

LONDON CHARTISM

1838-1848

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Some aspects of London in the Chartist period

London was already a huge city, with populations of 1,873,676 and 2,362,236 in 1841 and 1851 respectively, easily the largest in Europe and, indeed, the world, far outstripping all rivals.¹ On the other hand, as a continuously built-up area, it remained remarkably compact. Concentrated urban development south of the Thames was very limited – principally to Lambeth, Southwark and Bermondsey, although Kennington, Newington, Walworth and Camberwell were being rapidly filled in – on account of the belated construction of bridges across the river. On the east, although the marshes of the Lea Valley were an impediment to expansion, the city still fell considerably short of them. To the north suburbs did not extend farther than Camden Town or Islington and to the west Kensington Gardens marked the boundary.²

In many significant ways London remained a pre-industrial city, exuberant, chaotic and semi-rural. For example, thousands of cows, pigs and sheep were kept in sheds and cellars in the central districts, even roaming the streets;³ and twice or more a week the ‘immense droves of cattle, besides herds and flocks of all kinds’ collected at Smithfield spread ‘disorder and confusion’ throughout the capital.⁴

But, fundamentally, London life had been undergoing – and was continuing to experience – a radical transformation, becoming increasingly sober and orderly. Gas lighting made the streets incomparably safer by night. Pall Mall was illuminated as early as 1807; by 1841, it was claimed, ‘the metropolis now burns gas in every square, street, alley, lane, passage, and court’, and thereby ‘half the work of prevention of crime was accomplished’.⁵ With the establishment of the Metropolitan Police in 1829 the city, it is argued in Part Three, was, within a decade, subjected to an astonishingly far-reaching system of official regulation and restraint.⁶ Beyond these two important innovations, centred on the 1820s and 1830s, lies a long-term alteration in the attitudes and behaviour of Londoners.⁷

The metropolitan populace had been notorious throughout the eighteenth century for its turbulence, insubordination, violence and brutishness – for Bartholomew Fair and ‘Tyburn Fair’. In the 1750s it was remarked: ‘In London amongst the lower class all is anarchy,

drunkenness and thievery.' Nevertheless M. Dorothy George convincingly discerns a vast difference between the second quarter and end of the century.⁸ As is well known, Francis Place, born in 1771, dwelt obsessively on the improvements he considered had occurred by the 1820s since the years of his youth.⁹ Although uncritical reliance on any part of Place's voluminous testimonies must be avoided¹⁰ there is little reason to doubt his insistence on the change in metropolitan mores – for instance, not unfamiliar with East London, he was greatly struck by the progress that had taken place in Wapping and Rosemary Lane.¹¹ So, he wrote in 1834:

Forty years ago the working people with very few exceptions were to a great extent, drunken, dirty immoral and ignorant. He who was the best paid was then the most dissolute. This is not so now . . . Drunkenness among journeymen dirtiness, immorality and gross ignorance are not the prevailing vices. Their manners are greatly improved, their morals are mended their knowledge is considerably extended, and is constantly though slowly increasing. That these things are so will be affirmed by any one who has had the opportunity of observing the working people and has observed them during even the last twenty years. Proofs abound in every direction, in their dress their deportment their language in the reading rooms they frequent, in the book clubs and institutions of which they are members, and the books they possess as their own.¹²

These things *were* affirmed by others: by William Lovett, for one, as early as 1834 as well as in evidence to a Select Committee of 1849 and in his autobiography, who attributed the improvement to educational activities and the spread of coffee houses.¹³ In short, Londoners by the Chartist decade were less intoxicated, brutal and debauched, more tractable, self-improving and self-disciplined. The alteration in mores had naturally not yet run its course. Executions continued to attract milling, gloating crowds;¹⁴ and in 1869–70 John O'Neil and another 'Old Crispin' drew a stark contrast between the temper of that period and the drunkenness, pugilism, bull-baiting, dog-fighting and other vices of shoemakers forty to sixty years before.¹⁵

The metropolitan economy

We may trace the vastness of London, the varied character of its external features, and the wonderful diversity which its social aspects present, to three distinct causes. First, its official supremacy, as the residence of the sovereign, the seat of the government and legislature, and all the most important departments of the state; secondly, its manufacturing industry; and, thirdly, its commercial importance as a port. Any one of these elements would nourish a large amount of population; but without the two latter it would be kept within moderate limits, and it is chiefly in consequence of their influence that London is twice as large as Paris.¹⁶

The position – indeed dominance – which London possesses by virtue of capital city is too well appreciated by Britons for it to be elaborated upon, other than to stress that metropolitan Chartism's initial feebleness gravely undermined the entire movement's effectiveness.¹⁷ The pre-eminence of the Port of London is less, but still widely, recognized: at mid-century a quarter of Britain's entire foreign trade was conducted on the Thames and, in addition, there was the extensive coasting trade.¹⁸ Even so the link is rarely made between the raw materials imported or the goods exported¹⁹ and their English destinations or origins. In both cases London itself was very often recipient or producer. And it is London's importance as a centre of 'manufacturing industry' that is generally overlooked for the entire nineteenth century – London was actually the country's *principal* centre of production.²⁰

This fact was obscured from early in the century as it became assumed that: 'Our large manufacturing districts are, for obvious reasons, located in the vicinity of our coal-fields' and therefore 'London may be regarded as a vast trading and commercial, rather than a manufacturing town'.²¹ Henceforward manufacturing industry was synonymous with textiles, metallurgical extraction and working, and steam-power; and the distinction was drawn between the products of the factory and 'mere handicrafts'.²² It would, however, be manifestly absurd to deny the name of 'industry' to such prominent sections of the metropolitan (and national) economy as shoemaking, tailoring, hatting, building, silk-weaving, the working of copper, tin-plate and other metals, engineering, furniture-making, leather production, printing, watchmaking, shipbuilding, etc.²³ Further, it is necessary to

state categorically that, while many of these industries were either to collapse or to be drastically curtailed later in the century, before 1850 it was Spitalfields silk alone that was in decline (it had reached an advanced stage in its demise).²⁴

Not only did symbiosis exist between the river and metropolitan industry: there was also considerable interdependence between many of the crafts. The hair and wool by-products of the leather trades provided the bodies for stuff hats, and the silk of their successors could come from Spitalfields.²⁵ Bermondsey leather met the demands of shoemakers, cabinet- and chair-makers, bookbinders, coachbuilders, etc. The coppersmiths produced boilers for London's sugar-refineries, breweries and distilleries as well as for engineers.²⁶

Another prominent feature, much commented upon, was the extreme localization of several industries. Silk was overwhelmingly confined to 'Spitalfields', leather to Bermondsey, hatting to Southwark, watchmaking and jewellery to Clerkenwell, coachmaking around Long Acre and sugar-refineries 'in the neighbourhood of Goodman's Fields' (Whitechapel). This intense concentration of numerous producers in small, widely separated areas together with its opposite – the dispersal of other large industries throughout the vast city – may go some way to account for the impression of most contemporary observers that London was not the capital of 'manufacturing industry'.²⁷

As Table 1 indicates the typical unit (of production and distribution) was a tiny shop with either a master working alone or employing one, two, three or four men; and although there were a considerable number of employers with between five and nineteen men, such concerns were still small-scale. On the other hand, there *were* 217 masters who employed more than fifty men and eighty masters with over 100.²⁸ In fact, an 1848 map of London displays an astonishingly large number of 'manufactories', etc.,²⁹ while, in 1841–2, George Dodd was able to publish a series of articles on 'days' at twenty-one *London* 'factories', stating:

There are many establishments in or near London, such as water-works, gas-works, ship-yards, tan-yards, brewhouses, distilleries, glass-works, &c., the extent of which would excite no little surprise in those who for the first time visited them. Indeed the densely packed masses of building forming the eastern districts of the metropolis, on both sides of the river, include individual establishments which, although they would appear like little towns if isolated, scarcely meet the eye of a passenger through the crowded streets.³⁰

Whatever the size of the average unit, workers in the Chartist period had no doubts that large (or larger) employers, engrossing a disproportionate share of the market, had risen and were continuing

Table 1. *Number of men employed by London masters, 1851*

Number of men employed	Masters employing this number of men
0*	10,594
1	3,182
2	3,092
3	1,922
4	1,338
5	710
6	729
7	329
8	322
9	183
10-19	985
20-9	416
30-9	183
40-9	121
50-74	100
75-99	37
100-49	39
150-99	14
200-49	10
250-99	5
300-49	5
350+	7
TOTAL	24,323

*Or number not known.

Source: *Population Tables, II, Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations, and Birth-Place of the People, 1852-3, LXXXVIII, Part 1, I [1691-1] [hereafter 1851 Census], p. 29.*

to emerge from the shoal of small masters nor that a capitalist system was remodelling productive relationships.³¹ The building trades were especially conscious of the operations of 'the devil-capitalists'.³² Thus a carpenter wrote:

That the workman does not receive a price for his labour that will enable him to procure the necessaries and comforts of life for himself and family, and that the employer receives more than an equitable profit for the outlay of his capital, is evident . . . first look at the condition of the 'large employer'. You see men, the major part of whom have risen from the ranks of the journey-men, have accumulated large fortunes, and are now the worst enemies of the men, who spurn and revile you, and who often treat you worse than the dogs that prowl the streets of the metropolis. Why do they do so? . . . from a love of gain, that a few men may amass largely, while the mass of the men of the trade are reduced to a state of slavery, dependent on the caprice of these men for the food that sustains life. Then look at the condition of the 'small mas-

ters'. You see men, partly victims of the 'large masters', yet still more the victims of avarice and an aping disposition to follow the footsteps of the large employers; vieing with them in crushing labour to the earth.³³

The Chartist locality of stonemasons, immediately before the furious strike of 1841–2, addressed the trade unionists of London:

Brothers in Bondage . . . We have been now engaged for a number of years in battling with a monster, which although we have at times rendered powerless, yet have we not been able to conquer. Fellow men, we adopted the system of Trades' Unions in the full hope that by that means we could defend ourselves against the ferocious monster CAPITAL, who is at all times eager to appease his greedy appetite upon the very miseries of the sons of industry.³⁴

Another mason had similarly lambasted 'the determination of the capitalists to make tools of the operatives . . . whilst they themselves revel in luxury from the sweat of our brows'.³⁵ But throughout the London trades there was widespread recognition of the decisive influence of 'men of capital'.³⁶ The tailors particularly resented the new-found, excessive riches of their employers: 'The masters appeared to be increasing their wealth . . . that they now had their drawing rooms, counting houses, carriages, and, in some instances, their hunters and hounds, whilst the operatives, who produced all, were left to the miseries of a cold Poor Law bastille [sic].'³⁷ And, during the lock-out of 1838–9, the bookbinders castigated 'those unprincipled capitalists – and money-mongers' and 'the all-grasping capitalist'.³⁸ Even a Seven Dials broadside of 1853 could proclaim:

The monied men have had their way, large fortunes have they made,
For things could not be otherwise, with labour badly paid,
They roll along with splendour, and with a saucey [sic] tone,
As Cobbett says, they eat the meat, while the workmen [sic] gnaws the bone.³⁹

Although substantial fortunes had been made from manufactures – but, above all, commerce – in the eighteenth century,⁴⁰ it is clear that a more pervasive, general process, a transformation, was occurring in the 1830s and 1840s and had got under way around the end of the Napoleonic Wars. One of the outstanding characteristics of London was the multitude of trades and occupations. Clapham, following the 1831 classification, settles for 'four hundred or so', but Dodd's conjecture of 1,300 to 1,400 is a more plausible estimate.⁴¹ It is, however, erroneous to conclude from this that London's social structure was that of a pre-industrial city with a host of independent artisans or that, at most, a wage-earning labour force was only gradually appearing. While the majority of workers were hand craftsmen and many did not labour for wages but were paid by the piece (e.g. pair of boots, garment, item of furniture), there can be little doubt that the second quarter of the nineteenth century saw the making of

a metropolitan proletariat.⁴² Thus Bédarida, in his meticulous analysis of the 1851 Census data, can allocate four-fifths (80.5 per cent) of the total active population to the 'working class' – Classes III, IV and V of the classification by the twentieth-century Registrars-General – to which he has assigned employers of less than five men.⁴³

Another essential aspect of the London economy was the existence of a luxury market serving not only its (more or less) permanent residents but the wealthy of the entire nation. Its presence ensured the continuance of quality production and highly skilled craftsmen, even if they worked increasingly within capitalist structures. On the other hand, there was a vast mass-market to be satisfied.⁴⁴ This was met, not by steam-power, mechanization and factory organization, but by simultaneously expanding the labour force, lowering wages and manufacturing an ample supply of underpriced goods – at their worst the produce of the intensively exploitative and uncontrollably expanding dishonourable trades. Slop production (i.e. sweating) and capitalism are impossible to separate, for in a handicraft economy their logic is identical. In relentless combination they moulded the working-class politics and trade unionism of the thirties and forties by the proletarianization of the metropolitan craftsmen, forging a common consciousness of disparate groups of workers.⁴⁵ The concomitant conflicts ensured that the class collaboration exemplified by cities like Birmingham and Sheffield could not flourish in London despite the superficial socio-economic similarity. This is not to say that no small employers were Chartists – a fair number, appreciating the thrust of contemporary developments, are known to have been – but in London there could be no significant, large-scale alliance between the bourgeoisie and the artisans.⁴⁶

This two-pronged assault on the position of the artisan led to attempts to regain 'social independence', albeit in new, collective forms. First came the experiments in producers' co-operatives, designed to exclude middlemen between them and the consumers, of the late twenties and early thirties, culminating in the National Equitable Labour Exchange and United Trades' Association of 1832–4.⁴⁷ In 1832 the impressive Operative Builders' Union (OBU), based principally upon Manchester, Birmingham and London, emerged, uniting the building trades in seven sections. A trivial dispute in July 1834 concerning whose beer Cubitt's workmen would drink resulted in a lock-out by the London masters. The document was presented to the members of the Union, which rejected all forms of the contract system and demanded a uniform rate of wages and the dismissal of non-unionists. Virtual defeat in the autumn, following collapse in Lancashire and Birmingham, caused the break-up of the Builders' Union at

the end of 1834.⁴⁸ The most spectacular – and mythologized – of the general unions was the (Grand National) Consolidated Trades Union (GNCTU) of 1834.

It is the Webbs who were, uncharacteristically, responsible for the exaggeration that: 'Within a few weeks the Union appears to have been joined by at least half a million members.'⁴⁹ Examination of balance sheets has convincingly indicated an approximate, but peak, national paying membership in April 1834 of little more than 16,000. Such a savage scaling-down of the Consolidated Union's countrywide support has, however, accentuated its importance for London, since, of that total, the capital contributed no fewer than 11,000 members. There were 4,600 tailors, 3,000 cordwainers, just over 1,000 silk-weavers and the remaining 2,500 or so were spread across twenty-one other occupations (of which the principal were the smiths, cabinet-makers, rope-makers, tanners, silk skein dyers, silk hatters and wood turners).⁵⁰

No more is known of the weavers' involvement, save that their adherence had terminated by February 1835.⁵¹ The tailors, who dominated the formation of the Consolidated Union in February 1834 – and had already been preparing to end the abuses in their trade – launched a major struggle against their employers in April demanding 'equalization' of wages, a fixed working day and no work except on the masters' premises. They had opened their houses of call to all and were seeking to abolish the division of their craft into 'honourable' and 'dishonourable' sections. The strike, which involved some 10,000 tailors, ended in complete capitulation and their secession from the Consolidated Union in June, when the cordwainers, confronting exactly the same problems and angry at the tailors' conflict taking precedence over their own grievances,⁵² also withdrew. The defection of the two largest component groups ensured the Union's demise (though, renamed, it survived until the summer of 1835).⁵³

The only success of 1834 was the massive meeting at Copenhagen Fields and procession to the Home Office on 21 April in protest at the transportation of the Dorchester labourers. As ever with popular demonstrations, estimates of the numbers involved varied according to political sympathies, but there is a reasonable consensus that 40,000 to 50,000 took part in the procession, while it would appear that more than 100,000 attended the preliminary meeting.⁵⁴

The heady expectations and ensuing reverses of 1834 were a decisive influence on the politico-economic attitudes of Londoners in the Chartist years. In 1847, at a meeting to canvass support for the National Association of United Trades, a weaver declared:

he had been of opinion [sic] ever since the Builders' and Consolidated Union were broken up, that the working classes had been going downwards, for the want of an institution of the same magnitude, that these bodies were. The means at their disposal, at the present time, to resist the innovations of capital, were comparatively small, and were getting smaller: but the pence of the millions, with its moral power, will accomplish everything needed by the working classes, and rescue them from their present degraded state.⁵⁵

On the other hand, many afterwards shied away from grandiose schemes of emancipation, especially if their trade societies were to be involved.⁵⁶

A profile of London·Chartism

The role of metropolitan Chartism in the national movement was inherently of major importance. The triumph or failure of Chartism, however formidable its provincial mobilizations, was ultimately dependent – to an extent probably not previously recognized – on the contribution that the capital made to the agitation. But any popular movement in the seat of government was inevitably subject to the most rigorous restrictions available; and from 1829 the authorities were equipped with an increasingly effective Metropolitan Police which in 1842 and 1848 was deployed to curb Chartist disturbances with impressive success. This second consideration, of the maintenance of public order, is treated in detail in Part Three; that of the indispensability of London's support runs throughout Part Two and is directly, albeit briefly, examined in the Conclusion.

Chartism in London, it will be emphasized, only emerged as a distinctive movement from 1840–1. During the 1840s metropolitan Chartist culture appears to have been much the same as that of the major centres of Chartist activity in other parts of the country: with one outstanding exception. The Londoners tended to be non-religious or actively anti-Christian.⁵⁷ Metropolitan rationalism was a deep-rooted characteristic both preceding and postdating Chartism.⁵⁸ Chartism inherited another metropolitan tradition dating from the 1790s, that of the insurrectionary conspiracy, with disastrous consequences in 1848.

Indeed, London Chartism was the natural extension, developing without discontinuity, of the previous half-century of artisan, Jacobin radicalism. The two principal, unrivalled influences on thought were William Cobbett and Thomas Paine. The birthday of the 'immortal Thomas Paine' was commemorated annually by suppers and speeches.⁵⁹ So, while the labour theory of value and class conflict were essential components of Chartist political theory, it was also intrinsically backward-looking: to the eighteenth century and beyond. It was not a confident, proletarian anticipation of socialism – at least, during the decade in which Chartism was a mass movement – and represents instead the mental endeavour to reassert artisan independence and an agrarian foundation of society in the new industrial world.

Table 2. *Number of Chartist localities per year and their distribution, 1838–49*

	1838	1839	1840	1841	1842	1843	1844	1845	1846	1847	1848	1849
Middlesex	1	4	1	2	3	3	2	2	2	0	1	0
Westminster	0	6	2	6	8	2	1	1	1	1	3	2
Marylebone	1	2	2	2	5	4	3	3	3	3	11	4
Finsbury	1	7	5	4	6	5	5	1	0	2	4	1
City	3	5	2	7	6	3	2	1	1	2	3	2
Tower Hamlets	2	13	4	10	13	10	8	3	3	8	25	8
Essex	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0
Kent	0	2	0	2	3	2	2	2	1	1	2	1
Southwark	2	2	0	2	7	6	1	1	1	1	3	1
Lambeth	2	3	1	3	6	6	2	2	2	3	3	2
Surrey	1	6	1	1	6	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
TOTAL	13	51	18	39	63	43	27	17	14	23	57	21

Although in 1848 two, perhaps three, London localities were named after Ernest Jones, he was not yet the disciple of Marx and was honoured as martyr, poet and gentleman. The other localities which then took personal names were the Alfred Lodge,⁶⁰ Wat Tyler League and Wat Tyler Brigade, Wallace Brigade, William Tell Brigade,⁶¹ Washington Brigade, Thomas Paine Locality and Emmett Brigade.⁶²

While the Chartists were therefore linked with indissoluble bonds to their predecessors, their relationship to later metropolitan radicalism is utterly different. A profound hiatus exists around mid-century and although Chartism and former Chartists could not fail to influence developments in trade unionism and the renewed movement for parliamentary reform, the connections appear amazingly slight given the psychological hold, combined with the mass penetration, of Chartism in its heyday.⁶³ Intensive research on the three decades following 1850 could cause substantial revision of this view,⁶⁴ yet such an outcome seems unlikely. Only the tiny band of O'Brienites carried ideas of the 1840s into the 1860s and 1870s.⁶⁵

Chartist life centred on the localities and Tables 2–5 show the total number of localities (more properly, for the earliest years, Chartist societies) which existed per year, 1838–49, and per month in the three peak years of agitation, for the entire metropolitan area. Localities are included which were experiencing periods of known disorganization and even whose existence is uncertain or conjectured. They are grouped according to the five parliamentary constituencies of Westminster, Marylebone, Finsbury, the City, Tower Hamlets, Southwark and Lambeth, and the adjoining counties of Middlesex, Essex, Kent and Surrey. This method is not ideal but does have the

Table 3. *Number of Chartist localities per month and their distribution, 1839*

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Middlesex	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Westminster	1	2	2	4	3	3	3	3	4	5	2	2
Marylebone	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1
Finsbury	2	2	3	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	6	5
City	3	2	2	4	4	3	2	2	2	2	2	2
Tower Hamlets	4	4	8	10	6	7	6	5	6	6	4	3
Essex	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kent	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Southwark	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Lambeth	2	2	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Surrey	3	3	3	5	5	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	20	19	24	38	31	26	24	21	21	22	17	15

Table 4. *Number of Chartist localities per month and their distribution, 1842*

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Middlesex	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2
Westminster	5	7	8	7	5	4	4	4	3	2	2	2
Marylebone	2	2	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4
Finsbury	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	4	5
City	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	5	3	3	3	3
Tower Hamlets	7	8	9	10	8	8	9	8	7	8	8	8
Essex	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kent	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
Southwark	2	2	3	3	3	5	3	3	4	4	5	5
Lambeth	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	6	6	6	6
Surrey	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	1	1	2	3	3
TOTAL	31	35	40	42	40	39	39	37	35	38	40	40

considerable merit of employing geographical categories in terms of which Chartists themselves frequently thought.

The localities constituted organized Chartism and it is primarily its history that is traced in Part Two. In the excited years of 1842 and, above all, 1848 the course of Chartism also comprehended riotous outbreaks and great meetings. The Chartist crowd was an entity very different from the locality, not only in size but in social composition. Part Three is devoted to the crowd, its control by the police and the counter-demonstrations of 1848. The third dimension of metropolitan Chartism was the trades from which enrolled Chartists were overwhelmingly drawn and in whose affairs Chartists were prominent.

The occupations of all those Chartists (up to 1849 and including the members of the London Working Men's Association (LWMA),

Table 5. Number of Chartist localities per month and their distribution, 1848

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Middlesex	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Westminster	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2
Marylebone	3	3	4	4	10	10	10	9	4	4	4	4
Finsbury	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	1	1	1	1
City	1	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2
Tower Hamlets	7	7	7	9	17	16	14	12	9	9	7	5
Essex	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kent	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	0
Southwark	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	1
Lambeth	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Surrey	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	21	21	22	26	41	41	36	34	22	22	20	17

1836–9) for whom information is available are analysed in Table 6. These figures seem in general to be reliable and to provide a serviceable indication of participation by individuals in the Chartist movement. An index greater than 1.00, of course, denotes a propensity to Chartism: but it is suggested that only trades with indices in excess of 2.00 can be designated as ‘markedly Chartist’ and those with indices over 4.00 as ‘outstandingly Chartist’.

Several provisos must, however, be stated. If the leather finishers’ locality of 1842–3 had had, like the coppersmiths and braziers or carvers and gilders, the names of its general council printed in the *Northern Star*, the number of leather dressers (and carriers) could have been increased by six or eight and the trade might then have appeared as ‘outstandingly Chartist’, which it undoubtedly was. In contrast the commitment of the printers and bookbinders, although Chartist crafts, is overstated. The numbers of both are approximately doubled by men who were members of the LWMA in 1836–9 but are not otherwise known as Chartists. The same reservation probably applies, less forcefully, to the cabinet-makers – certainly not to the other furniture trades – and only to the extent of relegating them from their tenuous position as ‘markedly Chartist’ to a Chartist propensity. Similarly, and of greatest deceptiveness, the total of clock and watchmakers, especially non-radical artisans, is inflated to twelve by the presence of eight LWMA members equally inactive after 1838.

Even allowing for these reservations the indices of Chartist participation are at odds with the schema advanced by Iorwerth Prothero: that it was the ‘lower’, weakly organized trades which were Chartist, while the ‘upper’ or ‘aristocratic’ trades held aloof.⁶⁶ Rather the engineers and millwrights were only marginally less radical than the

Table 6. *Chartist occupations*

Occupation	Number of Chartists	% of Chartists' occupations	Total in London, 1841	% of male population of economically active age, 1841	Index of Chartist participation (column 2/ column 4)
Boot and shoemakers	269	23.24	24,857	4.33	5.38
Tailors	98	8.46	20,265	3.53	2.40
Carpenters and joiners	91	7.86	18,238	3.18	2.48
Stonemasons	38	3.28	3,464	0.60	5.44
Bricklayers	17	1.47	6,719	1.17	1.26
Plasterers	12	1.04	2,586	0.45	2.30
Plumbers	7	0.60	3,607 ^a	0.63	0.96
Painters and glaziers	22	1.90	7,820 ^a	1.36	1.40
Other building trades (builders, paper-hangers, slaters)	7	0.60	2,677	0.47	1.30
Silk-weavers	57	4.92	7,720	1.34	3.66
Coppersmiths and braziers	11	0.95	1,029	0.18	5.30
Tin-plate workers	7	0.60	1,409	0.25	2.47
Boilermakers	1	0.09	452	0.08	1.10
Engineers and millwrights	23	1.99	4,977	0.87	2.29
Smiths (i.e. blacksmiths)	10	0.86	6,679	1.16	0.74
Other metal trades (brass-workers, whitesmiths, wire-workers)	12	1.04	3,109	0.54	1.91
Cabinet-makers	25	2.16	5,950 ^b	1.04	2.08
Upholsterers	4	0.35	1,311 ^b	0.23	1.51
Chair-makers	8	0.69	1,538	0.27	2.58
Turners	6	0.52	1,505	0.26	1.98
Carvers and gilders	18	1.55	1,975	0.34	4.52
Hatters	35	3.02	2,819	0.49	6.16
Tanners	1	0.09	894	0.16	0.55
Curriers and leather dressers	11	0.95	2,290	0.40	2.38
Other leather trades (fellmongers, leather-dyers)	2	0.17	304	0.05	3.26
Printers	44	3.80	6,553	1.14	3.33
Type-founders	2	0.17	449	0.08	2.21
Other printing trades (stereotype-founders, copper plate printers)	4	0.35	308	0.05	6.44

Table 6 (cont.)

Occupation	Number of Chartists	% of Chartists' occupations	Total in London, 1841	% of male population of economically active age, 1841	Index of Chartist participation (column 2/ column 4)
Bookbinders	15	1.30	2,184 ^c	0.38	3.41
Booksellers and publishers	9	0.78	1,865 ^c	0.32	2.39
Newsagents and newsmen	8	0.69	375	0.07	10.58
Newspaper editors and reporters; authors	6	0.52	321	0.06	9.27
Goldbeaters	0	—	371	0.06	—
Jewellers, goldsmiths and silversmiths	12	1.04	3,899	0.68	1.53
Other gold and silver workers	3	0.26	418	0.07	3.56
Clock and watchmakers	12	1.04	4,223	0.74	1.41
Ship and boat- builders	3	0.26	2,808	0.49	0.53
Rope-makers	1	0.09	1,162	0.20	0.43
Coopers	7	0.60	3,504	0.61	0.99
Sawyers	1	0.09	2,977	0.52	0.17
Bakers	13	1.12	8,791	1.53	0.73
Linen drapers	0	—	1,783	0.31	—
Drapers	1	0.09	2,762	0.48	0.18
Chemists and druggists	2	0.17	1,803	0.31	0.55
Clerks and accountants	20	1.73	21,463	3.74	0.46
Coal labourers (including whippers)	1	0.09	1,700	0.30	0.29
Labourers (employment unspecified)	21	1.81	49,456	8.61	0.21
Gardeners and nurserymen	11	0.95	4,861	0.85	1.12
Coffee-house keepers	7	0.60	562	0.10	6.18
Eating-house keepers	1	0.09	297	0.05	1.67
Publicans; beer- shop and innkeepers	9	0.78	5,274	0.92	0.85
Others	153	13.21	309,993	53.98	0.24
TOTAL	1,158	100.04	574,356	100.03	

^a Separated according to the proportion returned in the 1831 Census (1841 Census, p. 46).

^b Separated according to the proportion returned in the 1831 Census (1841 Census, pp. 46-7).

^c Separated according to the proportion returned in the 1851 Census.