The presence of some insurrectionary activity and a degree of ambivalence on the part of others should not obscure the readiness with which the majority of English reformers and trade union leaders were absorbed into conventional politics at both national and local levels. Their followers too, were not in the main prepared to risk life and limb in the face of intermittent distress when opportunities for piecemeal reform and gradual improvement were being offered to them. Here again, broad cultural factors conditioned the development of a more 'orderly' society in which protests were transmitted through organisations and a relatively harmonious relationship achieved between different groups without the need for a vast repressive apparatus. In that sense, the English 'mob' tamed itself, at least as much as it was tamed by government or its agents (Stevenson 1979: 322-323).

Stevenson thus offers us a more optimistic interpretation than those who see revolutionary potential in the conflicts of the 1830s. Popular culture and common sense, it seems, tempered the occasional impulse to tear down the whole structure of politics. That impulse, Stevenson suggests, never sustained itself long enough to support a genuinely revolutionary bid for power.

Revolution or evolution, observers of the early nineteenth century in England, and in Great Britain as a whole, commonly agree on the decline of challenges to the whole system. What is more, most analysts of that decline -- even those who consider the Chartism of the 1830s and 1840s to be the last great stand of the old working class -- treat the period around 1830 as a critical transition. The hard-fought differences among analysts concern how

and why working-class challenges declined: cooptation of artisans and skilled workers, plus their petty-bourgeois allies? Accomodation and repression, cunningly blended, by the ruling classes? A more general emergence of bourgeois hegemony which squeezed out any alternative vision of revolutionary change? Working-class learning of the virtues of compromise? Some of the difference among these interpretations, to be sure, is terminological and ideological. Taken seriously, however, the different accounts lead to contrasting ideas of the day-to-day processes by which insurrection gave way to electoral agitation.

It would be foolish to claim that a study of contentious gatherings from 1828 to 1834 will resolve these serious questions. It would be doubly foolish to pretend that the mere description of the contentious gatherings of 1828 and 1829 -- which is, at best, what this paper has supplied -- puts us in a position to end the controversy. We draw a much more modest set of conclusions. FIRST, a careful examination of patterns of conflict during the years from 1828 to 1834 is likely to yield results bearing significantly on the largest questions historians are asking about nineteenth-century Britain. SECOND, the study of "contentious gatherings" -- however artificial the construct -- does take us to the issues and interests around which ordinary Britons were organizing and struggling during the nineteenth century. THIRD, the biases in the sources are not so great as to preclude our getting a sense of the connections between everyday social life and those special occasions on which people made visible, sustained, collective efforts to defend or advance their interests. FOURTH, seen from close up, the British contention of the late 1820s involves rather more bargaining, testing, forging of alliances, and choosing of strategies than most accounts of the period

suggest; words such as "riot", "disturbance" and even "protest" miss the mark. FIFTH, although local and class interests certainly did come into play in the contention of the late 1820s, national and "parochial" struggles interlocked extensively; our sources' bias toward national affairs contributes to that impression, but surely does not account for it entirely. SIXTH, our more general theoretical agenda -- the analysis of interactions with authorities, of repertoires of contention, and of the interplay of interests, organization and collective action -- takes us to the central historical questions about the period. In this privileged instance, at least, the abstract urging of theory, the desire for methodological rigor, and the will to respect the historical experience all lead toward the same close examination of the texture of contention.

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