SOCIAL CHANGE AND COLLECTIVE ACTION IN FRANCE AND BRITAIN

Summary of Research Completed and
Data Available at the End of October 1983

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Introduction

The collective action of British and French people has long provided models and evidence for the understanding of collective action in general. Historians and sociologists alike, for example, commonly take Great Britain's transition from the boisterous street politics of its eighteenth century to the nineteenth century's play of organized interests as the very type of orderly change. Likewise, France's successive revolutions often set the pattern for thinking about revolution as a whole, as well as offering cases against which any fledgling theory of revolution must try its wings. Many more events and processes in both countries have given analysts of collective action the means of developing their ideas, or of testing ideas already widely held. In Britain, eighteenth-century food riots, the movements that formed around John Wilkes and George Gordon, Luddism, the Swing Rebellion, and mobilization for Reform figure repeatedly in general discussions of collective action. In France, not only the revolutions of 1789, 1830, and 1848, but also the country's tax rebellions, food riots, strikes, radical movements, and party politics constitute the material of discussion after discussion about political change.

Comparison between the two countries, furthermore, is classic. Observers disagree vigorously over whether Britain somehow made an "orderly" transition to "modern" social life while France took the "disorderly" path. No one denies, however, that the two followed very different paths. All formulations concerning the political consequences of industrialization, the development of capitalism, or statemaking must take the two contrasting experiences into account.

Our Recent Work

For some years, our research group has been studying the history of collective action in France and Britain, in hopes of better understanding the general connections between social change and collective action. The studies of **France** involve collecting long, uniform series of descriptions of selected types of conflict and collective action -- notably strikes, rebellions, and violent events -- for the entire country over the period from 1600 to the present, then analyzing their variation in relation to evidence concerning structural change, year by year and and region by region. The studies of **Great Britain** (i.e. England, Scotland, and Wales) consist of two overlapping inquiries: 1) an intensive analysis of changes and variations in the patterns of "contentious gatherings" in Britain as a whole from 1828 through 1834; 2) an equally intensive examination of relationships between changes in the social geography of the London region (Kent, Sussex, Surrey, and Middlesex) and shifts in the region's geography of contention for selected years from 1758 through 1834.

Great Britain as a Whole. Our collection of evidence on Britain falls into two main clusters: a) work on the changing patterns of contention in Britain as a whole (England, Scotland, and Wales) during the seven years from 1828 to 1834, b) examination of changes in the social geography of contention in the London region (Middlesex, Surrey, Kent, and Sussex) during twenty years spread over the period from 1758 to 1834. In the work on **Britain as a whole** we have:

> 1. read systematically through each issue of seven periodicals (Mirror of Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Votes and Proceedings of Parliament, the Annual Register, Gentleman's Magazine, the Times of London, and the Morning Chronicle) from the beginning of 1828 through the first six months of 1835;

2. photocopied and abstracted every article mentioning a gathering of people outside the government (for a total of about 150,000 articles abstracted);

3. grouped mentions of the same gathering into dossiers, then identified the events meeting our specifications for a "contentious gathering": an occasion on which ten or more persons outside the government assembled in a publicly accessible place, and collectively made claims which, if realized, would affect the interests of at least one person outside their number (we have set up reliable rules for deciding whether ten or more persons were present, whether they made collective claims, and so on); for the seven years from 1828 through 1834, that process has produced dossiers on about 6,650 contentious gatherings, of which about 6,000 are currently complete;

3. after a good deal of checking and editing, used an interactive direct-entry computer program to produce a standardized machine-readable description (largely in text, and using words from our sources) of each event; each description actually includes a number of distinct records: a) one describing the <u>contentious gathering</u> as a whole, b) one for each <u>location</u> in which some action of the event took place, c) one for each <u>formation</u> participating in the event, d) one for each <u>phase</u> of the action making up the event, and e) one for each <u>source</u> consulted in preparing the description; in our present storage system, each of these exists as a separate file; at the end of October 1983, we had nearly completed the years from 1828 through 1833, for a total of about 6,000 machine-readable descriptions out of the total of 6,650 events;

4. checked and cleaned those files, done some preliminary machine recoding of crucial fields (e.g. formation names, major issues), and run descriptive tabulations of the completed files;

5. assembled a large collection of microfilms and photocopies of relevant British archival material, especially papers of the Home Office, as well as historical publications on the period and subject of our research; we have consulted these materials extensively in coding and interpreting our evidence, although we have not so far attempted to analyze them systematically or exhaustively;

6. using the archival and published materials, created special data sets dealing with particular issues or events; the most extensive concerns the Swing rebellion of 1830; it combines two files: a) machine-readable descriptions of the contentious gatherings in our main sample that qualify as part of the Swing events, b) machine-readable descriptions of the approximately 1,100 events (the majority of which do not qualify, by our criteria, as contentious gatherings) catalogued by Hobsbawm and Rudé in their <u>Captain Swing</u>;

7. conducted preliminary analyses of these special data sets — following, for example, the changing geography of the Swing rebellion.

London and its region. In the work on the London region, we have been assembling evidence on changes in three features of the region's social geography: a) the distribution of land use, economic activity, and population; b) the locations of different kinds of routine assemblies: meetings, entertainment, casual gatherings of tradesmen, and so on; c) the sites of different sorts of contentious gatherings. In summary:

1. Under heading a), our most ambitious and systematic effort has been the nearly-completed transcription of Kent's street directory of trades and businesses for 1759 (100% sample), 1768 (100%), 1781 (5%), 1795 (5%), 1801 (100%), 1811 (5%), and 1828 (100%). Via our mapping programs, that file has been producing remarkable portraits of changing economic geography in the region's built-up center.

2. Under heading b), routine assemblies, our evidence is less satisfactory and not so far along, but we have assembled and edited dossiers of assemblies for 1758, 1759, 1768, 1769, 1780, and 1789, with machine-readable descriptions completed for 1768 and 1769.

3. Under heading c), contentious gatherings, we have used the same procedures as for 1828-1834 to identify and describe events in 1758, 1759, 1768, 1769, 1780, 1781, 1789, 1795, 1801, 1807, 1811, 1819, and 1820, drawing on the 1828-1834 enumeration for the remaining years. As of October 1983, we had completed machine-readable descriptions of 750 out of an estimated total of 1150 events in the entire sample.

Because the data on London are still very much in process, we have so far conducted no genuine analyses of this body of evidence.

France. The work on France has been going on for a long time, and has accumulated a good deal of evidence. The Appendix provides detail on the more systematic files of French data that are now available. In broad summary, they fall into these categories:

1. a catalog of contentious gatherings in the provinces of Anjou, Burgundy, Flanders, the Ile de France, and Languedoc from 1600 to 1799, drawn from a combination of archival reports, contemporary periodicals, and historical works;

2. catalogs and machine-readable descriptions of violent events in France as a whole from 1830 to 1860, 1930 to 1960, and a randomly-selected three months per year from 1861 through 1929, catalogs (but no machine-readable descriptions) of violent events from 1961 to 1975, plus detailed descriptions (some of them machine-readable) of major conflicts such as the June Days of 1848.

3. catalogs and machine-readable descriptions of strikes and lockouts in France as a whole from 1830 to 1967, plus greater detail on individual cities, particular trades, and major series of strikes, such as the sitdowns of 1936-1938.

4. machine-readable data on social characteristics of French départements and other administrative units, as well as of France as a whole, for numerous nineteenth- and twentieth-century years.

My colleagues and I have used these files to carry out a wide variety of analyses of social change and collective action in France. (A list of reports of that work produced during our current NSF grant's term, 1981-1983, appears in Appendix A.) For several years we left categories 2, 3 and 4 dormant while collecting the material on 1600-1799 and working on the evidence for Great Britain. Over the last year, however, we have been reactivating, checking, and cleaning the older French files.

APPENDIX A: Reports of Work on France and Britain, 1981-1983

Note: This is an incomplete list. In general, it omits lectures, internal reports, student papers, unpublished theses, and minor technical discussions. It usually only includes one version of a report that appeared in several versions, and prefers published to unpublished versions despite the fact that unpublished versions are often fuller. On the other hand, it includes some general conceptual, theoretical, and technical discussions that report no research results in any strong sense of the word.

Ronald Aminzade
1981   Class, Politics, and Early Industrial Capitalism. A Study of Mid-Nineteenth-Century Toulouse, France (Albany: State University of New York Press)

Brian Brown
1981   "Industrial Capitalism, Conflict, and Working-Class Contention in Lancashire, 1842," in Louise A. Tilly & Charles Tilly, eds., Class Conflict and Collective Action (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications) [Hereafter: Tilly & Tilly]

Samuel Cohn
1981   "Keeping the Navvies in Line: Variations in Work-Discipline Among Victorian Railway Construction Crews," in Tilly & Tilly

Roberto Franzosi
1982   "One Hundred Years of Strike Statistics: Data, Methodology, and Theoretical Issues in Quantitative Strike Research," Working Paper 257, Center for Research on Social Organization, University of Michigan [Hereafter: CRSO Working Paper]

Roberto Franzosi & Charles Tilly
1983   "A British View of American Strikes," Industrial Relations Law Journal 5: 426-439.

Frank Munger
1981   "Contentious Gatherings in Lancashire, England, 1750-1830," in Tilly & Tilly

1981   "Suppression of Popular Gatherings in England, 1800-1830," American Journal of Legal History 25: 111-140

R.A. Schweitzer and Steven C. Simmons
1981   "Interactive, Direct-Entry Approaches to Contentious Gathering Event Files," Social Science History 5: 317-342

Marc Steinberg

1983   "Class Consciousness, Interests, and their Articulation Among the English Working Class, 1828-1831," CRSO Working Paper 292

Charles Tilly

1981   "Introduction" and "The Web of Contention in EighteenthCentury Cities," in Tilly & Tilly

1981   "How One Kind of Struggle -- War -- Reshaped All Other Kinds of Struggle in Seventeenth-Century France," CRSO Working Paper 241

1981   As Sociology Meets History (New York: Academic Press)

1981   "The Urban Historian's Dilemma: Faceless Cities or Cities Without Hinterlands?" CRSO Working Paper 248; forthcoming in Lloyd Rodwin & Robert Hollister, eds., Images and Themes of the City in the Social Sciences (New York: Plenum)

1982   "Whom, What, How and Why European Rural People Resisted," CRSO Working Paper 253

1982   "Charivaris, Repertoires, and Urban Politics," in John Merriman, ed., French Cities in the Nineteenth Century (London: Hutchinson).

1982   "Britain Creates the Social Movement," in James Cronin & Jonathan Schneer, eds., Social Conflict and the Political Order in Modern Britain (London: Croom Helm).

1982   "Warmaking and Statemaking as Organized Crime," CRSO Working Paper 256

1982   "Conflict and Change in France since 1600, As Seen From a Very Small Place," CRSO Working Paper 261

1982   "Five French Regions, Four Contentious Centuries, Two Fundamental Processes," CRSO Working Paper 262

1982   "Statemaking, Capitalism, and Contention in EighteenthCentury Languedoc," CRSO Working Paper 271

1982   "How the Fronde Made a Difference in Seventeenth-Century Anjou," CRSO Working Paper 272

1982   "European Violence and Collective Action since 1700," CRSO Working Paper 277

1982   "Proletarianization and Rural Collective Action in East Anglia and Elsewhere, 1500-1900," Peasant Studies 10:5-34.

1982 "Routine Conflicts and Peasant Rebellions in Seventeenth-Century France," in Robert Weller & Scott Guggenheim, eds., Power and Protest in the Countryside (Durham: Duke University Press).

1983 "War and the Power of Warmakers in Western Europe and Elsewhere, 1600-1900," forthcoming in Peter Wallensteen, Johan Galtung & Carlos Portales, eds, Global Militarization: Conflicts, Processes, and Alternatives (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press)

1983 "Statemaking, Capitalism, and Revolution in Five Provinces of Eighteenth-Century France," CRSO Working Paper 281.

1983 "Violenza e azione colletiva in Europa. Riflessioni storico-comparate," in Donatella della Porta & Gianfranco Pasquino, eds., Terrorismo e violenza politica. Tre casi a confronto: Stati Uniti, Germania e Giappone (Bologna: Il Mulino)

1983 "Flows of Capital and Forms of Industry in Europe, 1500-1900," Theory and Society 12: 123-143.

1983 "Karl Marx, Historian," Michigan Quarterly Review 22: 633-642.

1983 "Demographic Origins of the European Proletariat," forthcoming in a volume of essays edited by David Levine (Academic Press)

1983 "Speaking Your Mind Without Elections, Surveys, or Social Movements," forthcoming in Public Opinion Quarterly

1983 Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons (Russell Sage foundation, forthcoming)

1983 "Capital Implodes and Workers Explode in Flanders, 1789-1914," CRSO Working Paper 296

1983 "Origines du Répertoire Contemporain d'Action Collective en France et Grande Bretagne," forthcoming in Vingtième Siecle

Charles Tilly & R.A. Schweitzer
1981 "Britain's Everyday Conflicts in an Age of Inequality," CRSO Working Paper 228

1982 "How London and its Conflicts Changed Shape, 1758-1834," Historical Methods 5: 67-77

Louise A. Tilly
1981 "Women's Collective Action and Feminism in France, 1870-1914," in

Tilly & Tilly

1981   "Paths of Proletarianization: Organization of Production, Sexual
        Division of Labor, and Women's Collective Action," Signs: Journal
        of Women in Culture and Society 7: 400-417

1982   "Three Faces of Capitalism: Women and Work in Nineteenth-Century
        French Cities," in John Merriman, ed., French Cities in the
        Nineteenth Century (London: Hutchinson)

APPENDIX B.: Data on France Available at the End of October 1983

1.   roughly 350,000 microfilm frames of texts from French archives, plus photocopies and notes possibly covering another 400,000 pages of text; the largest part of the material consists of governmental correspondence and administrative reporting produced by efforts to control collective action between 1600 and 1940.

2.   standing files of reports (typically a standardized abstract plus a photocopy of the original source):

   a. reports of perhaps 5,000 conflicts in Anjou, Burgundy, Flanders, the Ile de France, Languedoc and (less densely and systematically) the remainder of France from 1600 to 1799; the reports come from systematic reading of the relevant sections of archival materials mentioned above (e.g. a complete reading of series G^7, Archives Nationales, for the five provinces), plus a number of periodicals (e.g. the <u>Mercure français</u>) and historical writings (e.g. the published correspondence of Colbert).

   b. reports of some 3,000 conflicts in metropolitan France from 1830 through 1975; the reports come from systematic reading of two daily national newspapers for each day from 1830 to 1860 and 1930 to 1975, plus a randomly-selected three months per year from 1861 to 1929.

3. machine-readable files:

   a. descriptions of about 1,500 violent events that occurred in metropolitan France from 1830 to 1960, drawn from the files just described.

   b. descriptions of persons charged with participation in the rebellions of June 1848 and December 1851; the 1848 file describes approximately 12,000 individuals, while the 1851 file transcribes detailed tabulations by département, giving characteristics of about 26,000 persons.

   c. descriptions of about 100,000 strikes and lockouts that occurred in metropolitan France from 1830 to 1967, drawn mainly from official accounts and tabulations of industrial conflict; only a third of these descriptions, roughly speaking, provide significant detail on the characteristics of individual strikes and lockouts.

   d. departmental summaries of sitdown strike activity in 1936, 1937, and 1938, drawn from a synthesis of newspaper accounts and official statistics.

   e. descriptions of roughly 2,000 persons identified (from a wide variety of sources, especially rosters and interrogations in the archives) as participating in the counter-revolution of 1793 in southern Anjou.

f.   summaries of population characteristics, economic activity, and criminal prosecutions in French departements and selected cities for various years from 1826 to 1954, drawn mainly from official published sources such as the census.

g.   transcriptions of national-level time series concerning population characteristics, economic activity, governmental administration, industrial conflict, and collective violence for single years from 1830 to 1968, drawn especially from official statistical yearbooks and similar publications.

APPENDIX C: Data on Great Britain Available at the End of October 1983

1. Microfilms or photocopies of about 20,000 pages of manuscripts in British archives (especially the Public Record Office, London) from 1740 to 1840. The documents come especially from administrative and political correspondence concerning the control of collective action.

2. Standing Files:

a) Complete dossiers of about 6000 contentious gatherings occurring in Great Britain from 1828 to 1834. All dossiers include photocopies of original sources and complete, detailed coding.

b) Preliminary dossiers of about 650 more contentious gatherings occurring in Great Britain during 1833 and 1834. These preliminary reports include photocopies of original sources and a standardized general description of the event.

c) Complete dossiers of about 725 contentious gatherings occurring in Kent, Surrey, Sussex, or Middlesex during one of the following years: 1758, 1759, 1768, 1769, 1780, 1781, 1789, 1795, 1801, 1807, 1811, 1819, 1820. Another 400+ dossiers are nearly complete.

d) Complete dossiers of about 225 routine assemblies occurring in Kent, Surrey, Sussex, or Middlesex during one of the same years. Another 625 dossiers are almost complete. The final total will be in the vicinity of 2200 routine assemblies.

e) Standard descriptions of about 600 locations (parishes, towns, wards, and other sites) in Kent, Surrey, Sussex, or Middlesex in the period 1756–1816.

f) Descriptive material on about twenty major events or series of events (e.g strike waves, campaigns, Swing rebellion) occurring in Great Britain during the years from 1828 through 1834, including abstracts and photocopies of all articles referring to those events (whether qualifying as contentious gatherings or not) found in our sources.

3. Machine-readable files:

a) Standard descriptions of the 6000 contentious gatherings from 1828 to 1834 in Great Britain as a whole mentioned above.

b) Standard descriptions of about 680 contentious gatherings out of the estimated total of 1150 in Kent, Surrey, Sussex, or Middlesex for the years from 1758 to 1820 mentioned above.

c)   Standard descriptions of about 175 routine assemblies out of the estimated total of 2200 in Kent, Surrey, Sussex, or Middlesex for the years from 1758 to 1820 mentioned above.

d)   Standard descriptions of about 600 locations in Kent, Surrey, Sussex, or Middlesex in the period from 1756 to 1816.

e)   Standard descriptions of two of the roughly twenty major events or series of events for which we have assembled the special dossiers described above.

f)   Standard descriptions of about 350 contentious gatherings forming part of the "Swing" rebellion of 1830.

g)   Standard descriptions of about 1100 events from the "Swing" rebellion cataloged in the appendix to Eric Hobsbawm & George Rudé, Captain Swing.

h)   Total population, urban population, proportion of land cultivated and 35 other characteristics for all counties of Great Britain, mostly as of 1831.

i)   Complete transcriptions of Kent's London street directory of trades and businesses for 1759, 1768, 1801, and 1828.

j)   Transcriptions of 5 percent of all entries in Kent's London street directory for 1781, 1795, and 1811.