SOME POLITICAL ISSUES IN
NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRITAIN

PART ONE: THE GOVERNMENT AND WORKERS' ASSOCIATIONS,
THE RURAL REBELLIONS OF 1830, PARISH GOVERNMENT,
CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION

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July 1977
Some Political Issues in Nineteenth-Century Britain
Part One: The Government and Workers' Associations,
The Rural Rebellions of 1830, Parish Government,
Catholic Emancipation.

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Editor's Note

"Some Political Issues in Nineteenth-Century Britain. Part One: The Government and Worker's Associations; The Rural Rebellions of 1830; Parish Government, Catholic Emancipation" is the second in a series of briefing papers for the Great Britain Study. The Great Britain Study is a close examination of "contentious gatherings" in England, Wales, and Scotland from 1828 through 1834. The briefing papers summarize the current historiography, available source materials and bibliography for questions which are important to the understanding of conflict in Great Britain during those pivotal years. We have designed them to inform the editors, coders, and analysts of our data. We hope they will be useful to other scholars as well. In his first briefing paper, Michael Pearlman (a graduate student in modern European history at the University of Michigan) provided a general survey of the period under study. In this paper he takes up four issues which became objects of serious contention during the period 1828-1834: the rights of workers to organize on behalf of their own interests, the agrarian conflicts of 1830 (commonly known as the Swing Rebellion or the Last Labourers' Revolt), parish government (with respect to which the role of self-perpetuating Select Vestries was hotly contested in the late 1820s) and Catholic Emancipation. Future reports will take up such questions as Parliamentary Reform and the law of assembly. We will welcome corrections and additions.

Charles Tilly
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The Government and Workers' Associations:

Friendly Societies and Trade Unions

General

Mutual benefit societies, or friendly societies, as they are usually known in England, have a long but somewhat obscure history. With the breakdown of the guild structure in most trades (by the 17th century), workers found it necessary to organize their own institutions to fulfill certain important functions such as burial, sickness, and old-age insurance. These friendly societies became more widespread through the 18th century, and government sources estimated that nearly one million workers were enrolled in such organizations by 1815. The governing classes were not completely hostile to such societies; the local gentry, priests, judicial officers, and manufacturers hoped that mutual insurance among the working classes would keep down the poor rate, as well as imbue the lower orders with the spirit of hard work and self-help. But concern did exist over other functions that friendly societies fulfilled. The clubs often became the center of social life for workers in various trades, meeting regularly at local taverns and displaying a type of conviviality not appreciated by the upper classes. Moreover, these societies sometimes developed the function of trade unions or served as a cover for union activity, particularly during the pre-1824 period when trade unions themselves were outlawed. Thus the question for the government, as stated in A Treatise on Ignorance (1808) by P. Colquhoun, was

how far may it be practicable to organize these excellent institutions, so on the one hand to render them productive of benefits infinitely more extensive to the parties interested, and on the other to divest them of their tendency to moral and political evil.
The first general legislation concerning friendly societies was Rose's Act, 33 Geo. III, c.54, passed by Parliament in 1793. This Act for the Encouragement and Relief of Friendly Societies, often called Rose's Act after its sponsor, gave certain benefits to all societies registered under its provisions. First, and most important of all, the act gave legal recognition to the friendly societies, allowing the society to enter into contracts, to sue its officials for embezzlement and breach of trust, and permitting the courts to enforce payments on behalf of their members. Members of the societies who were not legal residents of the parishes they inhabited could not be removed unless they became chargeable to the local poor rate (seemingly an important privilege under the Old Poor Law), and the society itself was to be free of certain stamp duties relating to its official business. In order to register, the societies were to present their rules and regulations to the local Court of Quarter Sessions, whose magistrates were to examine the documents for their suitability under the law. All amendments to the rules were to be passed by a two-thirds majority of the members, and submitted to the Court for approval. In addition, the courts were given particular summary powers to enforce the regulations of the society in regard to contributions, disbursements, and official malfeasance.

Nothing in Rose's Act required that friendly societies register with the local magistracy; many societies refused to do so, particularly in Scotland, where the common law gave greater recourse to institutions which had no official legal status. Other acts were passed through the next years to induce them to register. In 1795, friendly societies which existed before the passage of Rose's Act were allowed an extra year to gain official status, while other types of benefit societies for those in distressed circumstances were brought under the aegis of the earlier act.
In 1809, justices were given greater authority to name the time and mode of payment of summary judgments under the act (49 Geo. III, c.125), and in 1817 the Savings Bank Act included a section allowing friendly societies to deposit their funds with such institutions at the relatively generous interest rate of three per cent per annum (57 Geo. III, c.130).

The major problem facing friendly societies during this period was a tendency toward chronic insolvency. Societies were often founded without the necessary actuarial data, because of a lack of expert knowledge on the local level, as well as a lack of statistical experience with specific groups of workmen. Thus a new Friendly Society Act in 1819 (59 Geo. III, c.128) required that all new societies were to have their actuarial tables reviewed by two qualified individuals under the direction of the local magistrate. Moreover, all new friendly societies were to appoint three trustees, two of whom were to be substantial property owners (i.e., assessed at least £50 for poor relief). All property and funds of the society were to be vested in these trustees.

These new requirements were not sufficient for the government's purposes (particularly since only new societies come under its provisions), and a Select Committee on Friendly Societies was appointed by the House of Commons in 1825, under the chairmanship of Thomas Courtenay, to study the question. The committee reaffirmed the earlier legislative support for friendly societies as institutions dedicated to working class self-help and the lowering of the poor rate, and addressed itself to three major problems: financial insolvency, the use of friendly society funds for social purposes, and the support of illegal combinations by some societies. The committee paid most attention to the question of actuarial tables, and a new committee was organized in 1827 to specifically examine this topic.
In February 1828, a bill, based on the deliberations of the committee was introduced into the Commons; it required all registered friendly societies to adopt the provisions of the 1819 act relating to trustees, and established a mechanism for the central review of all society actuarial tables. When the bill was brought before the House in April for a second reading, the Whig leader Henry Brougham presented a petition from friendly societies in Manchester, complaining about the requirement to reregister under the proposed new act. John Gem Hobhouse, another Whig, objected to the bill, claiming that the qualifications for trusteeship were obnoxious to those directly concerned, i.e. the friendly societies themselves. M.P. Thompson from Dorsetshire argued that opposition to the bill was being organized by publicans (presumably since they would lose business if the trustees limited the social activities of the clubs), but the bill was put on the table for the remainder of the session.

In May 1829, an amended bill was introduced into the Commons. This bill (enacted as 10 Geo. IV, c.56) dropped the trusteeship requirement, but demanded that all registered societies should forward their rules, regulations, and actuarial tables to the Barrister at Law appointed to certify the Rules of Savings Banks, who would examine them for reasonableness. Otherwise, the requirements for registration, and the other aspects of earlier registration, were to remain essentially unchanged. Courtenay complained in the House that he had received a bad name from his advocacy of the 1828 bill, and that his intentions had been misconstrued. But no opposition to the new bill was recorded, and it became law. This act, as amended in 1834 (4 and 5 Wm. IV, c.40) remained in force until another major revision in 1855.

Prior to the 19th century, combinations of workmen organized for the purpose of enforcing standards of wages, hours, or working conditions were
considered by the government to be in restraint of trade and therefore subject to repression under the common law of conspiracy. Theoretically, the regulation of industry was a duty of the local magistrates under the Elizabethan Statute of Artificers (5 Eliz., c.4), and workers were only allowed the right to petition the relevant authorities in their own defense. But with the growth of the capitalist free market, the government abdicated its responsibility in this arena, and workers in some industries began to organize trade unions and societies. In response, Parliament adopted new legislation during the 18th century (in 1743, 1758, 1763, 1771, and 1779) to back up the common law with statutory powers against workers' associations in particular trades. Finally, during the anti-Jacobin hysteria, Parliament passed the Combination Acts of 1799 and 1800 (39 Geo. III, c.81, and 39 and 40 Geo. III, c.60) which generalized this trend; all combinations of workers were to be prohibited, with penalties up to three months imprisonment for any trade union activity.

The nature and effectiveness of these Combination Acts have become the focus of a significant historiographic controversy. The classic historians of the British labour movement, the Webbs, claimed that the Combination Acts represented a "new and momentous departure" by Parliament in the direction of repression of the trade unions. But more recent research by M.D. George and Arthur Aspinall has shown rather decisively that the Webbs were overstating their case; the Acts merely added additional power to a series of common and statute law prohibitions. Moreover, the existence of legislation did not necessarily mean repression. The government and the employers were often hesitant to move against the trade unions, particularly in the better-organized artisinal trades. Thus the years 1799-1824, while the Combination Acts were in force, were paradoxically
a period of tremendous expansion in union activity. E.P. Thompson, in *The Making of the English Working Class*, has attempted to stake a middle ground in this dispute; agreeing with most of George's arguments, he continues to point to the "general prohibitive influence of the Acts which could be used in terrorem against the unions. Thompson also claims that the Acts, by forcing the unions into an outlaw existence, drove them into an alliance with the political Jacobins. But such a statement is difficult to prove, lacking the necessary documentation.

In 1824, the repeal of the Combination Acts was passed by Parliament through the efforts of Francis Place, the London master tailor and radical. Place and his allies hoped that the legalization of trade unions would bring industrial peace, but they were quickly proved wrong. The Act of 1824 had removed not only the statutory legislation against combination, but also had exempted the unions from the common law against restraint of trade; workers took advantage of these new provisions, and the years 1824–1825 saw a tremendous surge in combination and strike activity.

In response, the Parliament (many members of which had not clearly understood the provisions of the 1824 Act) passed a revised Act in 1825 (6 Geo. IV, c.129). The common law remedies against combinations were to be put back in force, except for combinations with the sole purpose of regulating wages and hours. Violence, threats, intimidation, molestation, or obstruction with the purpose of forcing workers to quit work, to belong to any club or association, to pay fines for not belonging or complying with the rules of such an association or contributing to its funds, or to force any employer to alter the mode of carrying out his business or to limit the number of his apprentices or the number or description of his journeymen was to be punished by three months at hard labor. The wording
of the act was vague, particularly as to the definition of threat, intimidation, molestation, and obstruction, but the intent was clear. Combinations were only legal if constituted for the purpose of regulating wages and hours only. Attempts to enforce a closed shop or in any way regulate working conditions were illegal and punishable under the statute and under common law.

Further judicial interpretation was necessary to discover exactly what trade union practices were threats, intimidation, molestation, and obstruction, and the precedents themselves were contradictory. The act of striking itself was seemingly legal, but certain justices [e.g. the case of Reg. vs. Duffield (1851)] ruled that even peaceful picketing which attempted to induce other workmen to join the strike was a molesting of the rights of the employer and the obstruction of his manufactory. In 1832, trade unionists were convicted for writing to their employer and threatening to strike unless their demands were met (Rex vs. Byderdike). On the other hand, Justice B. Rolfe, in R. vs. Selsby (1847) ruled that peaceful persuasion was in no way illegal. It was not until the Molestation of Workmen Act of 1859 that peaceful picketing became conclusively legal; in the meanwhile "the practical effect of these decisions was that although combinations to raise wages were lawful, they were hamstrung. While a strike to raise wages might be perfectly lawful, it was unlawful to threaten the employer that such a strike would take place, or to peacefully persuade persons to take part in it"(Citrine, 1950:9). Moreover, other weapons were still available to the government against the unions; the law against illegal oaths (used against the Dorchester labourers in 1834), and the medieval law of master and servant, which made it a criminal offense for workers to break a contract and leave their work undone. Effective trade union activity thus remained illegal under the 1825 Act.
Chronology

A. Friendly Society Legislation

1793 Rose's Act gives friendly societies various legal rights
1819 Major revision of Rose's Act requires all new societies to appoint trustees
1825 Select Committee of House of Commons examines state of friendly societies
1827 Select Committee renewed to study actuarial data
1828 (April) Friendly society bill tabled
1828 (May) New Friendly Society Act passed

B. Trade Union Legislation

1799, 1800 Combination Acts outlaw trade unions
1824 Francis Place masterminds repeal of Combination Acts
1824-5 Trade union upsurge throughout Great Britain
1825 New legislation places restriction on trade union activity
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Report from the Select Committee Appointed to Consider the Laws Respecting Friendly Societies and to Whom was Referred the Report of 5th July 1825 (Sessional Papers, 1826-7, v.3, 689).


2. Monographs and Articles


C. Trade Unions and the Government


Trade Unions in the Early 1830's; Seven Pamphlets, 1831-7 (New York: Arno Press, 1972). Contemporary opinion for and against the trade unions.


An appendix A-1 entitled The Rose's Act 33 Geo. III, c.54 is available in the Great Britain Study shelf of materials located in the Perry Building.
The Rural Rebellions of 1830

The agricultural workers' uprising of 1830, called the Captain Swing movement after its anonymous and ubiquitous hero, was the greatest rural rebellion of the 19th century in England. The movement, which touched twenty English counties and inspired the fear of a generalized laborers' revolt, received little attention in the standard historical texts until the work of the Hammonds at the turn of the century. Their study remained the classic exposition of the revolt until the publication, by Eric Hobsbawm and George Rudé, of Captain Swing, a comprehensive reworking of the available documents in the light of modern social historical technique. Any account of the movement and its place in the history of collective action must be greatly indebted to this work; this paper is particularly so.

The social background to the Swing movement can be found in the transformation of economic relations in the British countryside after 1750. By this time, the classic triad of English agricultural production had been established. The majority of land was owned by large-scale holders, who leased to farmers and graziers, and who themselves hired agricultural laborers, shepherds, and farm servants. The classic small-holding peasants were a dying minority, predominating only in the thinly populated regions of Wales, the Pennine dales and the Scottish Highlands. The period 1750–1850 saw a tremendous expansion of agricultural production in response to the general population increase and the demand from the growing urban centers. Landlords took advantage of this long-term boom market by turning six million acres, nearly 1/4 of the total cultivated acreage in Britain, from open field, common land, meadow and waste into private fields, mainly through Parliamentary Enclosures. These enclosures, by removing the rights of agricultural laborers to the use of the common fields for grazing and
threshing, made them totally dependent on the vicissitudes of the labor market for their sustenance; in the Hammonds' phrase, it turned them from cottagers with land into cottagers without land. Moreover, the English countryside became the site of a permanent labor surplus, as the emigration to the cities and towns never kept pace with population increases.

Thus the economic condition of the agricultural workers deteriorated over the years. Farmers, taking advantage of the labor surplus, tended to decrease the number of workers hired by the year or the season, and to begin hiring by the day or the week. Unemployment and underemployment were chronic, while wages were driven down below the subsistence level, particularly in the low wage area south of the line connecting Chester and the Wash. The response to this situation by the rural authorities was the Speenhamland system of poor relief; by supplementing low wages through the poor rate, Speenhamland tended to institutionalize poverty and eradicate the distinction between worker and pauper.

The degeneration of the position of the rural laborers entered a new and acute phase after the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. The war boom gave way to an agricultural depression, as the average wheat prices dropped nearly 50% over the next ten years. The temporary labor shortage disappeared as up to 250,000 men returned to the countryside, and the brunt of the crisis was borne by the agricultural worker. Over the next fifteen years, theft, poaching, and individual acts of arson increased tremendously, but there were only two major outbreaks of mass rebellion, both in East Anglia, in 1816 and 1822. These movements, marked by incendiaryism and threshing machine breaking, displayed many of the features seen later in the wider-ranging uprising of 1830.

The 1830 outbreak itself seems to have been caused by a convergence
of both an economic and a political crisis. The harvest of 1829, following a relatively good year, was one of the worst of the 19th century; poor rates were slashed throughout agricultural England in response, and the workers faced the winter of 1830 in an apprehensive mood after a mediocre harvest. Into this equation was thrown the precipitant of political unrest. General elections held in August had swung against the Tories, while word was arriving of the overthrow of the Bourbons in France. Although the agricultural laborers were generally isolated from the political life of the nation, it is probably no accident that the movement began in Southeast England, nearest to the Continent. Hobsbawm and Rude point to the large number of rural artisans (tailors, shoemakers, and the like) arrested in the repression, as well as to the higher proportion of incidents in villages with a large number of artisans; these elements probably served as a transmission belt, bringing the news of changed political circumstances to the agricultural laborers. Contemporary observers in the cities attempted to blame political agitators like Cobbett and Hunt (both of whom were touring areas nearby the centers of revolt), but the research of Hobsbawm and Rude points to a more circuitous route of influence, through local residents aware of the national and international events.

The first sign of rural unrest in 1830 was a series of fires in northwest Kent, near Orpington and Seven Oaks, during the first week in June. Isolated incidents such as this were a normal weapon of social protest in the English countryside, and little notice was paid until the breaking of the first threshing machine in Lower Hardes, Kent, near Canterbury, on August 28. Although the next two weeks were relatively quiet, by the third week in October over 100 machines had been broken, and the area around Maidstone had become the center of agitation for a fixed
minimum wage. At the end of October, the movement spread westward, and in the first week of November reached into the Sussex Weald. By the middle of the month, Western Sussex had been infected. It had taken nearly two months for the rebellion to spread through Essex, two more weeks before West Sussex had been affected. But only three days later, on November 18, the first incident occurred in Hampshire, near Portsmouth. The uprising had picked up both speed and intensity.

At this point, it might be useful to outline the events of a "typical" riot. Although in some areas, the events never progressed beyond what might be called the preparatory stage, while in other villages, particular methods or aims were emphasized, the uprisings generally had two goals: the increase of wages and/or poor relief, and the amelioration of winter unemployment through the destruction of threshing machines. The beginning of agitation in a region was usually announced by individual acts of arson and the dispatching of letters from the infamous Captain Swing, warning against the use of the machines. Ultimately, a group of laborers and their supporters would gather at a beerhouse, in a nearby wood, or another meeting place. Once a critical mass was reached (usually 25-200), the crowd would march upon the houses of local farmers, peacefully persuading or physically impressing new members en route. These roving bands often took on the trappings of a parade, the self-appointed or elected leader wearing a white hat or mounted on a white horse, others blowing alarums or carrying flags, possibly even a tricolour. The slogans were often violent, but the actions rarely were; upon arrival at the farmhouse, a few appointed individuals would begin dismantling the threshing machine, while the crowd demanded money, food, or drink from the tenant.
Usually, the laborers met little resistance from the local farmers. The smaller ones, in particular, were themselves dubious about the economic advantages of the threshing machines, which they had adopted because of competition from their larger and richer neighbors. Moreover, the farmers had their own grievances -- high rents, tithes, and taxes. Often, the farmer would concede to the crowd's demands for a minimum wage, under the condition that his own rent, or more likely, his tithe was lowered. The crowd would then march off to the home of the parson, landlord, or titheholder, or possibly invade the parish select vestry or the local market town, on behalf of both themselves and the farmers. These confrontations were often more violent, with the parson being the most frequent victim of attack. Another common scene of violence was the parish workhouse, the hated symbol of poverty and oppression.

It was in Hampshire and Wiltshire that the Swing movement attained its greatest momentum and dispersal, although lasting for only a little over a week (November 18-24 in Hampshire, November 21-26 in Wiltshire). The repertoire of collective action in these counties was similar to that in Kent and Sussex, with certain new emphases; there was less arson and more machine breaking, particularly in Wiltshire. Moreover, for the first time, some industrial machinery was attacked (a sawmill, a sacking manufactory, a threshing machine factory, and a woolen mill). There also seems to have been less cooperation with the farmers in these counties, i.e. fewer attacks on landlords, parsons, and rate-collectors.

Up to this point, the rebellion had spread from its origin in Kent either by foot or by word of mouth, but in direct lines of influence. But from November 15, an independent center developed in South Berkshire, which spread to North Wiltshire, Gloucester (November 26-28), and toward
Oxford and Buckinghamshire. Huntingdon also found itself the center of a "contagion" during the last week in November, affecting parts of Bedford, Hertford, and Lincoln. Meanwhile, the original wave of risings had begun to play itself out upon reaching Dorset (November 23-29) and Somerset (November 30-December 1), the western edge of the Southern English grain-growing region.

East Anglia, the scene of rebellions in both 1816 and 1822, also rose in late November 1830. Again, fires and Swing letters predated the major events. Wage movements and machine breaking began in the northern coastal region of Norfolk, around Walsham, on November 19, spread to the Norwich area by November 27, and the Ipswich-Colchester region in the first week of December. Particularly in Eastern Sussex, the riots were notable for the close cooperation between the laborers and the tenant farmers, some of whom were accused of intentionally fomenting the movement. North and west of East Anglia, Cambridge and Lincolnshire were also the sites of major confrontations, while further away, Leicester, Warwick, Stafford, Shropshire, Cumberland, and Yorkshire saw isolated incidents, mostly arson.

Although in some cases the movement was carried from one village to the next by a mobilized band, Swing generally moved by word of mouth and the "contagion" of example. Hobsbawm and Rudé posit that the riots followed "the complex system of smaller veins and capillaries which linked each parish to its neighbors" (p. 190), rather than the major arteries of intercourse between larger towns. But a recent thesis by Andrew Charlesworth claims to show that "the major nodes and networks of each region, not the country lanes, formed the spatial framework through which the disturbances were channeled," while the inter-village networks played a
secondary role. Charlesworth's case here seems generally convincing, although he is forced to explain away quite a few exceptions.

In toto, the Swing movement was responsible for 350-400 cases of arson, 20-25 attacks on industrial machinery, the breaking of 390 threshing machines, and a variety of other disturbances (all listed in Hobsbawm and Rudé (1968), Appendix III). Analyzing the distribution of riotous events, Hobsbawm and Rudé divide the question into its macro- and micro-levels. On the most general plane, the riots centered in the classic low-wage, grain-growing areas of England (that is, the South and East), while diffusing in the pastoral West and the higher-wage North. The areas of hops and wheat cultivation were particularly prone to unrest, while the truck-farming area surrounding London (for about 25 miles) remained relatively immune, except for some incendiarism. Within the rebellious area, Hobsbawm and Rudé point to the propensity of the following types of villages to enter into action:

1) larger villages
2) villages with a higher proportion of artisans
3) villages serving as centers of trade and communication, i.e. villages with fairs, markets, or lawyers
4) villages dominated by owner-occupiers rather than tenants
5) classic "open" parishes, i.e. rural slums whose excess population labored in neighboring areas
6) villages with a tradition of non-conformist Protestantism
7) parishes with concentrated employment, i.e. a high ratio between laborers and employers
8) parishes with a recent history of enclosure. Hobsbawm and Rudé have been criticized for waffling on this point. See Tilly, 1970.

This analysis clearly shows that the occurrence of Swing was not directly related to the level of poverty in any particular community, but
was rather mediated through the factors listed above. But Hobsbawm and Rude have been taken to task for their tendency to isolate the strictly agricultural basis of revolt. Tilly, in particular, has pointed to the relation between riotous areas and regions of declining rural industry (which Hobsbawm and Rude deny in the second edition of their book). Also, E.P. Thompson (1969) has called for a further look at the connection between the rebellion and political radicalism. Both of these points require study and clarification.

Governmental authorities responded to the Swing movement with a combination of concession and repression, neither of which was totally effective. The Wellington ministry reacted slowly to the developments in Kent, and it was not until the riots spread to the Sussex Weald that troops were dispatched. These forces, according to Hobsbawm and Rude, served as a deterrent and a warning, being used mainly to guard the towns, and usually arriving too late to affect the outcome of any particular action. Peel, at the Home Office, urged the creation of special local units or the revival of the Yeomanry, but essentially left the local justices to their own devices. Some J.P.'s, particularly those in Norfolk, urged conciliation, while those who attempted to organize resistance found it difficult to enroll local farmers (who often sympathized with the laborers' plight, even when not in open alliance). The most effective repressive forces were organized privately, as a sort of feudal army, by local notables; the Duke of Buckingham created such a force near Winchester, as did the Duke of Richmond in West Sussex. This latter body was often cited as a particularly commendable force, organized in mobile units and dispatched to areas of likely trouble.

The accession to power of the Whigs on November 22, placing Lord Melbourne in office as Home Secretary, was marked by sharpened governmental
intervention against the laborers. Melbourne issued a proclamation on November 23 offering a £500 reward for the capture of rioters and incendiaries (and, two days later, a circular demanding repressive action and recommending the adoption of Richmond's Sussex plan). Military officers were dispatched to the counties to aid the J.P.'s, but again, on December 8, Melbourne had to issue another circular rebuking certain magistrates for their laxity.

Ultimately the riots ceased, with or without concerted repression, and the government instituted judicial action against the nearly 2,000 prisoners seized in the events. Fearing over-sympathetic justice from local magistrates, the government established a Special Commission to try the rioters in Hampshire, Wiltshire, Berks, Dorset, and Buckingham. Of the 992 cases tried by the court between December 18 and January 10, 378 defendants were dismissed, 35 sentenced to transportation, 252 sent to prison for various terms, 2 were fined, and 227 were convicted of capital crimes (of these, only 11 were ultimately executed). Meanwhile, the other counties proceeded in the normal manner, and with greater leniency. In sum, 1,976 prisoners were tried by 90 courts in 34 counties; of these, 252 were sentenced to death (233 of these sentences were commuted, often to transportation, while the remaining 19 were executed), 505 were ordered transported (481 ultimately sailed for Australia), 644 received prison sentences, 7 were fined, and one convict was whipped.

Echoes of Captain Swing were heard in rural England for the next few years, but the Hammonds were not wrong in declaring the 1830 movement the last laborers' revolt, at least of the old style. Incendiarism remained endemic, but it was not until the 1870's and the birth of agricultural unionsim that the rural workers again expressed their grievances in a mass movement affecting large portions of the countryside. The temporary
successes of the revolt, the halt in the spread of threshing machines and
the wage increases were soon wiped out. But Swing had put the fear of
God into the rural elites. And, although the rural and urban movements
were never consciously united, the laborers had set a certain tone for
the political agitation that was engulfing Britain.
Chronology

June         Fires in Northwest Kent
August       Parliamentary elections; word arrives of July Revolution in France
Mid September Wage movements and machine-breaking begin generalizing in East Kent
Late October Riots spread toward Kent Weald
Early November Movement reaches Sussex
11 November   First troops dispatched
15 November   West Sussex rises; independent center develops in Berkshire
18 November   First incident in Hampshire -- nearly all of Hampshire and Wiltshire affected over next week
22 November   Whig cabinet takes power
23 November   Melbourne issues proclamation offering reward for capture of rioters
27 November   Meetings and machine breaking spread in Norfolk; Gloucester and Huntingdon affected

Last week in November
Movement reaches greatest extension; original wave of revolt in South begins dying out upon reaching Dorset and Somerset

First week in December
Revolts center in Suffolk and Essex; isolated incidents elsewhere

8 December    Melbourne rebukes Norfolk J.P.'s for conceding to rioters
18 December-10 January
Special Commission tries prisoners in Hampshire, Wiltshire, Berkshire, Dorset, and Buckingham

For graphic descriptions of events, see the tables and charts in Captain Swing.
Bibliography


For relevant reviews of *Captain Swing*, see:


A contemporary work not listed in *Captain Swing*, but used by the authors, is Wakefield, E. Gibbon, *Swing Unmasked* (London: 1831).

The other major work on Swing is, of course, Hammond, Barbara and John L., *The Village Labourer* (London: Longmans, Green, 1920).

Although Hobsbawm and Rudé have opened the book on an important chapter in British social history, few have yet to take up their call for further research. Those who have include:


Other relevant studies of 19th century rural uprisings are:


Manuscript sources taken from Hobsbawm and Rudé, Captain Swing

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Parish Government

An ecclesiastic parish, in medieval England, was the local area where reciprocal duties (such as tithing) existed between a priest and the local inhabitants. By 1689, the parish had acquired various civic functions, such as the maintenance of the peace, the supervision of roads, and the administration of poor relief; it had become the major division of local government, except in those Northern English counties where certain extremely large parishes were subdivided for the purpose of secular administration. There was a tremendous variety in the size and population of the 15,000 parishes in the Great Britain of 1830; many were rural hamlets, little removed from medieval village life, others included 200 square miles of Northern moorland, while still others (in suburban London) numbered over 100,000 inhabitants. The boundaries of the parish were not coincidental with other administrative units such as the hundreds or the borough — in fact, some parishes were cut in half by county lines. No clear precedent existed for changing parish borders; as new churches were built or old ones destroyed, new civic parishes might be created, or might not. Legal membership in the parish was as indeterminate as its boundaries, as for certain purposes, all owners of land or houses in the areas were considered to be "members" of the parish, while for others, actual residence or rate-paying might be required. Since the administration of the parish of 1830 was so bound up with a variety of local customs, as well as specific parliamentary legislation, it will be necessary to examine the history of the parish as a civic body to understand its contemporary role.

The communal duties of the parish originated in church affairs, and the oldest parish office was that of Churchwarden. Usually two to four
in number, the churchwardens were selected annually, either by election at an open meeting of the parishioners, by nomination of the previous churchwarden, by appointment by the local Incumbent (i.e. the rector or vicar) or any other method of local custom. The responsibilities of the churchwardens were centered around the upkeep of the parish church, although they later became involved in other aspects of parish affairs along with the Overseers of the Poor and the Surveyors of the Highways. Their major duty, however, was the setting and collection of the church rate, an ancient custom legitimated by common law.

With the breakdown of feudal order on the local level, the Tudor monarchs began to utilize the parish structure for the administration of non-ecclesiastic affairs. The most important functions which devolved on the parish were the upkeep of the local roads (including paving, lighting, cleaning, and policing), the support of the poor, and the maintenance of the peace. The latter was the responsibility of the constable, who was the local arm of the magistrates. Originally an official of the manor, the constable became the parish representative of the justices of the peace (J.P.'s) by whom they were usually appointed. Thus they were parish officers in name only, being accountable to the J.P.'s and the High Constable of the Hundred in their duty of apprehending and detaining local law-breakers. In the 16th century, two new sets of officials were added by parliamentary statute to perform duties which were previously the responsibility of the constable. These Surveyors of the Highways and Overseers of the Poor (usually two to four of each per parish) were theoretically subordinate to the J.P.'s; annual reports of their activities were required; their rates had to be approved; moreover, the J.P.'s could rule as to specific uses of the funds. But by the 19th century, the J.P.'s had effectively alienated this power to the vestry,
and usually ruled on local affairs only during disputes between factions of the parish. The 5,000 J.P.'s in Britain could no longer hope to control the details of local government, and the parishioners began to feel that such control was unnecessary and arbitrary.

The body which actually controlled the parish during this period was the vestry. As another agency of government without a clear statutory existence in most localities, the constitution of parish vestries differed throughout Britain. In the majority of areas, the vestry was "open"—that is, all ratepayers were members, and the vestry evolved into a sort of local democracy, with all major communal decisions discussed and voted at vestry meetings. (Of course, in most areas, the vestry was dominated by the local landlords and their agents.) These vestries had wide-ranging powers; as the Webbs have stated, "By custom, the right and power of the parish to provide for inhabitants whatever services or regulative ordinances were deemed locally expedient was so vaguely extensive as to be practically without ascertained limits." But the major duty of the vestry was the appointment of parish officials, the overseeing of their duties, and the setting of the local rates.

The other major type of vestry organization was the close, or select, vestry. In certain parishes, the powers of the open vestry had been taken over the years by a self-perpetuating group, usually composed of ex-parish officials, members ex-officio, and up to twenty other parish residents. Some of these close vestries, particularly those whose legitimacy was somewhat dubious (i.e. either granted by the local bishop or by historic custom) made major decisions in conjunction with popular meetings, and left the day-to-day functioning of the parish in the hands of the appointed officials. But others, mainly those in the populous
London suburbs, had usurped all the powers of the parish, and had even
won the right to appoint its own members to sit as justices of petty
sessions for parish affairs. It was these vestries which particularly
offended the majority of local ratepayers, and were often the focus of
agitation over parish governance in the period 1827-1831.

The tremendous economic and demographic changes of the 18th century
tended to destabilize the J.P.-vestry-parish officer structure which had
developed over the past two centuries. Parliament continued to impose
new duties in the parishes, such as the provisioning of fire protection,
inspection of slaughterhouses, the licensing of pubs and taverns, and the
billeting of soldiers, but did not engage in any thorough reorganization
of the parish itself. Those parishes, particularly in the areas of the
greatest demographic growth, which found it difficult to administer under
the old system often petitioned Parliament, and the result was a series
of local Acts which affected a great number of parishes. These local
Acts took a tremendous variety of forms, but two were the most usual;
the replacement of an open vestry by a select vestry, or the creation of
a new local body for the administration of a particular parish function,
e.g. a Turnpike Trust or a committee of Incorporated Guardians of the
Poor. These latter bodies supplanted the vestry in regard to overseeing
their delegated operation and setting the relevant rate. Usually, the
Local Act reorganized a single parish, but often, particularly in the
case of the poor law, created a board to administer more than one parish,
or in the case of the Turnpike Trusts, a section of many parishes. The
composition of such bodies varied from locale to locale, but usually
included representatives of the parishes ex-officio, and elected members
based on a limited franchise.
Thus, in the early 19th century, English local government was composed of a variety of bodies, whose interrelation was intricate and often obscure. Decision-making power was generally held by an open vestry, a close vestry, or an incorporated body dedicated to a limited area of administration; the parish officials were responsible to these organs; and the justices of the peace were more or less involved in overseeing their operation and adjudicating disputes. But this structure, even with the changes brought about by the 18th century Local Acts, proved unable to cope with the increasing size and complexity of the tasks of local government. The functioning of the poor law on the local level received particular attention because of the tremendous increase in the burden of the poor rates in the late 18th and early 19th century -- many blamed a large part of this increase on local corruption and inefficiency. Thus Parliament, in 1817, appointed a Select Committee on the Poor Laws, chaired by Sturges Bourne, to investigate parish administration. Two pieces of legislation resulted. In 1818, an Act for the Regulation of Parish Vestries, applying to all vestries outside of London and Southwark without relevant local Acts or peculiar customs (58 Geo. III, c.59), codified certain regulations concerning the functioning of the vestries. Rules for vestry meetings were adopted, and a system of plural voting was established (giving those rated at L50 or less one vote, with an extra vote for each additional L25 of assessment, up to six votes). In 1819, an Act to Amend the Laws for the Relief of the Poor (59 Geo. III, c.12) legalized the executive committees which had been established by various parishes to streamline local government. These committees were to consist of the parish Incumbent, the Churchwardens and Overseers, along with five to twenty other parishioners elected annually by the open vestry, and were to be responsible for the operation of the Poor...
Law in the parish. But these Sturges Bourne select vestries, as they were called (not to be confused with the "close," or "select" vestry which we have discussed already) were adopted by only 3,000 of the 15,000 parishes, most of whom had already organized such committees extra-legally. The 1818 Act affected even fewer parishes, as most came under a local Act or a peculiar custom, and were thus exempted from its provisions. The forms of parish administration therefore remained nearly as varied throughout Britain, even after this attempt to codify their method of operation.

In the late 1820's, the governance of the close vestries became an important political issue in London's populous suburbs. Over one quarter of the 200 metropolitan London parishes were ruled by select vestries, concentrated in the newer western suburbs which had become favorite spots for development by wealthy bourgeois and aristocrats. These interests had successfully petitioned Parliament for the suppression of the local open vestries, and the establishment of close vestries which they dominated. But in 1826, agitation began among the lower middle classes for the restoration of the open vestry in St. Paul's-Covent Garden, and by 1829 had spread to Christ Church-Spitalfields, St. James-Westminster, St. Mary-le-bonne, and St. Pancras. Individually and collectively, these parishes petitioned Parliament; their demands came to be associated with the parliamentary reform agitation, and were adopted by the London radical M.P.'s and sections of the Whigs. In 1830, a committee of Parliament, chaired by John Cam Hobhouse, was appointed to investigate the close vestry issue. Advised by Francis Place, Hobhouse paraded a series of witnesses before the committee to complain of gross abuse, fraudulent management, and utter confusion in the select vestry parishes. A bill was introduced in 1830 to allow parishes to abolish the close vestries by majority vote, but was amended in committee and withdrawn. Then, in
1831, Hobhouse reintroduced his bill at the height of the reform agitation; claiming that the select vestries were causing a discontent second only to the reform issue itself, he demanded its passage. Talk spread of organized resistance to parish ratepaying, and in the midst of the political crisis of August, 1831, both houses of Parliament passed Hobhouse's Act.

The new bill (land 2 Wm. IV, c.60) was not obligatory, and depended on the approval of a two-thirds majority in a parish referendum. Under its provisions, an executive committee was to be established to act as the supreme governmental authority in the parish; all ratepayers were to receive the franchise, but only those rated at least £40 were eligible to serve as committee members. Moreover, an elective auditing body was established to oversee the parish's financial affairs. Only twelve parishes adopted this new form of governance, but among them were the most populous suburbs where the reform movement had its greatest popular appeal. Popular committees were established to organize support for the referendum and to elect their members to parish office. Thus by 1832, the parish government in many London suburbs was under the domination of local radicals. But by the end of the 1830's, the wealthy interests had reestablished their control in most areas. The radical movement in the parishes was for all purposes dead.
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Catholic Emancipation

The question of Catholic Emancipation was one of the most important, and probably the most divisive, issue in British politics during the first thirty years of the 19th century. The original restrictions on the rights of Catholics in the British Isles were adopted by the Tudors as a weapon against their dynastic opponents. During the 17th century, Catholicism became associated with Stuart royalism, and the Revolutionary Settlement of 1689 (along with the new Penal Code) included harsh controls over all aspects of Catholic life. The small Catholic community in England, dominated by a few aristocratic families, posed no real threat to the Protestant Orange and Brunswick dynasties, and most provisions of the Test Acts of 1673 and 1678 remained unenforced in Great Britain. But in Ireland, anti-Catholic legislation was an important tool for the maintenance of Protestant minority rule. As Edmund Burke claimed, the laws constituted "a machine of wise and elaborate contrivance, as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and degradation of a people... as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man." Strict regulation was made of religious observances, Catholic education was outlawed, economic disabilities were placed on recusants (those who refused to attend Anglican churches) and political rights were abolished. But the repression of the Catholic majority made Ireland a constant source of danger to the British government. Fear of rebellion and of Irish alliance with the hated French led Parliament to abolish the large majority of anti-Catholic laws in 1778 and 1782, and to enfranchise all Irish forty-shilling freeholders in 1793. Thus, by the time of the Act of Union (1800) between Great Britain and Ireland, the major disability placed upon Catholics was political; they were unable to hold public office, including membership in Parliament. Of course, like
all other non-Anglicans, they were also forced to pay the tithe for the established Church of England.

Although the Catholic emancipation issue cut across party lines, the demand for relief was supported by most Whigs and the majority of liberal Tories. These "pro-Catholics" denigrated the idea that Catholics could not be faithful citizens because of their allegiance to the Papacy and argued that emancipation was the remedy for the perennial unrest among the Irish peasantry and the Catholic middle class. The more conservative Tories, on the other hand, claimed that the Protestant settlement was inviolable, and that its alteration would remove a major prop of the established order in Britain. The latter elements relied upon an appeal to a popular anti-Catholic sentiment which had been graphically displayed during the Gordon riots in 1780 (which George Rudé called "perhaps the most violent and the most savagely repressed . . . in London's history"\(^1\)). But, as we will see, the Tory appeal to popular anti-Catholicism in the 1820's was ultimately unsuccessful.

As the governing Tory party itself was split over the emancipation issue, a modus vivendi, generally known as the "open system" was adopted in 1812 which allowed both pro and anti-Catholics to express their individual opinion on the matter, but committed the government to official neutrality. Thus, although opinion in the House of Commons was moving toward emancipation, the issue was effectively shelved; it was clear that without pressure from the government, both the House of Lords and the King would maintain their staunch defense of the Protestant constitution.

Moreover, the pro-Catholics were themselves divided over the question of

the "veto," i.e. securities which would assure governmental control over
the Catholic hierarchy, such as veto power over the appointment of clerics.
Moderate, often cisalpine, English Catholics and their mainly upper-class
Irish supporters hoped that such measures would reassure the government
and swing it in favor of emancipation; the large majority of Irish, though,
considered the veto to be as offensive as the Test Acts themselves. Despite
the tactical split, a relief bill passed the Commons by six votes in 1821.
Predictably enough, the bill was defeated by the Peers.

A turning point in the struggle for emancipation came with the found-
ing of the Catholic Association in 1823. The Association, led by Daniel
O'Connell, turned the small, mostly middle-class movement into a popular
crusade through the inauguration of the Catholic Rent, a penny a month
subscription, supervised by the parish priests and collected on a mass
scale. By the end of 1824, the British authorities were beginning to take
notice, and in February 1825 the Association was outlawed for two years
by vote of Parliament. O'Connell reorganized the Association to conform
to the new law, and soon the attention of both pro and anti-Catholics was
turned to parliamentary elections. A relief bill had again passed the
Commons in 1825, only to be turned down by the Lords. Both sides hoped
that a strong showing in the elections of the summer of 1826 would strengthen
their position; the pro-Catholics hoped for victories in Ireland based on
support for the Catholic Association among the forty-shilling freeholders
(i.e. the peasantry), while the anti-Catholics whipped up popular sentiment
in England. The results were disappointing for the anti-Catholics, who
were unsuccessful in their attempts to unseat a large number of English
pro-Catholics. But the 13 seat net gain for the opponents of emancipation
allowed them to defeat a motion for Catholic relief in the House of Commons
in 1827.
In February 1827, Lord Liverpool, who had been extremely successful in conciliating the opposed wings of the Tory party, fell ill, and the more liberal (and pro-Catholic) Canning became Prime Minister. Canning himself died in August, and his successor Goderich found it impossible to maintain both the support of the Crown and a parliamentary majority. Thus, in January 1828, Wellington became Prime Minister. Although Wellington was himself an anti-Catholic, he hoped to maintain the open system and reconcile the Tories. But circumstances were to prove beyond the Duke's control.

In February 1828, the Whigs introduced a bill into Parliament to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts insofar as they imposed political disabilities on dissenting (non-Anglican) Protestants. The dissenters had previously, by a yearly Act of Indemnity, been allowed to evade the provisions of the law, and their case was not nearly as controversial as that of the Catholics. During the 1820's, the dissenters imitated the Catholics (although rarely joining with them) by agitating for repeal, and their cause was taken up by the pro-Catholics who hoped to set a precedent for religious toleration. Thus, the government was put on the defensive when the dissenters' repeal bill passed the House of Commons by a large majority, and Wellington found it necessary to yield on the issue. In April 1828, the bill was approved by the Lords and the King. But Wellington, in order to appease the Ultra (i.e. strongly anti-Catholic) wing of his own party, was forced to take a strong stand against the Catholic Emancipation Bill introduced into the Commons in May, on the heels of the previous victory. In addition, he eliminated the Huskissonites (liberal Tories) from the cabinet, over the issue of reform of two rotten boroughs.

Wellington's balancing act was bound to alienate one faction and it was the pro-Catholics who were the first to react. O'Connell, who had
wavered in his opposition to Wellington after the relief of the dissenters, resolved to actively oppose the ministry. An opportunity arose in June, as a by-election became necessary in County Clare, Ireland; O'Connell decided to run, personally, against Vesey Fitzgerald, a pro-Catholic but a supporter of the Wellington ministry. Obviously O'Connell could not, as a Catholic, sit in Parliament, but he correctly surmised that a victory would put intense pressure on the government. The balloting took on the air of an evangelical campaign; O'Connell raised over £14,000 in a week, and the local clergy were enlisted to lead their flocks to the polls, bivouac with them, and maintain a sober decorum. On July 5, the results were announced, and O'Connell had gained a resounding victory.

Wellington faced a dilemma. He could continue to oppose emancipation, and refuse to allow O'Connell to sit in Parliament, but would then confront a mounting agitation in Ireland which might ultimately threaten civil war. Nearly 25,000 British troops (out of a standing army of 30,000) were stationed either in Ireland or on the western coast of Britain, but Wellington found such a solution personally repugnant. On the other hand, support for emancipation would involve alienating the Ultras of his own party and might also face the opposition of George IV. He thus decided to wait and hope that the situation would cool down.

The opposite occurred. The Catholic Association continued to hold mass meetings in Ireland. Moreover, the Ultras began an organized appeal to anti-Catholic sentiment in both Ireland and England. In June, Lords Brunswick, Kenyon, and Eldon had formed the Brunswick Constitutional Club to champion the cause of Protestant Ascendancy. The movement was to be kept under strict aristocratic control; the first 150 members were to be peers and M.P,'s, after which a call would be made for popular membership.
Even with this provision, many Ultra peers were opposed to the formation of an extra-parliamentary political club, which they considered unconstitutional. Others were content to rely on Wellington to maintain his opposition to the Catholics. Thus the whole weight of anti-Catholic sentiment was never mobilized behind the Brunswick campaign, or those of the older Pitt and Orange Clubs.

But by September, 1828, the popular appeal had begun. Lord Winchilsea organized a meeting in Maidstone, Kent on September 16, and a county Brunswick Club was opened to "all noblemen and gentlemen." By November 15, the pro-Catholic Spectator reported the existence of 36 Brunswick clubs in Britain. In some areas, pro-Catholics attempted to oppose the formation of the Brunswick Clubs; in Worcester, they seceded from a public meeting on the subject, but failed to prevent the formation of a local club. The Clubs themselves were limited to the "better elements" of the population, but made appeals to mass sentiment through open monster-meetings. The first and most famous of these was held on Penenden Heath in Kent, on October 24. The size of the meeting was estimated between 25,000 and 60,000; speakers on both sides of the issue were welcomed, and addresses were made by Lord Winchilsea and R.L. Sheil, the Irish agitator, along with other notables such as Cobbett and Orator Hunt (Hunt was pro-Catholic, while Cobbett denounced both sides). A vote was taken, and the anti-Catholics were overwhelmingly victorious.

The Brunswickers hoped to emulate their success at similar meetings throughout the country, but the example was slow to take effect. Meetings were held in Cheshire, Cornwall, Exeter, Devon, and in some Welsh counties through December and January, but the pro-Catholics berated the movement as restricted to the rural backwaters. When meetings were held in cities such as Leeds, Leicester, and Edinburgh, the pro-Catholics were more
successful, although rarely, if ever, did they constitute a majority.
Certain Whigs, such as Lord John Russell, proposed organizing counter-associations, but most pro-Catholics feared provoking a backlash. Thus, popular opinion in Britain seemed generally anti-Catholic, but the Ultras were unwilling and unable to stir up the fervor associated with previous campaigns, such as that of George Gordon in 1780.

Meanwhile, Wellington and Peel, the Tory leader in the Commons, had decided that emancipation would have to be granted as a concession to the Irish. Wellington spent the fall and winter of 1828 preparing George IV, although in the interval he tried to control the Irish situation by demissioning the increasingly pro-Catholic Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, Anglesey. Plans for emancipation were finalized in January, 1829; Catholics were to be given full civic equality, but could not hold the posts of Regent, Lord Chancellor of England or Ireland, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, or certain ecclesiastic positions. As a security against further agitation, the Catholic Association was to be permanently abolished, and the forty-shilling freeholders were to be disenfranchised in Ireland (leaving the vote only in the hands of those drawing more than £10 annually from property). The government position was announced in the Speech from the Throne on February 5, and was favorably received by the pro-Catholics, except for some grumbling among the Whigs over the franchise revision. The Ultras began a last-ditch petition campaign, but with the Ministry on the side of emancipation, the result was certain.

The last hope of the anti-Catholics was an appeal to George IV, who had no real sympathy for the Catholics. George's brother, the Duke of Cumberland, persuaded the King to withdraw his support from Wellington on March 4, but later that night he recanted, and the bill was introduced as
scheduled on March 5. On March 30, the third reading passed the Commons. The final vote in the House of Lords was scheduled for April 10, and the Ultras planned a public meeting to present petitions. But the government firmly warned the Ultras, and the petitions were quietly presented to the Home Secretary. The same day, the Relief Bill handily passed through the Lords.

An epilogue to the emancipation crisis came in May, when O'Connell attempted to take his seat in Parliament. The government decided that the Relief Bill was not retroactive; O'Connell was forced into a new election, which he easily won. The Parliament that convened in October included nine other Irish Catholics, as well as six English. But the Relief Bill had much more serious effects for the Wellington ministry. Members of the Ultra party, led by the Marquess of Blandford, had become staunch opponents of Wellington and Peel, whom they considered to have betrayed the Protestant cause. In June, Blandford introduced into the Commons a resolution to abolish the rotten boroughs, which he considered the corrupt base of ministerial power. His supporters hoped that an appeal to anti-Catholic sentiment in a reformed parliament would be more successful. Although this group of Ultras were relatively small, they managed to upset the small Tory majority in the Commons, and would play an important role in the near future. On the other hand, the extra-parliamentary supporters of reform were encouraged by the success of the Irish agitation. In January 1830, Thomas Attwood founded the Birmingham Political Union, modeled after the Catholic Association. The Catholic Relief Bill had opened the Pandora's box of reform.
Chronology

1673, 1678  Test Acts imposes wide variety of restrictions on British and Irish Catholics
1778  Relief Bill passed abolishing most restrictions
1780  Gordon Riots
1793  Franchise Act gives vote to forty-shilling freeholders in Ireland
1800  Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland
1821  Catholic Relief Bill passes Commons by six votes, defeated in Lords by 39
1823  Catholic Association formed by O'Connell in Ireland to press for relief
1825  Catholic Association outlawed by Parliament, but revived under semi- legality
       Relief Bill passed by 21 votes in Commons, defeated in Lords by 48
1826  General Elections; anti-Catholics make slight gains in Britain, Catholic Association shows strength in Ireland
1827  Pro-Catholic motion defeated by four votes in Commons
1828
9 January  Wellington named Prime Minister
26 February  Commons passed repeal of Test and Corporation Acts for Protestant dissenters, 237-193
April  Lords and King agree to repeal for Protestants
12 May  Commons votes to consider Catholic Emancipation by 272-266
Late May  Huskisson and other liberal Tories resign from cabinet over defeat of plan for enfranchisement of Manchester
10 June  House of Lords defeats pro- Catholic resolution by 44 votes
5 July  O'Connell named victor of by-election for County Clare
Mid-July  Plans laid for organization of Brunswick Clubs to oppose Catholic Emancipation
2 August  Catholic Association reformed after expiration of 1825 Act
16 September  First provincial Brunswick Club organized in Kent
24 October  Mass meeting held in Penenden Heath, Kent to discuss issue of Emancipation
December and January  County and city open meetings held in imitation of Kent
24 December  Lord Anglesey, pro-Catholic Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, dismissed by Wellington

1829
5 February  Government announces plans to introduce Emancipation Act
24 February  Catholic Association abolished as wing of Emancipation bill
5 March  Debate on Emancipation opens in Commons
30 March  Third reading of Catholic Relief Bill passes Commons, 320-142
4 April  Lords divide in favor of bill by 105
10 April  Petitions against Emancipation delivered to Home Secretary; third reading of bill passes House of Lords by 104
15 May  O'Connell attempts to take his seat in Commons, but law held not to be ex post facto
October  First new Parliament after Emancipation includes ten Irish and six English Catholics
Primary Sources

For a comprehensive list of primary sources on Catholic emancipation, see Machin (1964), Reynolds (1954), and Davies (1907). On the parliamentary issues, the private papers of the major actors are most relevant, along with certain published sources listed in the above bibliographies. The parliamentary debates are to be found in Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 2nd series, 1820-1830, and the relevant legislation in A. Aspinall and E.A. Smith, eds., English Historical Documents, vol. 11 (1783-1832) (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1956).

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