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English Radicalism and Political Reform in the Nineteenth Century: A Study in Applied Philosophy

Grace Rogers Mauzy

Western Michigan University

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ENGLISH RADICALISM AND POLITICAL REFORM IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: A STUDY IN APPLIED PHILOSOPHY

A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

by Grace Rogers Mauzy
Kalamazoo, Michigan
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Grace Rogers Mauzy
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INTRODUCTION

The face of England changed dramatically during the 19th century. Railway tracks seemed her agrarian greenness, mines pocked her highlands and the smoke-belching blemishes of Leeds, Manchester and Birmingham bulged into ugly prominence in her midsection, casting a sooty pall that boded no good for her aristocratic tradition.

Traditionally the aristocracy were the political and economic powers of England. Traditionally the common people regarded the aristocrats humbly and respectfully, quiescent in their well-defined social roles.

As the face of England changed, the smoke-laden winds of industrialism inexorably shifted the economic power from the traditional province of the aristocratic landowner to the newly-created middle-class province of the industrial capitalist, creating, in the process, a gulf between the political power and the economic power of England.

With industrialization came urbanization; with urbanization came new, poorly-defined social roles. Living conditions in the industrial towns were squalid; working conditions were oppressive. For many workers, life consisted of slavish working hours with barely enough time left over to drown their sorrows adequately in gin. The common people became restless and their restlessness was enhanced by the notions of "self-evident rights," of "social contract," and
of "equality" that had trickled down from the ivory towers or drifted across the Channel from France, lodging insidiously, if not yet seditiously, in the vocabulary of the common man.

Chafing under the yoke of political discrimination were the Jews, the Roman Catholics and the non-Anglican Protestants. Nor could the agnostics or atheists hold office. The soul of England seethed, believing in the rights of Englishmen, but not completely sure what those rights were, nor how to obtain them.

The English thinkers were aware of this seething soul and sought a solution. Some sought it through mental escape, and returned in thought, if not in spirit, to the glory of the Middle Ages. These were the romanticists. Some sought religious escape, redefined the world in accordance with the dichotomy of God and the devil, and let anger and feelings of injustice disseminate through the emotionalism of being "saved." These were the Evangelists. Some sought the solution through philanthropy, and attempted to alleviate the misery but neglected to change its causes. On the other hand, some sought the solution through the application of reason to society. They strove to create a social science whereby new institutions could be developed which would conform with their newly discovered universal law of human nature. These men were the philosophic radicals, and
Jeremy Bentham was their Newton.

The romanticists made conditions more bearable for the "haves." The Evangelists and humanitarians, often the same people, made life more bearable for the "have nots." But they offered palliative measures only.

The philosophic radicals struck at the root of the problem, the outmoded political institutions of England, and found a cure. That England became a democratic nation is due to the philosophic radicals and their followers, the political radicals. That she became a democratic nation without experiencing a violent revolution is due to the ability of the Radicals to work through the already existing legal channels, and their willingness to compromise. The palliative measure of the humanitarians and Evangelists also deserve credit. They made waiting easier for the soul of England.

The purpose of this paper is to trace the Utilitarian philosophy of Jeremy Bentham through the gradual democratization of Britain, and to show how it was possible for England to move from Utilitarianism to socialism under the same Radical banner.
CHAPTER I

THE PHILOSOPHIC RADICALS

Jeremy Bentham

Any study of English radicalism must start with its seminal thinkers, the philosophic radicals, who sought to apply the doctrine of utility to the no-longer-adequate political institutions of Great Britain. To fully understand the philosophic radicals, it is necessary to begin with Jeremy Bentham, who formulated the principle of utility.

Jeremy Bentham was born in 1748 and died in 1832 just before the passing of the First Reform Bill which was based on his doctrine and which set the stage for the democratization of England. Bentham was a gentle, truly humane, annoyingly precise, completely unimaginative recluse, who spent a lifetime reforming social institutions on paper. He expressed pleasure as the ultimate good, scoffed at ascetics, yet lived a life of almost monastic simplicity. His recreation consisted of taking "ante-prandial circumgyrations"1 at a running pace. He disliked metaphor, poetry and metaphysics, considering such things "fictions," and in ignoring this part of man's mind, failed to understand mankind's nobler motives.

There would be no place in Bentham's scheme for a man who would lay down his life for a friend. Brinton says that "The world of St. Francis was for him as non-existent as the world of Freud."¹

Jeremy Bentham believed he had discovered the universal law that unlocked the secret of the social sciences. This law, according to Bentham, was that the ultimate social good depended upon the greatest amount of happiness being shared by the greatest number of people. If social institutions conformed with this law, society would be good. Nothing could seem more reasonable.

There were no new ideas in Bentham's theory. From the time that Locke had decided that man's mind at birth was a blank page, men had been searching the environment for the solutions to social problems. From the time that Newton had discovered law in the physical world, men had been searching for a fundamental law of society. Throughout the 18th century the French philosophes assiduously applied mathematics, the language of reason, to social institutions in an effort to improve them. If the solution were to be found, it must be found in the nature of man, the nature of society, or both. Jeremy Bentham decided that society should conform to the nature of man, so he began there.

¹Brinton, Eng. Pol. Thought, p. 16.
Bentham borrowed his ethics from the Hedonists, his association psychology from Hume and Hartley,¹ his faith in founding a social science and his moral arithmetic from the philosophes,² his metaphysics (which he would have denied having) from the Medieval nominalists,³ and his phrase "the greatest happiness for the greatest number" from Priestley.⁴ His claim to fame is that he organized a jumble of often considered notions, found a least common denominator which he used as a measure, then worked out a formula, complete with guidebook, whereby he could apply his theory to social institutions.

That he managed to do this was due to his pragmatic, unimaginative nature. When he comes to a knotty problem, one that might cause a deeper thinker to pause, he subjectively pooh-poohs it, labels it a "fiction," or unreasonable, or a problem of the imprecision of words, and confidently goes on his objective way.

The Principle of Utility

In his formulation of a philosophy of human nature,

²Halevy, Phil. Rad., p. 19.
⁴Halevy, Phil. Rad., p. 22.
Bentham started with the premise that there is a science of the mind. Impressions or sensations perceived by the mind, if perceived contiguously will be recalled contiguously. If one is hungry, one eats food and feels better. So when one thinks of food, he remembers the pleasant sensation and associates food with pleasure. If, however, he eats strawberries and gets hives, he will associate strawberries with discomfort. This is the theory behind association psychology, and the theory upon which Bentham bases his law. The mind will associate pleasure with impressions or sensations that were agreeable to it; it will associate pain with impressions or sensations that were disagreeable.

Sometimes an agreeable sensation will be followed by a disagreeable sensation, then the mind compares the amount of pleasure with the amount of pain and makes a choice. If it is more pleasant to eat strawberries than it is unpleasant to have hives, one may prefer to eat strawberries. Each person decides whether or not the amount of pleasure offsets the amount of pain in any given association.

Perhaps the choice would lie between two unpleasant sensations. A person might have to choose between eating strawberries and getting hives, or not eating strawberries and starving to death. He would, according to Bentham, choose the action that produced the lesser pain. Using pleasure and pain as the only determinative factors governing man's actions, Bentham proceeded to analyze humanity
and prescribe a moral and legislative code for humanity to follow.

Bentham introduces his *Principles of Morals and Legislation* by stating that mankind is governed by "two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure."\(^1\) In his second sentence he said that "It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do."\(^2\) By using the words "ought to do," he stepped out of the realm of pure psychology and entered the realm of ethics.

He points out that since we are ruled by our desire for pleasure and our aversion for pain, then it naturally follows that anything that promotes pleasure is good, and anything that diminishes pleasure or promotes pain is evil. The principle of utility is that principle which *judges* "every action whatsoever"\(^3\) as to whether or not it augments pleasure. By "every action whatsoever" he explains that he means not only private actions but also governmental measures.

With these fundamentals in mind, it is only reasonable that morals and laws should direct men to good; therefore, the happiness of the community is the end of government. To

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\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)Ibid., sec. II, p. 2.
achieve this end, moral and legislative codes must use the principle of utility as their criterium.

How apply anything as individualistic as personal pleasure or personal pain to a community? This was simple to the nominalist Bentham, who had no patience with such "fictions" as the Rousseauian "General Will" or the metaphysical German "community soul." The community, he states, is "fictitious body, composed of the individual persons who are considered as constituting as it were its members." \(^1\) The interest of the community is, then, "the sum of the interests of the several members who compose it." \(^2\)

To determine whether or not any given action will benefit the community, one need only compare the sum total of pleasure for the individual members which will be augmented by the action, with the sum total of the pain which will be augmented by the action. If the amount of pleasure is more than the amount of pain, the action is good.

Only two principles are adverse to the principle of utility, declares Bentham. One is the principle of asceticism, which is, he feels, a sort of inside-out utility. Ascetics fall into two groups, the religionists and the

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\(^1\)Bentham, Principles, chap. I, sec. IV, p. 3.

\(^2\)Ibid.
moralists, and they believe that pleasure is evil and pain is good.\(^1\) The moralists, he says, merely "reprobate pleasure," but the religionists actually "court pain."\(^2\) Bentham dismisses the ascetics by saying that they misapply utility, but very few people are ascetics, so they really don't matter.

The second principle adverse to the principle of utility is the "principle of sympathy and antipathy,"\(^3\) which he later calls the "principle of caprice."\(^4\) These principles are held by unreasonable persons, who disapprove merely because they disapprove "holding up that approbation or disapprobation as a sufficient reason for itself and disclaiming the necessity of looking out for any extrinsic ground."\(^5\)

These persons are the men who talk about "moral sense," or "common sense," or the "Law of Nature," or those who talk about the Will of God almost as if God had spoken to them.\(^6\) Bentham sputters about them in copious footnotes, irritably

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\(^1\)Ibid., chap. II, sec. V, p. 9.
\(^2\)Ibid., chap. II, sec. VI, p. 10.
\(^3\)Ibid., chap. II, sec. XIV, p. 17.
\(^4\)Ibid., p. xv.
\(^6\)Ibid., n. 1, pts. 1-9, pp. 17-20.
pointing out how unreasonable they really are. He shows how
the laws based on their principle will be too harsh or too
ineffectual, and then dismisses them by saying that they
must be regulated by the principle of utility before they
can do mischief.¹

Having washed his hands of such heretics, Bentham
proceeds to analyze the ways by which men can be regulated.
There are, he calculates, four sanctions, or things that
bind men.² These are the "sources from which pleasure and
pain are in use to flow . . . . "³ Because these sanctions
can inflict pain, they are capable of regulating men's
actions. The physical sanction inflicts the natural conse-
quences of an imprudent act. The political sanction is the
regulatory power of the proper political authority. The
moral or popular sanctions are imposed by public opinion.
As for the religious sanctions we can't really know about
them, but they should come from the immediate hand of God,
and may apply to either present life or the future life.⁴

⁴ Ibid., chap. III, secs. III-VII, p. 25.
Sanctions, then, are the **means** to the legislative **end**, which is, of course, the happiness of the community.

**Bentham's Moral Arithmetic**

Having established the **means** and the **end** of government, it is time to examine the **instruments** of government: namely, pleasure and pain. To be able to apply pleasure and pain as criteria, they must first be measurable.

Pleasure and pain can be measured as to **intensity**, **duration**, certainty and propinquity.\(^1\) Intensity and duration are calculated from the minimum and so will be represented by a whole number. Certainty or uncertainty, and propinquity or remoteness are calculated from the maximum and so will be represented by a fraction.\(^2\) These are the elements to be considered in computing individual pain or pleasure.

If, however, an act is under consideration, and its tendency toward good or evil is questioned, then the possibility of the sensation recurring, or the fecundity, and the purity of the pleasure or pain must be taken into account. A pleasure is **pure** if there are no unpleasant after effects.

If the act is to apply to a number of persons, the above elements must be known, plus the number of people who will be

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affected, or the extent. 1 These are the points, says Bentham, on which the "whole fabric of morals and legislation may be seen to rest."2

The principle of utility can now be easily applied to determine if an act or measure has a tendency toward good or evil. One merely adds the column of pleasure and compares the sum with the sum of the column of pain. If a number of individuals are involved, one adds the individual sums of pleasure and compares the total with the total of the individual sums of pain. If pleasure predominates, the act will have a tendency toward good; if pain predominates, the act will have a tendency toward evil. 3

With his moral arithmetic, Bentham has supplied legislators with a rule of thumb by which to determine the goodness of a law. That he expected it to be merely a rule of thumb is evidenced when he says, "It is not to be expected that this process should be strictly pursued previously . . . to every legislative or judicial operation." 4 It is sufficient to show that the value of pleasure and pain can and should be compared before enacting a law.

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2 Ibid., n. 1, p. 30.
3 Bentham, Principles, chap. IV, sec. V, pts. 4-5, p. 31.
4 Ibid., chap. IV, sec. VI, p. 31.
Bentham's Moral Calculus

Having cleared the philosophical waters with his moral arithmetic, Bentham promptly clouds them again by plunging feet first into the mud of subjectivity. He analyzes and classifies fourteen sorts of pleasure and twelve sorts of pain. The basic pleasures, he decides, are pleasures of sense, wealth, skill, eminence, good name, power, piety, benevolence, malevolence, memory, imagination, expectation, association and relief. The basic pains are those of privation, the senses, awkwardness, eminence, ill name, piety, benevolence, malevolence, memory, imagination, expectation and association.

As if these weren't enough, he next classifies individual reaction to pleasure and pain and finds not less than thirty-two "quantums" or degrees of sensibility. These range from such factors as health, sex and age to such abstract factors as morals, religion and sympathy.¹ All classifications are an attempt on Bentham's part to make the subjective objective from his own limited and subjective observations. Brinton finds his attempt "rather pathetic."² Healey, however, points out that, although it may seem that Bentham's "taste for classification has got the better of his

¹Bentham, Principles, chap. VI.
analytical spirit,"¹ one must keep in mind that it was due
to "a most serious and scientific preoccupation, which is
... to put an end to the era of subjectivism in morals and
to found an objective morality."² If we accept Halevy's
justification, that all's well that ends well, we can accept
Bentham's next argument, that the consequence of the act is
what really matters.

The Right of the Government to Punish

In his analysis of consequences and the circumstances,
intentions and consciousness that lead to the consequences,
and in his later analysis of motive, Bentham bogs down in
the mire of semantics. Such remarks as "There is no such
thing as any sort of motive that is in itself a bad one,"³
cause decent men's eyebrows to arch in indignation. Bentham
realizes that he is handicapped in his desire to communicate
because of age-old notions of right and wrong.

Bentham's intention is mild enough. He only wishes to
justify the right of the government to punish; a promise
which should seem antithetical to his original belief that
it is evil to produce pain. According to the principle of

¹Halevy, Phil. Rad., p. 32.
²Ibid.
utility, it is justifiable for the political authority to annex an "artificial consequence"\(^1\) to an offensive act, but only "in as far as it promises to exclude some greater evil."\(^2\)

To be able to properly apportion punishment, the political authority must determine the responsibility of the offender. Evil, says Bentham, is not connected with motive, because an individual must have his own pleasure in mind when he performs an act, or he wouldn't do it. This is, in itself, good.\(^3\)

When, however, harm comes to another because of the act, the individual has crossed the bridge from private good to public good, and the greater good enters the picture. Responsibility for the offense enters when a person foresees the evil consequences of an act, when he intends the consequence to do harm, and then performs it consciously.\(^4\) On the basis of the principle of utility, this person should be punished by a means of a carefully calculated punishment which is just a trifle more painful in the values of moral arithmetic than was the pleasure that originally motivated the individual. This will serve to deter the individual

\(^3\)Ibid., chap. X, pp. 97-136.
\(^4\)Ibid., chap. VII, pp. 70-82.
from doing further mischief.¹ This is the natural method of
punishing which Bentham proposes should replace the old
technical method, based on the principle that crime deserves
punishment, and which inflicts unrealistic punishments on
the offender.

Bentham devotes the remainder of his work to a careful,
precise and humane analysis and classification of the various
crimes and their punishments; in other words, he makes the
punishment fit the crime.

Bentham was convinced that he had accomplished his
purpose. His least common denominator was the psychological
fact that men seek pleasure and avoid pain. He founded an
ethical system when he said men ought to do this. He made
his ethics workable through the application of his moral
arithmetic and laid the groundwork for further work in this
field by developing his moral calculus. He leaped lightly
over the chasm separating the individual from the community
by refusing to look into its metaphysical depths.

His ethics carried him easily over the next barrier,
the relationship between the community and the political
authority, because the moral word "ought" is merely a shell
around the authoritarian word "should." If men ought to
seek pleasure, then something must see that they do.

¹Ibid., chap. XII, sec. I, p. 170.
The beauty of the principle of utility is that it could be applied so easily to laws and to penal jurisprudence. A little addition, a little subtraction, and one could be scientifically sure of oneself. All one needed now was a wise, humane political authority to put the principle into action; a benevolent dictator.

There can be no doubt about it, Jeremy Bentham was not an advocate of democracy when he wrote his Principles. Furthermore, he believed in the "oughtness" of governmental intervention into the affairs of men. That his philosophy became the foundation of British democracy and synonymous with laissez faire is due to James Mill, who made Bentham a democrat, to Adam Smith, who convinced him of the "invisible hand," and to the philosophic radicals, who propagandized his doctrine.

Bentham and Political Economy

Having neatly disposed of penal jurisprudence to his satisfaction, Jeremy Bentham decided to apply the principle of utility to economics. In this field he was indebted to Adam Smith, whose Wealth of Nations, published in 1776, substituted the theory of laissez faire for the old, no longer realistic, mercantile theory of economics. Smith's ideas came at the right moment of history, for the American Revolution showed the need for a new economic plan.
Basing his theory on the principle of utility, (which he had arrived at independent of Bentham), Smith said that each individual seeks his own economic good, and in so doing is "led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention."\(^1\) Because of this, the result is that he "frequently promotes [the interest] of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it."\(^2\) Smith based his argument on the principle of exchange and the value man puts on his labor. If a man feels that something he worked to make is worth more than he is offered in exchange, he will not exchange it. Therefore, prices are self-regulating according to the interest of the individual.

According to this principle, restrictions placed on exchange by the government merely interfere with the natural balance.\(^3\) Government, then should not interfere in the economic affairs of men. In Smith's thinking, the government has only three duties: to protect the society from invasion; to protect the members from each other; and to provide such public works and institutions as would be more economically provided by group effort.\(^4\)

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\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 327.

Smith failed to solve adequately the problems of rent or
taxes in a laissez faire society. These problems would later
be solved by David Ricardo, one of the philosophic radicals.

In 1798, Jeremy Bentham, who frankly acknowledged his
debt to Smith, wrote A Manual of Political Economy in an
attempt to determine "what must be done, and above all what
must not be done, for the national prosperity to reach the
highest point."¹ He disagreed with Smith on some minor
points, but, in the main, agreed with his policy of laissez
faire. In his Manual he stated that when considering either
community or individual wealth, "The motto, or watchword of
government, on these occasions, ought to be--Be quiet."²
For this reason, Bentham's economic theory is often referred
to as "quietism."

His reasons for quietism were that the community wealth
is really the wealth of the individuals, and they know best
what their interests are; furthermore, the government is
likely to interfere with the desired end, while the individual
will be interested only in increasing his own wealth, and
with each one trying, each is more likely to attain it.

¹Halevy, Phil. Rad., 108.

If government interferes at all, it should be in diffusing knowledge to the people so they can act wisely. The government should not give money to people, for that would constitute taking from one to give to another, and this would not benefit the whole.\(^1\)

Bentham's obvious acceptance of Smith's theory of laissez faire is important because laissez faire will be one of the hallmarks of the Utilitarian and a major factor in the political reform platform of the radicals.

The Problem of the Identity of Interests

Elie Halévy, in *The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism*, seeks, among other things, to point out the contradiction between Bentham's belief that government should intervene in the affairs of men, and the policy of governmental non-intervention in economic affairs that became the war-cry of the radicals.

He finds that the crux of the problem lies in association psychology and was first analyzed by Hume.\(^2\) If we accept the premise of utility, that man seeks pleasure and avoids pain, and that that constitutes the only determinative factor in man's blank-tablet mind, how can we explain man's


tendency to seek the good of society?

To answer that we must decide whether egoism (man's interest in his personal pleasure and pain) is more predo-
minate than sympathy (his interest in someone else's pleasure and pain). Bentham decided it was, but that the happiness
of another is important to the individual because it can affect his own happiness. This is what Halevy means by a
"fusion of interest."

Halevy then divides the thesis of a fusion of interests into two sub-theses: the thesis of the natural identity of
interests, and the thesis of the artificial identity of interests. The former is based on the fact that even though
egoism is important, men manage to survive; therefore, they
must learn to harmonize their interests. This they will do,
if left alone, for it is to their individual interest to do so.¹ This is the thesis behind Adam Smith's economic theory,
and also the one behind Bentham's theory of political
economy. The latter is based on the premise that men are
primarily egoistic and that their interests will not
harmonize; therefore, it is the business of the legislator
to harmonize these interests for them.² This is the thesis
behind Bentham's Principles, and Halevy finds it to be the
principle he follows more often than not.

¹Halevy, Phil. Rad., pp. 13-16.
²Ibid, p. 17.
Halevy explains the contradiction by declaring that "Benthamism was the work of a jurist who was by accident an economist."¹ He shows that as new economic theories came into the picture, it became more and more obvious that the government would have to step in; first, to protect the security of the property owners, and secondly, to educate people for the good of the economy.² In a democracy, this contradiction tends to decrease. The closer a majority comes to being unanimous, the closer it comes to having a complete harmony of interests. While waiting for that desired end, it is only to be expected that the majority will impose their interests on the minority.³

George Sabine finds that the contradiction can be explained by the assumption, on the part of Smith and Bentham, "that economics and government are mutually independent, or are only indirectly related through individual psychology."⁴ Crane Brinton blames the contradiction on Bentham's inability to understand "the way men feel towards the state or towards any group of which they are members . . . "⁵

¹Halevy, Phil. Rad., p. 488.
²Ibid., p. 490.
³Ibid., p. 491.
⁵Brinton, 19th Cent. Thought, p. 17.
This problem of identification of interest, which at first glance seems merely academic, will assume increasing importance as the radicals move from a policy of laissez faire reform to a policy of direct governmental intervention.

As England moves slowly toward socialism there will be another conflict; the conflict between Bentham's atomistic metaphysics, which declares that the sum of the parts equals the whole, and no more; and the Hegelian concept that the community is more than the sum of the parts. Bentham's atomistic moral arithmetic can easily be applied as a measure of individual pleasure and pain in such matters as the punishment of an individual offender, but how does one apply it to show the benefit to the community in such matters as slum clearance? Here, the community is improved, but not the majority, counted one by one. Still the greatest good for the greatest number is affected.

That England was able to make the switch from Utilitarianism to Socialism under the same radical banner, will be due in part to the pragmatic nature of Englishmen, who remedy a situation first and philosophize later; in part to John Stuart Mill, who will provide a pivot point in both the matter of identity of interests and the matter of metaphysics. The radicals will be able to do an about-face and march toward socialism without missing a beat.

Before tackling that problem we must first examine the
transition of Jeremy Bentham, benevolent despot, to Jeremy Bentham, democrat.

Bentham and Mill

Had Jeremy Bentham been the only one to believe in his principle of utility, he may never have influenced history beyond a few reforms in penal jurisprudence. From the time of the publication of his *Principles*, however, he had continued to write. He had tried unsuccessfully to interest the rulers of Great Britain and Europe in his suggestions. He had attempted a grand and expensive practical reform by building a model prison, the Panopticon, and this, too, had failed. In 1809, at the age of sixty, an embittered old man, he met James Mill, who would convince him that the principle of utility could best be served in a democracy. Because Mill believed in Bentham's doctrine enough to spend his life propagandizing it, the principle of utility became a school of thought and instrumental in shaping the history of England.

James Mill was a hard-headed, opinionated Scotsman, who firmly believed that man is the product of his environment, and of nothing else. Though an ardent advocate of the freedom of opinion, he actively disliked anyone who differed with him.¹ An exponent of the theory that man lives for

pleasure, he took a dim view of pleasures and "deemed very few of them worth the price which, at least in the present state of society, must be paid for them." Mill not only shared Bentham's belief in association psychology and the principle of utility, but also his lack of imagination and his impatience with poetry and sentiment. He had been trained for the ministry, only to decide that he couldn't believe in a benevolent God, who, with foreknowledge, would create people knowing they would go to hell. So he became an agnostic and turned his dogmatic tendencies toward association psychology, politics, economics and education. But above all, and in spite of all, James Mill was a teacher.

After his first meeting with Jeremy Bentham, Mill spent the next eleven years living near him, subsidized by the old humanitarian. Bentham obviously loved Mill and his large family for he took them with him on his holidays at Ford Abbey. James Mill was by no means a parasite; rather, he was a prodigious worker who expected all associated with him to work. During these years he assisted Bentham with his publications; helped him apply the theory of utility to

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2 Ibid., p. 41.
4 Ibid., n. 1, p. 74.
democracy; educated his growing family,\(^1\) taking particular
pains with his oldest son, John Stuart;\(^2\) and tried to
prevent the youngsters from forming any preconceived ideas
on anything not conforming with the principle of utility.
At the same time he served as a nucleus and teacher for the
young politicians and thinkers, who like himself, wanted to
reform England on the basis of this principle.

Of the men associated with James Mill, the ones who were
most instrumental in establishing the "school of Benthamism,"
were Francis Place, a radical whose forte was agitating and
organizing;\(^3\) Sir Francis Burdett, M. P. for Westminster; and
John Cartwright, the first English theorist on universal
suffrage.\(^4\) Though they, in turn, influenced the political
side of Benthamism, they soon looked to Bentham as "the
chief thinker of Radicalism."\(^5\)

Perhaps dearest of all to Mill was David Ricardo, the
gentle economist, who developed laissez faire economy into a
philosophy of progress, and who, without the encouragement of
James Mill, may never have published his important work.\(^6\)

\(^{1}\)Wallis, The Life of Francis Place, n. 1, p. 74.

\(^{2}\)Mill, Autobiog., chap 1, pp. 1-38.

\(^{3}\)Halevy, Phil. Rad., p. 259.

\(^{4}\)Ibid.

\(^{5}\)Ibid., p. 264.

\(^{6}\)Ibid., p. 266.
Bentham and Democracy

As early as 1809, James Mill made a cautious attempt to apply the principle of utility to democracy. He stated that although it was the province of the legislator to frame a constitution, in regard to the "conduct of the national business according to the rules of the constitution," the case is widely different.¹ This is something "which must be done by the people; or it is ridiculous to talk of doing anything for them." The conflict between legislator and people could result in a situation that could "destroy all national prosperity." Mill pulled in his horns a bit and suggested that the constitution contain the necessary checks on the "impulse of the people" and then the "operation of power, in the second stage, may be purely salutary."² This wasn't much, but it was a start.

It wasn't until 1817, however, that the Benthamites came out in favor of, not only democracy, but radical democracy. This was the work of the master himself, and was entitled A Plan of Parliamentary Reform in the Form of a Catechism, with an Introduction showing the Necessity of Radical, and the Inadequacy of Moderate Reform. In his introduction Bentham blasts at the monarch as the "ruling

²Ibid.
one," and the aristocracy as the "ruling few" for sacrificing "the interest and comfort of the "subject many." The only remedy for this is "two-words, viz., democratical ascendancy." and radical parliamentary reform is the only means. ¹

In 1818 Bentham drew up twenty-six Resolutions for Parliamentary Reform which Burdett presented in a motion in Commons on June 2, 1818.² In these resolutions he proposed, among other things, universal suffrage, the secret ballot, yearly elections and the redistribution of electoral districts on the basis of population.

By 1818, Jeremy Bentham, benovent despot, had become Jeremy Bentham, radical democrat.

Ricardo's Political Economy

At the same time that Bentham and Mill were applying the principle of utility to democracy, David Ricardo was hard at work developing a new point of view and attempting to correlate it to the principle of utility.

Ricardo disagreed with Smith's theory that economic law is based on labor and exchange alone. He analyzed the

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² Halevy, Phil. Rad., p. 262.
"principle that the quantity of labour bestowed on the pro-
duction of commodities regulates the relative value,"¹ and
found it subject to too many modifications to suit him. He
decided, therefore, that in order to find the basic laws of
economy, he must look at the distribution of the total
product. The total product, he discovered, is divided
between the "three classes of landlord, capitalist, and
labourer."² He next applied Robert Malthus's theories of
dynamic laws of population and rent to the economic factors
of wages, profits, taxes and trade, and drew conclusions
that would fit his preconceived notions of laissez faire.

Ricardo's law of population and rent winds around to the
conclusion that the landlord is a parasite, and the laborer
can't progress. If there were enough fertile land to feed an
increasing population, there would be no increase in rent,
which is the differential between productive land and non-
productive land. But this can't be so, because the nature
of land is such that it is not equally fertile. Therefore,
with an increase of population, more and more infertile land
is put to work and more labor is needed to produce the same
amount. When more labor is used, the value of the product
increases and prices go up. When prices go up, the living

¹David Ricardo, Principles of Political Economy and
Taxation, ed. by E. C. R. Gonner (London: Geo. Bell & Sons,
1908), pp. 5-40.
²Ibid., p. 41.
standard goes up and population increases. When population increases, people find it harder to make a living, and the population decreases.¹

As a result, decided Ricardo, the one who profits most from an increase in prices is the landlord. Actually he profits doubly, once when he receives high rent for his infertile land, because it is being worked harder; and once when he receives his pay in produce which he sells at the now higher prices.² He makes pure profit. The capitalist, on the other hand, must subtract wages and rent from his profit, so he makes less; and the laborer makes only as much as it costs to replace him.³

It was on the basis of these conclusions that Ricardo recommended a laissez faire policy. He applied his conclusions to the question of free trade, and pointed out that the only ones who would benefit would be the landowners. He applied them to the laws regulating wages, and decided that wages should be "left to the fair and free competition of the market, and should never be controlled by the interference of the legislature."⁴ He suggested that if the government

¹ Ricardo, Prin. of Pol. Economy and Taxation, p. 55.
² Ibid., p. 60.
³ Ibid., Chap. VI, pp. 87-107.
⁴ Ibid., p. 298.
wanted to help, it should educate the people so they would stop reproducing during times of prosperity. He also felt the government should make laws "to render less frequent . . . early and improvident marriages."¹

The Benthamites were delighted with Ricardo's conclusions for they proved just what they believed all along. Certainly there should be free trade, and certainly there should be no laws regulating wages. They also had long suspected that the landowner was growing wealthy at the expense of the poor.

Halevy finds Ricardo's conclusions illogical, showing that it is obvious that the three classes would present a conflict of interest that might call for "artificial identification of interest" by means of legislation. This would be more in line with Bentham's original philosophy that the government had the right to intervene in the affairs of men for their own good. Why then, does Ricardo use his new point of view as a rationale for laissez faire? Because he is a product of his times, decides Halevy. Ricardo is satisfied with "reconciliation through consequences; from both the law of differential rent and the law of value he draws conclusions in favour of commercial liberty."²

¹Ricardo, Pol. Econ. and Taxation, p. 82-84.
²Halevy, Phil. Rad., p. 338.
It might be noted that in turning from a theory of economics based on exchange to a theory based on distribution, Ricardo is also turning from the realm of Bentham's atomistic philosophy. And with his dynamic laws of population and rent, he is permitting something other than pleasure or pain to have a deterministic influence on the actions of men.

Ricardo died in 1823, but by that time the basic platform of the radicals had been developed. The radicals would stand for free trade, laissez faire in economics, universal suffrage, the secret ballot, annual elections, and the redistribution of electoral districts on the basis of population.

The gospel was written. It was up to the third generation of Benthamites, the first to be labeled "philosophic radicals," to spread it.

The Philosphic Radicals

John Stuart Mill was two years old when his father met Bentham. He had, at that age, few, if any, preconceived ideas, and only the tiniest speck of an innate yearning toward tenderness on his otherwise blank-tablet little mind. His father didn't believe in innate tendencies, so he saw in young John the perfect guinea pig on which to experiment with his ideas of association psychology, education and Benthamism. John was permitted no frivolous studies; he started with Greek at the age of three, and was brought gradually through
Latin, history and French, until at the age of thirteen he was deemed ready for Ricardo's political economy. To read was not enough, John must make marginal precis of each paragraph and be prepared to teach the younger children what he had learned.¹

At the age of fourteen, John was given a copy of Bentham's *Principles*. Having been trained for just this moment, the book was a revelation to him. He states that "It gave unity to my conception of things. I now had opinions, a creed, a doctrine, a philosophy; in one among the best senses of the word, a religion . . ."²

It was about this time that James Mill's circle of friends was broadening, including now, the young radical, Joseph Hume; John Austin, who would later publish a great work on jurisprudence; and George Grote, whose able pen helped the radical cause. These men came to listen to, and learn from, James Mill. John Stuart Mill has written that, while Bentham influenced men through his writing, James Mill "was sought for the vigour and instructiveness of his conversation, and did use it largely as an instrument for the diffusion of his opinions."³

²Ibid., p. 66.
³Ibid., p. 101.
Young John was an intimate of his father and it was easy for him to enter the radical circle. At the age of sixteen he first appeared in print and from that time on he published profusely. By 1823 he had become the center of a group of his own that met to study and discuss questions on the basis of utility. He named his little society the Utilitarian Society, and from this time the Benthamites would be called Utilitarians.\(^1\) He counted among his friends at this time, Charles Austin, younger brother of John Austin; William Eyton Tooke, son of the economist; and William Ellis, a young political economist. By 1824 he had become friendly with George John Graham and John Arthur Roebeck, and they called their threesome the "Trijackia," or "Union of the three Jacks."\(^2\)

These young propagandists agreed with James Mill on association psychology, the principle of utility, representative government and complete freedom of discussion. They branched out on their own, however, by following the Malthusian doctrine with an optimistic twist. To Malthus human affairs could not be improved. The young "Philosophic Radicals," as they were now called, felt, however, that human affairs could be improved by "securing full employment

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\(^1\) Mill, *Autobiog.*, p. 79.

\(^2\) Halevy, *Phil. Rad.*, p. 480
at high wages to the whole labouring population through a voluntary restriction of the increase of their numbers."¹

From 1824 until 1828 the "Philosophic Radicals" spread their creed. They were deliberately propagandizing Utilitarianism as a basis of reform. They spread it by word of mouth, through the friends of John Stuart Mill; through the Cambridge associates of Charles Austin; and through Cambridge undergraduate associates of Eyton Tooke.² They spread it through their new radical organ, the Westminster Review, established in 1824 by Bentham to offset the influences of the Whig controlled Edinburgh Review and the Tory controlled Quarterly Review.³ They also spread it by means of debating societies. In 1825 John Stuart Mill organized a debating society, only to have it fall flat on the first night, due to the inadequacy of its principal speaker. Bloody but unbowed, he kept right at debating, making a name for himself and his friends in the season of 1826-7 by meeting, along with Roebuck, two Tory speakers, Hayward and Shee.⁴ Mill declares that these debates were a "bataille range" between the

¹Mill, Autobiog., p. 105.
²Ibid., pp. 103-4.
³Ibid., p. 9.
⁴Ibid., p. 128.
'Philosophic Radicals' and the Tory lawyers," and that they attracted the attention of persons of note, including the Coleridgeans.\(^1\)

In 1828 they gained more prominence when Maurice and Sterling, two young followers of Coleridge who were attempting to start a radical party on the idealistic philosophy of the Romanticists, entered into the debates.\(^2\) These speakers influenced John Stuart Mill more than his father would have believed possible, for they offered the fulfillment of that tiny speck of innateness the elder Mill had overlooked in his son's otherwise blank-tablet mind. They introduced him to poetry, which filled the void of hopelessness that engulfed the twenty-year-old boy. He realized that if perfect happiness were achieved and he had nothing to strive for, he would be miserable. If this were the case, why had he been trained in such a way that he had no inner resources? John Stuart Mill eventually resolved his dilemma by accepting emotionalism and feeling as an essential part of man's life.

By 1828 the *Westminster Review* had flopped under the inefficient editorship of Bowering. At the same time young Mill had lost his taste for spreading the Benthamite gospel. (though he would not break with the Utilitarians until his

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\(^1\) *Mill, Autobiog.*, p. 128.
father's death), and the propaganda campaign from the philosophic point of view had lost its impetus.

It was now time for the political radicals to take over. They adopted the policies proposed by the philosophic radicals and started to bombard the political institutions of Great Britain.
CHAPTER II

THE POLITICAL RADICALS

Prelude to Reform

A glance at the political picture of England in the years from 1827 to 1832 is enough to show that reform was in the air. For this change to follow the pattern advocated by the philosophic radicals would depend upon effective agitation by means of the radical press and through reform clubs and political unions. In parliament it would rest on the proddings of the Benthamite disciples. It would also depend on the merging of the interests of all reforms, both philosophic and political.

Though not the only radicals in England during these years, the philosophic radicals did, however, have a well-formulated plan for economic and parliamentary reform. Portions of it were accepted and propounded by extremists from both parties who were intent upon grinding their own political axes. At this time most parliamentary radicals were merely extremist members of either the Whig or Tory party, and were not elected as Radicals. It is true that Westminster was represented by two Reform members, Sir Francis Burdett and Sir John Hobhouse, but they had reformed little. Francis Place remarked in 1826; "Burdett and Hobhouse are little if any better than mere drawling Whigs."¹ Some of the larger

cities were also represented by independents, who had as yet accomplished nothing spectacular.

Aside from Burdett and Hobhouse, chief among the Benthamite radicals was the Whig, Henry Brougham, a vociferous but formidable eccentric who had been in Commons since 1810, and who had, according to George Canning, "supported or proposed almost every species of innovation which could be practised on the constitution."

An advocate of Malthusianism, Brougham was in favor of popular education, parliamentary reform, and the well-being of the manufacturing class. He was against mercantilism, expensive colonial possessions, and the poor laws. Beyond the desire to educate the workingman so that he could understand and apply the doctrine of Malthus, Brougham had little sympathy for his plight.

Opposed to Brougham in all things excepting laissez faire was William Cobbett, publisher of the Political Register. As vociferous in newsprint as Brougham was in Commons, Cobbett was a radical only because he was so vehemently reactionary. He out-Toried the Tories in his hatred of progress. He yearned for the good old days of agrarian England and would have liked to do away with both factory

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and manufacturer. Because he pitied him, he agitated on behalf of the poor, exploited worker, and for this reason was an advocate of parliamentary reform.¹

Sharing both Brougham's enthusiasm for the industrial revolution and Cobbett's interest in the workingman was Robert Owen, who dreamt of a socialistic Utopia wherein workers lived cheerfully in order and cleanliness. Not politically affiliated himself, Owen attracted such radicals as the Tory-Democrats Michael Sadler and Richard Castler to his cause. The Factory Acts would be their contribution to reform.² These acts would be opposed by the Benthamites because they violated the laissez faire principle.

Whereas Brougham attacked colonialism as a useless expense and favored a "little England," Lord Durham, Gibbon Wakefield, Charles Buller, and the philosophic radicals, Sir William Molesworth and John Stuart Mill saw in colonialism a possible safety valve for the social pressures of England. Throughout the thirties they would work on a policy of liberal imperialism despite the violation of laissez faire such a policy would imply. Durham's plan sought to make Canada attractive to serious and industrious emigrants from the British Isles, enabling them to buy land and obtain passage,

²Ibid., pp. 43-60.
thereby relieving Britain of some of its more distressed population. With this end in mind, Durham, Wakefield and Buller founded the Colonization Society in 1830, which was culminated in the Durham report in 1839.¹

At the same time, all was not serene on the orthodox two-party front. The shifting of alliances within the Tory and Whig parties contributed to the effectiveness of the radical minority. In February, 1827, Lord Liverpool retired, and without his moderating influence, the Tories divided into progressive and reactionary wings. The former soon to be known as the Canninglites, was headed by George Canning, who, although a liberal in his foreign policy, was opposed to parliamentary reform. His Tory supporters were William Huskisson, an ardent Free-Trader, as well as Lord Palmerston, William Lamb, Charles Grant and Lord Goderich.² The reactionary or High-Tory group was led by the Duke of Wellington, Lord Eldon and Robert Peel.

Canning appealed to the Whigs to support him on his liberal foreign and commercial policies and they divided.


The main body of the Whig party, including Brougham; John George Lamerton, later Lord Durham; Lord Holland; and the Marquis of Lansdowne, agreed to join Canning; while Lord Grey and Lord Althorp remained aloof. Both Grey and Althorp were interested in parliamentary reform and religious tolerance, but felt that Canning had not offered sufficient support of these Whig measures.¹

The division of the Tory camp proved to be permanent, for during Grey's ministry the Canningites would join the Whigs. After Canning's death in 1827, however all Whigs were reunited.

In parliament and throughout the country the radicals bombarded the people with propaganda. They organized their specific interest groups. They wooed public opinion, realizing full well that public opinion was their most formidable weapon against the parliamentary stronghold of anti-reformism.

The major radical organs at this time were the middle-class Morning Chronicle, which expounded philosophic radicalism; Cobbett's Political Register, which stormed with Carlyle-like emotionalism for the workers to awaken; Richard Carlile's Republican, which carried Thomas Paine's philosophy to the common man; and the publications of Henry Hetherington, The Poor Man's Guardian, Penny Paper for the People, and the

¹Trevelyan, Lord Grey Reform Bill, p. 203.
Twopenny Dispatch, all of which screamed for the worker to arise. Beside newspapers, petitions and pamphlets were circulated, as were the ubiquitous handbills.

The commercial classes were organized by their champions into reform clubs, the workers into workingmen's unions, while political unions were founded to unite the two classes. Everywhere there were debates and lectures available to those with the price of admission; and some radicals, such as Cobbett, spoke to anyone who would listen, without charge.

As the radicals talked, the people listened, became convinced of their rights and raised their voices in rage. Their weapon of public opinion forged, the radicals leveled it on the parliamentary stronghold.

Parliament Bombarded

The bombardment of the age-old parliamentary stronghold of the British aristocracy began mildly enough. The radicals joined the Whigs and aimed their missiles of tolerance on the long-crumbled Test and Corporation Acts. These acts had been passed during the reign of Charles II to keep dissenters and Roman Catholics out of office and compelled office holders to receive the sacrament of the Last Supper according to the rites of the Church of England. The Test Act further required all officials to take an oath of allegiance and supremacy

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which amounted to denying the authority of the Pope.¹

The days of Cromwell were long past and the English no longer feared the dissenters. Since 1689 non-Anglican Protestants had been taking office, passing bills and legalizing their measures by annually passing bills of indemnity.² The Acts, however, were still effective in keeping Catholics out of office. In 1828 Lord John Russell, a liberal Whig, proposed to Commons that those portions pertaining to dissenters be repealed. He pointed out that, although the Acts were not enforced, they made the dissenters "irritated enemies," who were "smarting under a continual sense of injustice."³ Parliament could see the wisdom of the motion, and after cautiously rewording the oath to discourage Catholics and Jews from thinking they were to be included,⁴ it passed the bill by a large majority.⁵

This was only a minor victory for the radicals and could not have been achieved without the Whigs; but it was the start of Whig-radical and Tory-radical alliances that would enable the reformers to push their policies. The status quo remained unchanged; they had merely removed some of the

¹Annual Register, 1828, pp. 84-85.
³Annual Register, 1828, p. 84.
⁴Ibid., p. 102
⁵Ibid., p. 104.
rubble. The radicals aimed their next missile of tolerance at the stone of Catholic disabilities, and were stopped cold. In 1828 Sir Francis Burdett, friend of Bentham and Mill, suggested in vain that parliament next remove the barriers keeping Catholics from office.¹ This would entail major change and the Tories had long won votes with their cry of "no popery." It became obvious to the radicals that the bill could not be passed without Tory support.

Philosophic radicals may spread doctrine, political radicals may exert pressure, but practical politicians make and repeal laws, and they must be impressed with the expediency of change before change is wrought. Nothing will impress a practical politician of the expediency of a measure as poignantly as the roar of the populace.

In 1829 Ireland roared and the prime minister, the Duke of Wellington, listened. Thinking he heard the strains of civil war in the undertones of the roar, the old soldier helped remove the stone of Catholic disabilities, only to find out that with the stone he had removed the mortar holding the Tory party together.

In 1828 Daniel O'Connell, a fervent Irish radical, a Roman Catholic and an admirer of Bentham, ran for Parliament, knowing full well that Catholics couldn't be seated in that august institution. Seven-eights of his countrymen were

¹Annual Register, 1828, p. 105.
Catholics, and when O'Connell was elected the Irish roar for Catholic Emancipation became ominous indeed.

The Duke of Wellington was on the spot. In 1828 he had cleaned his cabinet of liberal Tories, placing all his eggs in the basket of the High Tories. Now, however, if he backed Catholic Emancipation, the High Tories would desert him; if he did not, Ireland might rebel. G. M. Trevelyan says he made a soldierly, not a political, decision.¹ He chose to back Catholic Emancipation, although it had long been identified with the Whigs and radicals.

In his speech opening parliament in 1829, King George IV showed his willingness to accept removal of Catholic disabilities.² Shortly after Robert Peel, Secretary for the Home Department, introduced the bill, the king changed his mind, deciding he could not agree to a modification of the oath of supremacy. Wellington and Peel immediately resigned, but before they could dissolve the government, the king assented.³

Despite the indignation of the High Tories, Wellington still had sufficient strength to push through the bill, helped, of course, by the support of the Whigs and radicals.

² Annual Register, 1829, p. 6.
The bill passed Commons with a majority of 178;\(^1\) it passed the Lords with a majority of 104.\(^2\) Wellington would have fallen at this time, declares Trevelyan, had not the king refused to work with the leader of the opposition, Earl Grey.\(^3\)

The handwriting was on the wall, however, and by 1830 it became obvious that Wellington would soon fall. The commentator who wrote the "State of the Nation" paragraphs for the Annual Register in 1830, has made some rather pointed remarks concerning the reactions of the Tories to Wellington's decision. Stating that they were disgusted, he maintains that they showed "no inclination again to trust the men who had once betrayed them."\(^4\) He further states,

They resisted Wellington, Peel and their colleagues, . . . as statesmen who had abused their powers and coalesced with their political antagonists to force upon the country a measure contrary to its opinions, its interests, and its institutions . . .

He remarks that the distance between the Tories and the Whigs was "at least not greater than between them and the ministry, and the Whigs (sic) had never betrayed them."\(^5\)

It seemed only a matter of time before the Whigs would

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1 Annual Register, 1829, p. 62.
2 Ibid., p. 96
3 Trevelyan, Lord Grey, p. 211.
4 Annual Register, 1830, p. 2.
5 Ibid.
be in power, and they spent that time supporting various unsuccessful reform bills. The Marquis of Blanford, an ex-High Tory who had been converted by Wellington's "betrayal" to a "fiery and reckless reformer," suggested that a committee review the boroughs and cities in the kingdom for the purpose of evaluating election reform.¹ Lord John Russell suggested giving representation to Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds.²

The most radical bill was proposed by Mr. O'Connell, who had finally managed to be seated in parliament by running again after the Catholic Emancipation law had been passed. Of his bill the commentator remarks that it was the "most wild and ruinous" of them all. O'Connell proposed triennial parliaments, universal suffrage and the secret ballot. The commentator ridicules it by saying,

The foundation of his system being this simple but mad proposition, that every man who pays a tax, or is liable to serve in the militia, is entitled to have a voice in the representation.³

Only twelve voices joined O'Connell's cry in the wilderness. Three-hundred and thirty-two M.P.s voted against him.⁴

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¹Annual Register, 1830, p. 87.
²Ibid., p. 103.
³Ibid., p. 105.
⁴Ibid.
⁵Ibid., p. 109.
Another unsuccessful blow was struck for tolerance on April 5, with a bill proposing a repeal of the civil disabilities affecting British-born Jews. The bill was tabled.  

Outside parliament the radicals were not idle. In January Thomas Attwood, banker-demagogue, founded a Political Union in Birmingham, and his example was followed in a number of towns. The goal of these unions was to unite the middle and lower classes for reform.² It was also at this time that Durham founded his Colonization Society.

In June George IV died, and a major obstacle to Whig control was gone. In July Paris once more went to the barricades, and all of Europe seemed in turmoil. The commentator remarks acidly, "All over Europe the popular notion seems to be, that a populace had only to rise, in order to make armies and governments vanish."³

The radicals greeted the news of the Three Days' Revolution with elation. Francis Place, Joseph Hume and Sir John Hobhouse were among others gathered in Hume's committee room when the news hit London. Hobhouse raised his hat and cheered. Place's biographer declares that for the next two

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¹Annual Register, 1830, p. 109.
²Trevelyan, Grey, p. 216.
³Wallas, Place, p. 243.
years Place kept the thought "always at the back of his mind that, horrible as an armed revolution must almost necessarily be, and he had no illusions on this point, such a revolution might yet be worth while."\(^1\)

England echoed the roars of Europe. Reform was in the air and the days of the High Tories were numbered. When parliament reopened in October, affairs looked grim for the government. Of 236 members who were returned by "more or less popular" election, only 79 were for the Wellington administration, 16 were neutral, while 141 were avowed for the opposition.\(^2\)

King William IV opened his first parliament on a worried note, declaring that there was a "spirit of discontent and disaffection" among the people, and that he was determined to exert to the utmost of his power "all the law and constitution have placed at my disposal for the punishment of sedition and for prompt suppression of outrage and disorder."\(^3\)

A cry of fear and rage went out among the inflamed populace. Handbills were posted urging the people to meet, and to come armed.\(^4\) One fear-monger printed a handbill which

\(^1\)Annual Register, 1830, p. 144.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 147.

\(^3\)Ibid.

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 159.
was read by Sir Robert Peel in parliament. It stated,

Come armed—We assure you from ocular demonstration, that 6,000 cutlasses have been removed from the Tower, for the immediate use of Peel's bloody gang—remember the cursed speech from the throne! These damned police are now armed. Englishmen, will you put up with this?¹

Amid the uproar, Wellington, with an uncanny lack of political wariness, declared in his opening speech in parliament that he was not only not prepared to bring forward a reform measure, but would feel it his duty "to resist such measures when proposed by others."² In so saying he cinched his downfall.

The end came quietly. A vote was taken on a proposal to study the civil list, on November 15, and a majority of twenty-nine voted against the minister. On November 16, Wellington announced his resignation.³

Wellington's downfall came too rapidly to suit Francis Place. He was not satisfied with the calibre of the Whig ministry which was certain to replace the old soldier. He would have preferred to delay the political change until he were more sure of being able to manipulate the political strings. However, what was done was done, and Place would

¹Annual Register, 1830, p. 160.
²Ibid., p. 155.
³Ibid., p. 163.
have to manipulate Grey's ministry as best he could.¹

Reform would have its day, and once parliamentary reform was effected, the High-Tory party would be destroyed as a major force. The people of England continued to roar at the instigation of the radicals, and the practical politicians would feel it expedient to listen. The years of 1831 and 1832 would be years of great excitement, of much change in the temper of the populace. The doctrines of the philosophic radicals would intoxicate the people with hope and a feeling of power, and the people of property would watch with grave misgivings and great distaste.

The Reform Bill of 1832

A Whig government, headed by Charles, Second Earl Grey, replaced Wellington's defeated ministry, and Francis Place "at once took up the task of worrying them into granting as much reform as possible."² He suggested public cross-examination of ministers "on those points on which they were likely to be weak."³

Petitions poured into the ministry, signed, apparently, at least once by every unfranchised Englishman, and by many

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¹Wallas, Place, pp. 249-253.
²Ibid., p. 252-253.
³Ibid., p. 253.
franchised ones as well. Political unions popped up all over the country; new radical presses were born and flourished. Agitators agitated, demonstrators demonstrated, and the working men of England flexed their political muscles, ready for the big fight. In the farm areas mills were burned and machinery destroyed, and the mischief was blamed on a non-existent Mr. Nobody, dubbed "Captain Swing."¹

Though Francis Place was not blamed for the burnings, a deputation was sent to him from the prime minister, asking him to write pamphlets asking people to stop. Place refused, and though later he did write a pamphlet pointing out that the burning of ricks could not raise wages, he could not resist remarking that "'Captain Swing' was helping to bring reform within the range of practical politics."²

The conservative Englishman watched his country go insane with a mixture of horror and disgust. The commentator who wrote the "State of the Nation" paragraphs for the Annual Register in 1831, reflects that opinion when he says,

Their objects were, to push on political changes to any extent, by any means; to insist on whatever they chose to demand, as a right which could not be refused without a crime; to repress, by their

²Walles, Place, pp. 253-254.
display of force, any expression, in their neighborhood, of opinions of an opposite tendency; and to make even the government, which they pretended to be supporting, feel by their violence, that they existed in order to dictate, not to obey.¹

The conservative Englishman did not feel he was being unjust. What if, in 1816, 558 M.P.'s from England, Wales and Scotland had been returned by patronage?² The fact that the people were only virtually represented under the system of rotten boroughs, pocket boroughs and close boroughs guaranteed that the government would be run by the men most suited to run it; men of property, education and stature. What could be gained by turning so serious a matter over to the masses?

Although reapportionment of election boroughs was the major issue, the political rights of the masses was in the forefront of many minds. The commentator questions these rights when he remarks:

That thousands of men declare political power to be their right, does not make it a right; that they unanimously demand to be put in possession of it, no more touches the reason of the question --is it fitting and expedient that they should possess it?--than their unanimous demand to be put in possession of the estates of their neighbors, or to be exempted from taxation, would prove that what they sought was useful and proper.³

¹Annual Register, 1831, p. 5.
²English Historical Documents, XI, p. 236.
³Annual Register, 1831, p. 2.
The radicals felt that men of property and stature were often more interested in that property and stature than in the people they virtually represented. Although Sir Samuel Romilly, a friend of Bentham, objected to the "detestable" practice of buying votes, he found it was the only way he could vote independently. He wrote in his diary on April 27, 1807, that,

To come in by a popular election, in the present state of representation is quite impossible; to be placed there by some great Lord, and to vote as he shall direct, is to be in a state of complete dependence...

In 1831 virtual representation was no longer enough for the people of England.

While the greater part of England seethed and the smaller part worried, a committee of four secretly drew up a bill that would be a great step in democratization. Lord John Russell and the radical Lord Durham, son-in-law of Earl Grey, represented the extreme liberal viewpoint on the committee and tried to formulate a bill along Benthamite lines. Sir James Graham and Lord Duncannon, representing the more conservative element, advised moderation.\(^1\)

\(^1\) Samuel Romilly, "Memoirs of the Life of Sir Samuel Romilly" as quoted in English Historical Documents, XI, p. 243.

\(^2\) Halevy, Triumph, p. 25.
That Francis Place had no part in drawing up the bill is evidenced by his reaction when told the particulars of the plan after its presentation to parliament. Place remarked,

It was so very much beyond anything which I had expected, that, had it been told to me by a person unused to proceedings in the House, I should have supposed that he had made a mistake.¹

Place was not the only one to be surprised. On March 1, 1831, the House of Commons was packed with expectant M.P.s. The Tories weren't worried. They had already agreed not to oppose the first reading of the "not very terrible" bill that was expected.² The Whigs were anxious to see if what their leaders had decided upon would be expedient.

Small-statured Lord John Russell stood up and coolly declared that a reform bill had been framed to remove the grievances against which the people complained; namely, nomination by individuals, election by close corporation, and expenses of elections.³ He explained that his bill offered a middle-of-the-road course,⁴ and that its argument was based on the constitutional right of Englishmen not to

¹Wallas, Place, p. 257.
²Tevelyan, Grey, p. 279.
³Annual Register, 1831, p. 7.
⁴Ibid., p. 6.
be taxed without their consent.¹ He gently chided parliament by pointing out how shocked a foreigner would be if he came to this country of unequaled freedom and "were taken to a green mound and informed that it sent two members to the British Parliament," or if he were to see "flourishing towns containing immense manufactories . . . and be informed that these places sent no representative to Parliament."² This must be corrected, and his reform bill had been framed to do so.

British M. P.'s had heard noble words before, and they were totally unprepared for the bomb that Russell next dropped. The reform bill concerned the redistribution of the franchise and was based on population statistics for 1831. Russell informed Commons that according to Schedule A of the bill, any borough with fewer than 2,000 people in 1821 would be disfranchised. This removed 120 members. According to Schedule B, any borough with fewer than 4,000, but more than 2,000, people would return one member. Weymouth, for example, was to be reduced from four to two members. This removed 48 more. With these measures Russell had coolly shifted 168 seats to new constituencies. Schedule C provided for the representation of towns which

¹Annual Register, 1831, p. 7.
²Ibid.
had heretofore had none, and adjusted the number of members
to be returned from previously represented towns. There
were also adjustments made in county seats. In addition,
98 new places were created. The bill set a property quali-
fication for voting at ten pounds and a residence requirement
of at least six months.

The crowded House listened stupified to Russell's words.
Someone interrupted him and asked him to read the names of
the disfranchised boroughs; as they were pronounced the facts
hit home. One-hundred and twenty M.P.s heard their political
voices dwindle to nothingness. Many laughed; some with
delight, these were the radicals; some with irony, there were
the Tories.

If Sir Robert Peel had been just a little braver; brave
enough to break the pledge made on February 20, not to
interfere with the first reading, Trevelyan feels that the
bill would have died on the floor. But Sir Robert was not
that brave, and during the first seven days of debates the
news of the bill reached the people and the Whigs had made a
coup. The working people and middle class of England loved
the legislation.

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1Annual Register, 1831, p. 7 ff.
2Trevelyan, Grey, p. 281.
Earl Grey left the House of Commons that day satisfied
that he had kept his pledge to the people. The radical
Hothouse hurried over to the library of Francis Place, to
see how the Benthamites felt about the bill. Place
immediately "took measures to cause it to be known in the
coffee-houses in the neighborhood, whence it spread like
wildfire." The Benthamites decided not to endanger their
chances by demanding more. Place and his friends now set
about uniting the working and middle classes. For the
moment, at least, all cries of universal suffrage and the
ballot had ceased. The bill was all-important.

Commons debated for seven days, and then voted that
leave be granted for the bill to be brought in. Many thought
it was too democratic; many thought it was not democratic
enough; but the Benthamites and Ireland's Daniel O'Connell
were grateful that the bill offered as much as it did and
advised their people to be temporarily satisfied.

On March 22, the bill passed the second reading by a
majority of one. Scant victory that it was, it was still a
victory. More than a third of the M.P.s representing the

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1 Trevelyan, Grey, p. 285.
2 Halevy, Triumph, p. 27.
3 Wallas, Place, p. 257.
4 Annual Register, 1831, p. 55.
rotten boroughs in Schedule A voted against themselves. Over half of those represented on Schedule B followed suit.¹

To celebrate the defeat of the "boroughmongers," Edinburgh, Dundee and London held illuminations. It went badly for the property owner who failed to have a candle in his window on these nights. Mobs prowled the streets, throwing stones at unlighted windows and taking special delight in pelting the homes of peers and bishops.² The conservative Englishmen clucked with dismay at the destruction of property. The Benthamites worried that the violence would turn the more conservative Whigs against the bill. Still, when the Controller from the King's Household asked Place to try to arrange that Tory windows not be broken, he refused, declaring that the Tories would claim that, even the mob had respected the houses of those who had been falsely represented as their worst enemies, but whom they knew were truly their best friends.³

The people of England flexed their muscles and picked up more stones.

The celebrations were premature. On April 19, the bill was defeated in the committee stage, and the king dissolved parliament.

¹Travelyan, Grey, p. 291.
²Annual Register, 1831, pp. 60-80.
³Wallas, Place, p. 260.
The resulting general election was a Whig victory. Urged on by the radicals, once again petitions poured in, presses flourished and Englishmen gathered in groups to show their strength. England reverberated with cries of "The Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill." The conservatives thought these cries typical of the lack of compromise to be expected from the people. The radicals, however, realized that the people were showing great restraint in not demanding universal suffrage and the ballot.

A second reform bill was passed by the new House of Commons by a majority of 109 on September 21, 1831. On that day the bill was presented to the House of Lords. While the peers of England considered this menace to their power, the people of England shook their unwashed fists and muttered threats. The Lords, undaunted, voted the bill down by a majority of 41 on October 8. The reformist presses announced the news to England in papers edged in black. On October 19, the king prorogued parliament.

On October 29, Sir Charles Wetherell, Recorder at Bristol and an outspoken enemy of the bill, made the mistake of going

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1Annual Register, 1831, p. 77.
2Ibid., pp. 380-283.
3Ibid., p. 275.
to that city on business. This lit the fuse that set off the
Bristol riot. For two days and two nights the populace threw
stones, hammered down jails, burned official buildings and
drank looted wine. They chased away one troop of militia and
cheered another, which prudently saluted and withdrew. What
had started as a show of popular indignation ended in a
popular brawl and indicated that Merry Old Englishmen could
act very like the French. On Tuesday, November 1, the people
of Bristol, merry and a bit hung-over, counted 12 dead and 94
wounded. It was becoming more and more obvious that the
people would have reform.1

With the introduction of a third reform bill in 1832,
there seemed but one thing left to do. If the Lords refused
to vote for the legislation, the king must create new peers
who would, as Anne had done in 1712. The people demanded it;
the ministers demanded it; but the king refused.2 Grey’s
cabinet resigned, and the king tried in vain to set up a Tory
government under Wellington.3

The people of England were now dangerously close to
civil war. A remark was made that until reform there was

1Annual Register, 1831, pp. 291-294.
2Annual Register, 1832, pp. 156-169.
3Ibid., pp. 169-177.
"no King William IV, merely the Duke of Clarence." The people gave publicly "three groans for the Queen."\(^1\) The royal coach was followed by a howling mob, and the court made preparations for flight.\(^2\) An anonymous speaker made the following rash statement:

To the waverers, who pretend to be friends of reform, we will present buttoned pockets; but for the absolutes, or military rulers, we will prepare our powder and melt our lead.\(^3\)

The king recalled Grey's ministry and with great reservation agreed to create not more than three new peers.\(^4\) As a last effort to prevent a "greater evil," Wellington asked his fellow Lords to "adopt the obnoxious proposition."\(^5\) Many refrained from voting rather than support the bill, and on June 4, 1832, 106 Lords voted in favor and only 27 voted against it.\(^6\) On June 7, a commission sent by the king gave royal assent to the bill that the king could not bring himself to sign, and the Reform Bill of 1832 was a law of England.

England had been on the brink of civil war. Had the philosophic radicals not devised a plan for reform and effectively publicized it; had the political radicals not

\(^{1}\) Annual Register, 1832, pp. 172. \\
\(^{2}\) Halevy, Triumph, p. 56. \\
\(^{3}\) Annual Register, 1832, p. 170. \\
\(^{4}\) Trevelyan, Grey, p. 332. \\
\(^{5}\) Annual Register, 1832, p. 177. \\
\(^{6}\) Ibid.
agitated for reform and still been wise enough to compromise when necessary; had the practical politicians not listened to the roar of the people, the nation could have been swept over the brink.

With the first reformed parliament of 1833 some of the political radicals, as well as some of John Stuart Mill’s friends, the philosophic radicals, were returned to parliament as Radicals. The four members of the latter group who would make names for themselves in the succeeding decades were Grote, Roebuck, Molesworth and Buller; the first three mentioned elected for the first time in 1833.\(^1\) Maccoby states that although one Tory estimate claimed there were 190 Radicals in the reformed parliament this figure is misleading. Of this number too many were of different schools and did not support each others’ measures, thus were ineffectual. To arrive at this total he argues that

To the Attwoods and Gobbetts, the Grotes and the Roebucks, the Buckinghams and the D’Eyncourts must be added all the Dissenters, all the manufacturers, all the humanitarians, all O'Connell’s "tail," and finally all such occasional remonstrants as Ingilby of Lincolnshire and Key of London.\(^2\)

Often the Radicals were unable to muster a combined vote of more than forty. The same author, however, points out that

\(^{1}\textit{Maccoby, English Radicalism, 1832-1852, p. 78.}\)

\(^{2}\textit{Ibid.}\)
"If Radical leaders were not able to dictate their own conditions to Whig Ministers, they were a formidable force for criticism."1 Along the same line Woodward has stated that, "The radicals saved the Whigs under Melbourne from resting upon their achievement in passing the Reform bill."2

From 1833 on there would always be a handful of these optimistic, positive and stubborn men in Parliament, prodding their more conservative colleagues to pass measures that would bring the greatest happiness for the greatest number. Some of them would lose their optimism when faced with the reality of practical politics. John Stuart Mill wrote Carlyle in 1833 that, "some of our Utilitarian Radicals are downcast enough, having deemed that the nation had in it more of wisdom and virtue than they now see it has . . ."3 But disillusioned or not, they kept prodding.

In July, 1833, Roebuck proposed universal and national education. Had this been supported by the Radicals Cobbett and O'Connell, it may have been more successful. Cobbett and O'Connell, however, were busy grinding their own political axes, and objected to education.4

4Ibid., p. 83.
In 1833, abolitionists led by William Wilberforce and aided by the Radicals were successful in passing the Abolition of Colonial Slavery Act, aimed at West Indian slavery and providing for the immediate emancipation of children under six, a seven-year period of apprenticeship for those over six, and a twenty-million pounds compensation to slaveowners.

In the same year as a result of preliminary work performed by the Owenites and Hobhouse, the Factory Act of 1833 was passed. Factory legislation caused a split among the Radicals. Hobhouse and the Tory-Democrats, Oastler and Sadler, were in favor of governmental intervention in industrial affairs; the philosophic radicals, however, were still committed to a laissez faire policy, although anxious to relieve the appalling conditions in the factories. The act was a result of a compromise between the two factions. It forbade employment of children under nine, restricted the hours that youngsters between nine and thirteen could work to no more than nine hours a day or forty-eight a week. In addition it held the hours that young people from thirteen to eighteen could work to no more than twelve a day or sixty-nine a week. As a sop to the educationists it also provided that the youngsters have two hours schooling a day. Unfortunately the act was limited to children working in textile factories. The Benthamites were won over by the education clause, and were
instrumental in providing for the appointment of a factory inspectorate.¹

In 1832 the Radicals managed to have a new Poor Law passed which did away with doles for the low paid employees. This coincided with Ricardo's economics, but many workers were distressed over the measure. Until the Chartist and Free-Trade movements of the late thirties, there was to be no concerted effort to establish Bentham's parliamentary code. By the latter part of the decade, the workers would feel that they had waited long enough, and the Radicals would be forced into action.

**Chartism**

The workingmen of England had joined the middle class to force the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832, but only the middle class had benefited. As the 1830's progressed, and little had been done to relieve their lot, the workingmen once again became restless. They had expected so much, had waited so patiently, and had received so little.

As early as the time of the Bristol riot the populace had shown that it didn't intend to wait long. On October 31, 1831, a National Political Union had been formed at a meeting held in Lincoln's-Inn-Field. Sir Francis Burdett had been

made chairman, but resigned shortly afterward, as the workingmen demanded to have an equal voice with the middle class. At that time the Benthamites were anxious to soft-pedal any dissatisfaction with the reform bill.\(^1\) One laborer remarked grimly that the middle classes were making the workers the "tools of their purposes." He grumbled that, "We are not even to have the vote, and they tell us it would be impolitic now to demand that."\(^2\)

The disappointed workers sought a solution for their problems in the growing trend toward trade-unionism. In 1830 John Doherty, an Ulsterman who had settled in Manchester, founded the National Association for the Protection of Labour. The association disintegrated within two years as a result of internal quarrels, and Doherty joined the socialist Robert Owen in an attempt to form a general union of skilled and unskilled laborers. In 1834 they organized the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union. The policy of the union was to promote a general strike for an eight-hour day. The anti-capitalists behind the labor movement, surprisingly enough, used Ricardo's economic theories to support their stand. He had said that the value of a product is increased by the amount of labor employed in its production. The

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\(^1\) Annual Register, 1831, p. 296.

\(^2\) Ibid.,
question the Owenites now asked was, "Where is the worker's share of the profit?" Ricardo had been content to dismiss the worker as worth only as much as it would cost to replace him. The Owenites suggested replacing the capitalist with co-operative production, used the relative amount of labor employed in production as a measure of worth. ¹

Many of the workingmen now turned away from the Radicals and toward Robert Owen's socialist movement.² The radicals decided there was no time to lose and in 1837 they infiltrated the London Working Men's Association, which had been founded in 1836 by Owenite William Lovett. At that time the association's program was vague, and the Radicals Francis Place, Joseph Hume, Daniel Harvey, John Rostuck and Daniel O'Connell convinced Lovett that they should work together on a single democratic bill that would benefit the workingman.³ Lovett agreed and "the association went back on Robert Owen's communism and returned more or less consciously to Bentham's programme."⁴

By 1838 250 workingmen's associations had sprung up over Britain. The London Working Men's Association joined forces.

¹Halevy, Triumph, p. 292.
²Ibid., p. 299.
³Ibid., p. 292.
⁴Ibid., p. 295.
with the revived Political Union of Birmingham, and on May 8, 1838, Lovett published the People's Charter.¹

The Charter asked for manhood suffrage, the ballot, payment of M.Fs, equal constituencies, abolition of property qualification for M.F.s and annual election. It must be noted that these are much the same measures that Jeremy Bentham had proposed in 1818, when he drew up his Resolutions on Parliamentary Reform.² The difference was that the Radicals were no longer suggesting; they were insisting.

If Lovett and the Radicals insisted upon the Charter, a big, noisy, demagogue by the name of Parnell O'Connor, demanded it.³ Taking their cue from Thomas Carlyle's recently published and highly dramatic The French Revolution, A History, O'Connor and his followers, who had separated from Lovett's group, became self-styled Jacobins. They wore tri-colored cockades, caps of liberty and called each other by Jacobin names.⁴ They prided themselves on being the party of physical force.

In spite of their espousal of the People's Charter, these men did not like the Benthamites. Nor did they approve

¹Halevy, Triumph, p. 295.
²Halevy, Phil. Rad., p. 262.
³Woodward, The Age of Reform, 1815-1870, p. 130.
⁴Halevy, Triumph, p. 299.
of the "utopian society" of Owen. They had no patience with conversion by means of example and instruction. Following the ideas of James Bronterre O'Brien, editor of the Poor Man's Guardian, they saw an analogy between France in 1791 and England in 1832. Just as the French middle class had ignored the masses once they had gained power; the English middle class had ignored the English worker after 1832.

Rather than combine with the English middle class for the Chartist demands, the O'Connor group attacked the measures of the Whigs wherever they could. The Benthamites were disgusted with these actions; and the Tories smiled smugly as Ultra-Radical and Radical split. Rather than play Girondin to O'Connor's Jacobin, the Benthamites retired from the movement and concentrated on anti-Corn-Law agitation. William Lovett was left to guide the moderate wing, the so-called party of moral force, alone.

When the Radicals turned to attack the Corn Laws, which kept the price of corn high by means of a protective tariff,

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2 Ibid.
3 Malevy, Triumph, p. 300.
4 Ibid., pp. 301-311.
they were not merely trying to throw a red herring in the path of O'Connor. The economic distress of the people caused by a bad winter and the resulting high price of corn\(^1\) showed the need of free-trade measures. It also gave birth to agitation for the Chartist measures.

Rather the free-trade tactics of the Benthamite Radicals could be called an "ace-in-the-hole." As early as 1836, the Benthamites Grote, Molesworth, Hume and Roebuck had laid the ground-work for the movement. In 1838 the Benthamites interested the Manchester School of Radicals in the movement and they were joined by Richard Cobden, who had formulated a foreign policy based on free-trade.\(^2\)

Throughout the fall of 1838 the Free-Traders and the Chartists battled. Lovett and the moderate Chartists eventually subscribed to an economic philosophy not unlike the Benthamites.\(^3\) Parnell O'Connor, however, was a landlord, and had long been on the side of protection. To combat the free-trade trend, he developed an economic theory based on Ricardo's law of wages. Free-trade would not help the workers, he declared. The price of bread would go down, but so would the wages. The capitalists would be the ones who

\(^1\) *Annual Register, 1838*, p. 196.

\(^2\) *Halevy, Triumph*, p. 302.

would benefit. The "real object of the free-traders was not the improvement of the workers' lot but cheap labour." ¹

This was not so, insisted the Free-Traders indignantly. Ricardo had shown very clearly that the real profiters were the British farmer and the European manufacturer. Remove the tariff and the invisible hand would soon have the British factories going. The workers would not get cheap bread, but they would get jobs. Then they could afford the bread.²

In 1839 both measures were brought before Parliament. Both were rejected. The Free-Traders, thanks to their better organization, lived on to fight another day. The Chartists rioted in a few isolated Welsh towns and fizzled out. By January, 1840, the movement was defeated for the time.

Halevy blames the Chartist failure on the Marxian doctrine of O'Brien and O'Connor. He declares that the English people were not interested in revolution, merely in economic relief. There was a class struggle even among the workers. A thirty-shilling-a-week-wage-earner was not interested in the problems of a fifteen-shilling-wage-earner, who, in them, cared not a whit for the five shilling man.³ Furthermore the workers in the big towns were willing to work with the Free-Traders.

¹ Halevy, Triumph, p. 307.
² Ibid., p. 309.
³ Ibid., p. 322.
Chartism, he declares, was not a creed; it was a blind revolt. The only creed the English worker would accept was that of the Christian Nonconformist minister. At first the Nonconformist ministers approved of the unification of the workers, but when forced to choose between revolution and order, they chose order and their people went with them.¹

Trevelyan feels the Chartists failed because they refused to ally with the middle-class radicals. The class consciousness of the movement kept it from being a political success. He points out that the worker's demand for the franchise will only be a success when the workers and middle class unite under John Bright in the household suffrage movement.²

Before that time, the Radicals who supported free-trade had a job to do, and they set about organizing and prodding until the time to do it arrived.

The Repeal of The Corn Laws

Economics at best is a dry topic; at worst it can be abominably boring. Politicians at best are dedicated men, often wrapped up in their own opinions and the wishes of their constituents, and not amenable to change; at worst, they are bored to death with parliament. The common man at

¹Halevy, Triumph, pp. 323-324.
²Trevelyan, Brit. His. in 19th Cent., p. 252.
test is sincere, but inclined to ignore the sophistries of the intellectual; at worst he will shake his fist at any new idea.

In the 1840's the Radicals were faced with the seemingly insurmountable problem of spoonfeeding Ricardo's economic philosophy into the mouths of the British. The feat was to be accomplished by Richard Cobden and John Bright. Until these men joined the Radical forces with the Anti-Corn League, English Radicalism had been regarded by the more conservative Englishmen as something that wasn't quite nice. Cobden and Bright made Radicalism respectable.

Before Cobden and Bright showed them the way, the common man had relied on muscle, number and poorly led organization to gain his demands. With the advent of these two men, the English people washed their fists and attempted to enter Parliament through the front door.

Richard Cobden was a practical economist with a genius for teaching. John Bright was a fighting Quaker with a genius for speaking. Both were sincere, compassionate and more than ordinarily endowed with good English common sense. Both came from solid, middle-class, manufacturing backgrounds. Both believed in free-trade.

When Cobden first joined the Anti-Corn-Law Association
in October, 1838,¹ he had no illusions as to the perceptive-
ness of the English masses. He had earlier accused them of
possessing an "opaque ignorance,"² and had felt that England
would never obtain change "except by one of two paths—
Revolution or the Schoolhouse."³

When in 1838 it seemed apparent that the people would
choose the path of revolution, Cobden and Bright went among
the people, bringing the schoolhouse with them. Following a
bunch of Cobden's that "a moral and even a religious spirit
may be infused into the topic,"⁴ they tackled free-trade with
the same apostolic fervor that the Wesleyan ministers had
found so successful.

Part of their success was due to their approach. When
Cobden and Bright looked at the grubby factory workers or
farmers that gathered around their platforms they did not
see a mob. They saw men; men with minds that could be
reached if one spoke in words they could understand; men with
dignity, who preferred order to riot.

¹John Morley, The Life of Richard Cobden (London:
²Ibid., p. 138.
³Ibid., p. 139.
⁴Ibid., p. 137.
The two free-trade missionaries delighted in using concrete examples. They might put a hollow-cheeked farmer on the platform to say mournfully, "I be protected, and I be starving." Then Cobden would explain simply and lucidly the economic reasons behind the man's hunger. John Bright's turn came next. With his eloquence he could bring the people to a high pitch of righteous indignation and still keep them from violence.

The tactics of Cobden and Bright won the approval of the Nonconformist ministers, who soon rallied to their cause. Working through the Anti-Corn Law League, which had developed from the association, Cobden and Bright reached the middle classes. The league had a staff of eight-hundred and the Radicals distributed well-written tracts to 9,000,000 people in 1843 alone. Using well-written arguments instead of inflammatory handbills was an innovation in itself, and it appealed to the middle classes.

Cobden and Bright had reached the workers and the middle classes, but could they appeal to parliament? It seems that they could. The newly-elected Cobden impressed the hard-to-impress British Parliament with his first speech in 1841. In it he reminded the M.P.'s that "it was the

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2Ibid., p. 270.
interest of the nation, and not the interests of a class, or
the abstract doctrines of the economists that cried for a
relief...1 Later he took the practical stand that,

by deteriorating the population, of which they
the M.P.s ought to be so proud, they will run
the risk of spoiling, not merely the animal, but
the intellectual creature. It is not a potato-
fed race that will ever lead the way in arts,
arms or commerce.2

This was the sort of argument parliament could and would
understand. Cobden's arguments made sense to Whig and Tory
alike.

When Cobden entered Commons, Sir Robert Peel was prime
minister of a Tory government. During the years from 1842 to
1845, Peel had gradually been converted by Cobden's arguments
to the principle of free-trade. At one time, after listening
to Cobden's common-sense argument, Peel crumpled the notes he
was taking and told a friend, "You must answer for I cannot."3

Peel, in accepting free-trade, faced a dilemma. His
political conscience told him to wait for a general election
and let the people know he was a free-trade convert. His
social conscience told him that the people were starving and
he was their salvation. In 1845 a potato blight, followed by
a ruined corn crop forced him to choose. He announced he was

1Morley, Cobden, p. 192.
2Ibid., p. 240.
3Thursofield, Peel, p. 224.
for free-trade, but his cabinet refused to go along forcing him to resign.1

The Whigs weren't anxious to take the responsibility for the Corn Law repeal; the memory of the battle of 1831 and 1832 was still vivid. They refused to form a government, and "handed back with courtesy the poisoned chalice to Sir Robert."2 Wellington backed Peel, though he didn't agree with free-trade; and watched morosely as his friend committed political suicide over "rotten potatoes."3 Peel was successful in backing the issue and in June, 1846, the Corn Laws were repealed. On that same day, young Benjamin Disraeli "hacked and mangled"4 Peel, and on June 29, Peel's government fell.

The Decline of Laissez Faire

The repeal of the Corn Laws marked the zenith of the Radical move toward laissez faire. The crusade for governmental non-intervention had developed in opposition to Bentham's original principle of an artificial identification of interest because of the obvious need for free trade.

1Thursfield, Peel, pp. 218-237.
4Trevelyan, Bright, p. 147.
Once that goal was reached there was no longer any need for insisting on a policy of laissez faire.

The Benthamites didn't discard the principle entirely. In 1848, however, John Stuart Mill published Principles of Political Economy in which he granted the government the right to concern itself in public matters "when the case of expediency is strong."\(^1\) Mill decided that "authoritative interference," that is, interference that would hamper the freedom of the individual, would generally be wrong. But a non-authoritative interference, one that instructed or helped people, would be fine.\(^2\)

Mill admitted, however, that there are times when even "authoritative interference" is acceptable. Governments should provide education, whether people want it or not, because the uneducated are not able to make that decision for themselves. Laws should protect children and women from the exploitation of parents or husbands, although wives wouldn't have to be protected if they were given the equal rights under the law that they deserved. Governments can manage affairs in cases that otherwise could only be done by a joint-stock company; because they probably would do as well,


\(^2\) Ibid., p. 603.
and the people would have some control of the government, being taxpayers, and none over the joint-stock companies. This would apply to such matters as canals, roads, railways and water, and Mill would prefer to see such services performed by municipal governments, if possible.

Governments should also be permitted to regulate the hours a man should work for a given wage. The invisible hand would not work in such cases, he decided. An employer would certainly hire a man who would work twelve hours at a given rate in preference to one who would work only ten hours for the same rate. The worker would know it, and if he wanted the job, he would work the longer hours. The only way this could be avoided would be for the majority of workers to refuse to work the longer hours. It would be easier all around if the government regulated it.

Lastly, Mill decided, in complete contradiction to Ricardo, the government should concern itself with public charity. If it did not, private individuals would, and it was better for all involved to have the government do it. "Energy and self-dependence are --- liable to be impaired by the absence of help, as well as by its excess."¹

When Mill permitted a small amount of governmental intervention, he reached a turning point in radical

philosophy. As England turned gradually toward Socialism, Radicals would be able to accept socialist measures without hitting a philosophic brick wall such as they had encountered in 1833 with the Factory Act. Not all Radicals would be ready to reject laissez faire. Cobden and Bright were to continue to fight industrial protectionism in spite of the growing trade-union movement. The shortened working day for children was to be extended to include the children employed in industries other than textile mills. An era of prosperity in the late forties and early fifties would be attributed in part to free-trade and the workers were to leave the camp of the Socialists and once again follow the banner of John Bright in his crusade for parliamentary reform.

The Radicals and the Second Reform Act

The political current in parliament had shifted pronouncedly in the generation separating the First from the Second Reform Act. The old Tory-Whig party designations had given way to the new Conservative-Liberal alignments. The former was made up primarily of the anti-free-trade element that had opposed Sir Robert Peel. The latter included old-line Whigs, Peelites and Radicals. It would take, however, the positive personalities and policies of the Peelite-Liberal, William Gladstone, and the Protectionist-Conservative
Benjamin Disraeli to once again define party lines.\(^1\) The Radicals had become a force to be reckoned with as far as their numbers were concerned. Had they been able to remain united they could have influenced either major party. Too often they lost strength in their disagreement over economic policy. Their chief success had been in finally passing an act removing disabilities on Jews during the Conservative Lord Derby's second ministry.

While Lord Palmerston's second ministry was in office, both the more advanced Liberals and the Radicals conceived an ardent dislike of Palmerstonian policy. In 1860 while the prime minister talked war, Richard Cobden, John Bright and William Gladstone talked peace. Gladstone's support of his peace crusade convinced Bright that Gladstone was "sound, liberal and moral."\(^2\) This was the start of a long friendship that would produce the Second Reform Bill. Cobden was successful in negotiating a commercial treaty with France in 1860, which marked an advance toward free trade on the part of France, and quelled Palmerston's headlong rush into war. Because of the support of Gladstone and Bright, this treaty was adopted by parliament despite Palmerston's objections.

\(^1\)Somervell, *English Thought*, pp. 73-79.
John Bright began agitating for parliamentary reform as early as 1858. Using as his rallying cry the fact that five out of six grown men in the United Kingdom did not have the vote, he stormed the countryside creating interest. He proposed nothing less than borough franchise to all who paid poor relief, or rent of ten pounds. He asked for county franchise on the latter grounds as well. He also demanded redistribution of voting districts in the cities that had grown since the passing of the Reform Act of 1832. In addition Bright wanted the secret ballot.¹

Lord John Russell favored reform as did William Gladstone. Moderate bills were proposed throughout the sixties only to be rejected because of Palmerston's objection, or because they did not offer enough to satisfy the Radicals. With the death of "Old Pam" in 1865, Russell became prime minister hoping to crown his career with an act for parliamentary reform. The time seemed appropriate. In 1864 Bright had intensified his campaign, winning the support of the working class. In 1864 Gladstone also had won the favor of the laboring class with his ambiguous sentence,

I venture to say that every man who is not presumably incapacitated by some consideration of personal unfitness or of political danger

is morally entitled to come within the pale of the Constitution.1

Though he hastened to point out that he was not in favor of "violent, or excessive, or intoxicating change," Gladstone was henceforward committed, in the eyes of the worker, to the reform of parliament.

The election of 1865 had not only preserved the Liberal majority in Commons, but also increased the strength of the Radicals, seating such men as John Stuart Mill and Tom Hughes. With Palmerston gone, there seemed little doubt that the Liberal-Radical combination could win.

In March of 1866 Russell proposed a bill representing a compromise between the household suffrage demanded by Bright and Gladstone's decision on what parliament could pass.2 Russell and Gladstone had prepared the bill "with one eye on Bright and one on their supporters among the 'old, old Whigs.'"3 Bright's part in the reform bill was described by the Saturday Review as follows, "Mr. Bright governs although he does not reign. When at this critical time he declares his view on reform, the Cabinet cannot avoid being to some extent guided by his views."4 Nevertheless,

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2Trevelyan, Bright, p. 351.
3Ibid., p. 346.
4Ibid.
Bright declared that Russell's bill had "nothing in it which he had recommended."¹ In June when the house divided on the third reading, Bright stood disconsolately by the side of Gladstone and watched forty discontented Liberals crawl traitorously into the "Cave of Adullam"² and toss forty good Liberal votes into the Conservative camp.

Although disconsolate, John Bright was not defeated. He quickly lifted the most damaging words from a speech given by Robert Lowe of the Cave,³ and printed them out of context in pamphlets which he showered upon the workingmen. They saw the words "venality," "ignorance," "drunkenness," and "futility for being intimidated," and decided to do some intimidating of their own.⁴

Throughout 1866 and into the spring of 1867 the laboring men of England demonstrated in huge, open-air meetings. They carried the banners of the Reform League and the Reform Club. They listened to speeches and walked in processions. Over 10,000 of them marched from Trafalgar Square to Gladstone's house shouting, "Gladstone and Liberty;"⁵ from 100,000 to

¹Trevelyan, Bright, p. 351.
³English Historical Documents, 1833-1874, p. 162.
⁵Annual Register, 1866, p. 75.
200,000 gathered at Manchester to hear Bright speak;\(^1\) over 100,000 met in Leeds, where 70,000 marched five men abreast in a line four miles long;\(^2\) and in Birmingham an immense demonstration combined with the oratory of John Bright stirred the soul of Joseph Chamberlain, who dates his political awakening from that moment.\(^3\)

Chamberlain was not alone. All of England was impressed by the orderliness and determination of these great masses of people. On Good Friday, 1866, a few Hyde Park railings were uprooted by the sheer weight of the crowd kept out of the park by police order.\(^4\) In May, 1867, 200,000 persons assembled in the same place, this time with police approval, and "not a plant was disturbed, nor a leaf of a flower touched."\(^5\)

John Bright had set the stage; all that was left was for Benjamin Disraeli to steal the show.

With the fall of the Russell government, a Conservative ministry had been formed headed by Lord Derby and dominated by Disraeli. In 1867 sensing that the people would have their

\(^1\)Annual Register, 1866, p. 137.  
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 141.  
\(^4\)Maccoby, Eng. Rad., 1853-1886, p. 91.  
\(^5\)Annual Register, 1867, p. 67.
reform, the latter proposed a reform bill. By so doing, he "offered himself up as a sacrifice to the outraged ghost of political consistency."\textsuperscript{1} General Peel, Secretary for War; the Earl of Carnarvon, Secretary for the colonies; and Lord Cranborne, Secretary for India; resigned from Derby's cabinet, with Cranborne remarking bitterly that Disraeli was adopting "the principle of Bright and the dictation of Gladstone."\textsuperscript{2}

As evidence that Lord Cranborne was not far wrong, Bright himself wrote on March 4, 1867, "I begin to be an authority with the Tory party! What next?"\textsuperscript{3}

While the bill was in the committee stage, Gladstone, Bright and the Radicals took it apart clause by clause and amended it until it met their requirements. Disraeli permitted this, seeing potential Conservative support in the proposed extended electorate.\textsuperscript{4} In due time and after much controversy,\textsuperscript{5} the bill was acceptable to both parties; a bill more radical than even Gladstone or Bright had dared

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{1}] Trevelyan, Bright, p. 369.
\item[\textsuperscript{3}] Trevelyan, Bright, p. 372.
\item[\textsuperscript{4}] Hammond and Foot, \textit{Gladstone}, p. 103.
\item[\textsuperscript{5}] Annual Register, 1867, pp. 19-116.
\end{itemize}
hope for. Disraeli had indeed "dished the Whigs."\(^1\)

The bill was passed by the House of Commons on July 15, 1867, but on its journey through the House of Lords it gained an amendment which was to provide John Bright with a new windmill at which to tilt and which would prove to be the launching pad for the politically-awakening Joseph Chamberlain. This amendment, the so-called minority clause, stated that though the large industrial districts would be permitted three members each in the House of Commons, each elector would be permitted only two votes. In this way, the "dreamers and schemers"\(^2\) hoped to retain the whip-hand in the very cities of the workers.

On August 15, the Second Reform Bill became a law. Besides redistribution of voting districts, it offered the franchise to all householders paying poor rates and to most lodgers. This astonishing measure, which doubled the voting population, meant that almost every factory worker in the cities of England could have a voice in his national government.

At the final reading of the bill, Lord Derby, that "frank, haughty, rash, . . . Rupert of debate,"\(^3\) announced

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\(^2\)Trevelyan, *Bright*, p. 394.

\(^3\)Herbert Maxwell, *A Century of Empire, 1801-1900* (London: Edward Arnold, 1911) III, p. 10. n.
that "No doubt we are making a great experiment and taking a leap in the dark...,"¹ and the repercussions set in. Volcanic Thomas Carlyle swooped up the figure of speech and erupted in his usual superlatives. The leap in the dark became "Shooting Niagara," and manhood suffrage was put within the same parentheses as "Horsehood" and "Doghood," which he insinuated would follow when "the new supplies of blockheadism, gullibility, bribability, amenability to beer and balderdash" took over the government.² Lord Granborne condemned the act as "political betrayal which has no parallel in our annals."³ Garvin scoffs, "That exploit was no 'leap in the dark' but a bound as nicely measured of its kind as any recorded in the audacities of political athletics."⁴

Statesmen may state and historians may interpret, but the people of England were determined to give credit where due. While the bill was still in debate, they staged a gigantic "United Reform Demonstration" in Manchester to which fifty-eight carriages carried deputations from the industrial cities to show their appreciation for the work of Bright and

¹Annual Register, 1867, p. 169.
⁴Garvin, Guberlain, I, p. 88.
Gladstone. Mill declared that when Disraeli told the new voters that he was the one who had given them the vote, they replied, "Thank you, Mr. Gladstone."  

Indefatigable John Bright waited only three days after the bill was passed to write the President of the Reform League, suggesting that they make the ballot their next work. But the people of England, having enjoyed their thumping victory, once again settled into a slumping complacency, and John Bright and William Gladstone sharpened their political axes to a fine edge and prepared to lop off the poisoned branches of the upas tree of Ireland.

At the same time, politically-awakened Joseph Chamberlain heard the sardonic words of Robert Lowe, "I believe it will be absolutely necessary that you [Mr. Speaker] should prevail upon our future masters to learn their letters." Chamberlain chose to take these words seriously.

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2Hammond and Foot, Gladstone, p. 104.
6Parliamentary Debates, 3rd series, CXXXVIII, 1549.
The Radicals, Ireland, and the Second Reformed Parliament

The problem of Ireland had been long-standing. As early as 1844, Disraeli had diagnosed the Irish trouble as due to "a starved population, an absentee aristocracy, and an alien Church." In 1845 the potato famine resulted in Peel's conversion to free trade and also in mass emigration from Ireland. In 1850 a Tenant-Right League was founded to procure a fair rent, fixity of tenure and free sale for the tenants. This movement spread within Ireland, but because of lack of political organization, went unnoticed in England. During the age of Palmerston, England had avoided the Irish issue, wishfully thinking that emigration had solved her problem.

In 1867 Ireland was brought violently into the English consciousness through the Fenian outrages. The Fenian Brotherhood, an American-Irish organization, pointed its mustered-out American-Civil-War guns toward England and dreamt seditiously about "The overthrow of the British Empire, that would be grand indeed."

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1Monypenny and Buckle, Disraeli, V, p. 17.
From 1865 the Fenians had simmered restlessly in Ireland. In February, 1867, they moved into England and attempted abortively to capture Chester Castle; in September they killed a Manchester police sergeant in a successful attempt to rescue two Fenian prisoners from a police van; and in December they made a "most audacious and nefarious attempt" to rescue two prisoners from the Clerkenwell House of Detention by setting off a keg of gunpowder in front of the door. This killed 12 persons and injured 120, many of them innocent bystanders. Maurice remarks that the elections of 1868 prove how much "'pressure from without,' whether in the shape of League demonstrations or Fenian explosions, did, on the whole, tend to strengthen Radicalism in the House of Commons." He further claims that Fenianism induced Gladstone to crusade for Irish Church disestablishment and enabled him to re-unite the Liberal party.

Three-quarters of the people of Ireland were Roman Catholic, one-eighth were Presbyterians and only one-eighth

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1 Annual Register, 1867, p. 23.
2 Ibid., p. 189.
3 Ibid., p. 171.
5 Ibid.
belonged to the Anglican Church of Ireland, yet all supported it.¹ When Gladstone brandished his political axe at the "alien Church" he was sure to get not only the Irish support, but also the support of the Radicals, who were generally non-conformists and opposed philosophically to an established church. During the debates that followed the introduction of Gladstone's Suspensory Bill it became obvious that the occupants of the Cave of Adullam would crawl back to the Liberal camp on this measure.² This left Disraeli with a minority in Commons.

Dissolution of the government at this time would mean that the next election would not have the benefit of the Reform Act redistribution, for the administrative details had not yet been carried out. Disraeli taunted the Liberals, daring them to call for a vote of confidence; Gladstone gritted his teeth with exasperation, determined to reap the benefit of the Reform Act; and Bright created an irreparable breach between Disraeli and himself when he called Disraeli "at once pompous and servile."³

¹Garvin, Disraeli, V, p. 12.
²Annual Register, 1868, pp. 94-107.
³For two points of view on this see Trevelyan, Bright, pp. 390-1, and Monypenny and Buckle, Disraeli, V, pp. 36-37.
"Passion Week" passed and tempers cooled. The cabinet expedited the new register so as to make possible a general election in November; an election necessary to determine the peoples' wishes in regard to the disestablishment of the Irish Church.

John Bright spent the summer convincing the people of Ireland and Wales that they should unite with the people of England on his reform measures. He then hustled to Birmingham to organize the voters in such a fashion as to avoid the pitfalls of the minority clause. In this he was ably assisted by Joseph Chamberlain, who made his political debut on this issue. Through ward-by-ward organization and an "ingenious allocation of votes," 1 Birmingham returned three Liberal candidates.

The Liberals won the election and Gladstone became prime minister of a parliament that was "the most Radical which England had known since 1832." 2 Once on top, Gladstone pulled his reluctant Radical friend up with him. Against his own better judgment, 3 John Bright became President of the Board of Trade. The Radicals A. S. Ayrton, W. E. Forster, James Stansfeld, G. O. Trevelyan, and A. J. Útway

1 Garvin, Chamberlain, I, p. 95.
3 Trevelyan, Bright, pp. 396-399.
were appointed to non-cabinet posts.\(^1\) The election campaign had been financed, in part, by the Radical, Samuel Morley, M. P., a millionaire manufacturer, who would continue to support Gladstone during the ensuing years.\(^2\)

Backed by the Irish and the Radicals, Gladstone had little difficulty in passing an Irish Church Bill in 1869. In 1870 he passed a land act that merely snipped the twigs of unfair eviction and lack of restitution for improvements. The act included clauses proposed by John Bright which provided for government loans so that the people of Ireland could buy land from absentee English landlords, but it failed to solve the Irish land problem.

In 1873 Gladstone proposed a bill creating a university system in Ireland that would avoid the issue of religion by not teaching the controversial subjects of history, philosophy and religion. The bill was opposed by the Irish Catholics, by Disraeli's Tories and by the blind, but academic Radical, Fawcett, who objected to restraints on the freedom of instruction.\(^3\) Gladstone lost by a majority of three, and resigned. Disraeli, however, refused to take office, so Gladstone stayed on for another year. The Irish


\(^2\)Ibid., p. 151.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 186.
problem would return to plague England under the guise of home rule, and would once again be an issue in British politics.

John Bright was not happy in the cabinet. Cut off from his life-stream, the English people, he withered. He helped a bit on the Irish Land Bill, fumbled a bit with the Forster Education Bill and temporarily retired, an adored but sick man. In the meantime, the politically awakened Joseph Chamberlain had quite rubbed the sleep from his eyes and was starting a trend in Radicalism that would make John Bright look like a conservative.
CHAPTER III

THE NEW RADICALISM

Chamberlain and Mill: The Pivot Point

The advent into the national political arena of Joseph Chamberlain marks a turning point between the old, conscious Benthamism and the new pragmatic Benthamism that applied the principle of utility without bothering to think about it. In the hundred years that had passed since Jeremy Bentham first developed his principle of utility, his philosophy had become so much a part of English thought that it seemed to be common sense.

England was on the threshold of socialism. That she was able to make the switch under the same radical banner without seeming to break her step is due in part to the pragmatic nature of Englishmen, who remedy a situation first and philosophize later; and in part to John Stuart Mill, who helped put a soul into society.

When Joseph Chamberlain carried on his extensive municipal reform that resulted in slum-clearance and improved sanitation in the disease-ridden city of Birmingham, he followed the pattern laid down by John Stuart Mill in 1848. Chamberlain was essentially pragmatic. He would have scoffed at using Bentham's moral arithmetic, and quailed at his moral calculus, yet the greatest good for the greatest number was
his goal. His common-sense attitude was if change is necessary, then change things.

In true Benthamite fashion he ignored metaphysics, and in so doing was able to bridge the gap between the greatest good for the majority and the greatest good for the minority; a point never solved by Bentham. The majority of Birminghamites were not dying from the squalid conditions, but a minority were. This spoiled his city, so as mayor he cleaned it up. The whole city benefited. In so doing, Chamberlain made the sum of the parts equal more than the whole. He added what Rousseau called the "general will"; or the German "community spirit;" or John Stuart Mill's "feeling." Jeremy Bentham had called it a "fiction."

John Stuart Mill, in his essay On Liberty, saw this in an obscure manner; obscure because he was loyal to Benthamism and saw danger to individuality in the metaphysical approach. Still he was fascinated by the approach of the Coleridgians, by the romanticism of Wordsworth, and by the social theories of Comte. In concentrating on securing liberty for the individual, Mill unwittingly put the tiniest breath of a soul into society. This can be seen in the statement that "'self-government' spoken of is not the government of each by himself, but of each by all the rest."¹

Mill sees society as a major factor in the relationship between the individual and the government. Man has a social obligation merely because he accepts the benefits of society; but society must not interfere with man's individual freedom.¹

Mill turns away from Bentham's ethics by accepting political and social freedom as a good in itself. In his theory of the "tyranny of the majority," he declares that the natural tendency of man is to use power against his weaker fellow man.² In the majority is strength and this strength will be used by the majority to "impose their opinions and inclinations as a rule of conduct on others."³ This, he feels, is wrong. With this theory hedonism flies out of the picture. If pleasure and pain are the measure, and if tyranny gives the majority pleasure, it is perfectly all right to be tyrannical. But Mill feels it is wrong; society feels it is wrong; and common sense feels it is wrong.

This is the point on which Radicalism pivots and turns toward socialism. Chamberlain did not stop to figure this out. Change was necessary, so he changed things. In so doing he showed both the strengths and weaknesses of Bentham's philosophy. First it was necessary to have a plan on which

¹Mill, Utilitarianism, pp. 176-200.
²Mill, On Liberty, p. 89.
³Ibid., p. 94.
to change the outmoded institutions. His philosophy helped him formulate a plan. It contained enough truth to be absorbed automatically into the actions of socially conscious men, but it failed to bridge society as a whole. The pragmatic Britisher bridged the gap with common sense, one of the "fictions" Bentham deplored. With Mill's pivot point, socialist thinkers will be able to move toward their goal without interrupting the pace and under the same Radical banner.

Mill's influence will be seen in British socialism in another way. Because of the strong feeling he had for individualism, the British socialist will never be swallowed up into an organic state, but will retain his own individualistic, pragmatic nature.

The new Radicalism of Chamberlain will by no means include all the Radicals; nor will the change be noted rapidly. But the turn has been made. There will no longer be any contradiction in philosophy about identity of interests. The artificial identification of interest will be an accepted thing, always, of course, qualified by the expediency of the measure.

There will no longer be a contradiction between Bentham's atomism and community needs; the community need in itself will be sufficient justification for a measure.
Bentham's great contribution, his plans for democracy, will be the ends sought by the new Radicals for some years to come. When the socialists enter British politics, they will find the transition easy.

Meanwhile, the British Radicals must get busy applying the new Benthamism to the institutions of Great Britain.

The New Radicalism

Joseph Chamberlain had a bent toward socialism and a talent for efficiency, so it is quite natural that, having been politically-awakened, he would heed Lowe's cry to "Educate your masters," \(^1\) and do something about it.

He organized an Education Society to investigate the appalling educational conditions of his home town of Birmingham, and by 1869 he was convinced that the only answer to England's educational problem lay in "national, compulsory, free and unsectarian education." \(^2\) He soon was head of the Executive Committee of the National Education League which spread rapidly through the large cities of England, laying the groundwork for the passing of W. E. Forster's Education Bill. \(^3\) In this he was supported by Birmingham Radicals George Dawson, Charles Kingsley, J. T. Bunce, William Harris,

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\(^2\)Ibid., p. 100.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 104.
and his colleague and manager, George Dixon. ¹

To Chamberlain's intense disappointment, the Forster Education Act, passed in 1870, contained not one of the points he deemed necessary. Instead, it established a system of school districts, school boards and rate-paid schools where necessary. It did not provide for a non-sectarian school if an adequate denominational school were already functioning, though it contained a "conscience clause"² that was intended to protect the children of dissenters. But worst of all, it contained the abominable Clause 25, that provided that rates could be paid by the board to keep a poor child in a denominational school.³ Chamberlain boiled. This was a matter of principle, a matter of conscience. It meant that rates paid by a dissenter would be used by sectarian schools. The people of Birmingham stood behind Chamberlain and refused to pay their rates. Birmingham became as he asked, a "fortress against clerical assumption and bigotry throughout the country."⁴

¹Garvin, Chamberlain, I, p. 182.
²Annual Register, 1870, p. 52.
³Garvin, Chamberlain, I, p. 124.
⁴Ibid., p. 111.
He was not alone in his objections. In parliament, the bill was called a "curse rather than a blessing, an ill-
omened messenger of strife and bitterness."¹ George Dixon and Edward Miall, Chamberlain's managers and both strong Radicals, accused the government of having roused "suspicion, distrust and antagonism of some of their most earnest supporters." Gladstone had snapped back that "support ceases to be of value when accompanied by reproaches such as these."²

Chamberlain now had his foot in the political door. A Unitarian himself, he joined the other dissenters in their battle for religious freedom. He made friends with Sir Charles Dilke and John Morley, and corresponded with John Bright. In 1872 he formed an Agricultural Union to spur legislation toward county franchise and declared himself for "Free Land, Free Schools and Free Church."³

In 1873 he became mayor of Birmingham and cleaned the filth from the streets, and in so doing blazed the trail future English Radicals would follow. In 1876 he became an M. P.

¹Annual Register, 1870, p. 58.
²Ibid., p. 70.
³Garvin, Chamberlain, I, p. 149.
Chamberlain was by no means the only Radical in politics at this time. The vanguard of the new Radicalism would consist of such men as John Stuart Mill, G. O. Trevelyan, P. A. Taylor, Henry Fawcett and Sir Charles Dilke, as well as Chamberlain, Dixon and Miall.

As early as 1871, John Morley of the Fortnightly Review had predicted that Chamberlain was "the coming man,"¹ and in 1873 his leadership in the new trend had been noted in The National Church. In October, 1873, it wrote,

The political Nonconformists are hastening to an open alliance with the Socialists, and they have taken the pains to proclaim this to the world. . . Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, chairman of the Executive Committee of the Birmingham League, is the chosen exponent of the "principles" of this new departure.²

The old Radicals, however, finally victorious after forty years of controversy, deserve credit for passing the Ballot Bill in 1872. The act provided for secrecy in voting under "penalty of three months imprisonment at hard labor,"³ and was only slightly weakened by the addition of a Scrutiny Clause and an eight-year time limit imposed upon it by the

²Ibid., p. 186.
³Annual Register, 1872, p. 64.
The passing of the Ballot Bill shows rather pointedly the power and tactics of the Radicals. The Annual Register maintains that the bill had "the all but unanimous hostility of the House of Lords, and the secret disapproval of the House of Commons, and the indifference of the general community." 1 Disraeli stated in a letter to Derby that "the Ballot Bill will pass, wh. [sic.] neither the House of Comm. [sic.] nor the country desire." 2 The House of Lords passed the bill rather than be accused of obstructionism by the Radicals. 3

The new Radicalism could be called a Radicalism of dissent, republicanism and machinery. Of the dissenters, some were members of the non-Anglican Protestant churches, and some were agnostics and atheists. Of the republicans, some frowned menacingly at the crown; some tolerated the crown but glared at royal relatives and royal expenses. The machinery, perhaps inspired by America, was engineered by Chamberlain.

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1 Annual Register, 1872, p. 72.
2 Ibid.
4 Ibid., p. 200.
In 1871 the dissenters were successful in passing the University Tests Act which opened Oxford and Cambridge to non-Anglicans.\(^1\) They agitated for the Burials Bill, which, if passed would permit dissenters to be buried in churchyards.\(^2\) But most of all, the dissenters wanted disestablishment of the Churches of England and Wales.

In 1871 Sir Charles Dilke led an attack against the crown. An ardent republican, he objected strongly to paying for the frills of monarchy. He partially converted Chamberlain, who, however, stopped short of dissolving the monarchy.\(^3\) In March, 1872, Dilke moved that the Civil List be examined, specifying that cost of the ritual connected with the crown and the cost of the royal yachts be scrutinized.\(^4\) The attack was ill-timed. The people were in a sympathetic mood because of the recent illness of the Prince of Wales, and the motion was voted down 276 to 2.\(^5\)

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\(^4\) Dilke's Motion of 3 March, 1872, *English Historical Documents*, XII, p. 94.

\(^5\) Ibid., p. 95.
Organized machine voting was first used in 1868 in England to combat the minority clause of the Second Reform Act. A man named William Harris had the idea; but Joseph Chamberlain made it work.\(^1\) Labeled by the Conservatives "Vote-as-you're-told," the Liberals called it "Vote-as-you-ought." The system depended upon wards electing ward committees, which in turn elected delegates to a central committee. The central committee then sent delegates to a central executive, which followed the directions of a management committee.\(^2\) The organization became so powerful that in 1880 Chamberlain was able to claim that the Liberal victory was due to his organization. He wrote The Times that "in 67 boroughs where the caucus had been established, the Liberals had gained or retained 60 seats and sustained only 7 defeats."\(^3\)

Though he fought for the Liberals in 1880, Chamberlain was anxious for their defeat in 1874. He had never forgiven Gladstone for his part in the Forster Education Act. Furthermore, he believed that "more might be obtained from a weak Tory Government faced by a strong Liberal Opposition\(^4\)

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\(^1\)Garvin, Chamberlain, I, p. 254.

\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)Annual Register, 1880, p. 55.
than from a Liberal Ministry under Whig restraint.\(^1\) In spite of Chamberlain's creed, not much Radical progress was made during Disraeli's government.

Dispite the majority against them, two doughty Radicals proposed radical measures. Every year Osborne Morgan introduced a Burials Bill, in true dissenter fashion; every year it was voted down. Every year G. O. Trevelyan introduced resolutions for county franchise, and every year he was turned down.\(^2\) Trevelyan claimed he began to look forward to the "gradual decrease in the majority"\(^3\) against him.

During these years the opas tree in Ireland had sprouted its branch of home rule, and the Irish under Charles Parnell became a political force to be reckoned with; the eyes of Britain looked overseas toward Empire; the crown glistened with imperial grandeur; the church held its own, and the Radicals oiled their machinery to prepare it for even more parliamentary reform.

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**Old Issues and New**

The Second Gladstone Ministry started ominously on a God-denying note from Charles Bradlaugh and seemed destined for bad weather. The opas tree of Ireland waved fitfully in

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\(^1\)Carvin, Chamberlain, I, p. 88.

\(^2\)Annual Registers, 1875–1879.

\(^3\)Annual Register, 1879, p. 2.
a breeze created by Parnell and the Land League. In the East, a storm was brewing in the sands of Egypt and the Sudan. The royal brow clouded with anger when the throne-shaking Dilke and the disrespectful Chamberlain were given Cabinet positions along with Bright and Fawcett. In parliament, 113 Radicals sat like stormy petrels on seas surging with the undercurrent of "Fourth Party" obstructionism.

The new parliament consisted of 349 Liberals, 243 Conservatives and 60 Home Rulers. Chief among the old Radicals were Forster and Bright. Most noteworthy among the new ones were the "bellowing blasphemer," Bradlaugh; the suave independent, Henry Labouchere; and, of course, Dilke and Chamberlain. In spite of the prevalence of ready-made issues, Bradlaugh started the first session of parliament off in a ripple of dissent by refusing to take the oath. The issue grew to wave size under the obstructionism of the Fourth Party, and would harrass the government for eight

2 Ibid., p. 254, note.
4 Annual Register, 1880, p. 55.
years before being resolved. In 1888 a bill would be passed legalizing the right of a non-conformist member of parliament to affirm his allegiance.

Despite their left-footed start, 1880 proved to be a moderately successful year for the Radicals. The Burials Bill finally passed, as did an Employer's Liability Act and a Ground Game Bill which permitted farmers to shoot rabbits and hares on land occupied by them. ¹

These successes, however, appeared insignificant compared with the Irish problem. The inadequate Land Act of 1870 had failed to solve the problem and the Irish Land League, headed by Charles Stewart Parnell, was formed for the purpose of obtaining the three F's: fair rents, fixity of tenure and free sale of his interest by the tenant. Parnell hoped to unite the Irish elements in parliament, and by the use of obstructionism, to force through a home-rule act for Ireland.

The Radicals were divided in their opinions on the Irish problem as was shown in the discussions of the Coercion Bill which was passed to prevent further violence in that land. John Stuart Mill proposed "stringent and summary" legislation, on a large scale, "affecting the rights of property" and urged "speedy elimination of the present landlord element and the establishment of a peasant proprietary, subject to

payment of a fixed rent to be guaranteed by the state. 1 Labouchere opposed the Coercion Act, which suspended habeas corpus and permitted the immediate arrest for "the Protection of Person and Property." 2 He called it the "perpetuation of a bad system," and felt that the government should include a measure of protection for the tenants. 3 Bright criticized the act because it did not include any remedial measures, or even an "admission of grievances." 4 Chamberlain called it a "hateful necessity." 5 Nevertheless, only eight Liberals refused to vote for it.

The Coercion Act was followed by the Land Act of 1881. Though the latter secured the desired three F's for the Irish, it was no longer enough. It became increasingly obvious that Ireland and her obstructionist spokesman Parnell would settle for nothing less than home rule.

So the upas tree of Ireland kept growing. The home-rule branch would flourish; Gladstone and many Radicals would decide that if they couldn't lick it they would join it; and

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3 Annual Register, 1881, p. 36.
4 Ibid., p. 27.
5 Ibid., p. 193.
eventually it would cleave the Radical party in two. In the meantime, the storm brewing in Egypt and the Sudan developed into a hurricane, which would wreak havoc on Gladstone and his cabinet.

The problem of Egypt was a "legacy of the Tories." A new nationalist movement led by the Egyptian Minister of War, Arabi, threatened the European investments in Egypt and the Suez Canal. Gladstone felt obliged to protect British interests and sent forces to overpower Arabi, which they did. Sir Evelyn Baring did a commendable job of settling the Egyptian domestic problems. At the same time, a religious movement was gaining strength in the Sudan under the direction of the prophet, Mahdi Mohamed Ahmed. Unfortunately, the crusading Gordon, sent to evacuate Sudan, decided instead to negotiate with Mahdi, and was massacred at Khartum in January, 1885. The English glorified him and blasted the government.

The Radicals were not behind Gladstone on his Egyptian policy. John Bright, staunch Quaker that he was, stood for "peace at any price," and resigned from the cabinet when

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1Thorold, Labouchere, p. 191.
2Garvin, Chamberlain, p. 454.
hostilities started. Labouchere and Dilke objected to England's interference in Egyptian affairs after Arabi was subdued. Chamberlain, on the other hand, objected to Bright's stand, saying that England had duties to its neighbors. Still, he did not approve of the occupation of Egypt. The people of England condemned the government for Gordon's death. All in all, the Egyptian wind blew no good for the Gladstone government.

Back on the domestic front, the Radicals were agitating for new parliamentary reform. On January 5, 1882, Chamberlain, angered by Irish and Fourth Party obstructionism, urged his constituents to become aware of the need for reform of the House of Commons procedure. He said its policy was:

To promise, pause, prepare, postpone,
And end by letting things alone,
In short, for taking people's pay
For doing nothing every day.

He recommended a cloture measure that would limit debate, maintaining that when a minority could obstruct a majority, democracy was not served.

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1 Annual Register, 1882, p. 148.
2 Thorold, Labouchere, pp. 190-224.
3 Garvin, Chamberlain, p. 453.
4 Annual Register, 1882, p. 2.
5 Garvin, Chamberlain, p. 377.
In 1883 Dilke deliberately ignored the foreign issue when delivering his speech to his constituents. Instead, he directed their attention to parliamentary reform by remarking that he was undecided whether the issue of county franchise and the issue of redistribution of seats should be brought together in one bill or introduced separately.¹ The same year, Bright suggested that the House of Lords be deprived of the right to veto a bill which the House of Commons had sent up twice.²

In 1883 once again Hyde Park resounded with the stamp of marching feet as the political and trade organizations paraded to show their desire for a Third Reform Bill.³ This time, however, there was an air of festivity, not the grim determination of Second Reform Bill days nor the threat of revolution that had hovered over England in the days of the First Reform Bill. The people of England had learned to expect radical reform as their due.

The Third Reform Bill proved to be a political football. The Radicals, especially G. O. Trevelyan, had long worked for county franchise, which would widely extend existing suffrage.

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¹*Annual Register, 1883*, p. 2.
The Tories did not dare reject the County Franchise Bill for fear of losing the confidence of the people. They hated to let the Radicals take credit for it, however, and possibly return the following year to pass a redistribution bill that would benefit their party. So the Tories and the House of Lords held out for a Redistribution Bill in 1884.¹

The House of Lords hesitated to reject the Franchise Bill, tabling it instead. Gladstone assumed their action to mean rejection and "virtually gave the Radicals the signal to start the greatest anti-Lords agitation since 1832..."²

The Radicals pointed out to the people that the peers had consistently been against extending the suffrage to Catholics, dissenters, and Jews; had consistently opposed parliamentary reform and the secret ballot; had, in fact, stood in the way of all progress. Had Gladstone permitted it, the anti-Lords movement could have grown to threatening proportions, but at the almost hysterical request of the Queen, he soft-pedaled the issue, attempting even to muzzle his ministers, Chamberlain and Dilke.³ Chamberlain, however,

²Ibid., p. 289.
³Ibid., pp. 292-295.
was not one to remain muzzled, and the Conservatives, headed by Lord Randolph Churchill, insinuated that he was behind the continuing anti-Lords demonstrations. Chamberlain, nonplussed by the accusations, closed the anti-Lords demonstrations by stating defiantly,

We have been too long a peer-ridden nation, and I hope you will say to them that if they will not bow to the mandate of the people they shall lose for ever [sic.] the authority they have so long abused.¹

The outcome of all the sound and fury was that Gladstone had his way. The Radicals in the ministry agreed to compromise with the Lords and accept their Redistribution Bill if the Lords accepted the County Franchise Bill. The Radical M.P.s not in the ministry worried lest their colleagues forget the battle cry of "End or Mend the Lords" and in November Labouchere suggested reforming the House of Lords.² The compromise was reached, however, and both the County Franchise Bill and the Lord's Redistribution Bill became laws.

The Third Reform Act doubled the existing suffrage, providing virtually complete manhood suffrage. Any head of a household could now vote. The Redistribution Bill, passed in 1885, transferred the basis of representation from the historic boroughs and counties to the individual as the unit

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²Ibid., p. 297.
determining representation.

The people were now a powerful voice in England. For the fact that the people found the road to democracy without experiencing a revolution, England can thank Jeremy Bentham, for finding the way; the philosophic radicals for showing the way; the political radicals for insisting that the way be cleared; and the pragmatic, practical politician for realizing the expediency of the matter and clearing the way.

For the fact that the people would move into socialism without losing their individuality, England can thank John Stuart Mill for providing a pivot point between utilitarianism and socialism and for making England conscious of her right to liberty.
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