THE POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE 'WESTMINSTER COMMITTEE' OF THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY.

with Special Reference to the Years 1807-22

(Volume II)

By W. E. Saxton.
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THE POST WAR POPULAR AGITATION 1815-18

Not until the final crushing defeat of Bonaparte did the storm clouds of late 1814 and early 1815 finally break. Reformers may long have believed they knew what was coming, but not even they are likely to have calculated on the fury let loose in 1816. Not even they can have foreseen clearly the full strength of long pent up desire from war time privations, and for all manner of improvements on pre-war conditions. Not even they can have foreseen clearly the extent of the distress which post war economic dislocation, and continued high taxation, would bring to millions. Nor are they likely to have envisaged that popular misery and impatience on one side, and the difficulties of providing any relief and the attitude of the governing classes on the other, would lead, almost immediately, to a state of tension which appeared as critical and dangerous as any during the war.¹

The new post-war popular agitation was an agitation with new features. It persisted on a countrywide scale with a dynamic impulse of its own; it depended, to a greater degree than any previous agitation, upon strong feelings among the 'working classes'. The war, the industrial revolution - time

¹ cf. e.g. F.O. Darvall, Popular Disturbances and Public Order in Regency England ch. XVI passim.
itself - had brought the country into a state of closer integration. Social and economic changes had continued to improve the status and educational level of many among the labouring classes. The development of the press and the intense nationwide interest in the progress and conduct of the war had developed their interest in national politics. When, at the end of the war, it appeared to them that their position was worse than it had ever been; when the slump in agriculture, trade and industry, which affected all classes, left vast numbers of them without work and hungry, more of them than ever before became ready to seek a political remedy for their sufferings. Joining with other classes in the clamour for relief from high taxation, they came to press for parliamentary reform.

Yet the popular agitation of this time was not really an agitation for parliamentary reform per se. Though, among certain sections of the middle classes, the demand for it had never disappeared, though it was again to be taken up by others, the desire of the majority of the middle classes was, primarily, for measures which would enable them to restore their prosperity. In the same way, though large numbers of the labouring classes were persuaded to demand parliamentary reform, their desire, too, was primarily for measures which would ease their lot. Whilst there can be no doubt that many among the latter had
been stimulated by the impulses of the American, and still more the French, Revolutions, it is clear that it was principally social and economic hardship which brought them to voice their feelings politically. It was not merely the post war slump which caused them to protest. Rather was it the deep rooted discontent which sprang from the progress of the Industrial Revolution itself. It was this which provided the dynamic impulse which kept their agitation alive long after the middle classes had quietened down. ¹

More than anything, it was this - the development of a countrywide 'working class' political agitation - which led to a return to the 'alarmist' days, and bitter feelings of the nineties. Among the governing, and conservative middle, classes, it produced a state of panic. To many, their attention no longer diverted abroad by the war, it seemed this new stirring among the 'lower orders' was a symptom of the renewed effort of 'Jacobins' to bring about the revolution that had so far been averted. Believing the 'common people' were being deluded by them - that it was impossible to provide a political remedy for economic ills - the ministry considered its prime duty was to maintain order until economic depression passed.

¹ ibid. p.152. As Darvall points out, the year 1816 "was, in a measure that of the birth of Chartism, and of the death of Luddism."
Finding the normal machinery inadequate to keep the peace, they determined on further emergency legislation and felt bound to allow increased use of the military to enforce it. The Whigs and many among the middle classes may have detested the new restrictions upon popular liberty, but they liked the thought of revolution less and made little resistance to them. Though many of them knew full well that Reformers had no thought of revolution, they blamed them for stirring disorder among the 'common people' and believed it likely they would succeed in bringing about revolution unintentionally.¹

The attitude of the governing classes towards them in their distress, and their apparent determination to suppress their protests, embittered large numbers of the 'working classes' and encouraged them to listen to the 'explanation' of their sufferings, and/the advice on how to act, given them by Cobbett and others. In their unhappy state they must have found it easy to accept the old arguments;—that they were the victims of a self-interested aristocracy, and those who, equally self-interestedly, supported their rule from the 'profits' to be made by doing so;—that Whigs were as bad as Tories. The use of troops to prevent disorder at home, and

¹ cf. e.g. ibid. Ch. XVI. passim, on the 'State of Public Opinion.'
the military occupation of France, lent colour to the view that the aim of ministers was to establish a military despotism. Constantly encouraged, by the 'extremist' Reformers, to act for and by themselves, they became increasingly ready to do so.

It is now possible to know that the majority in the country remained behind the Tories in support of the Crown and constitution; that the Whig party was to survive through the influence of the larger landed magnates, and the support of other elements who distrusted the repressive policy of the Tories; that working class discontent was to die down as economic conditions improved. It is now possible to know that the Westminster Reformers were to continue to gain support amongst the 'new' middle classes. But, at this time, because of the difficulties in mobilising their support in parliament, it seemed to many that the Tories, desperately clinging to office by corruption, were deliberately seeking to divide and alarm the country in order to restore their declining power;¹ that the 'extremists' were steadily increasing their influence among the 'common people'; that the Whigs were an entirely spent force. Together the

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¹ On the reasons for this illusion, and the real position of the Tories at this time cf. W.R. Brock, *Lord Liverpool* and *Liberal Toryism* ch. IV
corrupt tyranny of the Tories, and the violence of the 'extremists' would, it seemed likely, succeed in provoking revolution.

In the circumstances, the Westminster Reformers came to appear, and to feel themselves to be, increasingly isolated. Believing that it was essential to rouse the middle classes to see the necessity of parliamentary reform, they were, for most of the time, to remain at loggerheads with the Whigs, who refused to move for reform, and who blamed them for helping the 'extremists' to agitate the 'working classes', and for frightening the country. Believing themselves, that it was highly dangerous to agitate the 'working classes', they were to break completely with the 'extremists', who, in turn, blamed them for betraying 'the people', and for deserting to the Whigs. At times, notably in early 1816, and in the spring and summer of 1817, it seemed as if the Westminster group, many of whom were to be driven closer to the Whigs by the attitude of the 'extremists', might succeed in winning over numbers of the 'left wing' group to their cause. At others, notably in early 1817 and in early 1818, that the attitude of the Whigs would be more likely to drive them to pursue the course of the 'extremists'.

By 1818, attacked by the Whigs from one side, and the 'extremists' from the other, the Westminster group seemed for a
while in danger of splitting apart and of losing all support in the country.
Chapter X.

"Alarm"

1 The Westminster Reformers and the Whigs 1815-16.

Looking back over the period 1807-12, the most obvious feature of the relations between Whigs and Reformers must appear their desire to destroy each other. Mutually inspired by deep and fundamental distrust, and at many points rivals for popular favour, both parties had sought to make the position of the other untenable, by undermining it in the eyes of the public. But though each might look forward to the other's ultimate destruction, yet, as it has been suggested, the persistent attacks each made on the other must be conceived as having too, more immediate tactical aims. The Reformers needed Whig assistance. The Whigs wanted to harness the energies of Reformers. The Reformers were anxious to drive the Whigs to lead a reform movement. The Whigs were anxious to compel the Reformers to accept their leadership. Both recognised the 'danger' from the Tories, and both were keen to force the other to join them in defeating the Tory 'menace' first. Whigs and Reformers were equally confident they could control the situation afterwards.

Already old in 1807, the conflict between Whigs and Reformers was to continue for decades. But though open hostility must appear the most obvious feature of their relationship in the early nineteenth century, it is not by any means the only feature deserving attention and it must
not be allowed to obscure the attempts which were made to bring them together on better terms.

Among both Whigs and Reformers there were, it is evident, men who had become impatient at the time it was taking, and would take, before their 'enemy' could be forced to see reason, men who had come to recognise that continued conflict might eventually prove equally disastrous to both and who now came to be ready to try a different approach as an alternative, or additional, means of securing what might well seem of more immediate value - a working alliance. Since numbers of Whigs and Reformers already were co-operating loosely in the campaign against corruption and excessive taxation, and it might well seem a more definite arrangement could be made to draw them closer.

On one side were those among the Whig 'left wing' who had been long viewed with disapproval by conservative elements in the party, and who now became the subject of even greater distrust. By now, much more aware of the dangers of allowing Reformers to gain the ear of 'the people' unchecked, they had become even more anxious to win increased support in the country and to drive their conservative leaders and colleagues to adopt a more popular policy.

On the other side were numbers of the Reformers, equally unable to move without incurring disapproval and suspicion
from their own die-hard group, who were anxious to secure parliamentary allies, and who, it cannot be doubted, were clearly aware that an alliance with members of the Whig 'left wing' must greatly increase the embarrassments of the Whig party as a whole.

As it has been seen, there had already been two occasions - in 1809 and in 1811-12 - when advances had been made with the aim of securing an agreement between the two groups. On neither occasion had these advances stood any real chance of being successful, and the distrust of each group for the other had remained strong.

By mid-1812 it could seem, despite Cartwright's optimism, that there was little prospect that their mutual distrust would ever be overcome or that an alliance between them could ever be cemented. Circumstances might appear to have been wholly against it. Disorders among the provincial workers had effectively stifled middle class desire for parliamentary reform. The Whigs, whose interest in the matter had disappeared equally rapidly, might seem to have had even less reason for joining with Reformers; Reformers, it might appear, could only have lost by a closer alliance with the Whigs.

Yet it was precisely because parliamentary reform had, for the time being, ceased to be a live issue, and because the heat of 1809-10 had begun to cool, that the 'left wing'
Whigs and the more moderate Reformers had begun to draw closer at this time. The 'lesser' subjects on which they had co-operated - public economy, administrative, legal and prison reform, popular education, the freeing of the press, the humanization of military discipline and so on - had all assumed a relatively greater importance if only because they could still be pressed forward as practical measures.

The growing influence of Bentham among men of both groups, had not only served to bring them together, but to provide them with a 'programme' on which both might agree. The personal desire of Brougham to secure election for Westminster and the interest in him shown by the Westminster Reformers had also served to bring both groups closer. At the very time when Whitbread's influence among the 'left wing' group had been diminishing, Brougham, though out of parliament, had been coming to take his place as their 'leader', and it was he who now took the first positive steps to arrange a definite alliance with the Westminster Reformers.1 Conscious, perhaps, of their failure to increase their parliamentary strength in the 1812 election, and anxious to take advantage of the ending of the war to create the maximum stir, the Westminster

1. A. Aspinall, Lord Brougham and the Whig Party, pp.49 et seq.
Reformers, for their part, were prepared to listen to his overtures. In the middle of 1815, despite the strong disapproval of conservative Whigs there must have been on the one side, and the very strong disapproval of the 'extremist' Reformers there certainly was on the other side, plans for an alliance were discussed and agreed.

It has been said that the attempts to secure an alliance between the 'left wing' Whigs and the Westminster Reformers in 1809, and in 1811-12, had never stood any real chance of success; yet, if such an alliance had been cemented on either of those occasions, before the discontent of the post-war period appeared likely to divide the country in two, it might well have proved successful and valuable. In 1815, however, though such an alliance was actually, though informally made, yet it, too, was to be doomed to failure almost from the outset. For this there were two reasons.

First, the post-war popular agitation was to drive Whigs and Reformers further apart than at any time since 1806-7. The former - even the 'left wing' group - very soon made clear their strong disapproval of the way Reformers were seeking to turn the agitation into a demand for parliamentary reform, and, at the first sign of disorder, scuttled for safety, even faster than they had done in 1812. By the time the ministry came to seek approval for further repressive legislation,
not even the 'left wing' group was prepared to make more than a token resistance, or to defend the Reformers. On the contrary, they made clear they believed the Reformers - the Westminster Reformers included - were entirely responsible for making it necessary. Second, no one was to show himself better able to inspire distrust among Reformers - than Brougham.

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The prodigious success of the ministry's war policy seemed, at the moment of total victory in 1815, to have made its position impregnable. Despite the gloomy forecasts of numbers of Whigs and Reformers, the renewal of the war against Bonaparte, had been swift and short. In mid-summer 1815, the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary opposition appeared completely discredited.¹

The Whig party, indeed, might seem a broken force. Still inadequately led in the Commons, still divided in attitude towards domestic as well as foreign problems, it cannot be surprising that distrust for it as a party had increased rather than diminished. Neither conservatives nor radicals, whatever their feelings about the Tory ministers, could imagine that a Whig ministry could be anything but a

¹. S. MacCoby, op.cit. p.309
change for the worse.

Whatever their immediate reaction to the way in which their warnings of a few months earlier had so quickly been proved false, however, the Whigs themselves were not long pessimistic about the future. On the contrary, like the Reformers, they seem to have consoled themselves with the thought that now, at last, the 'Hurricane Season' was finally at an end, the future must soon be theirs.¹

The 'Edinburgh' had long held that the return of peace, the slashing of wartime expenditure, and the consequent diminution of Crown influence, would cut away the bases of Tory power. Now, the reduction of establishments to peace level and the dismissal of thousands of employees, would cause general unrest. Discontent would make itself felt in protest against the ministry, and the Whigs would be swept into office.²

Unrealistic as this view was — and was soon proved — it was, nonetheless, pleasant and palatable, and one from which the Whigs could derive new courage. Brougham, particularly, was optimistic, and, in the summer of 1815, it was he who was

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1. A. Aspinall, op. cit. p.50
2. ibid. cf.ög. Edinburgh Review XIV Art. 'Burdett's Plan of Reform'.
foremost in seeking to rally and to infuse optimism into other members of the party, in preparation for the new session.

As Professor Aspinall makes clear, when a few days after Whitbread's death in July 1815, Grey approached Lord Darlington about the possibility of providing a seat for Brougham, Brougham himself not only assumed that he was being considered for future leadership of the Whig party in the Commons, but immediately proceeded to act on that assumption. Believing Grey was preparing to consider a more popular policy, he wrote him a long letter, advising him how he thought the party should act, and what policy it should adopt, only to find that Grey had no immediate fancy for him as leader, and that neither he nor others of the more conservative Whigs, had much favour for his suggested programme either.

Brougham, like Whitbread, had long believed that the Whig party must make a more positive effort to win popular support. In his view, it must be vigorous and aggressive in attacking the ministry and must take up a programme of

1. A. Aspinall, op. cit. p.50. Whitbread had committed suicide on July 6th, 1815, at the moment when his credit and the credit of others who had opposed the renewal of the war had been at its lowest ebb.
2. ibid. pp.52-3
desirable and popular reforms. It was equally essential that the Whig leaders and the conservative majority in the party be persuaded to accept such a policy, and Reformers be persuaded to support it.

He had, however, long ago recognised the great difficulties of securing the agreement of both sides. On the one hand, the conservative Whigs tended to regard a persistent criticism of ministerial measures as 'ungentlemanly' and were quite unwilling to attempt to make party capital out of the 'scandals' of the royal family. Further, they did not approve of seeking popular support and greatly distrusted the idea of putting forward a definite popular programme.¹ For them such a policy was far too radical. On the other, the Reformers, untroubled by any 'gentlemanly' inhibitions in their politics, were ready to take advantage of every embarrassment of the royal family and the governing classes, Tory and Whig alike. They were little likely to feel a Whig programme was popular or radical enough.

Any man with Brougham's aim, therefore, even the most disinterested, must have been likely to have found it extremely hard to steer a straight course and to avoid

¹. G.M. Trevelyan, _Lord Grey of the Reform Bill_ p.183 n.3; A. Aspinall, op.cit. p.54.
incurring the suspicion of both sides. If his aim were to be achieved, then at one time it might be necessary to side with the conservative Whigs, as a means of bringing pressure to bear on Reformers. At another time, it might be equally necessary to side with Reformers, in order to bring pressure to bear on his own conservative colleagues.

Brougham, however, was the reverse of disinterested. In the course of time, indeed, his political behaviour was to reveal to everyone his supreme egotism, and was to make him one of the most distrusted figures on the political stage. At one moment seeking the approval of the Whig leaders, at another, of the Reformers, at other of both at once, it was far too often apparent that Brougham's prime interest lay in his own personal future. No person could have been less fitted to succeed with the policy of uniting Whigs and Reformers - nor more likely to bring about its failure.

At this time, having been slighted by the Whig aristocracy, Brougham had come to pin his faith on the prospects of building up an alliance of 'left wing' Whigs and Westminster Reformers - an alliance he must have been contemplating since at least 1812.¹ If, for a moment in

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¹ cf. supra, III, p. 83. n. 3.
1815, he had allowed himself to suppose the Whig leaders were coming to show greater interest in his views on policy, he cannot really have been greatly surprised when they did not. The programme he had suggested for the Whig party¹ — that it should undertake an all out campaign for economy, directing especial attention towards the abolition of the income tax; that it should attack ministerial handling of the peace, and take up prison reform, popular education, the commutation of tithes, the slave trade and the freedom of the press as party questions — was a programme designed to win both conservative Whigs and Reformers to its support. Since the former had now shown they were still disposed to hang back, he must rely primarily on the latter. If he could successfully build up a new connection from among his Whig friends and the Westminster Reformers, who would do the real fighting under his leadership, the great popular support it would win must either force the Whig party as a whole to move with him - in which case it would share in his credit, or, if the Whigs did not move, they must face the prospect that Brougham, with his own independent connection, would continue to gain strength at its expense. If, as Aspinall

¹ A. Aspinall, op.cit. p.51
points out, he were to become Burdett's colleague in the representation of Westminster he would become not only one of the most formidable men in parliament, but one of the most popular in the country too. In the circumstances it is understandable why he now approached the Westminster Reformers with definite proposals and made clearer his keenness to secure the second Westminster seat in due course. Whenever the next election should come, the whole country must be watching whilst he expounded his programme.¹

Like Brougham, Place and the Westminster Reformers also, were inclined to view the time as one of opportunity. For the moment the credit of Reformers might be low. But when 'the people' came to realise their burdens had increased, when they came to feel the effects of paying for the occupation of France, and realised that the late campaign against Bonaparte had been undertaken solely to crush liberty abroad and to stifle their own earlier protests, then they would come to see they had been right. Meanwhile, the prospect of an alliance with members of the Whig 'left wing', and a vigorous campaign at the opening of the first post-war parliamentary session, which would seize the attention of the

¹ ibid. p.52.
country, was not without its attractions.¹

Not for a moment had Place or the Westminster Reformers any intention of becoming the instruments through which Brougham or his friends - far less the Whig party - strengthened their position in the country. Not for a moment had they any intention of making concessions to Whiggism. In so far as they encouraged Brougham's plans for an alliance, they did so in the hope and expectation that it would bring him and his friends over to their side.²

As yet, the Westminster Reformers did not know Brougham well enough personally to feel absolutely sure of him. On the other hand they had so far had no good reason to distrust him. A year earlier he had publicly pledged his support for their parliamentary reform programme. His conversion to their cause might well appear sincere enough, and it is not unlikely he had repeated his pledge - if not publicly - thereafter.³ Moreover, there was much to suggest he might well be the ideal leader they had so long looked for, and 'the people' had so long needed. His brilliant talents, his interest in, and understanding of, the scope and need

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1. Place Papers, B.M. Add. MSS. 27809, ff. 13, 26; 35152 f. 158
   Place to J. Mill, Aug. 28th, 1815.
2. ibid. 27, 809, f. 26.
3. cf. supra. id. p. 171. n. 2.
for popular reforms, had so far appeared highly impressive. He was a brilliant speaker in parliament, and, as he had shown in Liverpool, more than able to cope with the Hustings speeches he would have to make in Westminster.\(^1\)

More immediately, the programme he outlined when he came to discuss matters with Place and Mill, had in itself much to commend it. Though, at first, Place objected to a renewed campaign against the income tax, Mill seems to have persuaded him that it was advisable. To the rest - to the campaign for general economy, to the proposals for an attack on the ministerial policy over the peace settlement, and to the pressing of social reform schemes - he seems to have given his unqualified approval.\(^2\)

It is likely to have been the last part of Brougham's programme that attracted Place the most. The ending of the war, which had created enormous social and administrative problems everywhere, was producing chaos in the capital.\(^3\) Crowds of poor and out of work had everywhere flocked to the cities. In London and Westminster, their numbers, already enormously swollen, were becoming so vast that it seemed the

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1. Place Papers, B.M. Add. Ms. 35152, f.158. Place to Mill, Aug. 29th, 1815.
2. ibid.
3. cf. e.g. H. Martineau, A History of the Thirty Years Peace I. ch. IV.
the existing machinery of order was likely to break down completely. The burden of the poor rates increased, and the Vagrancy and Settlement Laws came to be more viciously operated to ease it.¹ In these circumstances, more and more men became increasingly concerned to find the answer to problems, the acuteness of which made clear they could wait little longer for a solution. Already a parliamentary committee to investigate 'Mendicity and Vagrancy' in the capital had been appointed, and Place was keenly interested in assisting its work.² The 'Benthamites' must have been particularly keen too, that Brougham should press for poor law and legal reform, as well as popular education and the other reforms proposed by Brougham. They were certainly eager that he and his friends, Grey Bennet among them, should take up the matter of police reform.³

1. ibid.
Whatever the case, for the moment, in August 1815, an alliance with Brougham and his friends seemed the best policy. At most it would secure the Westminster Reformers valuable parliamentary allies who would press for highly desirable social reforms, which would, if they were carried, help to increase the demand for parliamentary reform as well. If it did not drive the Whig party to action, it would help to destroy its credit in the eyes of the country. At least, as Place must have recognised, it must embarrass the Whig party, and if, at any time, Brougham and his friends did not prove the allies they hoped for, the Westminster Reformers could withdraw their support.

Thus Place urged Brougham to discuss matters with Burdett so that arrangements for a parliamentary campaign could be co-ordinated, and he himself set about helping Brougham to draw together a band of followers who would be briefed by the time the new session opened. As he wrote to Mill on August 29th, 1815:

"... If they (Burdett and Brougham) and Bennet and a few others would pull cordially together and be incessant in attacking the enemy I have no doubt that, in a year or two, a great sensation will be felt all over the country. Circumstances, such as we have a right to expect to see, will command

attention, and if these men take their stations now, and do their duty they will draw the best men and the strongest intellects in the country around them.¹

Brougham, duly returned to parliament for Lord Darlington's borough of Winchelsea before the opening of the new session, in February 1816, nonetheless kept his eyes upon the Westminster seat. Following the Chancellor's announcement of the ministry's intentions to retain the Income Tax, on the first day of the session, Brougham prepared to launch the campaign against it which he and others of the Whigs had been arranging in the previous year. At the same time he prepared to take the lead in denouncing those features of the Peace Settlement and of foreign policy, which were likely to be very unpopular. In the first fortnight of the session Brougham appeared as one of the foremost opponents of the ministry, and there can be little doubt that his actions pleased the Westminster Reformers greatly.

On February 23rd, however, they had reason to be somewhat less pleased. Sometime previously a Westminster meeting had been arranged for that day to give the country a lead in the 'anti-income tax' and 'economy' campaign. Brougham and a number of his Whig friends were to appear as principal speakers to publicise that campaign. It is clear,

¹. ibid. 35152. f.158. ; A. Aspinall, op.cit. p.54.
however, that the occasion was regarded by the Westminster group and by local Whig politicians, as one on which Brougham should be publicly viewed by his prospective constituents.¹

Even before the details of the meeting were fixed, however, it seemed likely there would be trouble for the new 'allies'. At the previous meeting, held to arrange the business of the public meeting, Cartwright had strongly objected to the resolutions it was proposed to bring forward, which thanked Brougham and the Whigs for their efforts to defeat the income tax and expressed gratitude for their co-operation.² Eventually it had been agreed that these resolutions should be proposed, but that he should read his resolutions in favour of parliamentary reform afterwards. On the day itself, trouble indeed came.

It did not come from Cartwright. Brougham and his friends, Bennet, Brand, and Lambton, duly appeared on the Hustings and after they had been introduced, the resolutions Cartwright had objected to were proposed and passed without protest from him. Wishart, a local Whig then spoke and when Cartwright's turn came he made no reference whatever to the presence of the Whigs.³

¹ Place Papers B.M.Add.MS. 27809 ff.13, 28.; Cobbett's Political Register March 2nd, June 1st, 1816.
² Cobbett's Political Register Jan. 3rd, 1818.
³ For a report of the meeting cf. Examiner Feb. 25th, 1816.
It did, however, come from Hunt - who, according to his own story, had not intended to speak.¹ When Cartwright had finished, however, he rose and declaimed against the Whigs with all the vehemence he could muster - charging them with being as much responsible as the Tories for subverting the constitution. The Whigs, who professed to be fighting against pensioners and sinecurists, had among their numbers some of the biggest sinecurists of them all. He wished, he went on, to warn the meeting against that party, some of whom were present - and he indicated Brougham and his friends. "Westminster would not do for these gentlemen". Brougham had made clear on the Liverpool Hustings that he was an enemy of the radical Reformers and of 'the people'.²

As a result, whilst he was still speaking, Brougham and the other Whigs left the meeting without speaking. Burdett's own fiery denunciation of oppression, which followed, may have been made in an effort to divert the attention of the audience, but it may well have served to emphasise the fact that they had certainly never heard Brougham speak in the same vein.³

¹. H. Hunt, Memoirs III. 285 et seq. According to Cobbett (Register Jan. 3rd, 1818) he had made his intention to speak so clear at the previous meeting that the Westminster Committee had tried to silence him.
². Examiner Feb. 25th, 1816.
³. ibid.
Place and his friends were greatly embarrassed. Strongly as they disapproved of Hunt's actions, they disapproved even more the way Brougham and the other Whigs had left him in possession of the field without attempting to make any reply. Shortly after, they were still further embarrassed when Brougham returned to the Commons. Castlereagh taunted him about the fondness his new found friends had shown him. A few days later, Cobbett, in the next 'Register', revealed the whole story, denounced Brougham and the Whigs and, by implication, those who had invited him to the meeting.

Despite Cobbett's veiled 'warning' to them, despite their embarrassment, the Westminster Reformers did not break with Brougham at this time. Brougham was made aware of the damage he had done himself and, as a result, he set himself to win back lost ground in Westminster by taking an even more radical line in parliament. For a time, despite a 'lapse'.

1. Place Papers B.M.Add. MS. 27809, f.13. cf. Examiner, Feb. 25th, for a letter reflecting their views, suggesting Hunt was paid by the Ministry!
2. Cobbett's Political Register March 2nd, 1816. Cobbett himself had recently broken up a Whiggish meeting in Hampshire, cf. Register Feb. 24th, 1816.
when he showed his favour for a £60,000 grant to the Princess Charlotte on March 17th, it seemed he would more than succeed.¹

Early in the morning/March 19th, after a vast number of petitions of protest had been presented, the ministry was defeated in the critical division over the Income Tax. The event, to contemporaries, seemed sensational, and there was widespread conjecture as to the consequences. The Whigs, wild with joy, were convinced their hour had come, and Brougham himself, who had more than anyone been responsible for their victory, became quite unbalanced in his elation. Whilst others recognised the extent of his triumph, he seems for the moment to have believed himself supreme in the country.²

Before he returned to the House, he called upon Place explaining that he had just been to a meeting at Brooks' Club, where he and his friends had discussed the arrangements for a Whig ministry, and that it had been agreed that he should discuss matters with Place as the most influential of the Westminster Reformers. He expected to get hold of a circular Whip sent by Castlereagh the day before, urging the attendance of all ministerial supporters at the Income Tax debate. In the notice, Castlereagh had plainly said that it was not solely a matter of whether or not the present ministers

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1. Which Cobbett did not fail to publicise, cf. Register March 9th, 1816.
2. A. Aspinall, op.cit. pp.59-60
were able to carry on, but whether matters should be handed over entirely to Brougham. He would, therefore, read it in parliament and declare his willingness to take charge of government, reform parliament and change the whole of the present ruinous system!\textsuperscript{1}

Assuming Place's account to be true, it makes evident the great importance which the 'left wing' Whigs attached to the support of the Westminster group at this time. But if Brougham's plan was seriously intended, he certainly did not carry it through, and he may well have been influenced against it by Place. Place, who, not surprisingly, claims to have been astonished, undoubtedly believed the optimism of Brougham and his friends absurd and unrealistic.\textsuperscript{2} There could be no denying Brougham had proved what a tremendously powerful leader he could be, and, despite his earlier misgivings on the sudden abolition of the Income Tax, Place may well have viewed its defeat with some satisfaction. But he still did not trust Brougham completely, and his intense distrust for the Whig party as a whole remained unaltered. Brougham might or might not be planning to turn his victory to his own or to the Whig party's advantage, but, whatever the case, Place and his

\textsuperscript{1} Place Papers B.M. Add. MS. 27850 f.288; also A.Aspinall, \textit{op.cit.} p.61.

\textsuperscript{2} Place Papers B.M. Add. MS. 27809, f.27.
friends had no intention of allowing him to suppose they were satisfied with the defeat of the Income Tax, were now prepared to give him an unqualified support, and would be happy to see the Whigs in office. Brougham must show he recognised his victory over the Income Tax was only a first step towards defeating the 'bouroughmongers' by keeping up the pressure against them. He must prove his sincere concern for 'the people's' interests, if he were to keep the Westminster Reformers' support - and his readiness to talk of office was not the best means of doing so. It was, therefore, of vital importance to see how he followed his victory up.

In the event, the Westminster Reformers were to be delighted. However near Brougham had brought the Whigs to office, he himself now ruined them completely. In an almost frenzied effort to bring the ministry down, he overshot his mark. On the 22nd March, when speaking in a debate on the salaries of the Two Secretaries of the Admiralty, he launched a violent attack on the Prince Regent's personal conduct and character. There can be no doubt that the effect was disastrous. Tory feeling was outraged and Brougham's conservative colleagues scarcely less so. Even his friends

1. cf. e.g. Examiner March 24th, for the attitude of Waithman and his friends at a London Common Hall meeting of March 20th.
were shocked. As a result the ministry won a majority, and though it still remained in a desperately weak position, conservatives and independents prepared to rally to its defence.¹

But nothing could have done more than his speech to win him the confidence of Place and the Westminster Reformers. Place, delighted to see him taking up 'the people's' cause, and believing him to be making an effort to please them and to sacrifice himself, wrote him a long letter condemning those who had deserted him and praising him as a fearless leader (which he later regretted) with the aim of keeping him up to the mark.² Leigh Hunt lauded him in the 'Examiner'.³

Brougham, replying to Place, and thanking him for "his kind and encouraging counsel" made clear the value he continued to set on the Westminster Reformers' favour. In some respects, he suggested, the bad behaviour of his colleagues had been exaggerated but, he added...

"...Be assured of one thing. I shall hold my course firmly, happen what may, and all I expect or work for is, that if I should be deserted in the House of Commons I may at all events be

¹. A. Aspinall, op.cit. pp.62-3
². Place Papers B.M. Add. MS. 37949 f.37. Place to Brougham, March 23rd, 1816 (a substantial part of this letter is quoted by A. Aspinall op.cit. p.65). Also 27809 f.14. In 1829 he could hardly believe he had written it.
supported in the country. This will rally our friends in the House and at any rate will keep our enemies in check."¹

But Brougham was the very last man to hold firmly to a course, and if Place had at last allowed himself to be convinced Brougham was becoming an 'honest' man, he was very speedily disillusioned. Having lost the confidence of many of his parliamentary following, Brougham was now in turn to shatter the trust the Westminster Reformers had begun to place in him, completely.

On April 9th, he made clear he was still anxious to stand well with the aristocrats of his party. Speaking on agricultural distress, and demanding further ministerial economy, he made a special plea for a reduction in the burdens of the landed interest - for the removal of tithes, for a reduction of general taxes and for the lessening of the poor rates. He went on to propound a remodelling of the Poor Law system on Benthamite, or rather Malthusian, lines.²

Though extreme Reformers must have detested his advocacy of Malthusian doctrines, it is little likely the Westminster Reformers found fault with his proposals for Poor Law Reform in themselves. On the other hand, all Reformers equally must have viewed his plea on behalf of the landed classes

¹ B.M. Add/37949 f.38. (quoted by A.Aspinall op.cit. pp.65-6)
² A. Aspinall, op.cit. pp.58-9
with bitter disapproval. Despite his interest in Malthus, Place had not yet come to the view he later held, that poverty was at bottom the outcome of unchecked natural causes. At this time he still believed, with so many of his contemporaries, that the landed aristocracy had, over a long period, deliberately sought to pauperise the mass of 'the people' and were even now trying to keep them in poverty.¹

Brougham's speech must have reminded him and other Reformers that it was not long since he had openly supported the Corn Laws.

On other occasions too, he renewed Reformers' distrust for him. On May 8th, and despite his earlier pledge, he showed distaste for parliamentary reform asserting..."Our constitution was never in a better state than now."² Though there is no other evidence of his making a further pronouncement on the subject until June 18th, when he and a number of his Whig friends expressly dissociated themselves from the radical Reformers, it must have become well known that his distaste was growing in proportion as the demand for it, out of doors, was increasing.³

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1. Place Papers B.M. Add. MS. 27809 f.52.
2. Cobbett's Political Register June 1st.
3. Examiner, June 23rd, 1816. Brougham and a number of his friends did, however, profess themselves anxious for a measure of reform. They were presenting petitions for reform from various places in the country, probably collected by Cartwright.
On May 23rd, he let himself down very badly before his prospective constituents for a second time. Brougham had been invited to the Anniversary Dinner to give him a further opportunity to make his attitude clear. Cobbett, who attended the previous meeting held to discuss the arrangements, found to his disgust that it was intended that Brougham should be toasted after Burdett and Cochrane, with Cartwright last. Cobbett claims he threatened to make a scene, if the toast list was not altered. Brougham, who had accepted the invitation, heard what was going on, and, aware Hunt might attend, asked to be informed if he did so. When Hunt did, in fact, attend, Brougham sent a note apologising for his own absence, owing to the need for his attendance at the House.

As a result, the next issue of the 'Register' brought another attack on Brougham and the Westminster group from Cobbett, who now denounced what he was later to call the 'Westminster Seat Scheme'. In a letter 'To the Electors of Westminster', reminiscent of those written in 1806-7, he spoke of the Westminster leaders as being misguided, and again warned electors their interests were in danger of being sacrificed.

1. Cobbett gives this story in Political Register June 1st, 1816, and Jan. 3rd, 1818; cf. also, account of the dinner Place Papers B.M. Add. Ms. 2784/0 f. 277.
Giving his version of the dinner incident, he damned Brougham as a self-interested lawyer. It would, he said, be disastrous if electors should choose him and equally disastrous for Burdett to have him as a colleague. He went on to tell electors that, in the event of an election, they should choose Cartwright, even if Cochrane were elegible. Cochrane was in many ways admirable but - he pointed out - it was not through serving his country that he had suffered misfortune! It might be said that all 'gentlemen' gambled with the funds. But was that not itself a sufficient reason for rejecting Cochrane? If electors did not have Cartwright ready they might find a ministerial candidate foisted upon them.¹

It was the bad impression created by Brougham's failure to attend the dinner, and the embarrassment it caused them, which, more than anything, seems to have led the Westminster Reformers to break their connection with Brougham and his friends finally. If Place's mind was not made up irrevocably against Brougham at this moment, yet it must have been very soon afterwards that he decided it must be futile to expect him to be the 'leader' he and his friends were looking for, and altogether mistaken to attempt to procure his election for Westminster.² In any case, and quite apart from the

¹ Cobbett's Political Register June 1st, 1816.
unsatisfactory showing Brougham had made, they must have felt the behaviour of Cochrane and the popular favour he was winning would make it impossible to drop him in any circumstances other than his elevation to the Lords. Burning with intense anger at his treatment by the governing classes, Cochrane, who had taken his seat at the close of the 1815 session, was now rapidly becoming a 'champion of the people', even more energetic than Burdett and second only to Hunt in the violence of his language.

Meanwhile, Brougham, still as optimistic at the end of the session as at the beginning that the ministry would soon fall, remained apparently oblivious to the changed attitude of Reformers, convinced he could still rely on their support. Thus during the summer parliamentary recess, he enquired from Grey Bennet the prospects of a dissolution, and Bennet, in turn, immediately wrote to Place in flippant manner asking whether Brougham would still be acceptable as the Westminster Reformers' other candidate. On October 12th, Place replied, with the aim of destroying any illusions he and Brougham might retain on that score, completely.

1. Place Papers B.M.Add.MS. 27809 f.28. Grey Bennet wrote inter alia..."let me know what your great Westminster politics are, as Brougham must be returned and his election for somewhere or other it is necessary to secure."
Recounting at a much later date (1829) what he had then written, Place made clear he told Bennet...

"Burdett must be one of the members and Cochrane the other. I showed how Brougham from his want of courage in some particulars lost ground in the House; I said I regretted that Cochrane should be the member for Westminster and the more so as it is Brougham's own fault that has prevented his being returned from all expense with Burdett...(Place then went on to explain to Bennet how, as a result of dissatisfaction with Cochrane, efforts had been made to replace him in 1812; how subsequently in 1814, a 'fine opening' had appeared for Brougham; and how it had been hoped he would prove the proper person)

"Advances were made to him and some pains were taken to ascertain if he could be relied to maintain the right of the people to annual parliaments and suffrage as extensive as direct taxation. This having been ascertained, yet not in quite so open and satisfactory a manner as it was desirable it should have been, it became necessary that he should be known to electors that they might have an opportunity to decide (upon him) for themselves....It is.... evident that to a body of people who do their own business, the person to be elected must be made familiar; he must see and be seen with them on all proper occasions, he must speak to them.... and.... convince them as well by his actions as his words that he will maintain the principles they espouse and that he has NO RESERVE. Brougham did none of these things; several good opportunities were offered him to mix in a proper manner with the electors; he availed himself of none of them; he stood in a doubtful point of view on account of his being a lawyer.... The electors suppose his object is to obtain the Seals under the Princess (Charlotte) if she should become Queen, and they say they will not be made a stepping stone for him to mount. They say if Brougham is looking to the Court for preferment he has been consistent, but then he ought not to
expect to be taken up by the people."

Long before the next election there was no man among the Whigs more distrusted by the Westminster group than Brougham.

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By the end of the parliamentary session of 1816, the already deep-rooted distrust of the Westminster Reformers for both parties had become even stronger. Angered by the extent of popular distress and believing the governing classes primarily responsible for it, they were to become more embittered by what they believed was their completely self-interested behaviour. The Tories, it seemed, were still bent on retaining power; the Whigs were equally bent on taking their places. Both factions were still equally concerned to secure their own interests, more than ever concerned that 'the people' should be held back - by delusion or force - whilst they continued to pay for their 'natural' rulers' extravagances. Place could not have expressed greater disdain for the parliamentary classes as he viewed them in

1. *ibid.* f.31. A.Aspinall, *op.cit.* p.69. also quotes from this letter.
2. Place Papers B.M.Add.MS.27809 f.52
1816, and it is clear his attitude was shared by many.¹

Detesting both parties, the Reformers nonetheless still reserved their strongest contempt for the Whigs. Whatever hopes they may have had of Brougham personally, or of Brougham’s influence on the Whigs, there can be no doubt that, even before the opening of the session, they had found nothing to encourage their favour for the Whig party. Subsequently the behaviour of the Whigs, with individual exceptions, had been such as to drive the Westminster group and all Reformers even further away from them. The Whig party had continued to show itself disunited on policy and political approach. Brougham had proved even less able than Whitbread to inspire the confidence of his colleagues and Whig disagreement had

¹ ibid. f. 27. Place wrote..."Nothing but an acquaintance with such men, nothing but hearing from their own mouths the loose notions they entertain on almost all subjects, would convince those who only hear of them in connection with public matters how very little they know and how very little these idle persons can be prevailed upon to take the trouble necessary to become acquainted with any important matter of politics and legislation. They are proud, conceited, overbearing; they represent their own money or their patrons, they look towards government as the means of providing for themselves and their relations...They are as different from what a set of men elected by the people and accountable to the people...could possibly be".
been obvious. The attitude of the Whigs, when the ministry was rocking, had made it appear even more strongly that desire for office was the one common bond linking the party together. To conservatives and radicals alike, the prospect of a Whig ministry had continued to seem disastrous, and the triumph which the Whigs had enjoyed, by their defeat of the income tax, had proved shortlived.¹ The independents who had voted with the Whigs in conformity with popular opinion, on March 1, were by no means ready to see them—still less under Brougham's leadership—in ministers' places. At the same moment, Reformers, aware of the disinclination of the Whigs to follow Brougham, even assuming what was still doubtful, that he was to be trusted, were to have their distrust turned into disgust by the way the Whigs behaved when their hopes of coming to office immediately were shattered.

Thereafter, the Whigs did nothing as a party to win back the trust of either conservatives or radicals. On the contrary their vacillating actions— at one moment apparently seeking to woo the favour of conservative elements, at another that of 'the people'—served only to weaken the chances of office still further. Only the Whigs themselves continued to believe that office was just round the corner, and in

¹ ibid. f.26
proportion as their belief appeared more and more absurd, so the Reformers' contempt for them increased. In Place's eyes Whig behaviour at the defeat of the Income Tax had been a "silly display of party vanity". Referring to Whig behaviour during the session as a whole, he wrote...

"the Whigs herded only with themselves, saw nothing beyond their wishes, from which they repeatedly drew conclusions so perfectly absurd that if related as they occurred and stated as simple facts, they would be incredible to those who did not witness them"2

To Cobbett it appeared that to put on a Whig ministry...

"would be like the act of an old woman, who when she turned her shift at the end of the month exclaimed; How pleasant is clean linen!"3.

As the year drew to a close, Reformers' disgust with the Whigs turned to anger. Already, before the close of the session, the Whigs had begun to condemn openly the action and attitude of radical Reformers. The 'Edinburgh Review', in June, had once again proclaimed its belief in the absurdity of the doctrines of Burdett and Cartwright, which would destroy the constitution.4 Once again it had implied that they, and others who acted with them, were revolutionaries deliberately seeking to create a state of deadlock.

But though they now took care to make clear their intense disfavour for the popular agitation among the lower classes

1. ibid. f. 27  
2. ibid.  
3. Cobbett's Political Register Aug. 3rd, 1816.  
4. Edinburgh Review Vol. XXVI. Art. Reviewing Oldfield's 'Representative History' and Jopp's 'Historical Reflections on the Constitution... etc.'
which the 'extremist' Reformers and, they believed, the Westminster Reformers, were encouraging - though they no longer sought cheap popularity, they continued, until the last month of the year, to believe that in the new session, to begin in January 1817, they would be swept into office. Not until the very beginning of the session when it was brought home to them that the ministry was seriously alarmed and was positively exciting a panic in the country, not until they recognised that the 'evidence' of a revolutionary conspiracy - the mass meetings, the violent speeches of Hunt and others, the riots and disorders of the capital, the formation of new popular clubs and the widespread unrest in the country, the plans for a 'convention' - was to be used to justify new ministerial repressive measures, did their optimism finally fade.¹

For the moment, their hopes suddenly blasted completely, the Whigs were in disorder. Whether or not they themselves believed in the 'conspiracy' - and many besides the Grenvilles are likely enough to have done so - whether or not they believed repressive legislation necessary, it seemed quite clear to them they would win no favour with respectable elements if, in their opposition, they appeared to uphold 'revolutionaries'. Thus the Whigs made little effort to

¹ A. Aspinall, op. cit pp.68-71.
disprove the evidence of conspiracy and little more than a token resistance to ministerial proposals of February 1817. Not even the 'left wing' group defended the Reformers. On the contrary they gave vent to their bitterness by joining in the chorus of condemnation for Reformers — blaming them most of all for bringing about their own misfortune. 1

To Place and the Westminster Reformers, whose anger at what they viewed as the almost unbelievably blind self-interest of the Whigs had steadily mounted during 1816, this came as the last straw. Regarding the panic as entirely artificially inspired by the ministry for its own purpose, they believed that, if the 'evidence' on which it based its repressive proposals had been properly displayed and the proposals themselves determinedly opposed, its miserable shifts must have been prevented. That the Whigs should appear so ready to put party interest first, even at this time, that Brougham of all people, who knew Reformers well, should take the lead in condemning them out of 'spite' and 'self interest', appeared more shameful than anything else they had done before. The Grenvilles had long made their true colours clear. The rest of the Whigs too, must now surely stand condemned for ever.

As Place wrote:

"The ministers took what is called a higher tone and pushed their measures to a greater extent

1. ibid. pp. 74-5; cf. infra. pp. 131 et seq.
than, but for the especial countenance of the opposition, they would have done"..."Brougham and his Whig friends should hereafter partake in the shame and abhorrence which the administration of Castlereach, Liverpool, Eldon and Sidmouth cannot fail to have attached to it."1

1. Place Papers B.M.Add.MS.27809 ff.46,50
The Westminster Reformers and the Popular Agitation to the Crisis of the Winter of 1816-17.

The Westminster Reformers' political attitude at this point, may be briefly re-emphasised.

Believing, with all other Reformers, that the aristocracy were responsible for the existing, and, as they saw it, anarchic state of affairs in the country - believing they had undertaken the war solely to prevent the expression of popular feeling at home and abroad, and were even now seeking by delusion and force to make 'the people' pay for it, and for their own continued extravagance - they believed, too, there would be no hope of effecting any major improvements in the situation without parliamentary reform. In 1815-16, anger at the very scale of popular distress came to increase their bitterness against the aristocracy. They became more than ever anxious to see 'the people' enlightened, more than ever anxious to see them encouraged to press for parliamentary reform.

It is clear, however, that 'the people' on whom their interest centred, were primarily men of the 'new' middle classes. In their view it was of prime importance they be enlightened first, since, without their energy and leadership, parliamentary reform would never be secured and the 'common people', in the country at large, would never be properly educated to help themselves. For the miserable lives of the
poor, Place and his friends had the greatest sympathy; but they knew full well how savage they could become and how easily they could be led astray to riot. If they should break into disorder they would not only bring harm to themselves but to the country as a whole. They must, therefore, be set a good example, be educated with care and be taught the importance of self-discipline. They might be encouraged to demand reform, but they must be taught to look to, and respect, middle class leadership, and to behave peaceably.¹

However greatly, therefore, they might sympathise with their sufferings, however much they might blame the governing classes for worsening them, they were bound to view the behaviour of the 'common people' in the summer and autumn of 1816 with the strongest disapproval. Detesting their violence in itself, they were acutely aware of the damage it did to their cause. They were only too conscious that the recurrence of 'Luddite' outrages in the provinces and the considerable unrest in the Capital - over-crowded with poor, unemployed and dissolute - were once more seriously alarming the governing classes, frightening the middle classes, and stifling such interest as the latter had been re-developing in parliamentary reform.

¹. Place Papers B.M. Add. MS. 27809 f. 17.
Already highly suspicious of the activities of the ministerial spies and prepared to believe they were inciting the disorders deliberately, it was in these circumstances that they became even more apprehensive of the consequences of the activities of Cartwright, and much more angry at the behaviour of Cobbett and Hunt. Place wrote:

"The Reformers were active in their endeavours to induce the people to conduct themselves peaceably, and incessantly to petition for reform as the only means by which such relief as was in the power of government to grant could be obtained. They succeeded to a great extent in exciting a spirit of co-operation, which was, however, much damaged by Henry Hunt who had placed himself at the head of the common people."  

But the influence of Cobbett was behind him. He went on:

"Cobbett's Register was in great repute." (Cobbett)..."patronised and puffed Hunt." (and)..."Hunt's head being none of the strongest, Cobbett used it for his own purposes, bedaubed him with perpetual praise, and pushed him into such situations of danger as he himself was not disposed to take." 

In their eyes, the way Cobbett addressed the labouring classes seemed directly calculated to inflame them against all other classes. In the same way, Hunt's inflammatory speeches seemed calculated to inspire mass disorders. At this point it was not so much that the Westminster Reformers feared they would

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1. Place Papers B.M. Add. MS. 27809 f. 17.  
2. ibid. f. 16  
3. ibid. f. 17
bring about revolution. Rather was it that they believed that by encouraging disunity in the country they were playing the ministers' game.¹

Already, at the beginning of the year, the state of the relationship between the Westminster group, and Cartwright, Cobbett and Hunt, was such that an open breach might have come at any time, and on any one of a number of issues.² As has been seen, there were at least two occasions during the first half of the year when such a breach nearly did come - over the Westminster group's alliance with the 'left wing' Whigs, and over the disposal of the second Westminster seat. There were to be other occasions later. But on all these occasions both groups refrained from pressing matters to a point where subsequent public co-operation would have been impossible. Neither, it seems, was prepared to risk damaging their cause by showing the disunity which existed between them, if it could possibly be avoided. The Westminster group must long have hoped it would be possible to restrain the 'extremists', and Cartwright, Cobbett and Hunt must equally have hoped they would be able, by one means or another, to draw the Burdett and the Westminster group after them along the course they

¹ cf. e.g. Examiner, Nov. 24th, 1816. (Leigh Hunt's Leader)
² cf. supra p. 173.
had chosen to follow.

It was not, however, until early 1817 that they finally separated, not until after their apparent agreement and co-operation had helped to persuade the country that they, and the Westminster Reformers, were planning to lead a mass movement of the 'common people'. In the event, the breach was to come, most directly, as a result of the activities of Cartwright.

As is well known, during the course of 1815-16, growing numbers among the provincial workers, coming to be more aware of the futility of direct action, became ready to listen to those who urged them to press for parliamentary reform and to form or join Hampden or Union Clubs of their own. Further, they came to be firmly persuaded that Burdett and the Westminster Reformers, as well as others in the capital, were prepared to lead them to secure it.

As is equally well known, the ministry and large numbers of the country were to become convinced by appearances - by the behaviour of Reformers in London and Westminster, by the re-appearance of popular political clubs, by the movement of Reformers between London and the provinces, and by their activities in the provinces themselves - that plans were being worked out for a revolution which would be centrally directed by the metropolitan Reformers who would give the signal by
launching an attack on the strong points of the capital itself. Suspicions and fears of an 'anti-parliament', roused formerly by the Yorkshire Association and by the Corresponding Society, were roused again in the minds of men who had lived so long amid revolution. Absurd though these fears may now seem, possible though it is to feel that closer investigation of the situation would have gone far to ease, if not to remove, them, there is yet much which makes them understandable.

As it has been seen, Burdett and the Westminster Reformers had been associated with Cartwright in the founding of the London Hampden and Union Clubs some years earlier.\(^1\) Again, at a later date, mainly it seems because they had not been able to refuse, they had been associated with Cartwright again in the launching of the so-called 'Committee of 31' or 'Committee of Public Safety'.\(^2\) Yet, from the moment they had recognised Cartwright's interest in rousing the 'working classes'; from the moment they had recognised the harm he was doing their cause by the suspicion his activities were creating among the middle classes generally, they had ceased to give their active support to the Hampden and Union Clubs. The 'Committee of Public Safety', to safeguard the rights of the Westminster electors, they had never taken seriously.

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1. supra II, p.207 n.1. 
2. supra III, pp.168 et seq.
Thus - and it must be re-emphasised - none of these clubs ever had much more than a nominal existence. Had it not been for the personal interest of Cartwright in keeping them alive for his own purposes, had it not been for his energy, they must, very soon after their foundation, have ceased to have had even this form of existence. As things were they were moribund. Cartwright and his general assistant, Cleary, alone attended and arranged their business.¹

After the middle of 1813 there were no more meetings of the Union Club.² The Hampden Club, supposed to hold dinner meetings twice annually, held other meetings, on Cartwright's summons, of two or three individuals, perhaps, including Cartwright himself, of four! On more than one occasion he found himself alone.³ Burdett, the chairman, rarely, if ever, attended, and though he was prevailed upon to sign circulars which Cartwright wished should appear as if approved by a respectable club meeting, it does not seem he took any interest in the Club at all.⁴ The 'Committee of Public Safety' scarcely, if ever, met after its foundation, though its summons

1. Place Papers B.M. Add. MS. 27809 f.3.
2. cf. Petition of Thomas Cleary (as Secy. London Union Society) to House of Lords, presented, Feb. 21st, 1817.
   Parliamentary Debates XXXV (House of Lords) Feb. 21st, 1817
   cf. also Place Papers, ibid. f.33.
3. Life of Cartwright 11.86,105
on one occasion, referred to below, gave it an entirely unwarranted prominence.

It would, therefore, be totally wrong to suppose that the appearance of new popular 'working class' Hampden and Union Clubs in the provinces after 1815, owed anything to the efforts of London Hampden and Union Clubs - nor to any intentional action of Burdett and the Westminster Reformers who were members of these clubs. On the contrary, the appearance of these new clubs reflected the 'missionary' work of Cartwright almost alone, and his activities may be regarded as having made quite certain the London Clubs would not survive.¹

At no time were the new provincial clubs ever centrally directed or controlled - except in so far as Cartwright's influence exercised personally, or in the name of Burdett and the London Hampden Club, carried weight among their members.

The fact remains that it was very far from obvious that the London Clubs were little more than a 'front' for Cartwright's activities, and very far from clear that the Westminster Reformers were not assisting Cartwright in the business of founding similar clubs in the provinces. At no time did the Westminster Reformers ever attempt to dissociate themselves from the London Clubs; at no time did they ever reveal,

¹ cf. Life of Cartwright 11.95
publicly, any lack of approval for Cartwright's work in the provinces. It would seem they recognised they would have been forced to make explanations, not only in themselves embarrassing, but almost certain to lead to a final breach with Cobbett and Hunt, as well as Cartwright himself, which might well do more harm than if they said and did nothing. Whatever the case, they did nothing and appear largely to have ignored them.

The fact that Burdett signed circulars in the name of the Hampden Club must, in the light of the consequences and Burdett's reaction to them, be considered as most unfortunate. Yet it need not be considered as proof of his interest in the Club, still less of his support for Cartwright's schemes in so far as they involved the rousing of a 'working class' movement. Rather it appears as evidence of his complete lack of close attention to what was going on. It would seem that he signed them with the utmost carelessness, mainly to placate Cartwright who pressed him hard throughout the year to give a bold lead to the country.¹ Had he examined Cartwright's activities more closely, had he appreciated earlier, as he might well have done, the effect that his activities, and the activities of Cobbett and Hunt, were producing among the working

1. On Cartwright's persistent efforts to get him to move in 1816 cf. Cartwright's Address to the Electors of Westminster, Feb. 14th, 1819.
classes, had he understood better the role for which he was being cast, it must seem impossible he would have done so.

Thus, in pressing the agitation for parliamentary reform without making their position and their attitude clear, Burdett and the Westminster Reformers themselves contributed to the development of an illusion which was now to deceive large numbers in the country. When Cartwright, touring the provinces and encouraging groups of workers to form or join Union and Hampden Clubs, spoke of the men in the capital who would be ready to lead them when they should themselves demand parliamentary reform, it must have been impossible not to think of the Westminster Reformers and impossible not to believe they were at one with him in desiring to see these clubs formed. Spies, and the few really dangerous individuals who existed in the capital, may have encouraged the impression that it was revolution rather than a petitioning movement which Reformers in the capital were preparing, but the evidence that they were seeking to rouse the 'common people' was 'obvious' to all to interpret either way - and spies may well themselves have been deluded.¹

In the first place the Westminster Reformers had helped to found both London Clubs, and Burdett, their leader, was still

¹. On the activities of spies at this time cf. F.O. Darvall *op.cit.* ch. XIV.
'obviously' active as chairman of the London Hampden Club. There could be no doubt whatever of the flourishing state of the Hampden Club since 'its' proceedings were published from time to time and 'it' issued circulars widely distributed in the provinces which urged 'the people' to petition for reform, and even provided them with a common printed form of petition to sign. Moreover, it was the 'Hampden Club' which called upon them to send deputies to a meeting in Westminster to decide upon a reform programme. But even assuming what is unlikely - that it became known that the London Union Club never met, and the London Hampden Club met but infrequently and with few in attendance - the impression, or illusion, gaining ground would not have been altered. If the clubs did little business as clubs, the energetic activity of 'their' members as a group was indisputable. In parliament, and outside at Westminster meetings, Burdett and Cochrane, the Westminster Reformers' representatives, repeatedly and violently denounced the system of government and the selfishness of the aristocracy, and repeatedly urged 'the people' to petition ceaselessly for

1. for an example of its published proceedings cf. Place Papers E. M. Add. MS. 27309 f. 150; for references to its circulars and printed petitions cf. ibid. f. 8, 33, 90; Life of Cartwright 11, 104. Printed petitions, of course, helped to convince ministers there was a central organisation. cf. infra, pp. 118-19.
reform. Burdett himself, time and time again, pledged himself to bring forward the subject when 'the people' demanded it. Nothing suggested the Westminster group were not always responsible for the staging of Westminster meetings.¹

In the second place, it was not simply that nothing made clear that the Westminster group distrusted the activities of Cartwright and intensely disapproved the behaviour of Cobbett and Hunt; rather was it that everything suggested they were still very much acting together. Hunt and Cartwright both appeared at Westminster public meetings in company with Burdett and Cochrane.² Both of them, and Cobbett too, repeatedly emphasised the importance of Westminster's leadership. All of them publicly advocated Burdett's 1809 parliamentary reform programme, and upheld him as their leader. All of them urged the country to petition for reform. There was, in fact, nothing whatever to show that when Cartwright spoke he did not speak with the entire approval of the Westminster group, nor that when he left on his provincial tours he did not go as their 'agent'.³ There was nothing to show that Cobbett and Hunt were not seeking to whip up ill feeling towards the governing classes, nothing to show they were not encouraging the formation of

² Hunt was also a member of the Union Club cf. Life of Cartwright. II. Appendix.
³ Since Place helped him arrange a lecture tour in the autumn of 1815 it must have appeared that he was.
clubs, on their behalf. When it is considered that it was at a Westminster meeting, partly organised by Place and his close friends, attended by Burdett, Hunt and Cochrane, and publicised by Cobbett, that deputies or delegates of 'the people' from all over the country were first publicly summoned to meet in Westminster, it may be seen even more clearly why there was no doubt whatever about their close political co-operation.¹

Their 'intentions', therefore, were 'obvious'. However much it is to be regretted, however much their failure to make clear their attitude served to alarm and mislead the great majority of people in the country, yet it cannot be surprising that they were so alarmed and misled. The agitation in the capital was such that all eyes came to be turned towards it. That the Westminster Reformers had little or no direct contact with, or influence upon, the provincial working classes was not appreciated by the governing classes, nor as yet remarked upon by 'the people'. That Cobbett and Hunt, whatever their influence as journalist and orator respectively, were nonetheless acting primarily as individuals, was no better understood. That Cartwright was acting upon his own initiative and without strong backing in encouraging the working classes to form clubs, that, had he not done so, in all probability no one would have urged them to form clubs at all at this time, was no more appreciated. Nor was it recognised
that, without him, many of the Westminster meetings might never have been staged.

The illusion must be conceived as having been in the process of forming over a number of years. Already, as has been noticed, it had served to rouse considerable suspicion in 1812. Not, however, until Cartwright came to intensify his efforts to found provincial clubs and to secure petitions, not until 1815-16, did it come to assume a definite shape.

In December 1814, Cartwright had failed to get more than one or two members to attend a London Hampden Club meeting, but on March 1815 he had succeeded in persuading Burdett, as chairman, to put his signature to a printed form of petition which bodies of people everywhere might adopt. Petition forms, which he and Cleary had distributed all over the country by April, were already being circulated in March, during the agitation against the Corn Bill. Cartwright took advantage of popular readiness to sign petitions against the Corn Bill to distribute 'his' petition for signature as well.

Undeterred by further failures to secure Hampden Club

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1. supra II. pp. 287-8.
2. Place Papers B.M. Add. MS. 27809, f. 8.; Life of Cartwright 11.86.
3. Life of Cartwright 11.104. It was at this very time when his friends were pointing out to him that the Hampden Club was completely useless. ibid. 11.105.
meetings in the spring, Cartwright had nonetheless gone ahead on his own. On the one hand he had begun to press Burdett to bring forward a reform bill in parliament and in May, both at the Westminster meeting of the 6th and at the Anniversary Dinner on the 23rd, Burdett had promised to bring the matter up when 'the people' demanded it. On the other, he had set to, himself, to encourage 'the people' to petition. At the Westminster meeting in June he had himself made a strong plea for petitions for reform, and had urged that all petitions, no matter what their subject, should express the opinion that the House of Commons should represent 'the people' ... "Such constant recurrence to the subject would", he urged, "greatly accelerate the reform we seek." In July, with Napoleon finally defeated, he had set off on a fresh missionary tour of the North of England, and Scotland, and as Place says .. "it was he who gave the tone to many places and revived the dormant desire for reform." In 1816 the fruits of his work began to appear more clearly.

During the autumn and winter of 1815-16, the country came to feel, far more intensely than before, the full effects of post-war economic dislocation and the slump in agriculture,

1. cf. supra, III. pp. 159, 162 n.1.
3. ibid. 27,809 f. 8. Life of Cartwright 11.109
trade and industry, brought considerable hardship to all classes of the community. Landlords and farmers, who had found corn prices rising upon the renewal of the war a few months earlier and who had looked upon the corn laws as a safeguard for the future, now found that a good harvest and the sudden ending of the war brought corn prices tumbling down in a way no protective measure could prevent. Merchants and industrialists, who had, a year before, consoled themselves with the prospect that, once normal conditions were restored, the markets of Europe would be clamouring for British goods, now found they had heavily over-produced and that continental countries had simply not the money to pay for them. For the moment, though divisions were rapidly to re-appear between the agricultural and mercantile/industrial interests over the Corn Law and currency questions, the middle classes united in clamouring for drastic retrenchment.1

1. For general surveys of post-war conditions cf. e.g. H. Martineau, op. cit. Bk. I. Chs. III, IV, V, VII.; E. Halévy, History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century I. Pt. I.1; G.D.H. Cole, Life of William Cobbett ch. XIV; S. Maccoby, op. cit. ch. XVIII. The 'currency question' referred to was the dispute over the return to cash payments by the Bank of England and the attendant problems of inflation and deflation, cf. on this, e.g. E. Halévy op. cit. p. 47. H. Martineau, op. cit. Bk. I. pp. 58-9. As is well known, it was one of Cobbett's pet subjects, and a subject which helped to create a much wider interest in political economy, cf. G. Wallas, op. cit. p. 158.
But though the middle classes generally were badly hit, their suffering was slight in comparison with that of the labouring classes. Vast numbers of agricultural labourers and industrial workers were to find there was now no work for them, or money to pay them. Even those who retained their jobs were to find the cost of living barely within, or beyond, their means. Crowds of men and their families left their homes seeking employment elsewhere. By March, whole parishes were depopulated. Swarming into the towns along with growing numbers of discharged soldiers and sailors they were, as already indicated, to present tremendous social and administrative problems, and to form a restless and potentially violent element.

It was in these circumstances that all Reformers intensified their efforts to win support in the country. In particular the Westminster Reformers were greatly encouraged by the temper of the middle classes generally, to hope that they could at last be persuaded to take the lead in demanding parliamentary reform. Prepared as they were to join with the 'left wing' Whigs in the campaign for the removal of the unpopular income tax, they were determined to make clear that though the ministry might be defeated over the income tax, though it might be forced to reduce or remove other taxes, yet 'the people' could have no possible hope of real prosperity without a complete change in the system of
government.

Thus, at the Westminster meeting of February 23rd, summoned principally to lead the petitioning movement against the income tax, Maclaurin of the Westminster group, and Burdett, both sought to make clear to the ministry and to the country at large that 'the people' had other and far greater grievances. It would be no good simply depriving the 'boroughmongers' of the income tax when they had other vast sources of revenue with which to continue their oppressive policy, and there could be no hope of cutting off these sources, no hope of preventing that oppression, without parliamentary reform.

Burdett, indeed, spoke in extremely radical vein. He had, he said, absented himself from "the room over the way", because he was satisfied he could do no good there. 'The people' must not be deluded that they were represented in parliament. He went on to denounce the corrupt power of the 'boroughmongers'. It was corruption that allowed them to trample upon 'the people' - corruption which allowed 'princely cottages' to be built and large numbers to live in luxury whilst 'the people' suffered ruinous taxation. The

1. For a report of the meeting cf. Examiner February 25th, 1816.
2. The 'princely cottage' was presumably a reference to the Pavilion at Brighton.
income tax and other taxes would pay for the 'standing army', the 'standing army' would be held as necessary to justify high taxation. But it would be used to cow 'the people'. So long as pensions and sinecure offices could be given to placemen, so long as parliament was the tool of ministers, there could be no hope of easing popular burdens and no hope of liberty. Cochrane burning with anger against his 'persecutors' and even now working to secure the impeachment of Ellenborough, who had summed up against him in his trial, made an impassioned speech in similar vein.¹

As indicated above, Cartwright before, Hunt during, and Cobbett after, the meeting, all made clear to the Westminster Reformers their intense disapproval of their association with the Whigs.² But though Hunt's impudent speech greatly angered the Westminster Reformers, he made no effort to blame the Westminster Reformers for their presence.³ Nor did Cobbett, when he reported the meeting, attacked the Whigs and praised Hunt, make any reference to the Westminster group at all.

The action of Cartwright, Cobbett and Hunt may then be regarded as a warning to 'the people', but still more to the

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1. Cochrane's efforts to press charges against Ellenborough are discussed in the Examiner March 10th, 1816.
2. supra, p. 15 et seq.
Westminster Reformers. It need not be surprising, however, that they did not attack Burdett and the Westminster group openly, nor follow their warning up at this point. Burdett was still too valuable a spokesman.

The Whigs who went wild with joy at their success in leading the defeat of the ministry over the income tax, would have done well to reflect upon a Common Hall meeting, likely to have been arranged before the ministry's defeat, but held on 20th March. There, Waithman made quite clear the Westminster Reformers' feelings. Triumph though it might be, it was no time for relaxation. On the contrary, Castlereagh, he pointed out, had, during the previous day's debate, charged the Whigs and their supporters, with being entirely self-interested in opposing a tax which would have fallen on the rich and would have relieved both the agricultural interest and the 'lower orders' of 'the people'. It was, therefore, up to the Whigs to disprove this charge by continuing to prosecute the campaign for economy and by calling for a committee to enquire into all ministerial expenditure, sinecure posts and pensions.

For the first few months of 1816, the Westminster Reformers could continue to view their prospects with some optimism. There could be no doubt that the temper of the

1. For a report of the meeting cf. Examiner March 24th.
middle classes remained strongly hostile to the ministry. Equally it was clear that the middle classes had no greater favour for the Whigs. True the division between the landed and manufacturing interests was beginning to appear more clearly - the former desiring increased protection under the Corn Law and continued currency inflation, the latter desiring the abolition of the Corn Law and anxious to see currency issues reduced and regulated in the interests of financial stability. But, the parliamentary parties, in trying to satisfy both interests, had so far satisfied neither, and it might well seem to Reformers that there was considerable hope of winning numbers of both interests to their cause.

By the late spring, however, circumstances had begun to change and their optimism must have begun to fade. The middle classes came to divide more sharply among themselves on economic issues. The discontent of landlords and farmers diminished as the price of corn began to rise in the expectation of a poor harvest.¹ That of the manufacturers increased as it became even clearer that the continental market for British goods was saturated. More and more, landlords and manufacturers came to regard each other's interests as fundamentally opposed. At the same time their interests in parliamentary reform declined still further.

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¹ E.Halévy, op.cit. p.9.
In the case of the agricultural community, this is partially to be explained by the improvement in their prospects. But the fundamental reason for the 'retreat' of the middle classes was the appearance of riots, disorders and strikes among the labouring classes.

As the position of many farmers had begun to improve, so the position of agricultural labourers and other sections of the labouring population had deteriorated. By May, the price of wheat (52/6d. in January) had risen to 76/4d, and it was still rising. Early in the month, bands of agricultural workers in the eastern counties began a series of violent outbreaks in vain attempt to get the authorities to limit the cost of food. Setting fire to barns and destroying property, they established a reign of terror in certain districts. The governing classes, who had experienced the disorders of large bodies of workmen gathered in the manufacturing areas and who had always viewed them as an unstable element, were much more alarmed at this evidence of the temper among the more scattered, backward and conservative peasantry. In a very short while, however, there began a series of strikes in the industrial and manufacturing northern and midland areas as well. Processions of the unemployed demanding relief were followed by sporadic disorders.¹

¹ On the deteriorating position of the labouring classes cf. ibid. pp.9-10. H. Martineau, op.cit. Bk.1 Ch. IV.
The 'retreat' of the middle classes, however, was by no means complete. Not for some time did the alarm of substantial manufacturing, trading and agricultural elements come to be such that they were prepared, temporarily, to drop their criticism of the ministry in the interests of upholding law and order.

The Westminster Reformers were thus still encouraged to make great efforts to win the support of the middle classes. Indeed, since the evidence suggested the ministry was rapidly ruining the country, it seemed to them necessary to make even greater efforts to bring about their 'enlightenment'. If they could be brought to realise it was the governing aristocracy, the policy they pursued - the system of government itself - which was responsible both for their hardships and for the poverty, misery, ignorance and violence of the common people; if they could be brought to realise that once the 'common people' were properly led, they would behave peaceably - they might yet be won over.¹

The reaction of Cartwright, Cobbett and Hunt, however, was very different. Believing, or in the case of the latter two, having come increasingly to believe, that the labouring

¹ On Place's conviction that the 'common people' would behave perfectly well if properly led, cf. G. Wallas, op. cit. pp.154-5.
classes were entitled to share in government; believing they could not expect any relief from these burdens, or any easing of their difficulties, until they were organised to act for themselves, they looked upon their fresh demonstrations of distress and discontent as offering them their greatest opportunity to rouse them politically.

From this time forward, the breach between the two wings of the Reforming party was to widen rapidly until they finally separated. Convinced the future of the country as a whole depended on the leadership of the middle classes, and convinced, in particular, that the lot of the 'common people' would not improve until the middle classes attained power, the Westminster group desired that the former be calmed in order that the fears of the latter should be removed. The 'extremist' group, however, having long sought to persuade the middle classes to move for reform without success, came to feel it was hopeless to expect them ever to move merely by appealing to them.\(^1\) Too many among the middle classes, it seemed, had come to benefit from, and to develop an interest in preserving the existing system. It was necessary, therefore, to encourage the labouring classes to agitate for reform themselves in order to bring pressure to bear upon them.

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1. Cartwright had clearly come to feel this long ago. G.D.H. Cole, *op. cit.* pp. 199 et seq., would suggest Cobbett only came to feel it at this time.
It was Cartwright, as might be expected, who was first to seek to take advantage of this new opportunity. On the 18th May, he called, via Cleary, a general meeting of the Hampden Club, to which all men who had ever shown any interest in parliamentary reform were invited. He intended the meeting should make arrangements for a grand reform dinner meeting to be held later at the Freemason's Tavern.\(^1\) Impatiently anxious that a strong lead should be given to the country, and keen to take advantage of circumstances which must reveal to everybody the desperate plight in which the country was falling, he was also now more keen than ever that the petitioning movement he had been fostering among the provincial workers should be encouraged by Reformers in the capital. Even according to Cartwright himself, however, his previous meeting was a complete failure.\(^2\) Burdett was in the chair, but only one of those specially invited attended! What approval his plans for the big meeting he planned did receive, cannot be known, but it is evident that Cartwright was still undaunted. Resolutions calling for it were published, signed by Burdett, as if they had been widely

\(^1\) Place Papers, B.M. Add. MS. 27840, f. 281, by a handbill signed by Cleary summoning the meeting.
approved. The meeting itself was fixed for 15th June, and Cartwright meanwhile set about publicising it in various ways.

In particular, there can be little doubt that he regarded the annual Westminster dinner, on May 23rd, as offering him a splendid chance to attract the attention of the country, and it may well be - assuming Cobbett's story to be true - that the Westminster Reformers did seek to put his name at the bottom of the toast list, not solely to give prominence to Brougham but also deliberately to avoid giving the impression they approved the course he was pursuing. It may be that they were trying to make it impossible for Cartwright to advertise his plans at all, since, if he spoke last, he would not be reported. If that is the case, however, they were thwarted by Cobbett, who insisted the toast list be altered. Cartwright spoke early and his speech was widely publicised. He referred to the great number of petitions he had secured, and complained of the way in which the 'boroughmongers' were rejecting printed petitions. He could assure the company, however, that plans were being made by the 'Hampden Club' to bring the subject of reform before the nation on June 15th - the anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta. If 'the people' were true to themselves, if they were firm, they would

1. cf. Cobbett's Political Register, June 1st, 1816. Jan 3rd, 1818.
secure parliamentary reform as peaceably as Magna Carta was secured. ¹

Thus, in the eyes of the public, Burdett and the Westminster group were now clearly associated with Cartwright in planning the meeting of June 15th. Though Cobbett, by revealing the 'Westminster Seat Scheme', was to give them, and 'the people' generally, a further warning, he made no attempt to denounce the Westminster group specifically, and it is evident he, Hunt, and Cartwright too, still hoping to draw them over, were still unwilling to press matters to a breach.

Ministers can scarcely have failed to notice Cartwright's words and may well have become immediately suspicious as to Reformers' intention. But even if they did not notice reports of the Westminster dinner, their suspicions must almost certainly have been roused by the appearance of things after the Freemason's Tavern dinner had been staged. It was not in any sense an imposing meeting. Comparatively few attended and large number of letters expressing refusal or inability to attend were received from Reformers who had been invited.² But the subsequent publicity it received partly through the daily press, and still more through a

². cf. ibid. 27809 f.150. Report of Proceedings etc.
pamphlet recounting the proceedings, published by Cartwright himself - gave it a considerable, if misleading, importance. 1

First, though it was an open meeting, all reports naturally enough recorded that it was summoned by the 'Hampden Club' and this, in itself, must have attracted considerable attention. Second, in Cartwright's pamphlet, prominence was given to his address calling upon 'the people' everywhere to make a special exertion to secure reform, and to the speeches of Burdett and Cochrane. Burdett's speech, which echoed Cartwright's appeal for a special exertion by 'the people', took the form of a tirade against the blind self-interest of landlords, who had, he claimed, the greatest stake in the country, and who should, therefore, have been foremost in leading the demand for reform. Third, and perhaps most eye-catching of all, equal prominence was given in the pamphlet to a speech by Gale Jones, re-appearing for a moment from the wings of the political stage. If, he urged, 'the people' were to respond to the appeal made to them by Cartwright and Burdett, then it was necessary they should be organised. He recommended, therefore, that there should be formed "an association for reform in every village," that there should be "corresponding committees" and a

1. For Cartwright's responsibility for its publication cf. Life of Cartwright 11.125.
"central committee" to which all communications on the subject of reform should be sent.¹

Whether or not Cartwright was behind Gale Jones' speech - and it may be he wanted to test the official reaction to proposals for the re-formation of corresponding committees - there can be no doubt that he wanted the proposal for their formation to be widely publicised. Further, whether or not Cartwright deliberately arranged his pamphlet to produce this effect, it cannot but have seemed to those reading it that he and Westminsters' representatives were equally interested in patronizing and launching the scheme. Burdett, it is likely, was really seeking in an indirect way to persuade the men of property of the error of their ways. But his speech in the context of the pamphlet, when followed by that of Gale Jones, could only suggest he was strongly hostile to them. Cochrane's attitude, in view of his subsequent actions, referred to below, is indeterminate.² But whatever their attitude, it cannot be surprising if the proposals for a new association, especially when put forward by the notorious ex-Corresponding Society member, Gale Jones, excited very considerable suspicion, and

2. cf. infra. pp. 87-8.
if that suspicion, once aroused, bred further suspicion. It might seem that the London Hampden and/or Union Clubs were to provide the "central committee", and the clubs in the country its "corresponding committees", and Gale Jones and Cartwright must have had some such intention in mind. In the circumstances, when Cartwright and Cleary both set off on tour after the end of the parliamentary session, the former to the Midlands and the North and the latter to Wales, it is likely their activities were much more closely watched. According to Place .."Lectures were delivered on parliamentary reform in various places. Meetings were held and petitions to parliament prepared." Because the Union Club had so far declined, Cartwright used the Hampden club..."but the Union, as far as was possible was made use of."

Though it may be that Cartwright had already been toying with the idea for some time, it seems likely that it was during the next few summer months that the scheme, which he later made public in September, was discussed with Cobbett and Hunt and took more concrete shape. Cartwright's scheme was to summon deputies from 'petitioning bodies' - Hampden and Union Clubs all over the country - to meet at the opening of the new session of parliament. They would then discuss and agree

1. Place Papers B.M.Add. MS. 27809. f. 33.
upon the heads of a reform bill which Cartwright would draw up and Burdett would then introduce in the Commons. Burdett should be supported, and parliament appropriately impressed, by the presentation of a vast number of petitions for reform which Cartwright had collected or would collect, and which the deputies would bring with them.¹

Not until September was the scheme publicised, and it may well be that it was kept substantially a secret from the majority of other Reformers until then.² At the same time there are reasons for thinking that preparations to launch it were already being made in August, and by Cobbett and Hunt as well as Cartwright.³

In the first place, increased pressure was put on Burdett by both Cartwright and Cobbett to persuade him to introduce a reform bill in parliament when the next session began. According to Cartwright later, Burdett had said earlier in 1816 that he felt the need of having a reform bill ready to produce at the right moment, since it was objected to him that he had no plan.⁴ It does not seem, however, that he made

¹ ibid.
² cf. infra. p. 82.
³ Place says that the scheme was evolved by "the Mayor in conjunction with Cobbett and Hunt", Add. MS. 27809 f. 33. Cobbett had agreed to attend the Freemason's Tavern dinner in June as a Steward, cf. ibid. 27840, f. 282 for his letter.
⁴ cf. Cartwright's Address to the Electors of Westminster, 4th Feb., 1819.
any effort to produce such a plan himself, and Cartwright and Cobbett became increasingly impatient. Cartwright's method of encouraging him was to set about drawing up a bill himself for Burdett's use - the heads of which he designed to conform to Burdett's own opinions.\(^1\) Cobbett was more forthright. In the 'Register' of August 10th, he told him flatly that unless those with weight and character got together and concerted measures for reform quickly it would be too late. 'The people' would rise in disorder, "animated by the calls of hunger" rather than by the principles of liberty. Burdett must, therefore, take the lead by making a reform motion in parliament when the next session began.\(^2\) In the second place, 'the people' were more vigorously urged to petition. At a Common Hall meeting, on August 21st, Hunt called upon every County, City, Town and Parish in the country to "assemble" and to "co-operate" in securing measures for reform.\(^3\)

That Place knew anything about the plan in advance of its launching is unlikely.\(^4\) From the moment he did know about it he regarded it as a "silly plan", likely to do more harm than good. "The Major", he wrote, "had no doubt whatever the

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1. ibid.
2. Cobbett's Political Register Aug. 3rd, 1817.
4. cf. infra, p. 88 n. 2
plan would amaze the whole world, oust the ministers, and produce an immediate reform in the House of Commons. He even named the precise date. Recalling that it was unlikely that the scheme would be supported other than by Cartwright's 'working class' clubs, it seems he regarded it, at best, as certain to delude the common people, at worst as dangerous, bound to alarm the ministry and as likely as not to bring repression. But though, in retrospect, it may seem there was never the slightest chance he would favour the scheme, yet, at this time, his attitude may well have encouraged Cartwright, Cobbett and Hunt to think he and his friends could be persuaded to co-operate. In the last few days of July, it was Place who had been behind the sensational outburst by Cochrane against the governing classes and their pretended philanthropy towards 'the people'.

As distress among the 'common people' had worsened, so ill-feeling towards the aristocracy and the well-to-do had greatly increased. Aristocratic efforts to help 'the people', by raising charity subscriptions, had caused particular bitterness among Reformers. The attitude of the ministry and of conservatives generally is understandable. Believing that popular distress was caused by the 'transition from war to peace' they believed that hard times would soon pass away of

1. Place Papers B.M.Add.MS. 27809. f.33.
2. Ibid. f.15.
their own accord. Meanwhile, order must be kept, and to that end an effort to ease the worst sufferings of 'the people' must be made. Since the normal machinery of poor relief was inadequate, a special effort to raise money for distribution among the 'common people' was necessary.

To Reformers, however, who regarded the high taxation imposed by the 'boroughmongers' as responsible for popular sufferings, the sight of soup being doled out to the poor by the wealthy was infuriating. In their eyes it seemed that large numbers of men, stock jobbers, fund-holders, sinecurists, landlords among them, who were still either prospering or hoping to prosper under the existing 'system', were now united with the aristocracy in seeking to keep 'the people' quiet. Their bitterness was increased by what appeared to be the beggarly sums given to charity by one of the wealthiest and noblest in the country. As Place wrote:

"By an unvaried and unqualified support of all the violent measures of ministers"..."they"(the ruling classes)"have reduced the men of the nation to a state of poverty, of dependence, of starvation; until, alarmed for themselves, they have established soup kettles to dole out broth in scanty portions to the industrious people who, but for their conduct, would have been living as became men - independent men - on their own earnings."2

1. Cobbett had a great deal to say on this subject cf. e.g. 'Political Register' Aug. 3rd, Sept. 14th, 1816.
2. Place Papers B.M. Add. MS. 27809 f. 52. An extract from his Address advertising the first number of Hone's Register in Jan., 1817.
In reaction, they determined to make clear to 'the people' that it was not the transition from war to peace that was responsible for their sufferings, but the 'self-interest' of the governing classes. Middle class desire for economy and relief from high taxation was still such that, on this issue, many were prepared to pay heed to the views of Reformers. When, therefore, the Society for the Relief of the Manufacturing and Labouring Poor - an aristocrat sponsored body, founded originally in 1812 - arranged a meeting to raise funds at the City of London Tavern in July, a meeting which would be attended by the Royal Dukes, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Vansittart the Chancellor, Place saw a great chance of securing publicity for the Reformers' views. Recognising Cochrane's bitter feelings - he had failed to press the charges against Ellenhborough and was still awaiting trial for escaping from prison - he planned with him that he should go to the meeting and denounce the 'charity-givers', at a time when all eyes would be focused on the proceedings.¹

Thus, at the meeting, when the Duke of Kent from the chair proposed the first resolution - that the existing distress was the 'effect of a transition from war to peace' - Cochrane rose,

1. _ibid._ f.15.
and called it a "gross fallacy". There was an immediate uproar. Cochrane, refusing to be shouted down, repeated it was a "fallacy". In a violent speech, he reasserted it was taxation and profligate expenditure that was ruining the country - the taxation, which was voted and shared by corrupt placemen and spent on a vast military establishment. Charity was no answer whatever. He moved, as an amendment to the resolution, that the national debt, the large military establishment and the profuse expenditure of public money should be set as the real cause of popular distress.

There was considerable confusion until the Duke of Kent altered the resolution so that no cause of distress was specified. Cochrane then spoke again. He trusted that...

"all who were present and were also holders of sinecures had it in their intention to sacrifice them to their liberality and justice, and that they did not come here to aid the distress of the country by paying half a crown per cent out of the hundreds which they took from it." And he pointedly indicated the £9000 per annum income of the Duke of Rutland. Shortly afterwards the meeting broke up in disorder.

The meeting and Cochrane's speech attracted widespread

1. For an account of the meeting cf. e.g. Examiner Aug. 4th, 1816. Cobbett's Political Register Aug 3rd, 1816.
2. Ibid.
attention. Place himself was delighted and believed its effect on the public considerable. He wrote:

"The cajolery of the Great was so ably capered by Lord Cochrane (who so far as his conduct went acted under my direction), the meanness of the Royal and noble party was made so conspicuous, that an immense effect was produced".

But it was not only the attention of 'the public' that Cochrane's behaviour attracted. Almost certainly, it determined ministers to go ahead with his prosecution for escaping from prison in 1815. Almost certainly, too, it persuaded Cartwright, Cobbett and Hunt that they would be more likely to persuade him than Burdett to co-operate with them. Cobbett, who, in June, had been no more than lukewarm when speaking of Cochrane, now began to praise him lavishly and asserted, when reporting the meeting, that it had attracted more attention than the whole of the recent session of parliament. A little later Hunt followed Cochrane's lead and spoke in identical vein at the Common Hall meeting of August 21st, mentioned above.

In the course of the next five weeks, there can be no doubt that Cochrane was approached by Cartwright, or someone acting for him, and that arrangements for launching Cartwright's scheme were discussed with him.

1. Place Papers B.M.Add.MS.27809 f.15.
2. For his trial at Guildford cf. Examiner Aug. 25th.
3. Cobbett's Political Register Aug. 24th,1816.
More immediately, since Place's bitter attitude and his influence behind Cochrane must have become known to them, it is not difficult to see why the 'extremists' may have supposed he and his friends would also be more willing to co-operate with them. It could seem that, now they had been let down by Brougham, they had come to be ready to pursue an altogether more radical course. When, towards the end of August, Place himself, as well as some of his friends, showed an unexpected interest in the staging of yet another Westminster meeting, projected by Cartwright, they may have been further encouraged to suppose this.

Cartwright, it appears, was anxious for the meeting, but was himself too unwell to undertake the arrangements. He had, therefore, arranged for Cleary to summon a meeting of the 'Committee of Public Safety' at the Crown and Anchor. Though it had "never done anything since its formation", Cartwright, wrote Place, now though it likely "to promote his views respecting parliamentary reform". Place decided to attend but prepared some resolutions of his own to use if necessary.1

The meeting, 'paragraphed' in the Sunday papers, and held at the Crown and Anchor, on August 30th, was well attended. But nothing had been prepared in advance. Of those who had been

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1. Place Papers B.M. Add. MS. 27809. f.18.
nominated to the 'Committee' only two - Brooks and Adams - were present, and Adams was "obliged to take the chair". A long letter from Cartwright having been received, it was opened by Place and read by him to the meeting. The letter, however, containing long resolutions, according to Place, "prosy" and "irrelevant", was coldly received, and a motion was made to refer them to a sub-committee to be set up to prepare the business for the public meeting. Place, therefore, proposed that he should read the resolutions he had himself prepared - which were short and pointed. On receiving the approval of the meeting he did so.¹

His resolutions asserted, inter alia, that the knowledge, talent, industry and moral conduct of 'the people' ought to have secured their full recognition; that all those invaluable characteristics had been perverted by a corrupt House of Commons, which did not represent them; that the conduct of the Commons had inflicted evils on other nations whilst its corrupt methods had exhausted 'the people' at home. There was only one remedy - a real, not a sham, representation of 'the people' in the Commons. Unless 'the people' did their duty, they might have to reproach themselves "with not having

¹ ibid.
prevented a violent revolution" or a military despotism. It was necessary, therefore, to avert these evils that 'the people' should meet in every County, City, City Town, Village and Parish and insist on radical reform. Place's resolutions, received according to himself with applause, were subsequently adopted.¹

Place, burning with anger at the behaviour of the governing classes, was also angry at the way the middle classes were hanging back. As he wrote to Mill when recounting the details of the meeting:

"Where are now the men of Rank and Talent? How is it that none of them appear anywhere to promote parliamentary reform? Are they extinct, are they frightened, do they think that hiding their heads in the hedge will hide the condition of the country from those who fail it? Be this as it may, we see none of these persons now."²

It was then, in these circumstances, that Hunt possibly, even probably, acting on behalf of Cartwright or Cobbett or both, came two days later on September 2nd to see Place and made what must appear an effort to restore a good working relationship with the Westminster group.³

Hunt, according to Place, took some two hours to make

1. ibid. Place quotes his resolutions in full.
2. ibid. Place to Mill. Aug. 30th, 1816.
3. The meeting is referred to by G. Wallas, op. cit. p. 119.
clear all the reasons for his visit, and Place and he seem to have discussed policy widely and generally. Though all the topics raised cannot be known, it does seem clear that Hunt brought up the matter of the disposal of the second Westminster seat, and tried to get Place to agree it had been a mistake to attempt to foist Brougham on Westminster. It also seems clear he was anxious that all differences between them should be ended.

Whatever they talked about, the interview did nothing to improve relations between them or between their respective groups. Place is likely to have urged Hunt that he must restrain himself in the interests of promoting unity amongst Reformers, but it does not seem he made any greater impression on Hunt, than Hunt on him.

Writing to Mill and describing Hunt as a "pretty sample of ignorant, turbulent mischief making fellow, a highly dangerous one in turbulent times" he said he had told Hunt that:

"it was miserable to see the avidity with which they"(he and his political friends)"sought to cut each others' throats, and that it would require nothing more in days of turbulence when they should arise, than for those who hated the people to stimulate them to destroy one another, which would be as easy as putting yeast to the dough to make it rise."  

According to Place, Hunt apparently indignant, had urged in reply that:

"his mode of acting is to dash at good points and to care for no one, that he will act by himself; that he does not intend to affront anyone, but cares not who he offends."¹

Whether or not Hunt had spoken of the proposed deputy meeting - and it must be uncertain - he must have now known that there could be no hope of securing Place's backing for the scheme. Place was willing enough to see all classes urged to demand reform. He was not willing to see the working classes alone roused, only to be deluded, when, however much they might be condemned, the middle classes as a whole still hung back. It was perhaps partly in consequence of this meeting, that matters seem to have been arranged thereafter so that Place and the Westminster Reformers, and perhaps Burdett as well, could not make objections.

The Westminster public meeting - arranged for September 11th, was an extremely large meeting. Cobbett suggested that as many as 30,000 attended.² Peter Walker apologised for

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1. ibid.
2. Cobbett's Political Register Sept. 21st 1816. cf. also Examiner Sept. 15th 1816. for accounts of the meeting.
Cartwright's absence, and Rev. Mr. Sparkes, who was deputising for him, then addressed the meeting. He reminded the audience of how often the voice of Westminster had warned the country, and how it had been neglected. He then introduced the first resolution. Hunt made a long and fiery speech before introducing the second. Walker then put the rest. The resolutions were substantially those drawn up by Place. The 'borough' faction were denounced as responsible for the existing distress and 'the people' were called upon to assemble and co-operate cordially in the measures adopted by the Cities of London and Westminster "in firmly and perseveringly" claiming their rights by petitioning. Cleary then read a petition founded on them and Burdett, promising to present it to the Regent, made a customary and strong plea for reform, and praised Cochrane's speech at the earlier London Tavern meeting.

So far things had gone much as Place and the majority of others must have expected. Cochrane, whose turn to speak it now was, however exploded a bombshell. He had not, he said, been aware of the resolutions, which the committee organising the meeting had intended should be submitted to it. He approved of them and approved the intention to petition the Regent. But he believed that it would be of no use if nothing more effectual were done than sending a few skins of parchment to parliament, which could be read by the clerk and cast aside.
He proposed, therefore, two additional resolutions - first...

(summary only)

that every "represented and misrepresented" city and town in the United Kingdom ought to prepare remonstrances against the present corrupt system, prior to the first day of the next session; that two or more deputies should be appointed to convey such remonstrances to the door of the House; that they should, in turn, be simultaneously presented by one or more M.P.s in order that the deputies might report back to their constituents as to the manner in which the House received them.

second...

that this meeting should adjourn till the first day of the next session of parliament.¹

In view of Cartwright's known authorship of the scheme it must seem virtually certain that it was he - possibly after discussion with Hunt and/or Cobbett - who had persuaded Cochrane to launch it at the meeting. If the intention to launch it was known by any of those present at the pre-meeting of August 30th, it was certainly not raised, and it may be quite certain that Place and his friends did not then know about it.² It is possible Burdett had refused to call for deputies at this point though knew Cochrane intended to do so. It is also possible that the decision to launch the scheme was a snap decision.

There is indeed room for considerable speculation on the precise

¹ Summarized from Cobbett's Political Register Aug. 25th, 1817.
² E. Halévy, op. cit. 1.13, assumes Place and his friends shared the responsibility for launching the scheme. If it had been brought up at the pre-meeting it is most unlikely that Place who was at pains to emphasise how silly he thought the scheme would not have spoken of it when he wrote of these events much later. If he had had anything to conceal he would scarcely have been so ready to direct attention to the leading part he played in the pre-meeting.
circumstances in which the scheme was brought forward. It seems likely, however, that whoever knew about it, Cochrane had been approached separately and the decision to announce the plan and Cochrane's agreement were left secret, so none should be able to upset matters and prevent Cartwright obtaining the maximum publicity possible for the scheme.

Whatever the case, it was thus a Westminster meeting, not the Hampden Club, which made the first call to the provinces, and this meeting was apparently organised by a 'Committee of Public Safety' whose members included prominent Westminster Reformers. But if any doubt remained that the Westminster Reformers, the 'Committee of Public Safety' and the Hampden Club were 'one' body, it must have been entirely removed early in November when a circular letter was distributed, bearing the name of the Hampden Club and signed by Burdett, calling for a meeting of deputies at the opening of the new session to discuss the heads of a bill for Reform. Whatever his feelings earlier, Cartwright seems finally to have persuaded Burdett to lend his name to the scheme, which he did - it can only appear - with extreme carelessness and lack of foresight.

1. cf. Cobbett's Political Register April 11th, 1818, It appears to have been issued in late September. It had a facsimile of Burdett's signature on it.
Cobbett represented later that he and Hunt had protested against the scheme from the start as likely to bring ministerial repression. But whilst it is not impossible they may have offered such objections when it was first discussed, it must seem quite impossible to accept that they did not help to push it subsequently. Quite apart from Place's assertion that Cartwright evolved the scheme in conjunction with them, there is the evidence of their own actions. It was after the scheme had been produced, and in full awareness of Cartwright's activities among the labouring classes, that they began to direct their attentions to them almost exclusively. If they did not openly publicise it, yet knowing of Cartwright's specific efforts to arrange the deputy meeting, it can only seem they did everything to keep the scheme alive in the minds of the public.

Thus, Hunt, addressing meetings in London, repeatedly called upon 'the people' everywhere to assemble in their home areas to concert measures for reform and to petition. He certainly had no objection to his being 'elected' as the 'deputy' for Bristol, and he was to play a leading part in the deputy meeting itself. Cobbett, for his part, reporting the

1. cf. ibid. and Dec. 20th, 1817.
September meeting, certainly made no adverse comment on Cochrane's additional proposals. Moreover, after five more issues, four of which focussed attention on Burdett and put forward Cobbett's views on the reform measures he (and by implication 'the people') should press for, and one of which gave advice to the 'Reformers in general', Cobbett directed the 'Register' specifically towards the labouring classes. It is further significant that he was pressed to do so by Cochrane, and it must seem virtually certain, by Cartwright too. On November 2nd, as is well known, Cobbett printed a special cheap edition of the 'Register' in pamphlet form which, since it excluded all news matter, could be sold without stamp duty for 2d., and addressed the 'Journeymen and Labourers' of the country. On November 16th, he announced his intention to continue publication of the 'Register' in two forms "until the meeting of parliament or....until reform shall have actually taken place."

Cobbett did not openly advocate the formation of Hampden

1. Cobbett's Political Register Sept. 21st. 1816
4. ibid. Nov. 16th, 1816.
and Union Clubs. But he constantly urged the labouring classes to maintain good order, to meet together to discuss matters and to petition for reform. Moreover he made clear he believed in Cartwright's views on Universal Suffrage. It is impossible to believe he did not foresee that his advice, so far as it was accepted, was bound to encourage men to form and join Cartwright's clubs, and impossible to think that he did not, at least at this time, welcome the fact that from the autumn onwards these clubs multiplied rapidly.

Thus, at the very time when political interest among the labouring classes was developing most rapidly, at the very time when three of the leading Reformers came to devote their attention to them and to make even greater efforts to rouse them, Burdett and the Westminster Reformers stood apparently committed to lead them. If ministers had been suspicious before, they must now rapidly have become seriously alarmed. By this time it must have seemed beyond all doubt that a central directing agency in the capital was not only seeking to spread disaffection among the 'common people' in the country at large, but was making definite arrangements to organise them as a political body with a specific plan of

1. cf. ibid. Dec. 20th, 1818. Cobbett claimed he was always against the Hampden Clubs - after steps had been taken to suppress them.
2. ibid. Nov. 23rd, 1816.
action in view. It might well seem an attempt was to be made to coerce parliament into submission as soon as it reassembled. As matters developed in the closing months of the year, it must have appeared even more likely that — whatever form it might take — a demonstration in the capital would be staged as a signal to the provinces that the moment for action had come.

Yet appearances could scarcely have been more deceptive, nor the impression gaining ground more misleading. Whatever part they played in ensuring Cartwright's scheme was followed up, not even Hunt nor Cobbett made any effort to form a closely knit 'association', whilst the direct influence of Burdett and the Westminster group among the provincial workers was negligible. Further, not only was there no central directing agency, but Reformers in the capital were completely divided and by November, Burdett and the Westminster Reformers, and Cobbett and Hunt, were on the point of breaking openly.¹ Not until too late did the working men, forming their clubs in many parts of the country, come to realise there was no body of men in the capital waiting to lead them. Not until very much later, if at all, did the ministry come to recognise that no central agency to co-ordinate and direct their activities

had ever existed.

As fresh disorders broke out in the provinces, as the situation in the capital itself, where the great crowds of unemployed had become even denser began to appear more explosive, so the governing classes became ever increasingly alarmed by the activities of Reformers and in particular by the attitude and behaviour of Cobbett and Hunt. The middle classes too, though refusing to be alarmed in the way the ministerial press suggested they should be, were nonetheless apprehensive and uneasy at their demagoguery. Even those who might accept their motives were disinterested - and they can have been few - regarded their object as highly dangerous.

As Harriet Martineau wrote:

"Their object was suddenly to raise up the great masses of the labourers and mechanics into active politicians, to render the most inflammable and uncontrollable materials of our social system the most preponderating - hitherto as powerless alone as the 'commonalty' of Bacon, without the leading of the greater sort."2

To the great majority, however, whatever Cobbett might say to the labouring classes about maintaining good order, it must have seemed their aim was to drive them into rebellion and that, in view of the extent of popular unemployment and misery,

1. E. Halévy, op.cit. p.16.
they might well succeed in doing so. Even if they did not, they would surely inspire others to try. ¹

Recognising the signs of middle class alarm, only too aware themselves of the dangers if the large crowds in the capital should be inflamed by Hunt, the metropolitan Reformers now began to exercise greater care in staging meetings, and to seek to put the brake on his activities. Even in October the City of London Reformers, at a Common Hall meeting, had shown their intense disapproval of his firebrand tactics, and Leigh Hunt, in the 'Examiner' began again to warn 'the people' against his namesake.²

But matters had already gone too far. Had they made public their disapproval for Hunt and other 'extremists' earlier, it is possible their influence would have sufficed to force them to act with greater circumspection. Had they made their own attitude clearer, it is possible excitement among the 'common people', at least in the capital itself, would not have been so great. It is possible, too, that they would not have encouraged men, far more violent and extreme than Hunt, to suppose they would lead or support them. As things were, matters were not only passing beyond their control, but beyond the control of Hunt, Cobbett and Cartwright as well.

¹ ibid.
² E. Halévy, op. cit. p.16; Examiner Oct. 13th, 1816.
It is well known that the few really violent men who did exist in the capital and who had attached themselves to the insignificant communistic Spencean Club, among them Thistlewood, Preston and the two Watsons, did have plans of their own for revolution. Pitiful though these may seem, it appears they hoped to rouse and direct the masses of unemployed in the metropolis to seize certain buildings in the capital, to overturn the government and to set up a provisional committee of public safety which would include Burdett, Cochrane, Brooks, Cartwright, Gale Jones, Hunt, Thos. Hardy and Fawkes. The inflammatory tone of Hunt seems to have suggested to them he would be the most likely and useful man to co-operate with them, and, as a result, they wrote to him asking him to be the principal speaker at a meeting of the distressed of London and Westminster.

Hunt, so he claimed later, finding it was intended the whole meeting should be directed to move en masse to Carlton House, refused to have anything to do with so revolutionary a design, and insisted, if he were to speak, that a petition of his own should be produced. This was apparently accepted and

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Hunt then agreed to attend. The meeting had by this time been fixed for November 15th.

In the event, though a tricolour flag and caps of liberty were carried on pikes, though Hunt's speech was made with his customary violence, the meeting passed off, relatively speaking, peacefully. Arrangements were made to adjourn and to re-assemble it on the first day of the parliamentary session — which was thought likely to be December 2nd — by which time the Regent's answer to the petition would be known. Hunt was called upon to join with Burdett in presenting the petition to the Regent.¹

But, if the meeting had not led to revolution, it certainly helped to convince the ministry that revolution was intended. Sidmouth, the Home Secretary, knew something, at least, of the intentions of the organisers of the meeting, and even though no move was made to Carlton House, the reference to the assembly of parliament was ominous enough.² Further, it greatly increased the alarm of Burdett and the metropolitan Reformers. Whether or not Burdett knew of the intentions of its organisers or knew of the role he was being cast for by them, he determined at this point to have nothing more to do with Hunt and to do

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¹ cf. Account in Cobbett's Political Register Nov. 23rd.
nothing which would make it appear he was encouraging him in the course he was pursuing. Thus, when Hunt wrote asking him to present the petition, he wrote back saying that though he had no knowledge of its contents, he was quite determined he would "...not be made a catspaw of..." and would "...not insult the Prince Regent...".

The long process which was to lead to the final separation of Hunt, Cobbett and Cartwright from the Westminster group was entering its final phase. Hunt, according to his own and Cobbett's story, had already long been highly suspicious of Burdett's intentions and when he received Burdett's curt refusal to present the petition he was so angered that he was for breaking with him at once. According to Cobbett he (Hunt) urged him they must either quit Burdett or 'the people'. When Cobbett in turn (again according to Cobbett) told him it was necessary to continue to support him to avoid confusion, and that matters had now proceeded too far to be ruined by a sudden break, Hunt is held to have urged that if a break had to come, it would be better to come before the Reformers in the country were 'betrayed'.

1. It is not impossible, of course, that he did know he and Reformers were being spoken of by the Spa Fields plotters as a potential member of a provisional government.  
2. M.W. Patterson, op. cit. II, 1415.  
Whether or not Cobbett's version of the reason that they did not break with Burdett at this time is correct - and it seems likely enough - it cannot be denied that it is a great pity Hunt's impatient counsel did not prevail. Even at this stage the break must have prevented the deputy meeting taking place, and even though the ministry's fears would certainly not have been removed immediately, it must have helped to make it clear - to the ministry, and to the provincial labouring classes equally - that the majority of Reformers had no interest in encouraging a 'working class' political movement for any purpose whatever. As things were, though Burdett and the Westminster and London Reformers now showed their intense disapproval of all action likely to inflame the 'common people' Cobbett and Hunt made no public attack on them.

Thus, it was almost certainly because they feared the consequences, that the Westminster Reformers strongly opposed the holding of an outdoor public meeting to protest against the further 'persecution' of Cochrane. Cochrane, having been fined £100 for his escape from prison in 1815, had refused to pay, and had now, on November 21st, been re-committed to prison. It was now suggested his fine should be paid by public subscription - to which each person would contribute no more than a penny - which should be launched at a public meeting. Despite the efforts of Cartwright's group and apparently
Cobbett and Hunt as well, to secure agreement to the staging of a meeting in Palace Yard, the opposition of Burdett and, inter alia, Sturch, who made clear he had no sympathy for Cochrane anyway, was such that, on 27th November, a dinner meeting was agreed to instead. 1

Thus, too, on the following day, Waithman, at a Common Hall meeting, condemned the behaviour of Hunt and the 'extremists' and sought to dissociate the metropolitan Reformers from them. He made clear that the former believed that it was more than ever imperative that the middle classes should come forward lest the 'common people' be fired to bring ruin and destruction on themselves and the country. There were, he believed, three classes who were the decided enemies of reform; those who lived on the national purse, the timid, whose fears had been excited by the consequences of reform, and the inflammatory and riotous, who were its bitter foes. It was necessary, if reform were to be procured, that the more

1. cf. on their meeting. Examiner Dec. 1st, 1816; Cobbett's Political Register Sept. 13th, 1817 for Cobbett's story; H. Hunt Memoirs III. 265. Cobbett and Hunt held that their attitude was determined by their dislike of Cochrane and Burdett's personal jealousy. But the Westminster Reformers were still ready to trumpet defiantly against the ministry themselves. A few days earlier a Dinner to celebrate Thomas Hardy's acquittal in 1794 had been held at the Crown and Anchor and obvious parallels were drawn between the ministry's attitude then and now.
opulent, middle and inferior ranks should stand together as 'the people' would then have confidence and would wait patiently for improved conditions. In the course of the meeting Hunt was greatly abused, and when resolutions were passed calling for petitions for reform, great emphasis was laid on the need for "constitutional and temperate" language.

But, in a few days time, it must have seemed to Westminster Reformers for a moment as if their worst fears - that the action of 'extremists' must ruin everything - had been realised. The fanatics of the Spencean group had decided they would wait no longer and on December 2nd, when the adjourned Spa Fields meeting reassembled, it was partially broken up by Preston and the Watsons before Hunt even appeared. Haranguing the crowds they fired numbers of them to set off with them with the crazy scheme of overturning the government. They planned to seize the Tower and other strong points in the capital. In riotous fashion a gunsmith's shop was sacked and the unfortunate gunsmith killed, before the crowds were broken up and dispersed by the Lord Mayor (Wood), two magistrates, and five constables, who arrested the leaders.

A riot beyond question; but scarcely a revolution. As

2. Ibid.
the subsequent trials made clear, only some twenty or thirty persons, at most, had known anything of Preston's and the Watson's intentions. Though the Home Secretary, Sidmouth, already knew of the likelihood of trouble, since one of the 'conspirators' was a ministerial spy (Castles), he had taken no steps to prevent the meeting, and had made no special arrangements to guard against disorder. Hunt, who met the rioters on their way, rallied by far the larger part of the assembly, which had waited for his coming, and resolutions were passed, deprecating the actions of the rioters, which were subsequently signed by 24,000 people and presented to the Commons. But a revolution it had to be. For a long time the ministerial press had been trying to rouse conservative fears of revolution at the Spa Fields meetings and now, at last, 'it' had occurred. The machinery of 'alarm' already well prepared, was immediately set in motion to whip up scorn and hatred for all Reformers.

1. T.B. Howell State Trials Vol. XXXII; Place Papers B.M. Add. MS. 27809 f. 50.
3. Cobbett's Political Register Dec. 7th, 1816.
4. The fact that Hunt was twice turned away when he had persisted in trying to present the Nov. 15th meeting's petition to the Regent had given the Dec. 2nd meeting the character of a protest meeting and had encouraged 'alarmist' reports. cf. E. Halévy, op. cit. p. 17.; H. Hunt, Memoirs 311. 360.; Examiner Nov. 24th, 1816.
The Westminster and London Reformers, once they had realised the insignificance of the riot, were more immediately concerned to prevent the ministry making capital out of it than to condemn the 'revolutionaries'. Thus, a Commons Council meeting, on December 8th, passed resolutions similar to those of Hunt. But it voted a petition for Reform to the Regent which was clearly designed to convince the country there was nothing to be frightened about.

The Regent's cold reply was an obvious indication of the direction of ministers' thoughts, but for the moment, it seems, they remained undecided whether to seek special repressive powers or not. Though doubtless large numbers among the upper classes and conservatives generally were shocked and seriously alarmed, yet there can be little doubt that, in the few weeks that followed before the opening of the session, a great many among the middle classes did come to see the incident for what it was. Aware that the disorders were abating in the provinces, and with grievances of their own that had not lessened, they refused to be stampeded into giving the ministry

1. Wood, the reforming Lord Mayor had made it his business to elucidate and publish the facts quickly. S. Maccoby, op. cit., p. 32. The 'Spencean' Club itself soon appeared for what it was - a pathetically small and for the most part harmless group. cf. Place's comments upon it, Add MS. 27809, ff. 146-6 and 27808 ff. 152-3.

a blind support. 1 The Westminster group might, therefore, take heart. But it was quite clear that, if they were yet to rally the middle classes against the ministry, they must not only give them a strong lead, but must demonstrate that they were not of the breed of Cobbett and Hunt, and could be trusted not to follow the paths they were treading.

Thus, if the riot did not bring any instant or blind panic among the middle classes generally, it was the immediate cause of the break between Burdett, the Westminster group and their London supporters, and Cartwright, Cobbett and Hunt, which became quite clear during the period before the long heralded meeting of deputies took place on January 22nd. Waithman and his Common Hall associates seized the moment to call for, and to found, a new and specifically middle class Reform Association at the very moment when Cartwright was making arrangements to receive the deputies. 2 Reformers, who could scarcely ignore the deputy meeting entirely, seem to have made every effort to ensure it did not take an extreme tone. Burdett went further, making apparent to all his

1. S. Maccoby, op. cit. p. 324-5; E. Halévy, op. cit. pp. 20 et seq. As Halévy makes clear, ministers were not yet completely decided whether the steadiness of the middle classes would not, in itself, prove adequate protection against revolution.

2. Examiner, Jan. 19th, 1817. The Common Hall meeting was on 15th Jan.; the Hampden Club meeting to arrange for the reception of the deputies on the 16th.
determination to associate no longer with the 'extremist' reformers and to have no hand in encouraging a 'working class' movement.

Though the Westminster group never favoured Cartwright's plan, yet facing the fact that a meeting of deputies of 'petitioning bodies' was to take place in Westminster at this time, it was natural enough they should feel bound to take an interest in it and should seek to influence its proceedings. It could only damage their cause if Cartwright, Cobbett and Hunt were to stampede it into demanding universal suffrage at this moment. It would seem that it was more for this reason - that they were anxious to preserve the appearance of unity among Reformers, than to please Burdett - that they arranged that Brooks should represent them, and urged that the proposals to be laid before the deputy meeting should go no further than Burdett's 1809 reform programme. This seems to be the explanation of Hunt's subsequent accusations that a "snug little juncto of Westminster men" compelled Cobbett, who was to be the other Westminster deputy, to "go back" on his conversion to universal suffrage, and to support Burdett's proposal for household, or direct taxpayer, suffrage.\(^1\)

\(^1\) H. Hunt, Memoirs 111.415.
Whatever success they achieved, however, it was completely undone by Burdett's failure to appear at the meeting. Whether it was because he now knew his name was being canvassed as a potential revolutionary leader; whether it was simply the result of a determination not to appear in company with Cobbett and Hunt; whether it was because he feared a wrangle over the question of universal suffrage, he neither came nor offered any apology for his absence. 1

As a result, when the deputies assembled it was the 'extremists' who carried the day. 2 Cartwright presided. Jones Burdett deputised for his brother and said he had been asked by the 'Hampden Club' to lay before the meeting the heads of a reform bill calling for Household Suffrage, Annual Elections and Equal Electoral districts. Cartwright then addressed the assembly. He made a somewhat half-hearted effort to obtain agreement on the bill, which, though he did not tell the meeting was the bill he had drawn up himself to please Burdett. He was himself, he said, in favour of 'universal suffrage'. But many sound reformers entertained doubts as to its practicability, and he would assure the

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1. This is, of course, well known. Cobbett's account of his failure to appear in the Political Register Sept. 13th, 1817 was acknowledged by Place to be substantially correct. Add. MS. 27809 f. 34.
2. For an account of the meeting cf. Examiner Jan. 26th, 1817.
meeting that the term 'household suffrage' would embrace cottagers and non-rate-payers. Cleary thereupon attempted to read resolutions thanking the Hampden Club for its very acceptable communication. But he was immediately interrupted by Cobbett, who refused to have any mention made of the 'Hampden Club' and declared that, with exceptions, it was composed entirely of the enemies and betrayers of their cause. When Cleary tried to move the heads of the 'Hampden Club' bill he objected again to the mention of the 'Hampden Club' and Hunt, sensing the disapproval of the meeting for the bill, insisted that 'universal suffrage' should be substituted for 'household suffrage'. An altercation followed in which Cobbett made an unconvincing effort to secure conformity on the proposal for 'household suffrage'. In the end, however, he gave way to the majority's desire to call for universal suffrage. The meeting then adjourned.

Though Burdett had not appeared, it was still expected he would do so, either at a subsequent meeting, or, at least, when the time came for him to present the vast numbers of petitions Cartwright had collected, to parliament, and to introduce the reform proposals on which the meeting agreed. Cartwright attempted to fend off enquiries from the bewildered deputies, by saying he had a letter from Burdett promising he would
appear soon.¹

But, by the following day, it must have become quite clear to the provincial deputies what was happening. At a Common Council meeting - clearly summoned at this time in the knowledge that all eyes would be focussed on the capital - resolutions were passed, advertising the new Reform Association, calling for a union of men of "rank, character and property" to take the lead in demanding reform and formally disavowing any favour for universal suffrage and annual parliaments.² The implication of this move was clear. The metropolitan Reformers, to whom they had long looked for leadership, were demonstrating their disfavour for a 'working class' political movement, and were trying to rally the 'middle classes' to press for reform as a means of calming them.

In the circumstances, by the time the deputies reassembled, they can scarcely have expected Burdett to appear. They met, in fact, twice more, the last occasion being January 27th, the day prior to the opening of the session, when it was decided to ask Cochrane instead to present the enormous number of petitions gathered, and to make the reform proposals they had agreed upon. There was a move by some to prevent the meeting being formally dissolved until after parliament's reaction was

2. ibid. Jan. 25th, 1817; Courier, Jan. 24th, 1817.
known, but a majority decided in favour of breaking up finally there and then.  

It was arranged with Cochrane that he should give notice of his intentions to make proposals for parliamentary reform, on the first day of the session. But Burdett, who had now returned to the capital, gave notice of his intention to make a motion on the subject, before Cochrane could do so. In view of his subsequent lethargy in following it up, Cobbett may well have been justified in accusing him of having done so deliberately, in order to prevent Cochrane or anyone else bringing any reform motion at that time.

Up to this point it had come increasingly to seem that the continuing 'alarmist' reports in the ministerial press had failed to convince the country that special security measures were necessary, and that ministers would give up any idea of introducing repressive legislation. Though the speech from the throne at the opening of the session condemned the activities of Reformers and others, it did not appear that special measures to suppress them were immediately in view.

Before the debate on the speech had properly begun, however, a

2. Cobbett's Political Register Sept. 13th, 1817.
3. E. Halévy op. cit. p. 22. Nor was there anything in the official press at this time to suggest repressive legislation was intended.
missile had broken a window of the Regent's carriage as he returned from opening parliament, and the complexion of things altered radically.

On the 28th, debates on this untoward event having prevented Hunt and Cartwright from arranging to present their petitions the day before, an assembly of the deputies went to see Cochrane. At 2 p.m. he announced he was going to the Commons to watch over their rights of liberties. Until he reappeared, Hunt harangued the crowds in Palace Yard and Cartwright arranged for coachloads of petitions to be delivered to the House. When Cochrane reappeared he was given a great bundle of petitions and chaired to Westminster Hall.¹ In the House, Cochrane had presented several of the petitions and had used the strongest language in arguing the need for reform before the Address in reply to the Regent's speech could be moved. The Bristol petition Hunt had brought, was rejected out of hand as libellous, though a few of the Whigs, including Brougham, aware of the temper of the crowds outside, made a half-hearted effort to have it accepted.²

The address to the Regent followed. The Whigs, making no effort to defend Reformers against the imputations cast

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¹ Examiner Feb. 2nd, 1817.; Cobbett's Political Register Sept. 13th, 1817.
upon them in the speech from the throne, proposed only an amendment, calling for the most drastic economy. As Miss Martineau put it, the practical answer they received was the intimation from Sidmouth, that, in three days' time, he would present a message from the Regent on the subject of the alleged disaffection of large bodies of the people. Canning emphatically stated that the constitution was perfect as it stood, and, confounding Reformers, Spenceans and Revolutionaries, condemned them together. ¹

It was now clear that repressive legislation was intended; that ministers were persuaded, after the attack on the Regent, that the situation was identical to that of 1795, and convinced they could and must secure additional powers to prevent revolution. When Cochrane, who had returned to the House, sought to move a further amendment to the Address denying its imputations against Reformers, in a last desperate effort to rally opinion against the ministry's plans, he could not even find a seconder. Burdett was not present. The last chance of persuading members - and the country - to make a stand against the policy of 'alarm' had disappeared. ²

Ministerial procedure thereafter, followed the now well

2. Cobbett's Political Register Sept. 13th, 1817.
established routine of 1795 and 1812. Papers were laid before parliament as evidence of the existence of a 'conspiracy'. On the 3rd February, they were referred to Secret Committees of both Houses and, on the 5th, balloting for the Committees of the Commons revealed that it was to be packed with ministerial supporters.\(^1\) Simultaneously, the press campaign to whip up popular fear and suspicion of 'revolutionaries' was stepped up to pave the way for the measures ministers intended to introduce. Unable to judge for themselves, forced to accept the Committees' Reports and the further evidence of the conspiracy published from time to time in the Tory press, the great majority of people in the country felt compelled to remain silent.\(^2\)

That no firm stand was made against the ministry was mainly the fault of the Whigs. Even had Burdett spoken up vigorously in the Commons on behalf of Reformers in support of Cochrane, the two of them alone would scarcely have mustered sufficient support to check the ministry in the course it had then determined to pursue. But his absence from the House at that moment, his failure to speak up immediately afterwards,

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1. Place Papers B.M. Add. MS. 27609 f. 54. Place duly noted that Brougham, in the House, offered to forecast who would be on the Committee and was almost completely right.
2. cf. \textit{ibid.} f. 66. As Place remarked, it was natural for many to feel that since the men who formed the Committees must be men of character, their Reports must be correct.
and the comparative moderation of his subsequent protests against the Reports of the Committees and the legislation based on them were to earn for him the considerable distrust of large numbers of 'working class' Reformers and the furious denunciation of Hunt and Cobbett.¹

The Westminster group were almost certainly equally displeased with Burdett's behaviour.² They must have believed, with other Reformers, that, even if he could not have checked the ministry, he could at least have forced the public to realise that the ministry was trying to excite alarm about a 'conspiracy', the evidence for which, they looked upon as absurd. At the same time they shared his intense distrust for Cobbett and Hunt, and were now as anxious as he to remove all suspicion that they were encouraging a 'working class' movement. 'Officially' therefore, they accepted his explanation for failing to support Cochrane - that he had left the House unaware of Cochrane's intentions, but that, in any case, the motion, brought at 3.30 a.m. should have been left until the morning.³

1. cf. e.g. Cobbett's Political Register Sept. 13th, 1817.  
2. Place merely commented when describing his behaviour in his narrative that it was clear there was "no cordial co-operation" between Burdett and the Reformers...that... "Lord Cochrane was their Champion". Add. MS. 27809 f. 50. He signified agreement with certain of Cobbett's Register articles which, when examined, are highly critical of Burdett.  
3. Hone's Reformist's Register. March 1st, 1817, reporting Westminster public meeting of Feb. 25th, where Burdett made this explanation in the course of his speech. The Reformist's Register was, in effect, the official organ of the Westminster group at the time. cf. infra. p. 140.
To Hunt and Cobbett, however, Burdett's behaviour appeared - as much as the behaviour of the Whigs appeared to the Westminster Reformers - a major act of 'betrayal'. In Cobbett's view it was only to have been expected that the Whigs would desert and 'betray' 'the people'. Their desertion would even do good by waking 'the people' up, and forcing them to realise the Whigs had all along been as much their enemies as the Tories. But that Burdett should desert them and leave them to be scorned - that he who had so long pretended to be 'the people's' champion, who had so long urged 'the people' to petition for reform and so often promised to move for reform whenever they should demand it, who had actually invited 'the people's' representatives to meet him in London - that he should now desert them, was a 'betrayal' immeasurably greater. From this point on, Burdett and the Westminster Reformers who continued to support him, were to have no bitterer foes than Cobbett and Hunt.

Burdett's behaviour is indeed difficult, if not impossible to justify satisfactorily, in view of the part he had played in rousing the post-war reform movement. It may be that he genuinely felt that he was likely to do more harm than good if he attacked the ministry and defended Reformers violently - that if he protested too much he would only encourage suspicion, which the Secret Committees' Reports themselves would otherwise
naturally dispel amongst intelligent people. But a different explanation of his behaviour seems more likely. Burdett, who had no fellow feeling and very little understanding for the 'working classes' certainly did not intend, and had never intended, to lead a purely 'working class' movement. Even so, it may be suggested that his actions at this time were determined less by his fear of social revolution, than by the pressure upon him of the 'society' in which he lived. There can be no doubt that his friends were very strongly against his appearing in any way to justify the actions of men so reckless and violent as Hunt and Cobbett.¹

Thus, though he did speak up in parliament, and did appear with Hunt and Cartwright at two Westminster public meetings - the first on February 13th, held to address the Regent, the second on February 25th, to protest against the suspension of the Habeas Corpus - he spoke with unusual moderation and made quite clear his disapproval of Hunt and all 'extremists', and equally clear his disapproval of their programme.² He refused to attend a third Spa Fields' meeting.

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¹ M.W. Patterson, op.cit. 11.427 et seq., defends Burdett's behaviour against Cobbett's attacks on him as the natural behaviour of any 'gentleman'. But it was largely for his 'gentlemanly' behaviour that Cobbett attacked Burdett in the first place.

² For these meetings cf. Examiner Feb.16th. Hone's Reformist's Register March 1st, 1819.
arranged by Hunt and, on this occasion, specifically stated he did not believe in universal suffrage or annual parliaments.¹

On February 22nd, at a dinner in company with Curran, Wishart, Brand, Brooks and other Westminster and City Reformers he identified his views as those of Waithman - whom Hunt and Cobbett had furiously denounced for the past two months - and of Waithman's new Society. Burdett said that though economic reform would be a blessing, it did not go far enough. He offered no objection to Brand's proposition that universal suffrage and annual parliaments would weaken the popular part of the constitution, whilst the abolition of rotten boroughs and household suffrage would strengthen it.² Burdett's appearance at the dinner was, in fact, symptomatic of his move closer to the Whigs which Brougham had already remarked on, and which certainly did not escape the eyes of Cobbett and Hunt.³

It is impossible to examine the Reports of the Secret Committees in detail, and perhaps hardly necessary to emphasise how fallacious they were. It must, to-day, seem scarcely credible that they could have been believed even by those who drew them up. Their conclusions were certainly not justified

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1. *Examiner* Feb. 10th, 1816. The third Spa Fields meeting was perfectly orderly.
3. cf. *Infra*, Ch. xi. n.
by the evidence, which came to light at the time. Nor have they been substantiated by any evidence which has come to light since. The carelessness of phraseology with which they linked together 'Reformers', 'Spenceans' and 'Revolutionaries' and charged them as a body with seeking to ferment revolution under the pretence of working for reform, was quite absurdly unfair and unjustifiable.

Yet it is clear they were the reflection of the genuine and strong contemporary beliefs of men, who, having so long lived amid suspicions and fear of revolution, were easily, and almost totally, misled by appearances. So strong were their fears, so strong their suspicions, that circumstantial evidence of the flimsiest kind appeared more than to confirm them. Concrete evidence, therefore, became unnecessary.

Thus great emphasis was laid on the connection between the country clubs - the reports did not make clear whether they were 'Hampden', 'Union', or 'Spencean' clubs - with the 'Hampden Club' of London. But was it the 'Hampden Club'? Was it the 'Union Club'? Was the meeting of deputies a meeting of the 'Hampden' or the 'Union' Club?

When a petition in the name of Cleary, as Secretary of the London Union Society, was presented to the House of Lords, protesting against the implication in its Report that it was affiliated to many country societies calling themselves
'Spencean Philanthropists', and seeking to prove the Union Society had not even met since 1613 and had never had any branches, it was promptly rejected. Though it was admitted that the only evidence to show a connection between it and the country clubs was a handbill published by the Sheffield Union Society on its formation, which had called for correspondence with the London Union Club and had stated that the payment of 20/- entitled a member of the Sheffield Society to membership of the London Club, it was considered quite sufficient. But it is clear, and might with proper investigation have been made clear then, that it was principally and almost alone Cartwright who had been responsible for creating the impression in the country that the Union Club in London still functioned, and that it was also principally he who had done most to create the false impression that the Hampden Club was a flourishing body.

The idea of a central directing body was confirmed in the minds of those who had framed the reports and ministers, by the printed petitions which Cartwright drew up, and which he

Both Grenville and Liverpool believed the conclusions drawn from this handbill in the report perfectly reasonable.
again was primarily responsible for circulating. Thus, as Castlereagh said, on 7th February, it was believed these did not contain the opinions of 'those' who drew them up, and for this reason they were rejected. Yet it is somewhat pathetic to see the ministry fearful of the bombardment of one old man. As Cochrane said, when presenting a petition on 27th February, it was absurd to imagine the Hampden Club doing anything like promote a conspiracy. He had been to only two meetings, one, an open meeting (June 15th) in an open room, the other attended only by three persons...

"He believed not a single paper had ever issued from the Hampden Club which was not written by a venerable individual whose character stood deservedly high with all who were in any way acquainted with him."  

But was there evidence of a 'convention' to supersede parliament? That such a convention had indeed met and that its organisers intended that at some time it would supersede parliament, the framers of the Reports had no doubt. Lord Erskine, however, specifically denied there was one scrap of evidence and drew the parallel to the accusation rejected in 1795. If it is true that, at bottom, Cartwright's scheme for organising the 'popular party' envisaged the fundamental

1. ibid. House of Commons, Feb. 7th, 1817.  
2. ibid. House of Commons, Feb. 27th, 1817.  
superiority of the 'rights of the people' to the 'rights of parliament' - if Cartwright did consciously try to organise a body of federated popular clubs, which would be centrally directed - yet it is equally true that no such organisation had even begun to materialise. There was no organisation such had characterised the Yorkshire association. There was not even the regular correspondence between clubs of the 1790s, organised by the Corresponding Society. Their only central organisation was - Cartwright.

But, even as envisaged, the scheme for a deputy meeting had intended no more than that genuine deputies from Clubs and places in the country should come to discuss a Reform Bill and bring their petitions to the existing parliament. In actual fact, as Place makes clear...

"some had been nominated at public meetings and others had assumed the title (of deputy) without any nomination and even without the knowledge of the persons (sic. places?) whose names they assumed. They called themselves deputies from many places, because petitions from these places had been put into their hands by the Major.... or because they had themselves obtained some of the signatures."1

Even the "delegate meeting" - as the Committee Reports styled it - was, whatever assistance he may have received, primarily Cartwright's creation.

1. Place Papers B.M.Add.MS.27809. f.34.
But even had a re-investigation been made, it is scarcely possible to believe ministers' faith in impending revolution would have been shaken. The points that Cleary's and Hunt's petitions had made - that Cochrane, Burdett and numbers of Whigs also made in a forlorn and hopeless effort to show the absurdity of the evidence and the conclusions drawn from it - were of but small concern to them. It is obvious that their very failure to find the clear outline of a revolutionary organisation, the very fact that so much was confused, served more than ever to convince them that such an organisation existed! Thus Liverpool, in a debate on Cleary's petition in the Lords - when the very existence of the London Club and any affiliated clubs was brought into doubt, serenly dismissed the objection raised, and made clear it was of little moment. The Sheffield poster, he said, recommended the establishment of similar societies everywhere to secure parliamentary reform. This was enough to satisfy him. But:

"as for the meeting of the 22nd January, it was a matter of public notoriety that Union Societies had recently met"..."whether the Union Club existed in form or not did not matter" He was not disposed to contest Cleary's assertion - "that the Society had not met as it was originally constituted. But the meeting of 22nd January was "in effect a London Central Union Club"..."It was, in fact, part of the system of the leaders of these societies to make them
change their names". 1

To ministers and large numbers of others, Reformers were revolutionaries.

In any event, no re-investigation was considered. The Reports of the Committees called the pitiful meeting a 'delegate meeting', and a 'delegate meeting' it remained. In spite of the evidence brought forward to prove the contrary, it went on record that the delegates were to reassemble again in March. The 'Revolutionaries' and 'Spenceans' remained linked with the Union Club, despite the fact that no Spencean Club had ever been founded until long after the Union Club had properly ceased to exist. The wretched Spa-Fields riot remained as an abortive attempt by 'Reformers' (or 'Revolutionaries') to seize the capital and to signal the country to rise in rebellion behind them, and as a warning that it was likely to happen again, despite the fact that Sidmouth had known what was likely to happen on November 15th and on December 2nd, through his spy, Castles, and had not even thought fit to take any special action to prevent trouble.

1. Parl. Debates. Vol. XXXV. House of Lords Feb. 24th, 1817. Thus the fact, that Place pointed out, that there were no 'Spencean' Club meetings until after the Union Club had ceased to exist - would have been considered irrelevant. Place Papers Add. MS. 27809. f. 88.

As Harriet Martineau wrote:

"The parliamentary reports speak of these transactions in which a mighty government was to be overthrown and a vast city with its formidable array of police and soldiery utterly subdued by five fanatics and a spy, with a solemnity which is now almost ludicrous."

Eight men prevented the catastrophe. Yet the whole country was now alerted to watch for the desperate actions of large bodies of men who were busy securing arms.

It has been considered necessary to view the reform movement in this period and the reaction of the ministry in some detail and for two reasons. First, in order that some assessment may be made of the Westminster Reformers' responsibility for the state of affairs which on the one hand, and however little justified it may have been, brought fresh ministerial repressive legislation, and on the other led to the breach between the Westminster Reformers and the 'extremist' Reformers. Second, so that it is better possible to understand the impact of the ministry's actions upon the Westminster Reformers and their own subsequent policy.

On the first point, it is clear that, in their minds, Burdett and the Westminster Reformers had all along intended to appeal primarily to the 'middle classes'. Their call to the country and to 'the people' everywhere, to discuss a plan

1. H. Martineau, op.cit. Bk.1.p.85
of reform, was not consciously directed towards journey-men and labourers, but towards men of substance. But careless use of the ambiguous terms 'country' and 'people' had produced effects, as unexpected and unwelcome to the Westminster Reformers, as the effects produced by others before, who had similarly called upon 'the people' to act for themselves, had been unwelcome to them. The appearance of numbers of 'working class' men on the political scene was as much their 'responsibility' as their own appearance had been the 'responsibility' of the Whigs and the older Reformers of the Constitutional Information Society, a quarter of a century before. Again, their reaction to the appearance of 'working class' political movement, and the consequent reaction of 'working class' Reformers to them was precisely similar to the reaction of Whigs, and Reformers such as Horne Tooke, towards their appearance, and to their own feeling that they had been betrayed.

They were not behind the Hampden and Union Clubs movement, still less behind the demagoguery of Hunt and Cobbett. But their interest in preserving, or at least in preserving the appearance of unity among Reformers, seems to have prevented their recognising until too late, how the 'extremist' Reformers had succeeded in rousing an almost purely 'working class' movement and what - through their nominal membership of
the Hampden and Union Clubs, through their public association with Cartwright, Cobbett and Hunt - was coming to be expected of them. That it seemed to them afterwards farcical that it could ever have been supposed that the London Hampden and Union Clubs were closely linked with the country clubs, is a measure of their failure to recognise the impression that was being created.¹ Their failure - and above all the failure of Burdett - was that they did not make quite clear when they did come to realise the effects Cartwright's scheme and the actions of Cobbett and Hunt were coming to have - that they had no favour for their activities so far as they were directed towards rousing a purely 'working class' movement. That failure is understandable. They, like Cobbett, must have felt by that stage that matters had gone too far. But it was to play no small part in creating the illusion - or delusion - which brought repression, and the feeling among numbers of the 'working class' that they had been 'betrayed'.

In the circumstances, it is not surprising that thenceforward they should be abused not only by the governing classes generally, but also by Cobbett and Hunt and their followers, and, though he was to restrain his feelings longer, by Cartwright too. It is arguable they could not, in any case,

¹. cf. e.g. Place's 'narrative' discussion of Ministers' actions and the Reports. Add.MS. 27309. ff.34 et seq.
have prevented the ministry's suspicion arising; but, could not, they in any case, have prevented the provincial 'working classes' being misled, nor prevented a division among Reformers. This may be so. But, as things were, they must be considered as bearing at least part of the responsibility for the fact that these developments did occur.

On the second point, if the reactions of Westminster Reformers are to be understood, it is essential to imagine the impact of the ministry's actions upon men, to whom the Reports on which they were based appeared not only fallacious but farcical, whose aversion and distrust for the governing classes was already deep rooted, who knew themselves to be innocent of any traitorous intentions, and who failed to see clearly how they had themselves helped to create suspicion.

If it is recognised that numbers among the 'upper classes' had serious misgivings as to the ministers' 'alarmist' policy, that larger numbers, among the middle classes generally, soon came to believe it unnecessary and unjustifiable, that even large numbers among the 'lower middle' and 'working' classes now came to view the ministry and the governing classes generally with either newborn or greatly increased suspicion - then the intensity of the reaction among the Reformers may be the more easily appreciated.

To those newly politically conscious among the labouring classes, who had joined innocently enough in the agitation for
parliamentary reform, the action of the ministry and the
behaviour of the Whigs came—despite the repeated warnings of
Cobbett and others that the governing classes would seize any
opportunity to trick and stifle the people—primarily as a
severe shock. To those who had, for a quarter of a century
or longer, believed the aristocracy bent on repressing every
symptom of 'the people's' growing enlightenment, who had
themselves suffered from the 'repression' of the nineties—
the actions of the ministry, the Reports, the repressive
measures and the attitude of the Whigs combined to produce
feelings of anger which, at least for the moment, were perhaps
greater than they had ever felt. The Reports appeared pure
effrontery; the ministers' 'alarmist' policy, the most
barefaced delusion ever practiced; its complete success, in
view of the Whig failure to defend Reformers, many of whom they
knew well, completely contemptible. To them it seemed not
merely obvious that the 'governing classes' were determined to
cling to power, but that they were becoming desperate in their
efforts to do so. To them it was the only explanation which
fitted the facts as they saw them. 1

1. cf. e.g. ibid., also Introduction to Bentham's 'Catechism'
(Works. III. 405 et seq.)
When Place viewed the action of Pitt's ministry, it would seem that though he condemned it for deliberately seeking to alarm the country in order to justify unnecessary repressive legislation - though he blamed the governing classes long before Pitt's day for having deliberately impeded the spread of that enlightenment, which would have prevented its 'alarmist' policy succeeding - yet, he recognised the fact that the great mass of 'the people' were then still ignorant and were genuinely enough alarmed by the French Revolutionary terror. It was, in his eyes, at least possible to make that much 'justification' for its action.\(^1\)

But, on the same basis, the action of the ministry in 1816-17 could, in his eyes, have no such justification. There was no danger from abroad, there was no danger of revolution (even if it had appeared for a moment that that danger existed it had been completely dispelled); there had never been a serious panic in the country at large. The continued agitation against the ministry of the 'middle classes' had shown the contrary, had shown them determined to have nothing to do with 'revolutionaries'. There could be no other explanation save that they had become frightened - not of revolution, but at

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1. Place Papers B.M. Add. MS. 27809. ff. 41 et seq. Place considered Pitt more humane than Castlereagh.
their failure to keep 'the people' quiet whilst they carried out their policy of repression abroad. There could be no other explanation of their sudden determination to alarm the country about the actions of Reformers, of the fantastic reports and their refusal to investigate them, of the speed with which they tried to rush repressive measures through parliament.¹

Nothing could have done more to deepen his and all Reformers' distrust and contempt for 'parties' and 'party government', than the way in which, in the early months of 1817, the reports and the repressive legislation were swept through parliament by, as they saw matters, the power of corruption.² Place, seeing clearly that the 'middle classes' were nothing like so alarmed as they would have been had they believed the reports, recognised the spread of knowledge among 'the people' and the growth in the power of public opinion. It was precisely because he recognised the existence of a much

¹ ibid. As Place pointed out too, in view of the crowded and excited state of the common people in the Metropolis nothing could have been easier than to have excited a rebellion had any revolutionary feeling existed. The fact that so little disturbance had been caused showed "the increased moral strength of the people", cf. f.71.

² Place's 'narratives' show that he watched the progress of the repressive legislation very closely and with intensely bitter feelings. Add.MS.27809. f.112. The same feelings, and much of which he noted find expression the Introduction to Bentham's Catechism (Bentham Works III.405 et seq.); cf. also G.Wallas, op.cit. pp.123.124.
larger and better educated public than in Pitt's day, that he regarded the present ministry's action as more despicable than that of Pitt's ministry. He wrote:

"Pitt's ministry had seen the people abandoning the support of party and had aimed to keep down knowledge lest the people get too strong". (But he had failed, despite the support of the throne and the aristocracy, and the progress of the knowledge had "outraced" him) . . . "Much knowledge had been acquired during the thirteen or fourteen years" (following). "It was principally, and indeed almost wholly, confined to the younger portion of the community and only to part of them, but the advance was obvious. The Castlereagh Administration began to feel the want of power which members had enjoyed in Pitt's time and therefore attempted to recover it". (They were) . . . "more reckless from principle and more inimical to the increase of knowledge than Pitt". (But they believed if a great effort were made they could "triumph over knowledge". Therefore, they took advantage of the distress of 1816-17 to create the impression the country was endangered by revolution. Castlereagh improved upon all Pitt's methods). "But they failed in exciting alarm in the country, the people had become too well informed to be imposed upon and their attempt was a total failure."  

Place described these events much later, but there is no doubt that, at this time, he had already long believed that if 'the people' were properly led they must eventually triumph. The power of public opinion would inevitably grow faster than the means could be found to crush it. In due course, when he became calmer and the situation appeared less tense and dangerous, he was again to become satisfied that, for this

1. Place Papers B.M. Add.MS.27809. ff. 43 et seq.
reason, sooner or later, parliamentary reform must be won.

At this moment, however, it seemed to him and to the Westminster Reformers too, much more likely than ever before that the governing classes would succeed in driving the country to anarchy and dictatorship. Their anger was roused not merely by the fresh 'demonstration' of the self-interest of the governing classes in itself, but by what seemed to them conclusive evidence of their total blindness to the consequences of the disastrous policy they were pursuing. Unless their actions were checked, they would bring ruin not only to themselves but to the country, long before 'the people' were educated to govern themselves.

Aware though they were of the influence Cobbett and Hunt were gaining amongst the 'common people'; much as they distrusted their influence, fearing they would lead 'the people' astray and deliver them into the ministers' hands, they did not believe the mass of 'the people' would accept their leadership

1. ibid. f.112. Place noted cynically that the division lists on the four Acts of Repression showed there were rarely more than 100 in the House. But on... "the party question respecting the Two Secretaries of the Admiralty, the number present at the division was 283."
unless they came to feel desperate. Now, however, it seemed the governing classes were bent on driving the people to follow their leadership, and the leadership of men far more dangerous than they.

As Harriet Martineau, writing of these times and emphasising that it was her own personal impression, said...

"The real danger"..."was not so much that the people would be irritated and misled by mob leaders and unscrupulous writers, as that a general feeling should grow up in the nation that government was a power antagonistic to the people - a power to be striven against as a natural enemy - an oppressive and not a protective power - a power of separate and inclusive interests from the people - a power never to be trusted. We speak advisedly and from experience when we say this was the general feeling of the great bulk of the industrious classes long after the first sufferings that attended the transition state of peace had passed away. This was the feeling that was far more dangerous to the nation's interests than any insurrectionary outbreak of the masses of the working population. Deluded these masses unquestionably were - acted upon by demagogues. On the other hand many among the upper and middle classes were alarmed into a prostrate adhesion, to the menacing policy of government and were ready with 'lives and fortune' to put down the revolutionary spirit which they were assured was working under the guise of parliamentary reform. But during all this unhappy time the government had no love from any class - very little respect, intense hate from many - slavish fear from more. There was no confidence on either side... The government took the fearful course of sowing distrust of the poor among the rich. The demagogues did their own counter work of exciting hatred of the rich amongst the poor. 'Divide and govern' may be a safe maxim for subduing a faction; it is the most perilous principle for ruling a nation".  

2. H. Martineau, op. cit. Bk.1. pp.87-88
Today it is impossible to view the situation without a greater sympathy and understanding for the position and attitude of the governing classes and for the policy of ministers, in face of the great difficulties which confronted them. But it is equally impossible not to acknowledge that large numbers among the middle and lower ranks of society bitterly distrusted them, and impossible not to view the position, attitude and policy of Reformers with equal sympathy and understanding. The country may never have been so greatly and deeply divided as it then seemed; the misunderstandings and distrust which developed between the governing classes and 'the people' may well appear tragic. Yet it would be wrong to suppose the fears of contemporaries were not real. Miss Martineau must appear partisan in her allocation of responsibility for the situation; but her appreciation of that situation, as it then appeared to many, is acute enough.

The immediate reaction of the Westminster group was to recognise the need to make even greater efforts to rouse the middle classes, lest they be crushed between forces they viewed as equally blind and equally dangerous. From this time forward, they were to become ever more clearly in the eyes of the country the party of the 'new' middle classes.
Chapter XI

At War on Two Fronts; 1817-18.

From the beginning of 1817, the Westminster Reformers came to act with a heightened sense of urgency. The broad outlines of their policy - a policy they had already long pursued - now emerges even more clearly. If the 'middle classes' were not to find themselves 'crushed', it was now more than ever necessary to make greater efforts to convince the 'middle classes' themselves, of the need to act; to bring the Whigs over to the popular side; to re-secure the confidence of the 'working classes' by weaning them from the influence of the 'extremist' Reformers and by seeking to prevent their being misled by spies and fanatics. It was, in short, necessary to re-secure and strengthen the unity of Reformers under the Westminster Reformers' leadership.

It was these considerations which led to the development, at this time, of a much closer relationship between the Westminster Reformers - as a political group - and Bentham; these considerations which governed their relations with the Whigs on the one hand, and Cartwright, Cobbett and Hunt on the other. They must be borne in mind when viewing the course they pursued.

The Westminster Reformers had so far been, and were to remain, substantially united in policy. It would be surprising indeed, however, if they had always remained
unanimous as to the best means of making that policy effective. In the course of 1817, differences of opinion on the tactics to be followed, were to become accentuated as a result of the tenseness of the situation and by the pressure upon them, from the one side, the Whigs, from the other, the 'extremist' Reformers - both seeking to 'compel' their support.

Thus there were those who were to be drawn closer to the Whigs, following Burdett's lead. Though they had no great liking for the Whigs, yet disgusted by the behaviour of Cobbett and Hunt and others who supported them, and anxious that middle class suspicions of their own intentions be removed, they came to believe it was better to stand closer to them than to risk appearing to countenance the actions of the 'extremists'. The Whigs must be won over, but it might be better to calm and conciliate them.

Of the opposite view, were those who, in the face of the Whig attitude, came to believe it was more important to concentrate upon winning support away from the 'extremists'. They had no greater liking for Cobbett and Hunt, but they came to believe it desirable to show greater favour to Cartwright, for whom they had never had the same deep dislike, as a gesture not only to them, but to the working classes who supported them.

Between them, there was a middle body, who believed that, so far as possible, the Westminster group should continue on a
straight course and must show, at all times, a complete independence of all other groups and factions. In the long run, though it was influenced by the feelings of others, it was the attitude of this body — dominated by Place — which carried the day. But, by 1818, these differences were such as to encourage both Whigs and 'extremists' to oppose them in Westminster at the general election, whilst arrangements for the election, and the election itself, were to increase them in a way to prove extremely embarrassing to the Westminster group.
I The Westminster Reformers And The Whigs Until The Election of 1818

Though the Whig opposition to the ministers' alarmist policy and to their proposed repressive legislation appeared less than half-hearted, there can be no doubt that many Whigs intensely disliked the course ministers were pursuing and the idea they should have the increased power they were calling for. At the same time their opposition was to be hampered by divisions in the party, by the general, if temporary, uncertainty of 'the public', by their own determination not to defend, and by defending, appear to countenance 'revolutionaries', and by the consequent violent attacks made upon them by Reformers.

The broad aim of the Whigs was to rally the opinion of moderate men everywhere. To Brougham and his 'left wing' friends the course to be followed was clear enough. The party must be drawn together and a firm stand made. Though no defence need be made of the Reformers, yet the ministry could be strongly attacked as having been responsible for bringing 'the people' to such a state of misery and distress, that they were the more easily 'deluded' and led astray.

Thus he set to arranging matters with his friends, and on February 8th wrote to Lansdowne ...
"We intend to fight every point in detail, availing ourselves of the thousand petitions as if they were generally on grievances and distress, though they call for reform as well as retrenchment. For these operations the ground is laid and we have begun with all manner of good motions, papers, etc., etc. We are provided with a great artillery and ammunition for firing into their "... (ministers') ...) jobs, a number of which have come to our knowledge".

Anxious as Brougham was to win over conservative and moderate members to support his policy, it is clear he was equally anxious to secure, if possible, the support of 'moderate' Reformers themselves. At first sight it might well seem no hope could have been more ill-founded, yet the attitude of Burdett and the evidence of feeling among the moderate Reformers, as expressed by Waithman and his London associates, must have done much to encourage it. He wrote optimistically...

"All differences among our friends are removed, and we are firmly united on almost every point (I mean even in the House of Commons) at once fighting against the Crown, and putting down the pernicious and insane rabble, equally the enemies of us and of the people. Even Burdett has become moderate and reasonable, has met Lord Grey and gone to Lord Holland in the evening. Lord Thanet has brought this to bear ultimately, but I have had full explanation with Burdett and find him disposed to all fair and moderate conduct. Whether anything can come of this beyond the mere convenience of the present moment is another question, but it is very useful in weaning the people or rather part of them from those pernicious persons who have been misleading them".

Brougham's opportunist line of thought is obvious enough.

Burdett's support and co-operation would be immediately valuable.

* Quoted by A. Aspinall, Lord Brougham and the Whig Party p.75.
** Ibid p.74. Professor Aspinall quotes from the same letter to Lansdowne. Cf. also, Broughton Papers B.M. Add. MS. 36, 457. f. 73. Lord Tavistock to J.C. Hobhouse, early August 1818, refers to the reconciliation which took place between Burdett and the Whigs at Burdett's house.
because of his prestige, but if advantage were taken of the circumstances, it might be possible to divide 'moderate' and 'extreme' Reformers completely and to draw the former behind them.

If, as seems certain, this was the case, Brougham must have appreciated at once that the realisation of his aim would prove far from easy. On the one hand, he found that, when it came to the point, the moderates and conservatives of his own party would not move. Partly infected by panic, partly despairing, partly keen to preserve the Grenville connection, the main body of the Whigs hung back. On the other, though Burdett himself and numbers of his metropolitan supporters showed themselves more disposed, for the time being, to accept Whig leadership, it became quite clear that Cochrane and the most influential of the Westminster Reformers behind him, were less inclined to accept it than ever. Following two courses at once - trying to rally his party by attacking the ministers, and trying to force the 'moderate' Westminster Reformers to see the error of their ways by attacking the 'extremist' Reformers - he succeeded once again in rousing anger on all sides.

Recognising that whether or not a firm stand was made in parliament against the ministry depended entirely on the Whigs, Place and many other Reformers first waited to see what their attitude would be. Even though it might not be likely, yet, if they should be thinking of acting like 'honest men' they must not be discouraged. Not until the Whig's attitude became quite clear did they come to act independently.
As is well known, Place, infuriated by the turn of events, came to write a series of articles for a new weekly paper - the 'Reformists' Register' - published by an old bookseller friend of his, William Hone. It is not unlikely that the impulse which led to its founding at this time came from Place himself, but, in any case, the paper may be considered during its short life as the organ of the Westminster group. In these articles he defended Reformers and bitterly denounced the Whigs.

Important though these articles are, as an illustration of his own and other Reformers' bitter feelings, and of his determination to give a strong independent lead to 'popular opinion', they must be considered, too, as important evidence of the 'beneath the surface' relationship of the Whigs and the Westminster group at this time. Brougham's violent denunciations of the Reformers, and Place's even more violent attacks on Brougham and the Whigs, have attracted historians' attention. But it has obscured the fact that, despite their anger with each other, neither lost sight of the object of winning or compelling the others' support. Place's articles, as much as Brougham's attacks on Reformers in parliament, must be conceived as having an important tactical significance. Each clearly knew what the other was about.

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1 Certainly he was closely associated with its founding. Place Papers BM. Add. MS. 27809. f. 51. Bentham, who apparently did not know he had written the Address advertising the new publication, wholly approved it and thereafter took a close interest in the Reformists' Register.
2 cf. e.g. G. Wallas, op. cit pp. 124-5, and A. Aspinall, op. cit p. 90.
3 C. T. Garratt, Lord Brougham p. 54.
Thus, in the first issue of February 1st, which was devoted to praising Burdett and Cochrane equally, the former for his promise to offer a reform motion, the latter for his amendment to the Address, it is apparent that Place, and those who agreed with him, were at one and the same time seeking to direct attention away from those of Burdett's actions which were earning him the criticism of 'extremists'; warning Burdett himself; and making clear to Brougham and the Whigs that, unless they defended 'the people', they must expect the Westminster group to treat them in the same fashion as the Tories. Place's own attitude, and the 'official' attitude of the Westminster Reformers is clear enough. They did not approve the actions of the 'extremist' Reformers; they did not approve of universal suffrage. But they were quite determined the body of Reformers as a whole should be defended; that their own point of view should be put forward; and that 'the people' should be made to realise how despicable were the actions of the ministry. In the circumstances, Burdett's attitude was exceedingly embarrassing to them.

In the course of the next week, however, it became clear that the Whigs had no intention of defending Reformers. On the contrary, their attendance at the House was poor, and Brougham himself led the way in

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1 Hone's Reformists' Register, Feb. 1st 1817.
2 At least not officially, as a party, though Place and Bentham were to justify it theoretically. But it is quite clear in the Westminster elections of 1818 and 1819, they recognised the Westminster electors favoured Household Suffrage.
attacking them! It also became clear that Burdett was moving even closer to the Whigs. Brougham may, at this time, have spoken with the deliberate intention of making moderate Reformers more uncomfortable, or he may have allowed himself to be carried away. There could, however, be no doubt that he was lashing all Reformers equally.

Thus, in the second issue of the Register (February 8th), in an article entitled 'Universal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments against Mr. Brougham and the Whigs', Place defended Reformers and attacked the absurdity of members' accusations that a convention had been summoned. At the same time, he violently attacked the behaviour of the Whigs and Brougham in particular; praised Cochrane; and, whilst lamenting there was too little co-operation between him and Burdett, defended Burdett against the charge he did not trust 'the people'. It was not that he opposed Universal Suffrage. He merely thought that Household Suffrage was more practicable to obtain.

Once again the attitude and tactics of the Westminster group are apparent. Furious though Place was that Brougham and many of his Whig friends, who knew the Westminster Reformers personally, should now join in attacking them - determined as he was to silence them - he was no less anxious to shame them and force them to recognise the futility of

* Hone's Reformists' Register February 8th, 1817.
trying to rouse the moderates and conservatives of their party, and the inevitable necessity that they must join with the Reformers. It was, at this time, still possible to hope that, if ministers were strongly opposed, they might at least be forced to moderate their proposals; that a stir might still be created in the country. Place and his friends can have had no hope that the Whig party as a whole would make any serious effort to oppose the ministers, but they could hope that the 'left wing' group and Burdett might be driven to do so.\footnote{Sir Robert Wilson Papers, BM. Add. MS. 30121 f. 286. Wilson complains, in a letter to a friend, of the efforts of the Westminster Reformers to divide the Whigs by disparagement.}

After a further week, however, it was obvious the attitude of the Whigs had still not changed. At a later stage it would seem Place became more prepared to make allowances for the difficulties the 'left wing' Whigs encountered in getting their own party to move.\footnote{\textit{infra}, pp. 15-2.} At this moment of crisis, however, he was not disposed to view things calmly. Far less was he prepared to make allowances for those who, whatever their reasons, were attacking Reformers in a way that must make the public believe they viewed all Reformers as equally dangerous, and played the ministers' game. Thus, when Brougham - clearly pursuing his aim of dividing the Reformers - violently attacked Cochrane, who had more clearly identified himself with the 'extremists', as he was presenting petitions for reform in the Commons, Place's anger was such that he determined on a more drastic method of silencing him and his
friends. He had no personal favour for Cochrane, but he was one of Westminster's representatives and was now acting with Place directly behind him, as Brougham well knew. Thus, if he would have defended Cochrane at this point in any case, he now felt himself doubly driven for personal reasons to take decisive action.

By this time Brougham himself, equally angry and offended at Place's attacks on him, had asked mutual friends to explain matters to Place. Place, however, was so furious that he had utterly refused to treat, unless Brougham gave a personal guarantee he would stop his attacks on Reformers. He warned him that, unless he gave this guarantee, he would make public his 1814 speech when he had committed himself to support the Westminster Reformers' programme, in order to make himself acceptable as their candidate for the other Westminster seat. He wrote:

"Brougham had committed himself against the Reformers with his own party to such an extent that he wanted the courage to do what his better reason, awakened by the attacks "... (in the 'Register')..." would have dictated to him as the proper course" .... "He spoke as a man who had never courted the people, much less one who had done as he had with a view to the representation of Westminster".

He had admitted half a million people had signed the petitions, but denied they knew what they signed. Further he had said the Reformers were "NOT HONEST"!

Thus, when Mill came to see Place, to explain Brougham's actions

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* Place Papers RM. Add. MS.27809 f.54.
** ibid.
*** ibid. f.55.
**** ibid.
he repeated, that, only if he received the guarantee he sought from him, would he, in turn, refrain from publicising Brougham's old speech. For the moment, he held his fire. The next article he wrote for the 'Register', to appear on Saturday, 15th February, was devoted to Burdett's 1809 Plan of Reform and a history of the 'Westminster Reformers' work since 1807.* But, by the following Monday, Place had heard nothing from Brougham and he, therefore, determined to go ahead with his plan. He had already prepared a special edition of the 'Register', which revealed how Brougham had sought election for Westminster and how he had sought to ingratiate himself with the Westminster Reformers, and which gave the text of his 1814 speech. This he now published, and several thousand copies were sold in the space of a few hours.** As a result, Brougham, in the course of the day, redoubled his attacks on all Reformers. Place then handed Cochrane a copy of the speech to read in the House in the evening, whilst petitions were being presented.***

Despite the attacks on him, it would seem Brougham had long failed to recognise the intensity of the anger he was rousing, and had failed to take proper account of the character of Place himself. Bent on dividing Reformers he had not seen he was helping to bring them together. Place and the Westminster group would not be forced over to the Whigs in

* ibid, and cf. Hone's Reformists' Register 15th Feb., 1817.
** Place Papers BM. Add. MS. 27809 f. 57.
*** ibid.
this way. It is likely he had not even realised, at times, how his tongue
had run away with him. It is, however, quite certain that he still
hoped to win over moderate Reformers and, quite incredible as it may
appear, was still intending to bring forward a motion for reform him-
self, as soon as the situation appeared more favourable! His reply
to Cochrane should, therefore, be viewed with this in mind.

After Cochrane had read his 1814 speech, and had defended Cart-
wright, who had collected so many of the petitions, he rejoined ...
"... if those out of doors whose tools the noble Lord was" had
waited, they might have found him ready to state opinions the same as
those read. He had not meant then to say "taxpayer suffrage" but
"direct taxation", and though he would not swerve at the mere produc-
tion of a Tavern Speech, yet he had and would continue to work for a
unity of friends of annual parliaments with more moderate men, division
among whom, pained him.

This has hitherto been considered as mere bluster. Even if,
as is more than probable, he had already conveyed something on these
lines to Place, it may be agreed that it would not of itself prove sin-
cerity of intention. The fact remains, whatever his feelings at this

\[\text{As Professor Aspinall makes clear, op. cit, passim, Brougham}
\text{commonly did let his tongue run away with him.}
\]
\[\text{cf. infra p.165 Also, cf. Sir Robert Wilson Papers BM. Add. MS. 30,152}
\text{f.254. Wilson makes clear, in a letter of Dec. 31st,1816, that the}
\text{Whigs were then still discussing the reform issue.}
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\[\text{Parlt. Debates. XXXV. pp.370-74. Hone's Reformists' Register}
\text{Feb. 22nd 1817.}
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\[\text{E.g. by A. Aspinall op. cit. p.75.}\]
moment, that he did not break off relations with the Westminster group and did stop his attacks on Reformers. Further, it may be virtually certain he was one of the foremost of these Whigs, who came, within a few days, to negotiate a joint plan of campaign with the Westminster group, and quite certain that, within little more than two months, he had re-committed himself to Reformers and was preparing to take the lead in pressing for reform.

Partly because their objections to the proposal to suspend Habeas Corpus and to the proposed Seditious Meetings Bill, were stronger than to other ministerial proposals, - perhaps, too, because their own sense of alarm had lessened - larger numbers of Whigs were, at this point, coming to be ready to make a much stronger stand against the ministry. The 'left wing' group, who were now in favour of staging county meetings to rouse 'outdoor' opposition, now seemed to have a better chance of winning the support of their conservative colleagues too. For their part, the Westminster Reformers, duly noting the signs, became once more disposed to hold their fire in the hope that their attacks had begun to have their desired effect. Cochrane noted, with some satisfaction, that the Whigs had made a good showing against the proposal to suspend the Habeas Corpus, on the 26th February - a day after a Westminster

* cf. infra. p. 156
++ S. Maccoby, op. cit. p. 328.
public meeting had been held to protest against it.\textsuperscript{1} 

It was in these circumstances that negotiations between the 'left wing' Whigs and Cochrane resulted in what appear to have been definite arrangements for a joint campaign. On February 28th, Cochrane wrote ... 

"I have resolved to steer another political course seeing that the only means of averting military despotism from the country is to unite the people and the Whigs, so far as they can be induced to co-operate, which they must do if they wish to preserve the remainder of the constitution."

It seems that it was intended Burdett and Cochrane should join with the Whigs in parliament; that a Westminster public meeting attended by the Whigs should advocate a change of ministers; and that the Whigs themselves should set about organising county meetings.

On March 11th, therefore, a Westminster meeting was held which called upon the Regent to change his ministers. Many of the Whigs, even Grey himself, were praised for their actions in opposing the suspension of the Habeas Corpus. Burdett acknowledged his own exceptional position. It was, he said, the first time he had ever spoken at a meeting in favour of a change of ministers, because he had always thought a change of men, without a change of measures, would be useless. But the present ministers must be checked before they made their despotism complete. Cochrane and other speakers, including Cartwright

\textsuperscript{1} 11th Earl Dundonald and H.R. Fox Bourne, \textit{Life of Cochrane} p. 118

\textsuperscript{11} ibid.
and Peter Walker, echoed Burdett's sentiments, and dwelled upon the 'obvious' signs of impending tyranny. Hone's 'Register' of March 15th, now written by Hone himself, called for petitions from every place in the country, demanding the removal of ministers.

It was not long, however, before the Westminster Reformers and the Whigs were back on their former terms. It seems that, though the 'left wing' group made considerable efforts to rouse and muster the moderates and conservatives of their party, the news of the fresh 'conspiracy' which came in the first half of March (the 'Blanketeers' episode) played into ministers' hands, and prevented them from achieving any success. Comparatively few Whigs could be persuaded to attend parliament and it seems only one or two county meetings could be staged. Doubtless all this angered Reformers considerably, but almost certainly the immediate cause of the fresh break between them was the failure of the Whigs to make any effective opposition to the additional clauses which Sidmouth had introduced into the Seditious Meetings Bill on March 24th - designed to prevent meetings near the Houses of Parliament.

For obvious reasons, Place and the Westminster Reformers were particularly angry at a proposal clearly aimed at them, and designed to

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*ibid.* Place Papers, BM. Add. MS. 27,840 f.301, for an account of the meeting.

** Place found himself too busy with other matters to continue.*ibid.* Place Papers, BM. Add. MS. 27809 f.57.

*** S. Maccoby, op. cit. p.328.

prevent them holding meetings in Palace Yard. It is equally clear that they felt they had a very strong claim indeed to the support of the Whigs in opposing it, in view of Fox's own frequent attendance at Palace Yard meetings. In consequence they arranged to hold a Palace Yard meeting of protest and, at the same time, Burdett and Cochrane discussed arrangements with the Whigs to oppose the whole bill. Plans were made to divide the House on every one of fifty-four or fifty-five amendments or alterations, made since the bill had been introduced, in the hope of securing its postponement until after the Easter recess. But, when the time came, Cochrane found himself seeking to oppose the bill alone and unsupported. The Whigs - as the Westminster Reformers must have known - had been forced to back out of their agreement, since Grey had offered to accept Sidmouth's Palace Yard clause as one of many concessions he made to the Grenvilles to preserve the unity of the party.

There were many incidents at this time which increased the Westminster Reformers' contempt for 'parties' and this, certainly, was one of them! Place prepared another article for 'Hone's Register', which would have appeared, had he published it, as one of the most violent

\* cf. unpublished MS. draft of an article Place felt himself compelled to write for Hone's 'Register' despite the fact he had earlier felt too busy to continue this work. BM. Add. MS.27,854.
\*\* ibid.
\*\*\* S. Maccoby, op. cit., p.328. n.1.
attacks ever launched on the Whigs. For the moment, having watched the behaviour of the Whig party since the beginning of the session with growing bitterness, he clearly viewed it as the last straw.

Yet it is significant that he did not publish it. As it has already been suggested the more obvious features of the battle between Whigs and Reformers at this time, tend to obscure the far more significant tactical aims of both, and it is important to recognise that the 'left wing' Whigs and the Westminster Reformers were nearer together at this time than appearances suggest. Looking back from a vantage point years afterwards, in the knowledge that no permanent, nor really effective union, was ever achieved, and that Brougham ultimately turned more towards pleasing the moderates of his party, it is easy to accept their bitter denunciation of each other at its face value, as evidence that all hope of union was now past. The fact remains that Brougham himself and many of his 'left wing' friends, among them Sir Robert Wilson, Grey Bennet and Lord Althorp, were all, at this time, coming to be increasingly restless under the conservative leadership of the party, and increasingly irritated at the influence of that leadership upon the moderate majority. Whatever their publicly voiced sentiments, it is clear that, privately, they were coming to share the Westminster 

* Place Papers BM. Add. MS.27854.

** It must be remembered too, that Place wrote his narratives at least ten years after this, when it was the Whigs' 'responsibility' for 'encouraging' ministers in their repressive policy which remained uppermost in his mind, and in the knowledge all attempts at union at this time had failed.
Reformers' fear that unless the Whig party came to oppose the ministers much more vigorously, unless it could be persuaded to pursue a more positive and popular policy, ministers must sooner or later provoke revolution. Privately, they were coming to be prepared to agree almost wholly with the Westminster group's criticism of the working of government and the behaviour of parties. 

So far they were still not prepared to make the concessions which the Westminster Reformers demanded of them. They were still not prepared to quit their party. But, at this time, and, increasingly as the year progressed, it could seem that their sense of the dangers and their failure to move their party would force them to make those concessions, and force them to come over to the Reformers. In the circumstances it may well be that Place again held his fire at the end of March deliberately in the belief that, now the damage was done, it would be better if the Whigs were left to themselves to reflect upon how greatly their party had helped to cause it. At the same time, a fresh effort might be made to win them over by other means.

The March issue of the 'Edinburgh Review' had contained an article, ostensibly reviewing two new works by Reformers, which was very clearly aimed, inter alia, at making the Westminster Reformers, who had publicised the works, uncomfortable, by lumping them together with what may

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* cf. e.g. Sir Robert Wilson Papers. BM. Add. MS.30121 f.302.
** cf. e.g. Long letter of Brougham to Lansdowne, July 21st, 1817, quoted by A. Aspinall, op. cit. pp.80-83.
*** cf. Place Papers BM. Add. MS.27809 f.57. These would certainly seem to have been Place's feelings.
be called the 'Cartwright School'. Attack the methods and the measures of those who held annual parliaments and universal suffrage to be the only cure for the country's ills - the two writers concerned, Cartwright and, obliquely, the Westminster Reformers, had all been accused of absurdity in basing their demands upon the doctrine of 'right'. At the same time they and the public had been warned of the inflammatory effects of that doctrine on the 'lower orders'.

The 'message' to the Westminster group had been clear. Did they not see how stupid it was to encourage the 'common people' to bombard the Commons with petitions about their 'rights'? It could only estrange all public men. Did they not see the effect - as Wyvill had warned Cartwright it would be, as far back as 1812 - was that when they had added to their "London democracy a majority of the peasantry, especially in the disturbed counties", it could only bring "mischief, calamity and even ruin" to the country, since the "upper classes of the community" would be even more "intimidated and united" with the Crown?

In the circumstances, it must be obvious why the Westminster group could not let the 'Review' go unanswered, and equally obvious why they had every incentive to hasten the publication of Bentham's 'Catechism of Parliamentary Reform' at this time. The Westminster Reformers,

* Edinburgh Review. Vol. XXVIII. March 1817. Art. reviewing a work by Fawkes and another by R.H. Evans who sought to prove, historically, that Annual Parliaments had once been the practice.

** Ibid.
knowing full well that the ill-feeling of the 'left wing' Whigs was principally directed against the 'extremists', Cartwright, Cobbett and Hunt, and that they were anxious to secure the support of 'moderate' Reformers, were perfectly ready to seize the chance offered them to make their 'terms' clear. Thus, in reply, they were concerned to make a thoroughgoing defence of the extreme proposals put forward in the petitions and to make clear they would support nothing else but a 'real' reform; to emphasise that, whilst they believed custom had established the 'right' of the people to share in government, their proposals for reform were based on their - 'utility'; to embarrass the 'left wing' Whigs as a 'tit for tat'. The publication at this time of Bentham's work of 1809, together with a long, freshly written, introduction, is then to be seen, in part, as one - albeit by far the most important - of the many thrusts which the Westminster Reformers aimed at the Whigs in the next few years.

Whether or not Bentham wrote the Introduction on his own initiative, whether or not Place and/or others persuaded him to do so, it must almost certainly have been written with Place's knowledge and

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It's publication at this time is evident from Bentham's statement of March or April 1819, that the 'Catechism' had been before the public for two years (Bentham MSS., University College, box 132) and from the obvious knowledge of it displayed in parliament - e.g. during debates on Burdett's Reform motion on May 29th (Brit. Debates Vol. XXXVI pp. 796 et seq) and out of parliament at the Westminster group's Annual Dinner, infra pp. 157-60.
co-operation. It is likely that it was amended, as it was being written, to meet particular attacks on the Westminster group by Whigs and 'extremists' as well as Tories. Beyond doubt, however, it was, when completed, intended in part to be a direct reply to the 'left wing' Whigs.

Using as evidence to prove the necessity of reform, the policy of the ministry, the parliamentary proceedings and the behaviour of all parliamentary politicians during the preceding few months, it was clearly designed in part to play on the fears of the 'left wing' Whigs. Fundamentally important as it is in revealing in detail not only the reasons for the Reformers' distrust of parties but for its evidence of the way in which 'party government' then operated, it is important to see that it was also intended to heighten the distrust of the 'left wing' group for their own party in particular. In the same way as they had sought to 'show' the Westminster Reformers they would help to bring about revolution if they did not break finally with the 'extremists', and join with them - so Bentham now sought to show the 'left wing' Whigs there certainly would be revolution if they did not

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* There are many references to, and quotations from, the particular issues of Hone's 'Register' which it is known Place wrote which must have been brought to his attention by Place. Bentham makes an oblique reference to Place's research on the question of Annual parliaments at this time. *Introduction to 'Catechism' (Works III, p. 514).*


*** of *ibid.* pp. 533-535.
leave their conservative colleagues, and join with the Westminster Reformers! *

Written in a quaint, calm, but cynically humorous, manner, and addressed to those who accepted the commonplace arguments against reform, there can be no doubt of the immediate and long term appeal of Bentham's 'Catechism' to the minds of intelligent men. Nor can there be any doubt that his skilfully directed thrusts went directly home to their target. It need not be supposed, however, that Bentham's entry into the political lists was so immediately effective as to be responsible for bringing 'left wing' Whigs and Reformers together again early in May. For this new concordance, there were more concrete reasons, arising primarily from the equally strong determination of Whigs and Reformers of all shades to make a stand against ministers' policy of silencing all press criticism.

The position of radical journalists, even before 1817, had been extremely insecure. Likely to have an ex officio information filed against them for libel and kept hanging over their heads they had, if they were brought to trial, to go before special Juries, likely to be composed of men unfavourable to them. With the suspension of the Habeas Corpus and Sidmouth's famous circular of March, directing that all magistrates might arrest those charged before them with publishing

* ibid p.333. Bentham wrote ... "Even in the House to-day there are a few ... eccentric generous minds' ... (Brougham?) ...'and these the people will have for their leaders"; ... "But to be thus immortalized they must have been transfigured into people's men".
or vending seditious or blasphemous papers, and hold them to bail, their position became even more unenviable. Sidmouth's action was clearly intended to crush all radical journalists, and particularly Cobbett whose 'Register's' circulation had become so vast, who seemed likely to spread sedition among, or to inflame, 'the people'.

It is well known that Cobbett, deciding discretion was the better part of valour, promptly left for America to carry on his 'Register' from there. T.J. Wooler, at this time still editor of the 'Statesman', and editor, too, of the now rapidly rising 'Black Dwarf', and William Hone, who had stayed to fight at home, were, however, both pounced upon by the ministry. In May, both were arrested - the former for publishing sedition, the latter for publishing a series of blasphemous parodies.

If the Whig party, as a whole, was especially impelled, after Fox's example, to make a great effort to resist this new threat to the liberty of the press, it is obvious why the Westminster Reformers, even more directly concerned, should be anxious to make the strongest possible protest. Grey's great speech of May 12th, when he led the Whig attack on the ministry on this issue, undoubtedly facilitated the close cooperation of the 'left wing' group and the Westminster Reformers at this time. It would seem that the latter decided that this was the

* of H. Martineau, op. cit. Bk. 1, Ch. X.

** Black Dwarf. May 9th 1817; H. Martineau, op. cit. Bk. 1, p. 163.
moment - now the Whigs appeared to be recognising more clearly how desperate the position was - when Burdett must make a reform motion, in order to secure the maximum support.

Place made immediate efforts to find out Hone's legal position after his arrest and clearly hoped to rouse a first class storm. Within a few days he was helping to arrange for his friend Hone to be defended in parliament. He wrote to Hone ...

... "About a dozen Whigs are to dine at the Crown and Anchor on the 23rd, at the anniversary of Burdett's election; among them Brougham, who has again committed himself in writing. Something might be said in the Register in praise of Burdett and introduce his motion on the 20th.

The 'Dwarf' has taken up your defence on the right lines and so far as he has gone, has done it remarkably well.

I have just now heard that Brougham intends on the 20th to speak right out in favour of Annual Parliaments, and is determined to go as far as anyone on the 23rd.

Please let me have all the references you can find to parodies on Holy Writ and on the Creeds for the purposes of a good row which will be made respecting them and you in parliament by Brougham and others" ...

Whigs and Reformers co-operated closely in parliament in the campaign on behalf of Hone and Wooler. Further the Whigs gave Burdett considerable support when he made his reform motion on the 20th, made joint arrangements with the Westminster Reformers to oppose the renewal of the Habeas Corpus Act, due to come up in June, and turned out in strength at their Anniversary Dinner.

\[1\] F.W. Hackwood. *Life of William Hone*, p. 146. The 'Dwarf' is, of course, T.J. Wooler's *Black Dwarf*. 
Burdett, to the irritation of the 'extremists', made no specific proposals on May 20th. He was clearly concerned to cast his net as widely as possible. He moved, therefore, for a committee to take into consideration the state of the representation. In the debate which followed, numbers of Whigs spoke vigorously in favour of the motion and Brougham, who excused himself from making a full speech because he was not well, said he was particularly anxious to support the motion because "he went further than his friends" and "stood pledged to state ... (his views) ... explicitly" ... 

... "In the meantime he could only state .... His unalterable adherence to his former sentiments upon this important occasion".

Seventy seven Whigs voted for the committee, a surprisingly large number, and a surprisingly large turn out, in view of the very poor Whig attendance at the House on other important occasions earlier in the year. On the following day, Brougham himself moved for repeal of the Septennial Act.

At the dinner on the 23rd, Burdett and the Whigs could not have appeared more convivial or more ready to laud each other's efforts. Burdett set the tone at the beginning. It would not, he said, "become them to argue on shades of difference or to ground their claims in

\[\text{\footnotesize \textbf{cf.} e.g. Cobbett's Political Register} \text{\textbf{Sept. 13th, 1817, and infra} p.201.}\]
\[\text{\textbf{Parlt. Debates} Vol. XXXVI. House of Commons May 20th 1817. (Underlining my own)}\]
\[\text{\textbf{ibid.} May 21st, 1817.}\]
\[\text{\textbf{Place Papers BM. Add. MS.27840 f.293, for a newspaper cutting account.}}\]
abstract rights; it was enough for them that reform was expedient and
highly necessary. At the same time, Fawkes and Evans, with their great
antiquarian knowledge had given proof that what they asked for was fit
and just. There followed toasts to the Westminster electors and to
Cochrane from the Whigs, and toasts to the Whigs from the Reformers.
Brougham, when toasted, showed he had, almost certainly, recently read
Bentham's 'Introduction', by the manner in which he praised the
Westminster Reformers. He went on to urge a great effort to oppose
the renewal of the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act. London and West¬
minster must meet time after time to petition parliament - and must
lead the country. Such an opposition would carry the day as it had
defeated the Income Tax. Brand intimated jovially that for once
Westminster would not take the lead as he already had a meeting
arranged in Hereford!

Before the new campaign of the 'allies' could be properly launched,
however, Sidmouth at last found out when the next attempt at the
'revolution' he had long awaited was about to take place, and once
more the ministerial 'alarm' machinery was set in motion. Secret
Committees were appointed to investigate ministers' evidence of the
danger. Whatever might have been done to oppose the ministry at this

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The evidence would prove too long to quote here. I can only say
his remarks followed the remarks made by Bentham about the
Westminster Reformers, closely. They may, however, have been
derived directly from Hone's Registers, written by Place.
stage, the news, that 'revolution' had finally 'broken out', effectively stopped any popular campaign against the extension of the Habeas Corpus Suspension. The famous and pathetic 'Derbyshire Insurrection' by a handful of miserable and misguided working men, seemed exactly timed to play into the ministry's hands. *

This time, however, ministerial efforts to excite panic were less successful. On the day of the appointment of the new Secret Committees, June 5th, Wooler was put on trial. On the first of the two charges, the jury was divided, though he was found guilty. On the second the division of the jury on the first charge having become known, he was found not guilty. The great rejoicing at the verdict was a clear sign that the metropolitan 'public' at least was no longer prepared to be frightened about nothing. ** On June 9th, the very day of the 'revolution' itself, the other 'revolutionaries' of the Spa Fields fiasco were put on trial. For the moment it seemed as if the Ministry would secure convictions. But the evidence, which came to light during the trial of Watson - that the ministry had all along known of the dangers, and that Castles, their agent, had been, of all the plotters, the most active and violent; and the reports, which were published in the press,

** Black Dwarf June 11th, 1817. Wooler's own account of his trial. cf. also S. Maccoby/p.334. cf. also, Black Dwarf July 2nd, 1817. Burdett and a number of Whigs were encouraged, by his acquittal on the second charge, to use the verdict on the first as a means of challenging the way Special Juries were picked.
whilst the trial was in progress - that a similar agent had been responsible for the Derbyshire rising, were quite sufficient to secure his acquittal. The Attorney General thereupon dropped the prosecution of the others. The jubilation which greeted the news made even clearer that the ministry's 'revolutions' were becoming increasingly suspect, and even the Lords' Secret Committee, which had made its Report during the course of the trial, showed that its framers were far from happy about the role of ministerial agents. Well might Burdett and the Whigs feel encouraged to attack the ministry vigorously in the closing weeks of the session. 

At the same time, though the prospects for all shades of opposition might appear to be brighter than for a long time, there was, as yet, no firm case to be made against the subsequently famous Oliver, and there was clearly no time for the new 'left wing' Whig/Westminster group alliance to rally opinion against the Ministry before the session closed. Further, when the Whig leader in the Commons, Ponsonby, died at the beginning of July, Brougham showed he had lost none of his interest in securing the leadership of the party in his place. In the circumstances, though he earned high praise from the 'Examiner' for his speech on the state of the nation, in which he violently attacked

i S. Maccoby, op. cit. pp. 334-5.

ii ibid.
every aspect of ministerial policy, it can scarcely be doubted that the Westminster group became highly suspicious of his intentions.†

In August, however, the Westminster group may even have hoped the 'left wing' Whigs would be won over completely. Brougham found he was not to secure the leadership in the Commons and Tierney was temporarily adopted instead. As the long letter he wrote to Lansdowne makes clear, he could not have been more bitter at his party leaders' hesitant and fumbling tactics. It is evident that, at this point, he must have been almost completely in agreement with the Westminster Reformers and Bentham in their view of 'parties', and it is scarcely fanciful to imagine that Bentham may well have encouraged his disgust in conversation at this time.★★

Contemporarily, the August issue of the 'Edinburgh Review' contained an article which considered the state of affairs worse than any since the time of the Stuarts, and held the case for some measure of reform proved.★★★ The 'Reviewer', clearly influenced by Bentham as to the importance of demanding reform on the basis of 'utility', had some kind words to say about the Westminster Reformers and some less kind to say about the danger from those who insisted upon demanding reform on the

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† A. Aspinall, op. cit. p.78.
★★ For Brougham's letter to Lansdowne cf ibid pp.80-82. Brougham showed he was fully conscious of the efforts of the Reformers, and Tories as well to increase the divisions of the Whig party ibid p.82.
basis of the 'rights' of the people - which were very clearly directed at Cartwright.

The course of their relations during the next six months is uncertain, but though it is clear there were factors operating, which must have kept them, for some time, on good terms, yet it is equally clear there were other factors, which were ultimately to drive them further and further apart.

As the economic conditions which had brought great hardships to all classes and so much misery to the poor, improved, so unrest in the provincial areas died away and confidence among the upper middle classes returned. Though the belief that Britain had now turned the corner and was now on the road to economic recovery and prosperity soon proved false, yet optimism increased and tension relaxed. Criticism, obvious enough in June, was to grow in volume thereafter. Save in the case of the leaders of the Derbyshire rising, ministers failed to secure the conviction of any of the 'revolutionaries'! Indeed, the Derbyshire trials in October - which brought Oliver's part in the rising great prominence - and Hone's courageous and successful conduct of his own defence in December, when he was finally brought to trial, served to increase suspicion of ministers. *

The Whig party should have been greatly encouraged by the turn of events. In fact, as Professor Aspinall makes clear, the Whigs could

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* S. Maccoby, op. cit. pp.335-7. E. Halévy, op. cit. p.29. For Hone's famous trial, cf. the very good account by H. Martineau, op. cit. Bk. 1 Ch.X.
not have remained more dispirited in the period before the opening of the new session - and might appear to be splitting up as a party completely.† The Grenvilles, led by the Marquis of Buckingham, now left the main Whig body altogether and made plans to form a new party of their own. Conservative and moderate Whigs still showed themselves unwilling to take any vigorous action at all. The 'left wing' group, more than ever convinced by the events of the preceding months that the party must band together and act aggressively against the ministry, more than ever anxious to take advantage of the change in the temper of the public, became increasingly frustrated by the scant heed paid to their views.** More than ever, they became uncertain as to how far they should take the lead in pressing for parliamentary reform. At one time it seemed, in view of the attitude and behaviour of the 'extremist' Reformers, who were now busy seeking to extend their influence, and attacking Burdett more strongly than they,††† that to take up the matter at this time might prove disastrous. At another it seemed, as Sir Robert Wilson argued, that the only hope of the Whigs winning popular favour and securing office - indeed the only hope of averting revolution - lay in the Whigs taking it up as a party.†† At one point, when it seemed likely the Regent would die and Brougham's protegé the Princess Charlotte would take his place, their spirits revived. But,  

† A. Aspinall, op. cit. pp.83-84.  
‡‡ ibid.  
*** cf. infra. pp.199 et seq.  
**** A. Aspinall pp.84-5.
when the Regent recovered and the Princess died in November, the 'left wing group' touched new depths of depression. The prospect of office, the last hope of rallying any party, seemed to have gone forever.¹

But, though Brougham and his friends may at various times have contemplated making fresh plans for a joint campaign with the Westminster group when the new session began, though the Westminster group may at times have had hopes they would come over completely as 'honest' 'people's men' — it was not to be. In the course of the first half of 1818, both the 'left wing' Whigs and the Westminster Reformers were each to become increasingly divided in attitude toward each other; the former as between those who did, and those who did not, favour co-operation with the Westminster men as Reformers; the latter as between those who favoured, and those who opposed any co-operation with the Whigs as members of the Whig party. Though there was to be no total breach between these two groups until 1819 — for personal friendship and contacts kept both in close touch — yet it is quite clear that, politically, they were to move steadily further apart.

In considering the reasons for this, it must be borne in mind that, as far back as the preceding summer, there had been speculation on the likelihood of an imminent general election,² and that, from the beginning of the year, it was considered certain there would be an election at the end of the session.³ It is clear the calculations of both groups were considerably affected by this knowledge.

¹ See ibid p. 83.
Dispirited and languid as the Whigs were at the turn of the year by their failure to secure the co-operation of their colleagues in the launching of a strong party attack against ministers, it seems that the behaviour of the 'extremist' Reformers at this time finally convinced them that, whatever should be done about parliamentary reform, no definite plan to pursue it should be made at once. Though it seems they intended as individuals, to follow up the various special reforming projects with which they were concerned, it would appear they decided that, as a 'group', they should pursue whichever course seemed best as the session developed, leaving moderates and conservatives to follow as they chose. As they felt their way forward, however, so they began to gain confidence.

Though no strong party attack was made on ministers yet the obvious support given by respectable elements out of doors, and by independents in the House, to individuals, who denounced the whole of the ministers' 'alarm' policy and held their special powers had not only been unnecessary but misused, clearly heartened the whole party. It was clear the country was with Lansdowne, Erskine and Holland, for example, in the Lords, and with Brougham, Bennet, Lambton and Romilly in the Commons when they took this line. In the circumstances Whigs were encouraged to pursue ministers and to bring forward the various

\* A. Aspinall, op. cit. p.84.  \* cf. infra pp. 204 et seq.

*** S. Maccoby, op. cit. pp. 338 et seq.; H. Martineau op. cit. Bk. 1 pp. 223 et seq.
educational, legal and administrative reforming projects they had had little chance of pressing in the previous year. ↑

For some time, however, it seems the 'left wing' Whigs remained uncertain about parliamentary reform. Confronted by the violence of the 'extremists', who now denounced the Westminster Reformers with an increasing ferocity, their instinct was to draw back altogether. The wild plans now coming to be put forward to secure the 'rights' of 'the people', alarming to them, were even more alarming to the majority in the country. In their own uncertainty about reform they recognised the far greater uncertainty and hesitance of the middle classes the more clearly. If no move were made to press the matter, ministers might yet succeed in rousing the country and provoking real revolution. If reform were pressed at this time, it might well be they would find they had themselves taken the first step in encouraging it. ↑

It is clear that Brougham himself became more and more satisfied as the session progressed, and as he sensed more clearly the temper of the middle classes, that it would now be both unwise and unsafe to pursue the matter. True, the 'extremist' Reformers, who had seized the moment tension had relaxed to redouble their attacks on the entire governing class, were gaining in influence among the 'working classes'.

↑ ibid.

Taking every advantage of the change in public temper they were frenziedly seeking to show that ministers had deliberately encouraged the panic for its own purposes, and that the Whigs had connived at their doing so. Even the Westminster Reformers were now condemned as, at bottom, friends to the 'system'. At the same time, it was evident that the middle classes, who were rapidly recovering from their earlier uncertainty and who were showing a growing interest in a more liberal and enlightened administration, continued to view the 'extremist' Reformers and their activities with increasing aversion.

In the circumstances, conscious of the intense distrust of the majority of the party for Reformers, and believing the party was winning greater favour in the country, he seems to have determined it would be absurd to risk losing that favour by pursuing parliamentary reform. It would even be highly dangerous for the Whigs to do so, since they might find, as the Westminster Reformers already seemed in danger of finding, that they would simply be shouldered aside. It was important, therefore, to stand firm and to steady the middle classes. It was necessary to lead them in the pursuit of economic and administrative reform, which would, at one and the same time, help to calm the country, reduce the power of the Crown and bring the Whigs to office. It was equally necessary to put down the 'extremists', who might yet convince the middle classes the ministers' alarmist policy was justified, and to discourage the Westminster Reformers from playing their
Wilson came to take the opposite view. Precisely because the middle classes had ceased to panic; precisely because the 'extremist' Reformers were becoming more dangerous, it was in his eyes even more necessary to give the former a strong lead for parliamentary reform. If ministers were not completely checked soon, the 'extremists' hold on the 'working classes' would increase, and Revolution would be inevitable. If the Whigs did not give the country a strong lead for moderate reform now it would be too late.

In the event, it was Brougham's views which carried the day. Parliamentary reform was again shelved by the 'left wing' Whigs - as it was shelved by the rest of the party - until the season improved. Wilson alone, though maintaining a tenuous connection with the Whigs and keeping a wary eye on the 'extremists', came over to the Westminster Reformers in March. In the same month, though the direction of his thoughts must already have been known to Reformers, Brougham made clear to all that he had no intention any longer of wooing the Westminster Reformers.

On March 2nd, he showed his disapproval of radical pamphleteers,
whether 'ill treated' or not, by attacking the now popular Hone for his 'blasphemous' parodies, despite the fact Hone had just been acquitted of blasphemy in court.\(^\dagger\) On March 16th, he committed an even worse crime in the Westminster Reformers' eyes. In a debate for a motion to reimburse the High Bailiff of Westminster for his election losses, he not only pressed they be made good from public funds without any enquiry into the 'legality' of his office, but quoted figures - holding them to be proved - far in excess of his proved legal losses as published in the previous Select Committee's report on the subject. The Bailiff, he said, was willing to take half - still in excess of any proved losses - and he and prominent Whigs all pressed that, in future, the Bailiff be properly safeguarded.\(^\ddagger\) Thereafter, he and his friends continued to make publicly clear that the Westminster Reformers must abandon the 'extremist' Reformers completely, and accept Whig leadership.

Contemporarily, the Westminster Reformers were becoming more clearly and completely divided in attitude, than the 'left wing' Whig group. More acutely aware than the Whigs of the activities of the 'extremists', and of the danger that their influence would be undermined, they believed, like Wilson, that now was the time when the middle classes must be given a strong lead for parliamentary reform.

\(^\dagger\) A. Aspinall, op. cit., p.85.
More closely in touch with the 'common people' and more apprehensive of the consequences if ministers were allowed to pursue their course unchecked, they believed it imperative the Whigs be persuaded to move in parliament. Confronted, however, by the attitude of the Whigs on the one hand, and that of the 'extremists' on the other, the divisions of opinion within the group, referred to above, became sharper.

First, there were those, the largest body, composed of those increasingly disgusted and alarmed by Cobbett, Hunt, and others who now rose to attack them. They believed, even more strongly, they must stand closer to the Whigs and emphasise their distaste for the 'extremists', who were now bringing ridicule upon their cause, but who might well bring ruin to the country. Despite the attitude towards reform which the Whigs displayed towards the 'public', it is evident considerable numbers of the Westminster group still retained hopes of winning them over by persuasive argument. The Whigs, at least, were continuing to show some interest in 'the people's' cause and were pursuing many reforms, valuable in themselves. If Whig suspicion of them were calmed, it might be easier to influence them and to draw them further than they could be driven. This body may be regarded as following the example of

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\# supr. pp. 35. The attitude of the 'extremist' Reformers is discussed more fully infra. It, pp. 52 et seq.

\#\# On May 18th, Sir Robert Heron proposed the abolition of the Septennial Act and 42 Whigs supported it,—cf. Champion May 25th,—amidst the plaudits of moderate Reformers.
Waithman a year earlier, and as approving of Burdett's lead. Burdett and a number of his friends, now the subject of constant and violent attack by Cobbett, had recently formed their own political club, the 'Rota', which demonstrated their political independence. Politically, as well as socially, however, they remained on good terms with the Whigs. Though they continued to make clear their belief in the necessity of parliamentary reform, though they - Burdett particularly - felt it necessary to make gestures to win back the support of the 'common people' and to placate Cartwright, yet their disfavour for extreme measures of reform, and their aversion for the 'extremists', remained obvious enough.

Second, there were those, a small minority, increasingly angered by continued Whig hesitancy, who were wholly against showing any favour to the Whigs and who were driven by their attitude to feel it was essential to take up a tactical position nearer the 'extremists'. Convinced they must continue to bring the strongest pressure to bear on the Whigs, they were, however, scarcely less disgusted with the latter than the first body. More and more they became inclined to believe

* Not all approved his gestures to the 'extremists', however. White's Independent Whig now made clear it favoured a 'moderate' Reform - Triennials and Household Suffrage; the Champion for whom J.C. Jennyns wrote a great deal, and the Sunday Review, likewise. cf. Place Papers BM. Add. MS. 27,841 ff. 33, 302, 387-8.

** Lord Broughton (J.C. Hobhouse) Recollections of a Long Life, 11, 114. Among its members were Hon. D. Kinnaird, Scrope Davies, Michael Bruce, Henry Bickersteth, Sir Robert Wilson, Hobhouse and Burdett.
that to show greater favour to Cartwright would serve to reduce the effect of the 'extremists' attacks on them, reassure the 'common people', and be the best means of bringing the country behind them.

Third, there were those who normally looked to the leadership of Place - but who were themselves extremely uncertain at this time. In Place's view, it was still first of all vital the Westminster Reformers' independence be maintained in the eyes of the country. It was essential, therefore, that they continue to stand clear of the Whigs, but equally essential they continue to show they had no favour for, and were not to be frightened by, the 'extremists'. They must rouse the middle classes to a proper sense of the dangers; they must reassure the 'common people'; they must preserve their position; but the only way to achieve these aims was through their own positive exertions. At this time, however, and except that he did not agree about showing greater political favour to Cartwright, he was much nearer to being in agreement with the second body. It had come to seem to him of far more immediate importance that the Westminster Reformers re-emphasise their independence of the Whigs.

At the very beginning of the session, Place had been made extremely angry by the attitude of the Whigs, when he had tried to enlist their support in opposing the High Bailiff's claim for reimbursement. Over the past few years, he had spent further time and trouble investigating historically the local administration of
Westminster, and was more than ever convinced that the Dean and Chapter were, as matters stood, bound to pay for the staging of elections, and that the Bailiff had no right to charge anybody anything. Knowing his claim for re-imbursement of his past losses was to be debated, he had again written to a number of Whigs, urging them to press for a full investigation into the administration of the Dean and Chapter, stating the case to be made and giving them the findings of his research. It was important, he urged, not only in order that the High Bailiff's position be made clear, but so electors should come to understand the local government under which they lived.

Thus, when Brougham and his friends had refused to take any notice of his entreaties, had asserted that a candidate should pay for his election, and had sought to secure for the High Bailiff a greater sum from public funds than it could be shown he had legally spent, Place's gall rose. That Brougham, the very man, who had proved in Court when defending Burdett, that, under the Hustings Act, the Bailiff was not legally entitled to any payment for his services, should now publicly assert that the Act was really meant to make men, who stood for election, liable for its cost, he found infuriating. But, as he wrote,

\[1\] Place Papers HM. Add. MS.27,841 f. 10. Letter of Place to ? (an M.P.) Feb. 8th,1818, urging him to press for a Committee to investigate the Bailiff's position. The matter was being raised because of the expected General election.

\[II\] ibid. Place makes clear in this letter he was contacting other M.Ps.
"all the leading Whigs" (including Althorpe, Tierney and Mackintosh) "took part against the electors of Westminster. None would say the electors were willing to remunerate the Bailiff if it was found out they ought to do so."

It was not, however, anger at any particular 'demonstration' of Whig 'selfishness' which convinced him as to the course the Westminster Reformers must pursue. He was becoming seriously worried at the prospect that the position Westminster Reformers had won might be sacrificed or destroyed. That Burdett and numbers of the London and Westminster Reformers had now sought shelter behind the Whigs was, in itself, dangerous; that their behaviour had led the 'extremists' to direct the full force of their attack on the Westminster Reformers, might well prove disastrous.

Viewing Whig behaviour as the session developed, he had recognised the Whigs were coming to be more and more satisfied it would be safe to desert 'the people' again. But unless they were exposed, 'the people' would find out too late that they had merely been assisting them to secure office, and in the explosion of anger which would follow, the country would be delivered into the hands of the 'extremists'. In his eyes, if at all times it was vain to hope to win the Whigs over by gentle methods, it might, at this time, be fatal. If the Whigs believed the Westminster Reformers were coming to support them, they would only be encouraged to pursue their own selfish course. If the 'extremists'

*ibid* 27.350 f.272. It is conceivable this last Brougham his last f. 280.
believed that the Westminster Reformers had gone over to the Whigs, it
could only lead to the increase of their influence among 'the people'
at the Westminster Reformers' expense. Thus, if all they had so long
worked for were ever to be achieved - if revolution were to be averted -
they must not only make greater efforts to show the middle classes that
the dangers, and the need for radical parliamentary reform, were daily
growing; but must make greater efforts too to reassure and to keep the
confidence of the 'common people'.

The Whigs, he believed, must eventually be driven to act by their
fear that if they failed to do so, there would be revolution. But
unless the Westminster Reformers maintained their leadership of 'the
people', unless they were in a position to 'control' them and to
'dictate' to the Whigs how they must act, unless they forced them to
act soon, they, as well as the Whigs, would be overwhelmed by it.

Place's fears - here derived partly from the expression he gave
them in pamphlets he wrote, or inspired, later - may well appear over
dramatized. But there can be no doubt that he and many of his friends
were becoming considerably alarmed at the way the Westminster Reformers'
political position was endangered, for reasons which will appear more
clearly below. Believing the Westminster Reformers must display their

\* cf. e.g. among many, his unpublished 'Reply' to Lord Erskine in 1819
EM. Add. MS. 35, 154, passim, and J.C. Hobhouse's A Defence of the People
in reply to Lord Erskine's Two Defences of the Whigs.

\# cf. infra. pp. 203 seq.
independence and fight to preserve their leadership of the reform movement, he was to be driven to make great efforts to draw the 'party' together again, and away from the Whigs. But, for the time being, his influence behind the scenes was to be of no avail, and, as the general election drew nearer, uncertainty within the Westminster group tended to increase.*

It would seem that the arrangements of February 1818, for Bentham to draw up and Burdett to move in parliament, a series of resolutions advocating Annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage, were made, partly to demonstrate the independence of the Westminster Reformers, partly to answer the 'challenge' of the 'extremists'.†† The aim, it appears, was to give the country a clear lead in a way that would, on the one hand, make the Whigs uneasy, on the other, make clear to the 'common people' in the country at large, that the Westminster Reformers were still to be trusted. 'Universal Suffrage' was a term which might mean whatever one chose to read into it, but, proposed by Burdett, it would make quite clear the Westminster group's independence of the Whigs. Place, himself, may well have hoped that, in so far as the Westminster group were more clearly committed to radical reform, it would help to force those

* cf. infra. Ch. xii. 1. (pp. 219 et seq.)
†† J. C. Hobhouse (Lord Broughton, Recollections of a Long Life 111.114) says the idea was concocted there. Bickersteth seems to have negotiated as an intermediary between Burdett and Bentham, cf. M. W. Patterson, op. cit. 111. 462. For letters on the subject by, and to, Bentham, cf. Bentham's Works (Bowring) Vol. X. 491-3. Place certainly amended them cf. Add. MS. 27841 f. 6. Reasons why Burdett may have been persuaded to move these resolutions are suggested infra. p. 210.
among the group, who favoured co-operating with the Whigs, back into line.

In the event, Burdett did not bring forward the resolutions for annual parliaments and universal suffrage until June 2nd - just before the end of the session. Very clearly they were brought forward then for immediate tactical reasons, as an election 'manifesto'. But whatever Burdett's own feelings about the results he achieved, it is clear the reaction to them served only to increase disunity among the Westminster Reformers and their supporters.

In no way did Burdett's motion 'alarm' the Whigs. Growing in confidence during the session, and undoubtedly aware of the attitude of Burdett and many of the Westminster Reformers, the majority of the 'left wing' were, by this time, clearly convinced a strong stand should be made against the 'extremists'. Whereas, on other occasions, many Whigs might have felt compelled to make clear that, though they did not approve of radical reform, yet they did believe some lesser measure of reform was necessary - now, not a single Whig was prepared to vote for the discussion of the matter by the house.

It seems, in fact, that they found it a splendid opportunity not only to display their contempt for 'extremists', but to embarrass the Westminster Reformers for 'identifying' themselves with them at this

\[\text{Parlt. Debates, Vol. XXXVIII. House of Commons, June 2nd, 1818; and Place Papers W. Add. MS. 27841 ff 84-85 for the pamphlet editions of his speech, which were published by the Westminster group.}
\[\text{M.W. Patterson, op. cit. 11. 457. Only Cochrane supported him.}\]
time. Thus when Burdett, who had moved the resolutions on the grounds of their 'utility', proceeded to justify them as resting upon ancient historical practice, Brougham seized his chance. Mockingly and satirically, he made clear the Whigs believed the 'Cartwright School' laughable, and all those, who held opinions deriving from it, deluded. The Westminster Reformers can scarcely have missed his implication.

In no way did Burdett's motion serve to bring those among the Westminster group, who favoured co-operation with the Whigs, back 'into line'. The Whigs recognised well enough that Burdett had been driven to make a gesture and that he and many of his supporters now favoured a more moderate reform than hitherto, and those who had drawn nearer the Whigs had been given no good reason to suppose it was any less likely the Whigs might be persuaded to move for moderate reform. It seems more than likely that they took the Whig attitude as a further signal that the Whigs would only consider taking up matters if they stopped trying to compete with the 'extremists', and drew apart from them altogether.

It certainly did not serve to satisfy the 'extremists', as will be indicated below. Not for a moment did they believe in the sincerity

\** Heron's motion, cf., supra. p.172, had been made less than a fortnight before. Heron's motion. p.172.
\*** cf. supra pp.291-3.
of Burdett’s conversion! Not for a moment were they prepared to allow the 'working classes' to believe in it either. Long before the Westminster election of July began, the majority of the Whigs were, in fact, able to delight in the embarrassments of their old enemy, and no-one was to show that delight more clearly than Brougham.
II The Westminster Reformers and the 'Extremists'
(1817-18)

As has been indicated, the Westminster Reformers were, in this period, drawn by their sense of urgency to make greater efforts - not only to move the Whigs but to reach the ear of the middle classes direct, and to counter the influence of those who came together to form, in effect, the nucleus of an extreme 'left wing' Reforming 'party'.

The 'extremist' group of Reformers were, of course, far less of an organised 'party' than the Westminster group, whose own organisation was negligible. Further the individualist tendencies, and the individual, and independent fame of its leaders, made close harmony between them impossible. At the same time, there can be no doubt that Cobbett, Hunt and Cartwright and others, such as Wooler, Gale Jones, Carlile and Sherwin, who now came to the fore, did co-operate - and at times very closely - both in their efforts to rouse the working classes and in bringing 'pressure' to bear on the Westminster Reformers. For this reason, and for practical purposes, the term is, therefore, convenient.

Wooler had been a debating society associate of Gale Jones. He succeeded Cobbett as editor of the 'Statesman' in January 1817, and also became editor of the new 'Black Dwarf' cf. Dict. Nat. Biog. and infra. For note on Black Dwarf, Carlile helped to distribute the Dwarf and also helped to print Sherwin's 'Republican', later called the Weekly Political Register. Carlile later became its editor and owner. For Sherwin cf. Dict. Nat. Biog.; for Carlile, cf. C.J. Holyoake, Life and Character of Richard Carlile.
In the course of the eighteen months from the beginning of 1817, the majority of the Westminster Reformers are likely to have come to view Cobbett, who was for most of the time in America, and Hunt with even greater personal and political ill-feeling. If their direct and personal attacks on Burdett and the 'Westminster Committee' disgusted them, there can be no doubt that their influence among the 'working classes' alarmed them considerably.

Their attitude towards Cartwright personally, had always been, and clearly remained, very different. He could not be regarded in the same sense dangerous as Cobbett and Hunt. Nor did he, himself, except on two or three occasions during elections, attack them directly. Yet there can be no doubt that, on political grounds, they had good reasons for viewing him with a growing irritation, if not anger. Though Cartwright - and it need hardly be surprising - did not care to imitate the violent methods of Cobbett and Hunt, yet he was, in his own way, no less ready to criticise and to bring pressure to bear on Burdett and the Westminster group. On the one hand, and directly in his own name, he came to direct a series of politely phrased letters to the press, thinly veiling or implying strong criticism. On the other, indirectly, and less obviously so far as the general public was concerned, he came to address them more vigorously through Wooler and the pages of the new, and soon powerful, weekly 'Black Dwarf'. Whether or not Cartwright

*cf. infra. p. 292; 2, pp. 51, 119.*
himself was the financial backer of the 'Dwarf' there can be no doubt that, in the course of 1818, it became very clearly his 'party' organ, and that through it, his views came to reach a much wider audience. Further, in Wooler he found a man willing and able to speak more vigorously than he. Since it was his political programme that Cobbett and Hunt pushed, and since he was himself still upheld by them as a figurehead, it may be seen why the Westminster Reformers' disapproval of him tended to increase. Cartwright, for his part, believing they were thwarting his every move and, in particular, preventing his election for Westminster, became increasingly bitter in his attitude towards them.

In the early part of 1817, however, and despite their feelings for each other, both groups of Reformers drew together to defend themselves and 'the people' generally from Tory and Whig attacks. However small their desire to co-operate, it is clear they recognised it was essential to shelve their differences for the time being and to make as concentrated a counter attack on the ministry, and its Whig 'allies', as possible.

There was, it is true, some bickering. Hunt spoke vigorously against Burdett in a Westminster public meeting and against Waithman in a

* A. Bain, *Life James Mill* raises the question of whether Cartwright was the Dwarf's financial backer. Any close study of Cartwright's activities at this time reveals that Wooler was completely behind him. It may be, cf. *Life of Cartwright* 11. 137, Cartwright to Northmore 18th Aug. 1817, that Cartwright's connection with Wooler dates from the latter's imprisonment. It may be, cf. *ibid* 11. 149, 154, that he had no more than a private arrangement with Wooler, or that he employed subscription funds to assist Wooler.
Common Hall meeting, and both gave equally vigorous replies. Cobbett, too, attacked Waithman in the 'Register', though he, at this point, only murmured against Burdett. Cartwright did his best to persuade Burdett to bring forward 'the people's' reform bill in a manner which showed his exasperation.

But these incidents apart, public recrimination was kept to a minimum. Both groups seem to have co-operated privately as well as publicly in opposing the ministry's repressive legislation. Place, himself, may not have favoured the political agitation among the 'common people'; but, quite apart from the urgency of the moment, quite apart from tactical considerations, he was quite determined they, and their petitions, should be defended. Cobbett, Hunt and Cartwright may have disapproved his and his friends' attitude completely, but they were not, at this moment, disposed to reject their assistance.

Thus, as already noticed, Place not only defended the extreme programme of universal suffrage and annual parliaments, which Cartwright's printed petitions had demanded and upon which the deputy meeting had agreed, but defended, and helped Cochrane to defend, Cartwright himself. At the same time, Cleary sought his co-operation over the wording of the petition it was intended to present to the Lords, which was drawn up

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† Examiner Feb. 16th; Hone's Reformists Register March 1st.
‡ Cobbett's Political Register, Jan. 11th, Feb. 1st, Feb. 8th, 1817.
+++ In a series of 'Letters to the Lord Mayor' (Wood) in the Statesman, cf. Cobbett's Political Register Jan. 24th, 1818.
originally by Cobbett on behalf of Reformers generally and ...

"as there was some difficulty from the necessity there was to allude to the report of the secret committee, great care was taken in wording the petition - so that while there was to be good reason for its rejection, if the House held to its orders, it should clearly deny the truth of the allegations in the report" ...

Whether or not Hunt sought his aid personally, it is not unlikely he was concerned with the presentation of Hunt's petition too. Cobbett's 'Register' of February 22nd, took an almost identical line to that of Hone's 'Register' of the same day. Both recounted how Brougham had been 'displayed' when Cochrane read his 1814 pledge on reform, and Cobbett described how Place had given it to Cochrane in a way which suggests he had first hand information. On March 1st, Cobbett gave great prominence to Cleary's and Hunt's petitions. It is, further, clear that he and Cochrane co-operated closely in trying to get public meetings of protest going.

But whilst the Westminster Reformers were quite prepared to co-operate with the 'extremists' group in crisis circumstances, whilst they were anxious to defend the meetings and petitions of the 'common people', they were also very much concerned to make their own attitude

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1 Place Papers RM. Add. MS. 27809. f. 87; also cf. Cleary's Letter to Cartwright June, 1819, ibid. f. 181

22 At least he refers to it several times when he speaks of helping with the Cobbett/Cleary petition. cf. ibid. f. 106.

33 Cobbett's Political Register, March 1st, March 15th.
clear and to emphasise that it was to the middle classes that they directed their appeal. It was they alone who could save the country from ruin. Universal suffrage was justified, but the mass of 'the people' must, and naturally would, look to their leadership.

Thus, in the Address written by Place to advertise the forthcoming first issue of Hone's 'Register', it was made clear that the new paper was primarily intended to further their political education. The petitions and public meetings, which were now condemned, showed that "the glorious light of knowledge" was spreading amongst 'the people' and could never be darkened by repression. It was useless for 'the people' to look to their hereditary guardians.

"It is to the middle class now, as at other times in this country, the salvation of all that ought to be dear to Englishmen must be confided; it is amongst this class the great improvement has been going on: it is from this class, now informed as no class in any country at any time were informed, that whatever of good must proceed."\^M

Place also seized the opportunity to remind the country, at a time when parliamentary reform was being condemned out of hand, how well the 'middle classes' had managed in Westminster when they had come to conduct their own political affairs. For Hone's 'Register' of February 15th, therefore, he wrote an article upholding Burdett's 1809 plan of reform, showing that, very far from its being visionary, it had been demonstrated as being practical since 1807. Recounting the Westminster Papers BM. Add. MS. 27809 f.52.

\^M Place Papers BM. Add. MS. 27809 f.52.
Reformers' action in that year he asserted ...

"Westminster has replied to the calumny of the enemies of reform 'that the House of Commons was corrupt because 'the people' were corrupt'. Where among them was the corruption?"*\\

In Westminster, where the opportunities to corrupt were stronger, and the temptation to be corrupted greater, than anywhere else in the country, the electors had shown their independence

"Those who dare say the corrupt people make the Honourable House corrupt, should have the example held up to them."**

But 'the people's' success in 1807 was no momentary triumph. They had, over ten years, conducted other elections, fought three legal actions and had held upwards of thirty public meetings, all at their own expense, at a total cost not exceeding £4000.

Place's comment was pointed enough, in view of the recent ministerial gesture reducing service estimates and officially encouraging the abolition of a few sinecures.

"Talk of reformation and economy indeed, here are examples of both. Here is no petty retrenchment from petty extravagances; here is a real reform in management and morals, at once demonstrating that the people, and the people alone are willing and able to do their own business in the least expensive manner."***

He drew a parallel between the reaction of the governing classes to the action of the Westminster Electors in 1807, and their reaction to the petitions for reform at this time. When Westminster had been

* Hone's *Reformist's Register* Feb. 15th, 1817.
** ibid.
*** ibid.
the plaything of faction, 'the people' had been regarded as mere tools. The men who had been elected, regardless of their talents, had been supposed thereby to become "Solon-like and inspired". But all they had learned was how to calumniate 'the people', so that, like a surgeon at a college, they could pass their examinations for preferment. It was no wonder the electors of Westminster had been abused in 1807 for doing their duty - and it was no wonder now that the petitioners should be abused now.

But Westminster was a practical answer to the calumnies of their 'natural' leaders. There was now peace and order, as well as economy, in the conduct of its political affairs. Westminster, in fact, presented a fair sample of what would happen - of how the whole people would conduct themselves - if Burdett's plan of reform were adopted and they came to have the same right of voting as the people of Westminster. Burdett, himself, had proposed Household Suffrage. He had never denied the right of Universal Suffrage; he had merely said it would be an innovation. Household, or Taxpayer, Suffrage was, in his view, the minimum extension of the franchise which would be adequate.

As indicated already, it is not known for certain on whose initiative plans were made to publish Bentham's 'Catechism' with a freshly written and topical Introduction - or precisely when the writing of the Introduction was first begun. But however and whenever first undertaken, it is above all important to see it as the product of an
attitude of mind identical to that of Place at this time, and important
to see it as pursuing a course identical to that which Place had first
set in Hone's 'Register'. In many instances the same points are made
and the same illustrations given. It is known that Bentham and Mill
were impressed by Place's articles and his use of the 'Register,' and
they were all clearly in close contact. If, in one aspect, it may be
seen as a direct reply to the Whigs, and as a direct attempt to draw
over their 'left wing' group, it may also be seen, in another, as a
direct attempt to publicise the cause of the Westminster Reformers,
to rouse the middle classes and to calm and 'educate' the 'common
people'.

Whatever their private attitude had been as individuals before, it
should be recognised that it was only now that the Westminster Reformers
ceased to demand parliamentary reform on the basis of the natural
rights of the people, only now, they came to advocate it on the basis of
'utility' - as a party. It was, further, only now that Bentham clearly
and publicly identified himself with them as the 'party' philosopher.

* A close analysis of the notes made by Place in his narrative and of
the points made by Bentham in his Introduction is here impracticable.
I can here only give as my opinion that, if the two are read in con-
junction, the identical attitude of mind is obvious, and that there
must have close co-operation. At some point, probably later in the
year, Place edited the work for popular consumption, and helped to
arrange for its publication early in 1818 in the 'Black Dwarf'. cf.
Place to Hume, March 1st, 1839, quoted by G. Wallas, op. cit. p.84, and
cf. infra. For the close contact of Mill, Place and Bentham at
this time cf. ibid p. 73,79. Place Papers, BM. Add. MS.27809, f.52.
The 'Catechism', together with its Introduction, should thus be regarded, as it was regarded by contemporaries, as their new party 'manifesto'.

Did the public (i.e. the middle classes) doubt their intentions? Bentham could assure everyone they were not revolutionaries, and certainly had no intention of abolishing the Monarchy or the House of Lords. Was there suspicion of their 'programme'? Bentham made clear that their position was still substantially that taken up by Burdett in 1809. But though they were satisfied Household Suffrage would still be a perfectly satisfactory means of ensuring that the interests of the whole body of the people would be represented in parliament, yet they now saw that Universal Suffrage would ideally be preferable and practicable.

Did the public doubt the practicability and advantage of radical parliamentary reform? If America were too far away, or if they doubted the evidence there, they had only to look to Westminster - their own capital. If anyone had not seen or could not see for himself, he might refer to Hone's 'Register' and read what had happened there, since 'the people' had come to manage their own affairs.

Did the public fear men like Cobbett and Hunt would enter parliament and act as levellers? Surely it must be recognised that the ruling classes had, in their determination to prevent the spread of

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\*
Introduction to Catechism, Works 111. 441.
\*** ibid. 458, 472, 520, 533.
\**** ibid. 472.
enlightenment, deliberately tried to excite suspicion of such men. Cobbett, for example, had been foremost in urging 'the people' to maintain good order. But, in any case, had they not the same interest as all other individuals in encouraging individual initiative and in upholding the institution of private property in order to promote national prosperity - viz. their own interest in their own property? Had not other men, represented as far more dangerous than they, the same personal interest?*

Was there still doubt that there would be "haranguing" and "thronging" - that 'the people', inflamed, might fail to recognise their own interests? Unfortunately there were many less well informed than those in Westminster. But 'the people' needed "not the time but the liberty to inform themselves". There was no danger in their acquiring knowledge. It was the present blind determination to stop them acquiring knowledge, which, by preventing them making their own judgments, brought the danger they would be led astray.** It was necessary only to look again to Westminster, where it was clearly demonstrated that, once 'the people' had succeeded in informing themselves, they would act peaceably and judge matters correctly. Further, had 'the people' there not naturally looked to their superiors and chosen two

* ibid. 471 et seq.
** ibid. 467, 474.
aristocratic representatives on their merits?

There is much else in Bentham's 'Catechism' which helped to make the position of the Westminster Reformers clear, and his arguments, especially when popularised by his disciples, were soon to become familiar. But whilst their influence on the progressive Whigs and on sections of the middle classes, was, over the course of time, to be considerable; whilst their more immediate impact even among sections of the 'working classes' was by no means negligible - they failed in any way to impress the 'extremists'!

Neither Place nor Bentham can have had any serious hopes that Cobbett and Hunt would be placated. At best they can only have hoped that their gesture in favour of universal suffrage at this time would keep the 'working classes' behind them, and diminish the 'extremists' influence. But quite apart from the fact that Bentham's pedantic style made it likely that few among the 'working classes' would make any attempt to read it, the determination of the 'extremists' to prevent the Westminster group 'deluding' them, made it virtually certain from the start that its influence among them would be limited. Though Cartwright was to arrange for the publicising of the 'Catechism' when

\[ \text{ibid} 468. \]

\[ \text{cf. Bentham's Works X. 490, which reveals that, by August, all but 100 copies of the Catechism of an edition of 750 had been sold, and that it was decided not to reprint it then for fear of prosecution.} \]

\[ \text{John Wade, a 'working class' man who started the Gorgon in 1818 was taken up by Place and Bentham and his paper certainly publicised Bentham's views. cf. Place Papers EM. Add. MS. 35,150 f. 91; also G. Wallas, op. cit. pp. 204-5 and infra. pp.293., 316. n.2.} \]
Bentham was producing reform resolutions for Burdett to bring forward in parliament - partly, it may seem, with the aim of keeping Burdett up to the mark - he was, in due course, to make clear his disapproval of the very idea of advocating the restoration of anything so sacred as 'the people's' 'natural rights' on the basis of expediency. ¹ Cobbett, who had refused to publish the 'Catechism' in 1809, was later, and in the process of attacking the Westminster Reformers, to dismiss Bentham contemptuously as an 'unknown creature of theirs', whose book on parliamentary reform was unreadable, the language being unintelligible, and the matter, 'not only bombast, but quaint bombast'.²

But, making due allowance for Cobbett's dislike of Benthamite economics, for his own and Hunt's distrust of Burdett, who came to take up Bentham's programme, and for Cartwright's distrust of the argument of 'expediency', it may be virtually certain that one of the prime reasons for their failure to be impressed was that they were never for a moment convinced that Place, Bentham or any of the

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¹ cf. infra p. 119. Cartwright's Address to the Electors of Westminster (April 6th, 1819). Cartwright, of course, had been in touch with Bentham since 1811, and remained so.
² Cobbett's Political Register, Dec. 12th, 1818.
Westminster group had any sincere intention of pressing for universal suffrage at all. Viewing matters through their eyes, Bentham himself might or might not sincerely believe in universal suffrage, though he had made more than unclear his readiness to be satisfied with less. But whether he did or did not, it must have seemed to them that he had been persuaded to advocate it at this time, solely to suit the Westminster Reformers' 'party' purposes — and in a way which did not commit them firmly to take it up. But whatever their first reaction, yet, as they watched the Westminster Reformers draw closer to the Whigs in May, they must have felt it was quite certain they would not do so.¹

Nonetheless, it was not until the end of the session that the Westminster Reformers, and the country as a whole, were made aware of the full extent of the 'extremists' hostility for Burdett and themselves. Cobbett, who had left the country, was temporarily out of touch with home affairs anyway. Cartwright seems to have felt disposed to wait and see how Burdett would keep his promise to bring

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¹ For Bentham's own reactions to Cobbett's comments on his 'Catechism', cf. Bentham Mss. Unpublished Letters to Lord Erskine 1819, Letter.11. Even..."Mr. Cobbett (with much gnashing of teeth)....confesses in his agony his knowledge of the existence of the work of which the merits of this real band of patriots"....(the Westminster Reformers)..."form the most striking object"....
forward a reform bill. Hunt certainly made his feelings clear by attacking the Waithman group at a London meeting in May, and would, doubtless, have done so more often, had it been possible to stage other public meetings at this time. But the opportunities for him to express himself clearly before a large audience were severely limited.

In any case, there were other factors which must have tended to prevent them pressing forward at this time. Cartwright, indeed, aiming to circumvent the new restrictions on public meetings and to encourage 'the people' to show their feelings, was already busy circulating petitions to be signed by no more than twenty at a time. But even he must have recognised it would be dangerous for the moment to attempt to rouse them to agitate openly. Again, the urgent need to keep the ministry from stifling the press completely and to defend Hone and Wooler, made continued

1. Burdett had, according to Cobbett, promised to bring it a month after the beginning of the session. cf. Cobbett's Political Register, Jan. 24th, 1818.
2. Cobbett's Political Register, Oct. 4th, 1818.
3. Cf. S. Bamford. Passages in the Life of a Radical 11. 44. He wrote, "Hunt was still somewhat turbulent but he was powerless for he had lost the genius of his influence when he lost Cobbett, and was now almost like Sampson, shorn and blind".
4. Life of Cartwright, 11. 137. Cartwright to Northmore 18th Aug. 1817. His aim, of course, was to avoid the infringement of the Tumultuous Petitioning Act of 1661.
co-operation for a while, expedient. Thus despite their great irritation at Burdett’s own association with the Whigs and at the appearance of large numbers of the Whigs at the Westminster group’s annual dinner; ¹ despite their anger at Burdett when he moved in the Commons, on May 20th, for a committee to enquire into representation, instead of bringing forward Cartwright’s bill of reform, their ill-feeling was kept substantially in check. ²

By July, however, Cartwright could restrain himself no longer, and those who handled the publication of Cobbett’s ‘Register’ in his absence—who were able to exercise discretion in the printing and editing of articles he sent them—were quite prepared to make full use of his denunciation of Burdett, written months earlier in America. ³

It is clear the ‘extremists’ were particularly anxious to take advantage of the changing temper in the country. The reaction to the revelations which came in June as to Castle’s part in the Spa Field riot, was obvious, and the rapidity with which alarm at the Derbyshire rising gave place

2. ibid and Dec. 20th, 1817.
3. cf. ibid Jan. 9th, 1819, which makes clear the then Printer of the Register, Jackson, had the latitude to print what he thought fit.
to suspicion of Oliver's role in provoking it, encouraged them to make fresh efforts to rouse opinion against the ministry. At the same time, as economic conditions improved, as the country as a whole became calmer and unemployment among the 'working classes' decreased, so it became altogether safer to encourage them to agitate again for parliamentary reform. They were, therefore, anxious to drive Burdett and the Westminster Reformers to action.

It is equally clear, however, that their anger against Burdett had increased. Believing the Derbyshire rising to have been entirely provoked by the ministers, Burdett's failure to make a strong stand against them at the beginning of the session, which might have checked them in their course, came to seem altogether worse. The treachery of the Whigs had been obvious and expected. But now, especially when a general election might come along at any time, it was essential to display the treachery of Burdett and his supporters, before they had any chance of deluding 'the people' again.

1. ibid. in particular Nov. 1st, Nov. 18th, 1817. Burdett did denounce the ministers' use of spies on June 16th, 1817. cf. S. Bamford. op. cit. 11.137 and Place Papers B.M. Add.Ms 27808. f.119, which contains Lemaitre's petition to the Commons of June 23rd. 1817, against the continued suspension of the Habeas Corpus - referring to his persecution of the nineties. Burdett strongly supported it.

2; Life of Cartwright 11.137. Cartwright to Northmore Aug. 18, 1817. Cartwright expressed his belief there would be a general election in the autumn.
Cartwright set the ball rolling. In July and August he published a series of letters to Burdett and in the 'Statesman'—a paper formerly edited by Cobbett, now, until it ceased publication, in Wooler's hands. The letters were in no sense violent, but they made quite clear to all who cared to read them, what Cartwright's feelings were about Burdett's behaviour in February and March, and his half-hearted attitude subsequently. More immediately concerned that Burdett should be compelled to take up his reform bill (or a reform bill), and to present it in the next session, Cartwright was unwilling to press Burdett too hard. Cobbett however, had very clearly made up his mind long before, that Burdett must be pulled down completely—that if he did not care to move, someone else must be found who would. Thus, in the July 26th issue of the 'Register', just after it had resumed publication, there appeared the first instalment of Cobbett's "Last Hundred Days of English Freedom". Over the next few months the public were shown not only how the Tories had deliberately set out to excite 'alarm' in order that they might crush 'the people', who had dared to protest about their sufferings, not only how the Whigs had 'helped' them, but how Burdett, who had been more than anyone responsible for encouraging 'the people' to cry 'out', had betrayed them. \(^2\)

1. ibid. II.126.; Cobbett's Political Register Jan 24th, 1818.
2. Cobbett's Political Register July 26th and intermittently thereafter.
At the same time, Cartwright was making arrangements to step up his 'petitioning-by-twenties' campaign. He had, it seems, become friendly with Wooler at the time he had been in prison awaiting trial, and whatever agreement there was between them, seems to have dated from then. Thus, in August, whilst Cartwright himself drew up a new form of petition in the name of the Hampden Club and advertised it in the 'Statesman', Wooler, in a long article in the 'Black Dwarf', praising Cartwright, pushed the scheme as hard as possible.

In the following month Cartwright himself urged 'the people' to petition in a letter in the 'Black Dwarf', and Wooler, in a public letter to Cobbett, called upon him to take the scheme up, stressing the importance of his 'Register' as a means of reaching them.

Meanwhile Cobbett, presumably encouraged to do so by his advisors in England, had been writing further and stronger articles against Burdett, the first of which appeared on September 13th. Once again Burdett's betrayal was gone over. If he were changing with age, if he felt, as he so often said, that he could do no good in the House then he should give up. If he were now attacked, it was because it was necessary.

1. Life of Cartwright. 11. 137. Cartwright to Northmore, Aug. 18 1817.
since he had not defended them – for 'the people' to defend themselves. 'The people's' eyes were now open... 'No army ever owed its ruin to the defection of a general more decidedly than we owe our temporary defeat to his abandonment'...

Burdett could speak well enough at the annual dinner meeting about 'the people's' need to resist tyranny, but he did not resist it himself. When further, he boasted of the many 'respectable' (Whig) gentlemen about him and...

"grounded his confidence of final success on their support, he did not recollect perhaps that there was not one single family to which these respectable gentlemen belonged, who had not used their utmost exertions, including all manner of acts of foolishness and baseness to prevent the Electors of Westminster from having any .... real voice in choosing their representatives" 1

As for his proposals on May 20th, that the Commons should set up a committee to consider the state of the representation. What use was it to ask the 'place' he had trained his Palace Yard listeners to regard with contempt as the 'Room over the way' to form itself into a committee to consider the matter? Nothing could suit the ministers better than a committee which would keep it well tucked out of sight.

- In another episode of the 'History', appearing in October, he developed the line of attack on Burdett he had taken up earlier. The real reason for Burdett's behaviour was his determination not to share his eminence with anyone else.

1. ibid
2. ibid. Oct. 11th, 1817.
That was why he had broken with Paull in 1807, why he had refused to appear with Hunt at Spa Fields, why he had refused to attend the deputy meeting. It was because he saw so many able men springing from the ranks of 'the people' that his attitude had now changed. That was why he now kept harping about the importance of 'property' and the propertied classes. He knew he would be quite safe amongst the mediocrities they produced.

In the 'Register' of December 20th, yet another similar article ended by warning electors in Westminster that Burdett would be likely to foist a Whig on them if he had the chance, and by insisting that they should not vote for him unless he agreed to press for universal suffrage. Almost simultaneously, Cartwright's reform bill was published together with a fanfare from the 'Black Dwarf'. In January the 'Register', praising his bill and advocating his election, launched a violent

1. ibid. Dec. 20th. Cobbett may have heard rumours, or it may have been a thrust in the dark. Certainly, early in the year, Sir Robert Wilson's name was being talked about - but for Southwark, cf. Wilson Papers. B.M. Add.Ms.30.122. f.158. Brougham's name may have been talked about too. G.D.H.Cole says it was, but in circumstances which suggest he was mistaking the occasion for that of 1814. There is, however, evidence which does suggest Brougham may have been considered by the Westminster group, cf. Place Papers B.M. Add.Ms.27350. f.280 - though he must have been rejected almost at once. Later Cobbett, doubtless, got to hear of the Westminster group's interest in Hobhouse or Kinnaird, cf. infra. pp.26, 122 etc.

and personal attack on the Westminster Reformers direct.\(^1\)

With the new session at hand, and an election in sight it now became clearer that the 'extremists' were determined they should move or be broken. In issue after issue of the 'Register' Cobbett seemed to be inciting the 'Common people' to revolt, scarcely bothering to veil his opinion that they had the right to do so, and would almost certainly have to do so, if their rights were to be secured.\(^2\) There was, he said, none but those whom their so-called superiors called the 'lower orders', who wanted a real reform. At the same time Cartwright and Wooler with him, continued to dangle a reform bill before 'the people's' eyes, showing them exactly what their rights were, and began to project fresh schemes, through which they might obtain them.

In recognising the course pursued by the 'extremist' group in the latter half of 1817, the uncertainty of the 'left wing' Whigs by the turn of the year, and the even greater uncertainty of the Westminster group, must become the more understandable. In the same way, if the increasing violence and wildness of the

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1. Cobbett's Political Register Jan 3rd. \(\text{1818}\).

2. C.D.H. Cole, op. cit. p.221 says that "only the weakness of the Reformers in case of an appeal to force against the overwhelming resources of the government, only this, the prospect and the prospect of obtaining radical reform without force, by the speedy collapse of the borough-mongering system held him back from advocating its use".
'extremists' in the early months of 1818, is also recognised then the subsequent reaction of both, referred to above - the growing confidence of the Whigs, and the increasing uncertainty and disunity of the Westminster group - must also become the more understandable.

There can be no doubt about why the bulk of the middle classes now turned even more decidedly against parliamentary reform, and no doubt why, now that the country-wide working class unrest of 1816 and early 1817 had died down, and prosperity seemed to be returning, they came to view the 'extremists' indeed all Reformers, with disgust rather than alarm. Nor can there be any doubt why parliamentary politicians, though condemning all Reformers, ridiculed them and spoke of them with contempt rather than anger. If, however, the position and difficulties of the Westminster Reformers in the election of 1818 are to be fully explained, if too, the Whig attitude towards them and more important, their attitude to the Whigs, is to be clearly seen, it is essential to examine the activities of the 'extremists' and their relations with the Westminster group at this time, more closely.

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Even before the turn of the year, the Westminster Reformers must have recognised that, unless they made a move to

l. cf. supra pp. 166 et seq.
disarm the criticism of the 'extremists', their own election hopes, as well as those of Burdett would be seriously endangered. In October, Hunt had been greatly angered by the lack of readiness he had found among them to take up the cause of the Derby prisoners and it must have been recognised he was certain to cause trouble.\(^1\) Cobbett's article in the 'Register' of January 3rd, however, gave them much greater cause for alarm.\(^2\) Vigorously attacking the 'Westminster Committee', Cobbett re-opened an old line of attack on them, which was to prove highly successful. Addressing what was to prove the first of a number of 'Letters' to Hunt, and continuing his tirade against Burdett, he now turned to show how the Westminster Reformers had become merely his hired and self-interested 'tools'. He would display the Westminster Junto!

1. Hunt had tried to get the metropolitan Reformers to make a stir on behalf of the Derby prisoners and had failed, principally, it seems, because there was uncertainty as to how far a 'spy' had really been 'responsible' for the 'Insurrection'. Hunt himself had then gone to Derby but had done no good. During the trial the Defence had not sought to expose ministerial agents but to blame Cobbett and other similar 'wild men' for having led them astray. When Cobbett heard of this, and of Burdett's and the Westminster group's failure to aid Hunt, he was furious. cf. C.D.H. Cole, op. cit. p.222.; Cobbett's Political Register Nov.1st, 8th, March 14th April 25th, 1817; Times June 30th, 1818 for letter of Cleary to Hunt; Cleary's letter to Cartwright 1819. Place Papers B.M. Add. Ms. 27809, f.181; and cf. infra p.216 et seq.

2. Place Papers, B.M. Add. Ms. 27809, f.106, contains Cobbett's article with irate notes on it by Richter which shows the Westminster group contemplated a reply.
After Cobbett had 'won' the election of 1807 (no man, Cobbett made clear, had one tenth so much part to do with its success as he) he had, he said, thought the 'Committee' which had formed to conduct Burdett's election should dissolve, lest, by becoming an established body, it became possessed of powers useful for mischievous purposes. He had foreseen the danger that its members might seek to intervene as 'principals' when they were simply the 'agents' of the 'people'. Horne Tooke and Burdett himself had both feared lest Burdett become the tool of the 'Committee'.

The Committee' had continued its existence, but as matters had worked out, its relationship with Burdett was the other way. It had few original members, but those who remained active, did so simply to serve Burdett and their own interests. Brooks (over conceited and fond of rich connections) remained at the head; Adams gave occasional attention; Harris was active and Sturch hung on - but there were few others. Brooks had often said that he and his son (Henry Brooks) and his son-in-law could form a committee at any time. But it was more "like one of the regiments that have been cut to pieces abroad and that is just come home, being as the army term is, a skeleton; or to speak in terms more appropriate, what remains of it is a 'rump' of the old committee"

Cobbett had much else to say, which was designed to illustrate his contention that Burdett and his handful of

1. Cobbett's Political Register Jan 3rd, 1818., from which the following is taken.
2. Samuel Brooks, of course, was, of the Westminster group, most often in the public eye.
'lackeys' had long sought to stifle liberty in Westminster, and to reveal the kind of men his 'lackeys' were. Brooks, for example, could not have been more honest..."I would trust him with property to any extent", but, of course, large sums of money passed through his hands and there was "pin money"; important people visited his glass shop and helped his trade; his own advertisements might appear on letters written on behalf of the 'Committee' which were paid for by public funds.... and so on.1

Cobbett's account of the Westminster Reformers' activities is too long to examine closely here. It is, therefore, impossible to show how much the truth was distorted — how many statements had no basis of fact whatever.2 But whatever damage his malignant attack on the character of the Westminster leaders may have done them personally, there can be no doubt that his description of them, as a 'self-imposed' 'Rump', was to cause them a very great deal of harm indeed. Taken up on all sides, it was to worry supporters of the Westminster group considerably.4

1. Whatever his reasons he made no mention of Place.
2. Place Papers. B.M. Add.Ms. 27809 f.106 for Richter's comments on Cobbett's 'Calumnies'.
3. As Bentham later noted, in a pamphlet, he was preparing a against the Whigs, Cobbett merely anglicised the term 'caucus' with which he became familiar in America. Bentham Mss. University College. Box 132. Letters to Lord Erskine 1819) III. The term 'caucus' was taken up and applied by the Mackintosh and Grey to the Westminster group before the end of the year. cf. infra. p. 117. n.1.
4. cf. infra p.117. Cobbett, at this time, accused Burdett of trying (contd.)
The precise point at which Burdett decided he must make a gesture, or gestures, to re-assure 'the people' is not known. Nor is it known whether or not his Westminster supporters helped him to reach that decision. The circumstances, however, make it understandable enough. Cobbett's new line of attack on Burdett and the Westminster group was developed in successive weeks, and, on January 24th, the 'Register' was devoted to an Address by Cobbett to Cartwright in which he urged Westminster electors to take up Cartwright in Burdett's place. On the 30th, the 'Register' was devoted to praise of Cartwright's bill. It is not difficult, therefore, to imagine why Burdett came to be persuaded he must move. Back in town at the beginning of the session, he must at least have been aware of the feeling of his supporters. He was much more accessible to Cartwright. Still chairman of the now almost extinct Hampden Club he must have found his persistent efforts to get him to further his schemes difficult to resist.

Thus, at the beginning of February, he became chairman of a committee to raise funds for those who suffered imprisonment when the Habeas Corpus was suspended. On February 13th,

(continues)

To foist Roger O'Connor on Westminster. Burdett had stayed in Ireland to help O'Connor defend himself against charges of robbery, when, according to Cobbett, he should have been defending the Derby prisoners. Cf. M.W. Patterson, op. cit. 11.428.

2. On the state of the Hampden Club cf. Life of Cartwright. 11.143.
he presented a reform petition in the Commons from a Westminster parish, (St. George's), almost certainly one of those drawn up by Cartwright. It must be virtually certain it was arranged that it should be signed by twenty persons, and presented by him, partly to test the Commons' reaction, partly to publicise Cartwright's scheme. Burdett's speech, presenting it, was pointed enough. He made clear that it was one of many petitions signed by twenty persons only. In this way the people of England could make their voice heard legally and without the danger, which accompanied attendance at public meetings — that spies might cause a riot.

It was, however, the petition itself which caused a minor sensation and Castlereagh, indeed, asked for it to be re-read, clearly uncertain as to whether he could trust his ears. In it the petitioners asserted that unless reform were granted they proposed to pay no taxes. In the 'Register' of January 17th Cobbett had hinted that the people should follow this course. Now Wooler, in the 'Black Dwarf' of February 18th, took the refrain. To refuse taxes, he said, was the right attitude. No taxation without representation. Everyone should refuse to pay taxes until they secured reform.

1. ibid.
3. ibid.
4. Black Dwarf, Feb 18th, 1818.
A week later, however, the 'Black Dwarf' altered its tack. Clearly the backers of the scheme had had second thoughts. Wooler now suggested a plan which should be tried before the taxes were refused. It was, he said, clear that such places as Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham and Sheffield should have representation in a parliament meant to represent the interests of all. The 'right' of returning representatives to parliament was a 'right' inherent in the people, and parliament had no power at all to deny that 'right' to anybody. Therefore, these places should elect their own representatives and send them to enquire from the House why they should be excluded. The elections, which should be carried out in the mode suggested in Major Cartwright's bill, would show how well 'the people' in populous places could conduct themselves. If, he went on, 'the people' stood together, they must succeed as the Americans had succeeded. The Americans had not denied the need for taxation, they had only demanded the right to tax themselves. The towns of England could not secede as the colonies had done, but they must insist upon reform on the same principles. If 'the people' stood firm, parliament would realise it must bow.

Wooler's advocacy of what must, almost certainly, have

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1. ibid. Feb. 25th, 1818.
been Cartwright's scheme, seems to have encouraged principally contempt at this time. ¹ But it must help to explain the *Edinburgh Review's* persistent attacks on Cartwright, obvious whether his name was mentioned or not, and all those, Burdett included, in any way associating with him. ² Further, ministers can scarcely have failed to keep watch until the scheme, with Cartwright and Hunt to the fore, was put into operation, when economic depression returned in the following year.

Meanwhile Burdett had written to Bentham with an urgent request that he should prepare a reform bill, and the negotiations which were to lead to Bentham drawing up, and Burdett undertaking to propose in parliament, resolutions calling, *inter alia*, for universal suffrage, were begun. ³ At the same time, arrangements to publish a cheap edition of

1. *Life of Cartwright* 11.137, Cartwright to Northmore Aug. 18th 1817 refers to a great scheme he has which does not seem to be the 'petitioning-by-twenties' campaign and may well have been this scheme which was, of course, to culminate in 'Peterloo'. cf. infra p. 121.

2. *Life of Cartwright* 11.153. Cartwright complained, in particular, of the persistent attacks on him of one of the 'Reviewers' — almost certainly Brougham.

Bentham's 'Catechism', and plans to stage a Westminster public meeting which would proclaim his and the Westminster Reformers' favour for universal suffrage, went ahead. Unable to meet in Palace Yard whilst parliament was sitting, it was found impossible to secure permission, or impracticable, to stage a meeting elsewhere. In the end it was agreed to risk staging it in Palace Yard during the Easter recess. According to the law it was eventually summoned by a requisition signed by seven householders.

It was made quite clear, however, even before the meeting was staged, that however much Cartwright might be mollified it would make no difference to the attitude of Cobbett and Hunt. On March 14th, the publishers of Cobbett's 'Register' printed a letter from him to the electors. He addressed those who had elected Burdett out of public spirit, not the 'rabble' who chaired him after he had expressed approval of the Corn Bill! They were to think well. If you re-elect 'Burdett as a matter of course'; ..."or if you receive your other member from his nomination or from that of any Club or Committee, if this be the case, then he is the patron of the City'.

1. It was at this point that Place edited, in conjunction with Wholer, a special edition of the 'Catechism'. There can be little doubt that Cartwright, who was pushing Burdett at this time, facilitated the publication for publicity purposes. Certainly 'his' Palace Yard meeting of March 23rd praised and thanked Bentham. It would seem Cartwright's aim was to ensure Burdett should, as far as possible, be publicly committed to bringing resolutions for universal suffrage forward as soon as possible. The aim of the Westminster group in co-operating in the staging of the meeting...
Repeating all his earlier charges against him, he gave the 'history' of Burdett's behaviour towards the Corn Laws.¹ In the circumstances there can be little doubt that the Westminster Reformers must have expected trouble when the meeting would be held in little over a week's time.

The Palace Yard meeting of March 23rd, styled a meeting of 'Inhabitant Householders' to emphasise its legality, and attended by, among others, Burdett, Cochrane, Cartwright and Hunt, can, in fact, have given little satisfaction to the Westminster group.² Hunt, before the business of the day could be brought forward, launched an impassioned attack on the 'Junto' who had made the prior arrangements for the meeting – at a 'secret' pre-meeting. Matters should have been decided in the open and by 'the people' – not by a few contemptible householders.

It was Cartwright's 'secretary', Cleary, who had cooperated with the Westminster group in the preparations, who rose to reply. Conscious that Hunt regarded him, along with the Westminster group, as responsible for having prevented action on behalf of the Derby 'conspirators' in October, he

(contd.)
must have been in part to provide an opportunity for Burdett to win back background.

¹. Cobbett's Political Register, March 14th
². For an account of the meeting cf. Special issue of Black Dwarf March 23rd, and regular issue, March 25th, 1818, from which the following is taken.
well recognised Hunt's attack included him. He explained the arrangements had been made in the same way as always, except that seven householders had summoned the meeting, instead of the High Bailiff, to conform with the present state of the law. Originally all inhabitants had been summoned, but, believing it would make the meeting illegal, the word 'householders' had been added to the requisition.

As for the main business of the meeting, Cartwright and Hunt carried the day. Cochrane now showed he did not approve of the printed 'petitions-by-twenties' scheme, and urged that it be dropped. People, he said, should meet in public in their local areas. The House would never accept a printed petition. But he was voted down. Cartwright's resolutions, showing the country that Westminster now favoured annual parliaments and universal suffrage, and thanking Bentham for his championship of the people's cause, were then passed. Hunt urged the people to refuse their taxes. Burdett, as chairman, ended the proceedings. He would, he said, make no promises, but he would always do his best to please his constituents. Leaving the subject of universal suffrage, he devoted his speech to ministry's evil use of Oliver and other spies.

1. It was Cleary who had written to Hunt saying there seemed no hope of securing aid for the 'conspirators' cf. infra p.
Cartwright, indeed, got a great deal of publicity out of the meeting. A special issue of the 'Black Dwarf', on the same day, circulated his speech and his resolutions recommending petitioning and universal suffrage. The normal issue of two days later, reported the meeting and again announced to the world that Westminster had now declared itself in favour of universal suffrage. Regardless of what he said at the meeting, Burdett was now clearly committed to take it up.  

Hunt, too, got a lot of publicity — mainly unfavourable to himself it is true — but his charges against the Westminster 'Junto' had not passed unnoticed.

Burdett and the Westminster Reformers, however, not only failed to impress 'extremist' opinion, but excited the strong disapproval of 'moderate' Reformers who objected to their having anything to do with Hunt or with Cartwright's 'absurd' ideas. The 'Champion' and the 'Independent Whig', which had long supported Burdett and the Westminster Reformers, now emphasised their moderation, spoke scathingly of Burdett and blamed the 'extremists' for bringing disunity to the movement.

In April, Cobbett's 'Register' contained another and even more violent attack on Burdett, clearly designed for election

1. cf. Bentham's Works X.494. It may be that Bickersteth's proposals for a union between Burdett and Bentham was read at the meeting or otherwise publicised.

purposes. He and Hunt, Cobbett wrote, had all along protested against the staging of the deputy meeting. They had only attended it to prevent trouble. Burdett had been principally and, by implication, solely, responsible for it, and had, therefore, been responsible for bringing large numbers of innocent deputies, such as Benbow, Mitchell and Bamford under ministerial suspicion. It was for that reason they had been imprisoned.

In the same way, the Berbyshire Reformers had been harried because one of them had been a deputy. Yet Burdett had not done nothing in parliament — he had not even taken the trouble to defend the Berbyshire prisoners at their trial. It was this refrain which was kept up in the 'Register' to the time of the election itself, and this refrain which Hunt, already with strong feelings on this point, later took up on the Hustings in the election.

It was about this time that Hunt determined he would stand at the Westminster election himself. So far there had been no official announcement of Cochrane's intention to retire, though it had been expected for some time. But it is likely he would have stood anyway, and was at this time being encouraged.

1. Cobbett's Political Register April 11th.
3. April 25th, May 30th, 1818.
privately to do so by Cobbett. It may be imagined he, Cobbett and others of their supporters, including Sherwin and Richard Carlile, knew full well, at this stage, that the Westminster group intended to propose one of Burdett's 'Rota Club' friends - Hobhouse or Kinnaird - or possibly Fawkes, in the event of Cochrane retiring, and were quite determined he himself, and any friend of his, must be strongly opposed. It may equally be imagined that they knew full well that Cartwright, who was still very anxious indeed to secure election, would be set up by Peter Walker, Cleary, Wooler and others of his friends. But, from their point of view, assuming Cartwright was not swept aside before the poll began - which they must have believed would be likely - it was obvious he was not the man to denounce Burdett as he must be denounced on the Hustings.

Whatever the case, it is quite clear that Hunt and his friends had no intentions of waiting to see what would happen. On the contrary, they sought to cause - and to some extent succeeded in causing - the maximum consternation among the Westminster Reformers. It was, as Hunt must have known, being arranged at the annual dinner that Kinnaird and possibly

2. Cobbett. Political Register (Dec. 12th 1818) - referring to the 1818 election, then said, in effect, that Hunt had only stood because it had looked as if Cartwright would allow himself to be pushed aside.
Hobhouse were to be introduced to the electors and that
Cochrane intended to announce his decision to retire.\textsuperscript{1} In¬
vited or not, Hunt and one of his supporters, Gale Jones,
attended the dinner on May 23rd, and after Cochrane had stated
he would not stand again, Hunt, despite the uproar he created,
despite being shouted down time and time again, succeeded in
making clear he would stand himself.\textsuperscript{2}

The consequence will be noted below. Here it perhaps n
more important to reflect on the indication it gives of the
weakened prestige of Burdett and the Westminster group, and of
the growing confidence of Hunt. That he should attack the
'Burdettites' at the very moment when they were commending
themselves on their triumph in 1807, is significant enough.
But significant too, is the fact that few newspapers had much
sympathy for them, and many were only too delighted to take
up Cobbett's and Hunt's charge against the Westminster group—
that they were a self-imposed 'Rump'.

There is no better way of summing up the position of the
Westminster Reformers at this time, than by recalling the
position of the Whigs and the fundamental dilemma which be¬
set them as a party during much of the nineteenth century
Hemmed in by Tories on one side and the Westminster Reformers
on the other, it might well seem - could certainly be argued-

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} cf. infra. pp.224 et seq.
\item \textsuperscript{2} For an account of the dinner, cf. \textit{Champion} May 25th, 1818.
\end{itemize}
that if they did not move they must be crushed. Yet it might equally seem, in view of the objections which would be raised, that almost any move would play into the hands of their enemies and would bring that danger nearer. If, as at times, their dilemma was acute, the party might well come to be in a state bordering on inertia. If the Westminster Reformers are, at this point, imagined as being now in a position similar to that of the Whigs; if they are seen as 'hemmed in' between the Whigs on one side and 'extremists' on the other, their position may be seen the more clearly.

It is, however, important to remember that precisely because the Westminster Reformers were so obviously embarrassed and Reformers generally, so divided, the dilemma of the Whigs had lessened; precisely because the Whigs had come to gain greater confidence in opposing them, the uncertainties and worries of the Westminster Reformers had increased. It was now the latter's turn to worry about their very existence.
CHAPTER XII.

The General Election of 1818

1. Defensive Hesitance: the 'Committee's' Election Preparations.

Towards the end of the session of 1818, ministers, increasingly hard pressed over the matter of the allowances they had proposed should be paid to the Royal Dukes on their forthcoming marriages, and aware of the growing preparedness of independents in the Commons to support the Whigs, showed themselves anxious to arrange a dissolution and the election of a new House as quickly as possible. The Whigs, on the other hand, conscious of the support they were winning and anxious to extract every advantage from the present mood of the existing House, showed themselves equally anxious to prevent a dissolution for as long as they could. The attitude of both parties is understandable.

George III's death was expected, and if he were to die before the writs assembling a new House could be issued, the existing House would have to be recalled and the game might yet go to the Whigs. Consequently ministers took the quite exceptional step of arranging for the Regent to come in person to dissolve parliament - to speed matters up. In their turn, Whigs, and Reformers too, promptly denounced those who were responsible for an action, so 'despotic' and 'insulting' in itself, and so 'clearly' designed, by its very suddenness, to secure them a more obedient House.

2. Ibid. pp 247-8.

The sudden interest of the Royal Dukes - and of the country - in their marriages, sprang of course from the fact that Princess Charlotte's death left no heir to the throne beyond the first generations of George III's descendants.
But if, in familiar fashion, Whigs and Reformers could again condemn the Tories for making a 'self-interested' appeal to the Treasury, they could hardly pretend the ministers' precipitant move had increased their disadvantage. As it has been seen, the election had been expected in some quarters for nearly a year, and Whigs, Westminster Reformers and 'extremists' alike, had all clearly, been considering their election arrangements since January.

By the end of April, the Westminster group may well have felt that arrangements for Southwark and for the City of London were being satisfactorily made. In the Borough, Westminster and Southwark Reformers jointly, were to support Sir Robert Wilson, who had been officially adopted as an 'independent'. In London, Waithman and Wood were to stand — again in association with the Westminster Reformers. Many of them, however, must have been seriously worried by the situation in Westminster itself. For some time, it seems, the possibilities of bringing forward either one of Burdett's two close friends, John Cam Hobhouse or the Hon. Douglas Kinnaird — both of whom were interested in securing seats — had been tentatively considered. But, so far, no action had been taken to make certain of their own attitude or the attitude of the electors on the subject. 1.

1. It seems that the Westminster group had, at one stage — probably in the middle of, or in late 1817 — reconsidered Brougham, but that his attitude over the renewal of the High Bailiff's Act once again turned decisively against him. Cf. Place Papers B.M. Add. Ms. 27850 f. 280. Another person considered seems to have been Charles Wetherell, who had successfully defended the Spa Field's rioters in June 1817. He refused. Cf. H. Martineau op. cit. Bk. I. pp. 250-51. Hawkes may again have been approached too. Cf. Champion May 25th 1818, fore-report of Burdett's speech at the Westminster group's Annual dinner.
Doubtless it was for some time difficult to take action whilst Cochrane's intentions remained uncertain. Doubtless, too, they were beset with the usual difficulties of planning any course of action too far in advance. But it is evident that the prime reason for their failure to move earlier is to be traced to the indecision and alarm produced among them by the scorn shown them by the Whigs on one side, and by the persistent attacks on them by Cobbett and Hunt on the other.

Cobbett's attempt to convince 'the people' that all that remained of the original 'Committee', which had conducted Burdett's election in 1807, was a pathetic handful of individuals, clinging to him solely out of self-interest, appears very obviously now as an attempt to 'write' them out of existence. Implying that all honest men had long since left them, his aim was to persuade the public the Westminster Reformers could and should be contemptuously dismissed. To many contemporaries, but more especially to those who lived in the country, who would be used by this time to reading of the part played by the comparatively few of them who were willing to act in the open, Cobbett's description of the Westminster 'Rump' was, doubtless, plausible enough.

Viewed literally his assertion - that only a few of the 'original' Committee survived - contained a partial truth. It is a fact that in the course of the past ten years, many of the 'original' supporters of Burdett and the Westminster Reformers had died or retired.}

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But it is quite clear that the majority of those who had taken the initiative and the leading part in the election of 1807 were still active, and that their numbers were much greater than Corbett attempted to suggest. It is equally clear that gaps in the ranks' had been, or could at any time be, filled by men who were prepared to give them active assistance. Further, it was to be shown clearly in 1819 and 1820 that the number of electors who favoured the Westminster Reformers had grown considerably, and had their election arrangements been handled efficiently, at this time, it is more than likely that the increased volume of support for them would have been revealed more clearly earlier. But arrangements were not made efficiently. Stung and hurt though they were by the attitude of the Whigs, and by Corbett's slanderous attacks on them, there is no doubt that the leaders of the Westminster group were as determined as ever that an independent stand should be made in the election. They were, and remained, however, too long undecided as to the best course to pursue.

On the one hand, there were good arguments in favour of taking up Kimmaird or Hobhouse. It seemed they were genuine enough Reformers; it was to be expected they would work well with Burdett. They were both men of 'rank and talent', and the adoption of either might be expected to please those of their supporters who now favoured keeping on good terms with the Whigs in opposition to the 'extremists'.
On the other, there were good argument in favour of taking up Cartwright. If they did so, it would make their independence of the Whigs quite clear to all, and would either silence the attacks of Cobbett and Hunt, or show them to be entirely self-interested. In view of the determination of Cartwright himself to stand, and of his supporters to set him up, it would help to promote unity and strength among Reformers. Hobhouse or Kinnaird were, as persons, preferable, yet they were unknown to the people, and might not be taken up by them.

Despite a greater readiness to cooperate with Cartwright for tactical reasons, the balance of opinion among them at this time, remained clearly in favour of Hobhouse or Kinnaird. Whatever advantages were to be gained by taking up Cartwright - and at a later stage they were still few, who could bring themselves to tolerate the idea of Cartwright as their representative. At best he was far too old, and likely to appear, and to make them appear, ridiculous in parliament. To convinced Benthamites, his ideas and his simple faith were clearly pathetic. At worst, his readiness to accept the patronage of Cobbett, his own veiled but persistent criticism of them, and his 'crazy' schemes, made them fear the consequences, if his prestige among the provincial 'working classes' were increased.

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1. These were some, like Sturch, who wanted no second candidate at all. *cf. infra.* pp. 247, 249.
Therefore, it would seem a meeting should have been arranged by the leaders of the Westminster group to settle the question, and to decide upon a course of action — so far as it could be decided — as early as possible. But quite apart from the customary unwillingness of many to commit themselves to any future course which they might later, through business or other difficulties, find difficult to pursue, there was another reason for their unwillingness to act at this time.

There can be no doubt that Cobbett’s attacks on the Westminster ‘Junto’ had made the majority loth to risk encouraging further charges that they were arranging matters in private, and loth to pursue any course, unless it had been sanctioned openly by the electors. In the circumstances, there was a disposition to wait until Cochrane’s future plans were certain and then to lay matters before a public meeting. As on past occasions it was to be shown that Place, almost alone among them, had the force of personality and the initiative to draw them together and to get them to act efficiently as a party when they were in difficulties. But Place was still unwilling to agree to undertake the management of an election in public, and therefore unwilling to take any action which might leave him morally committed to do so. Without someone or something to compel them to act, the Westminster Reformers, for too long, allowed matters to drift.

It does not seem to have been until May that the first tentative steps were taken to sound the attitudes of Kinnaird and Hobhouse. No approach was made to Hobhouse until the eve of the Reformers’ Annual Dinner, by which time it was known to the Westminster group that Cochrane would retire.
On May 4th, Kinnaird was visited by members of a special committee set up to arrange a dinner to honour Cartwright's long service to the cause of reform, and asked to take the chair on the occasion. Whoever projected it, it seems a number of the Westminster group viewed the dinner as an opportunity to demonstrate their solidarity and to reassure Reformers in the provinces that they had not deserted them. It is clear they now viewed it as well as an opportunity to bring Kinnaird's name before the electors.

But, by this time, his election for Bishop's Castle was being arranged, and he was still undecided whether to offer himself for Westminster. At this point, he was also very uncertain whether it would be wise to countenance Cartwright so conspicuously. Though it must have been about this time that he accepted an invitation to the Westminster Dinner on 23rd May, so that he could be introduced to the electors, it is evident that nothing was yet fixed, and that it was still necessary to make an approach to Hobhouse. On May 22nd, Burdett wrote to Hobhouse, asking for reassurance as to his readiness to advocate universal suffrage and annual parliaments, and for a definite decision as to whether he would accept election for Westminster.

1. Broughton Papers, B.M. Add. MS. 36,457 f.19. Kinnaird to Hobhouse, 4th May, 1818. He mentioned Place was in favour of his taking the chair.
2. ibid, f.42. Joseph Hame to Hobhouse, 9th June, 1818, refers to Kinnaird's arrangements for election at Bishop's Castle with which he was connected locally. cf. also Morning Chronicle 18th June. These arrangements eventually fell through, and he was not elected for this seat until 1819 in a bye-election.
3. ibid f.19. Kinnaird to Hobhouse, 4th May, 1818. He asked Hobhouse's advice and said he would ask Burdett and Serope Davies too. In the event the Dinner was not held until August, and he did take the chair. cf. Life of Cartwright 11, 149.
4. ibid. f.31. Burdett to Hobhouse, May 22nd, 1818. He asked him to let Henry Bickersdeth know.
Like Kinnaird, Hobhouse wanted a seat in parliament. Burdett and Tavistock, among others of his friends, had already been looking for one for him, for some time. 

He was, however, anxious before making any final decision, to find out the feelings and intentions of his father who had been a ministerial supporter. If he should enter parliament as a Reformer, whilst his father, if he decided to stand for re-election, would sit as a ministerialist, it might be embarrassing for both. But he had not written to find out his father's attitude and plans until May 18th, and it was not until May 25th that he received a reply, reassuring him that his ambition to secure a seat had his father's approval. Whatever his immediate reaction, to Burdett's note, however, it can be certain he had not made a final reply before Hunt and his 'henchman', Gale Jones, had completely upset the Annual Dinner, and Hunt had announced his intention to stand himself.

In the circumstances, the rapidity with which the Westminster group came to move thereafter, is not in the least surprising. With the dissolution likely to be announced any day and Hunt already in the field, they had reached no decision as to whom they would like to replace Cochrane, and had no firm promise from anyone to stand if officially asked to do so. Even so, they did not move rapidly enough to please Place, whose impatience once more got the better of him.

1. ibid f. 35. J. C. Hobhouse to his father, Sir Ben Hobhouse May 18th, 1818. Burdett had found two possible borough seats which might be purchased. Bentham, with whom he was now in close touch, approved of Reformers purchasing seats if necessary. cf. Bentham's 'Catechism': Introduction, Works 111. 462.

On May 26th, he wrote, as in 1812, to "those likely to interfere" in the election, urging them to take action speedily, to call a public meeting, to get Cochrane to announce his resignation officially, and to put two persons forward for adoption. He emphasised, again, however, that though he would advise and help, until matters were settled and a committee formed, he would not serve on the committee. 1.

After two days, during which time fresh approaches must have been made to Kinnsird and Hobhouse, Brooks and Adams had still failed to contact Cochrane. Hunt, on the other hand, had made arrangements for, and advertised, a public meeting in his own interest on June 1st. Thus spurred, Brooks arranged a meeting at his house of those among the Westminster group most likely to be ready to assist in organising the election, for the same day, by which time it was expected there would be a letter from Cochrane. 2.

Hunt's meeting of June 1st went much as might be expected, considering it was attended by his own supporters. 3. A Mr. Elliott took the chair. A Mr. Harley recommended Hunt for election, and proposed resolutions, praising him for his stand against the Corn Bill, welcoming the news of Burdett's conversion to universal suffrage, and asserting that Hunt was just the man to help him secure it. A number of letters from provincial 'working class' Reformers in Bristol, Manchester and other towns, including one from Bamford in Middleton promising to get up a subscription for Hunt, were then read.

1. Place Papers, B.M. Add. MS. 27,641 f. 11. Place MS. 'Diary' Notes May 26th, ibid. May 28th, 1812. 1813.
2. For an account of this meeting cf. A Correct Report of the Proceedings of the Meeting on Monday June 1st ... to adopt and secure the election of Henry Hunt. It was published by Carlile.
In the speeches which followed, distrust for Burdett was evident. At the same time, there was no strong attack on him, partly because Hunt, it seems, hoped he might yet be taken up as Burdett's partner. 1 Certainly he was proposed as the best person to 'cooperate' with Burdett. At the same time no chance of showing that 'cooperation' with Burdett meant keeping him up to the mark, was missed, and the 'Westminster Committee' was vigorously denounced.

Gale Jones, proposing Hunt, dwelt loudly and long on the oppressiveness of the Westminster group. He had, he said, attended every Westminster Dinner since 1807 and had watched them degenerate into mere Tavern meetings of honorary members and favoured visitors - "apostate Whigs and equivocal Reformers." Nothing was said, or permitted to be said, at them, save what was arranged by the stewards. After a few toasts and platitudinous speeches the 'head of the party' retired, and the meeting broke up, leaving the people without guidance. Twenty years ago he had addressed 40,000 of his fellows in St. George's Fields. Despite every adversity 'the people' were again ready to move, and Hunt, who was now persecuted as Burdett was once persecuted, was the man to lead them. It had been objected he would frighten moderate men. He would only frighten those who were insincere. The 'moderate Reformers' (i.e. the Westminster group) confined themselves to loose and general assurances which enabled them to preserve their credit with a 'certain party' (i.e. the Whigs) and to promote their own interests whilst avoiding being tied down to propose any scheme at all. Hunt, on the other hand, fearlessly made his principles clear.

1. Certainly he and his friends did their best afterwards to imply that he was Burdett's partner. Cf. e.g. Place Papers B.M. Add. MS. 27841 f. 271.
Hunt then proceeded to tell the audience exactly what he would propose in parliament if he were elected. He went on to say that he understood that Burdett had been converted to universal suffrage, and that he was glad to hear it, but... "the pretended friends of liberty must be closely watched"... A coalition between the agents of the ministers (the Whigs) and the "sham Reformers" might, if not met by the good sense and public spirit of electors, produce a division which would be so gratifying to the openly avowed enemies, as well as to the pretended friends, of liberty. Whatever happened, he would have fifteen days in Covent Garden to expose all the tricks of that contemptible faction - the 'Rump'.

Hunt was then adopted and a committee was formed including, among others, the radical journalists Sherwin and Carlile, as well as Gale Jones.

Meanwhile, a number of the Westminster Reformers and two of Cartwright's supporters had been meeting in Brooks' house. 1. Cochrane's announcement of his intention to retire having, at last, been officially received, it was resolved to hold a public meeting on June 4th, when Cochrane could take his leave and Burdett and another candidate could be nominated. So far there was agreement. When it came to the question of who that candidate was to be, however, argument began immediately. Precisely what had happened since May 23rd is not known, but it is apparent that, by this time, Kinnaird had agreed to stand and that Hobhouse, having surrendered his own pretensions in Kinnaird's favour, was prepared to support him.

1. The proceedings at the meeting at Brook's house are recorded by Place in his 'Diary' Notes, 27, 1841, p. 112, under June 1st. Among those present, besides Brooks, Brooks' son and himself, were Thomas Hardy, James Mill, Adams, Peter Walker, Rev. M. Sparkes, and eleven others.
But it is also apparent that the resolve of Cartwright's supporters, that he should be proposed, had in no way weakened. Thus, the moment formal agreement to adopt Burdett was reached, Walker promptly read a letter from Cartwright, which expressed his willingness to stand, and proposed him for the other seat. Place was left to propose Kinnaird afterwards. Hunt was completely ignored.

Though heavily outnumbered, the two advocates for Cartwright were not easily put down. Many of the 'pro-Kinnaird' group were far from confident in their choice, and there was a general feeling, after Cobbett's attacks on them, that it would be impolitic to make any decisions in private. Place did everything he could to impress on the meeting, and on Cartwright's proposers in particular, the importance of securing unanimity before the public meeting in three days' time. Doubtless, confident of the result he suggested first, that a majority vote be taken there and then. When that was negatived, he suggested that any thirty electors who had voted for Burdett in 1807 should be approached in each parish and asked if they would vote for Cartwright. He would abide by the result which could be produced by the following evening.

His arguments, however, were of no avail. Walker continued to object that Kinnaird was not known, and was, in any case, not a real Reformer. The meeting as a whole refused to consider making any firm decision. All that Place could secure was agreement that the 'opinion' of the meeting should be taken by ballot and that this 'opinion' should be held to justify these present proceeding further.
In the event only two, presumably his proposer and seconder, voted for Cartwright. Before the day was cut, however, it was made quite clear that Cartwright's supporters had no intention of abiding by this 'opinion'. Possibly during, possibly before the meeting, it had been arranged by the Westminster group that handbills advertising a public meeting for the purpose of choosing candidates (names unspecified) on June 4th, should be prepared ready for distribution at the close of Hunt's meeting. Clearly, however, had also arranged for handbills in favour of Cartwright to be printed which attacked the 'Bump', and quoted resolutions which Cobbett had drawn up in 1816 in favour of his election when it had seemed likely the Westminster group would propose Brougham. These also were distributed at the close of Hunt's meeting.

On the following day, Place wrote a letter to Kinnaird, 'officially' inviting him to stand, and asking him for his written declaration in favour of Burdett's present programme of annual parliaments and universal suffrage. He enclosed it in another letter to Adams which reveals that he was aware that feeling in favour of Kinnaird was far from wholehearted, and that he knew how unwilling were his friends to take decisive action before the opinion of the public was obtained. He asked Adams to ask Brooks to sign the letter to Kinnaird, but expressed his fear that Brooks would be too hesitant to do so at once. Any delay in applying to Kinnaird and in receiving his reply, he believed, would greatly increase their difficulties.

1. For this handbill, cf. Place Papers B.M. Add. MSS. 27841. f. 59.
3. ibid. f. 82. Place to Adams, June 2nd, 1818.
Paragraph.

Cleary he said, had called on him and had made clear he was very offended at the Major's 'rejection'. He was well intentioned, but he would certainly "take steps to prevent Kinnaird's character being made known," and to secure Cartwright's adoption at the public meeting if he could. Unless decisions were taken at once and arrangements for the public meeting were made quickly, there could only be mischief. If, therefore, Brooks refused to sign the letter to Kinnaird he should sign it instead. At the same time he should contact Burdett, Hobhouse and Sir Robert Wilson and ask them to give thanks to Cochrane and to propose Kinnaird. Success could not come if there were any doubt or hesitancy... "If we neglect matters," he concluded, "we have none to blame but ourselves."

Whether Brooks or Adams signed the application to Kinnaird scarcely matters. It was promptly sent, and Kinnaird's reply was received in time for an evening meeting at Brooks house. In the circumstances it was 'formally' agreed to make arrangements to propose him at the public meeting, now two days hence. Henry Brooks was to attend to the engaging of rooms and the advertising. James Mill, Sturt, Place and Adams were to prepare resolutions and to attend to sundry other matters. Since he had, earlier in the day, made arrangements to distribute printed copies of Burdett's universal suffrage resolutions to reporters, the moment Burdett started speaking in the House, to ensure the press would print them on the morrow, Place may at this point have felt more satisfied.

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1. ibid. f. 11. Places MS. 'Diary' Notes under June 2nd. Kinnaird's letter is preserved in f. 80.
2. ibid. f. 52.
But, despite every preparation, the public meeting of June 4th was to prove all but disastrous. Immediately before the meeting was opened, there was friction. No intimation had been received that it was intended to propose Cartwright, but it was now made clear by his supporters that they intended to bring his name forward. Even so, the Westminster Reformers might well feel confident that electors would reject him, and last minute adjustments to the 'programme' gave Walker and Wooler every chance to propose him at the appropriate time. It was after the meeting began, however, that the real trouble started, and from a quarter that the organisers had, seemingly, left out of their calculations. Hunt and his supporters, additionally angered by the distribution of the Westminster group's handbills at their meeting, and by the way his 'adoption' had been ignored, came along determined to break up the meeting completely.

Cochrane indeed succeeded in taking his leave. Walker was able to thank him for his services. Thereafter, when Hunt rose to second his thanks, and to attack the 'Rump' there followed an uproar which made it impossible for anyone to be proposed or accepted. For two hours, Brooks, chairing the meeting, sought to restore order, amid scenes of anger, violence and confusion. His efforts failing completely, some thirty men, favouring the proposal of Kinnaird or Cartwright, withdrew to an inner room.

But even there, with tempers now long past breaking point, confusion followed. Cartwright's supporters, many of whom were not electors, angrily demanded his nomination, and a state of impasse was reached until

1. ibid f. 11. Place MS. 'Diary' Notes under June 4th. Place gives a summary account of the meeting. Cf. also, the pro-Hunt pamphlet report of the proceedings of the June 1st meeting, which includes an account of this meeting from Hunt's viewpoint.
it was insisted all 'non-electors' should leave. Then and then only, could Kinnaird and Cartwright be voted upon. Cartwright's supporters being heavily outnumbered, resolutions were passed in favour of electing Burdett and Kinnaird, and a General Committee to conduct their election was finally appointed.¹

But the damage was done and the Westminster Reformers immediately found themselves in serious difficulties. In the first place nothing could have delighted Whigs and Tories more than the chaos and violence which had apparently resulted from the efforts of rival democratic factions to outbid each other. The famous democracy of Westminster was now revealed; if this was how the 'enlightened' people of that city conducted themselves, if this was a fair sample of the purity and calm and good order which would follow the moment Hunt's, Cartwright's, or Burdett's reform proposals were carried into effect, they were only too anxious their party journals should let the country know about it! Already the well known Tory and Whig papers had made clear they viewed Burdett's June 2nd parliamentary reform resolutions with the greatest contempt. Now they turned to illustrate precisely why.²

¹ Among them were Joseph Hume, J.C. Hobhouse, Sprope Davies, Michael Bruce, (Hobhouse's friend), Thomas Hardy, James Mill, F. Brooks, H. Brooks, F. Glossop, J. Redley, Sir John and William Throckmorton, and, as noted by Place without initials, Clarke, Lang, Prince, Beck, Kean, Richardson, Green, Millar, Dean (printer) Farlar, Wilson, Clines, MacLaurin, Later Spradley, and Langley who had helped in 1807, joined and Place himself, Mickersteth also helped.

In the second place, the passions and the disgust roused by the meeting among the Westminster Reformers, had the effect of widening their divisions, whilst the reactions of the press served to widen them still further. On the one hand numbers of the more moderate among them were driven to feel that it was even more desirable they should draw closer to the Whigs. On the other, numbers of those who had accepted Kinnaird, but had remained uneasy about Cartwright, now began to sway in Cartwright's favour. The arguments of Cartwright's supporters— that the trouble at the meeting would have been avoided had the Westminster group not selfishly determined upon proposing Kinnaird—now appeared plausible and persuasive.¹ Galloway wrote to Place the following day (5th June)

... "If something is not done quickly after yesterday's scene the fruits of your exertions will be thrown away. Hunt and his party as implacable and wrong-headed friends to our cause, but zealous and indefatigable. The best means of extinguishing Hunt...is to nominate Cartwright..." ²

As for Place himself and those who stood with him in support of Kinnaird, they now found they had not only to combat Hunt and his supporters,³ not only to take on Cartwright and his group as well— for, after years of waiting, was now declared to be standing for election— but to work hard to restore the confidence of their own ‘party’ —

1. cf. Wooler in the Black Dwarf June 10th, 1818.
2. Place Papers B.M. Add M.S. 27841 f. 113. A. Galloway to Place, 5th June, 1818.
3. Hunt simply issued a Poster after the meeting announcing he had triumphed over "ministerial agents", and "tax gatherers", and had been unanimously adopted. cf.: ibid. ff. 111-12.
4. ibid. f. 116.
For, in addition to those who wavered as between Kimmird and Cartwright, there were now those who believed, more than ever, that their efforts should be concentrated on securing the return of Burdett alone.

But worse was to follow. If the meeting itself and the reactions it had occasioned had widened the divisions among Reformers, their increasingly obvious disunity and uncertainty now presented both Whigs and Tories with an opportunity to recapture Westminster which they could scarcely reject. First the Whigs, then the Tories, too, made snap arrangements to set up candidates of their own.

The Tories' decision to set up and support Sir Murray Maxwell was certainly to heighten election excitement. Their readiness to make use of gangs of bullies was to be one of the prime causes of the violence which disfigured the election scene. But the appearance of a Tory candidate, though it gave the Westminster group added cause for alarm at this point, was to have no seriously adverse effect on any of the other 'parties', and no post-election consequences worthy of mention. In the event, it did no direct harm to the Westminster Reformers — though the Tories' behaviour during the election greatly angered them. Had a Tory appeared alone, it may well seem that they might have benefitted— that they would have drawn together, and enjoyed increased support from the vote of local Whigs, primarily anxious to oppose the ministers. 1

1. Times, June 11th/Maxwell, a naval officer, was not new to Westminster elections. An associate of Sir Samuel Hood, he had assisted his election campaign in 1806. (cf. Bundles of election papers of Parishes of St. Margaret and St. John in Westminster Public Library, Arch. Mus. Dep.) His present claim to the electors' favour depended on recently much publicised, successful voyage of exploration of...[Mss. Nat. Mus.]

2. Indirectly it may well have led to the Whig candidate getting more Tory votes than he would have got if no Tory had stood. For Poll Charts, cf. Place Papers B.M. Add. MS. 27841 f. 45, and 27849. cf. also, infra p. 27. n. 1.
It most certainly did no harm to the Whigs. On the contrary, it is quite clear that one of the prime reasons for their candidate’s ultimate success was the number of Tory second votes he collected. Nor, least of all, can it be said that their candidate’s defeat greatly harmed the Tories themselves. It was soon forgotten, and their party strength in the House was, at worst, one less. The decision of the Whigs to fight the election, on the other hand, was to prove of far greater consequence to the Westminster group, to the Whigs themselves, and indirectly—since it was to lead to the violent embroilment of their two most influential enemies for more than a year—to the Tories too.

It was Perry, editor of the Chronicle, who made the first public move. In a ‘leader’, appearing on Saturday June 6th, he described the appalling disgrace into which Westminster had fallen under the rule of a petty faction. Taking no notice of Burdett, he went on to refer to Kinnaird in terms which implied he was to be regarded as a man somewhat worse than Hunt, and announced—before any step whatever had been taken—that it had been decided by a body of electors to request Ranilley to stand, and that a public meeting was being arranged to invite him officially to ‘rescue’ Westminster. Whether Perry’s action—and it is not unlikely—was on his own initiative, or whether it was discussed first at the Whig ‘Brooks Club’ is unknown.

1. cf. infra. p. 27. n. 1.
Certainly the more immediate steps - taken by Perry himself suggest the former. How far it was afterwards approved by the party as a whole is also uncertain. The campaign itself was to be handled principally by Perry, members of the Whig 'left wing,' and their local Whig supporters, but much appears to have been the result of the initiative of individuals. In view of the contemporary lack of any regular party machinery for conducting popular elections, however, in view too of the distaste felt by the majority of the Whigs at the idea of attending them at all, this cannot be surprising. But whoever started the ball rolling, it was not long before the majority of the Whigs were after it.

It need not be doubted that most of them were delighted at the chance to pay off old scores and would have been glad to see the Westminster Reformers beaten out of the field altogether. Grey and other conservatives and moderates still intensely disapproved the very idea that Westminster tradesmen - still to them, very much among the 'lower orders' - should take any independent part in politics. It is clear, however, that Perry himself, and others who followed his lead, had more immediate tactical aims. They recognised that Burdett was still regarded with considerable favour by a large body of the electors and that it was desirable, for election purposes, to give him guarded approval. They clearly believed, too, that it was desirable to continue to encourage Burdett to cooperate with them, since his influence might still help to wean the lower classes from the 'extremists.'
But they were quite determined it must be brought home to him and to his supporters, that their behaviour—above all their attempt to 'compete' with the 'extremists'—was not only, and very obviously, earning them the contempt of the 'extremists' themselves, but of all respectable men too.

Thus the violent attack of the Whigs on the Westminster Reformers at this point, must be seen primarily as a continuation of the efforts of the Whig 'left wing' to 'compel' the latter to recognise they must come over to their side—must follow their 'natural' leadership. More immediately, Perry's 'Leader' was a positive signal to them and their supporters, that they must drop Kinnaird and join with them; that if they did, the Whigs, in turn, would support Burdett.

It is obvious that Cobbett's cry was taken up by them at a moment when the opportunity to secure the maximum party advantage by using it must have made the temptation to do so irresistible. It is not to be supposed the Whigs accepted Cobbett's description of the Westminster Reformers as Burdett's 'tools' in the sense he implied. But it is also quite clear that, at this point, they had no proper appreciation at all of what they were taking on; no real idea that, in copying the 'extremists', by seeking to represent the Westminster Reformers as a 'despised order', equally unfit for the company of 'gentlemen' Whigs or 'real Reformers,'
they were, in the course of the next year, to bring upon themselves what was to prove one of the strongest and most concentrated attacks the Whig party had ever to meet. 1.

The effect of Perry's 'Leader' on those who had committed themselves to electing Kinnaird with Burdett was immediate. It greatly angered Kinnaird's personal friends on his behalf, whilst its 'dishonesty' angered others still more. Despite Place's earlier intention to 'retire' after the meeting on the 4th, he now found that he could not withdraw completely. 2 Perry's attack on them was bad enough. It was shameful that the Whigs should so degrade themselves as to take their cue from Cobbett, but that they should accuse them of 'dictation', when, at that time, none of the electors had so much as thought of asking Romilly to stand, and it was quite clear that the Whigs were about to impose their candidate on them, was too much.

Already, on 5th June, an unofficial printing sub-committee had started to meet regularly at Brooks' house, and, though as yet no money had been collected, arrangements had been made to counter Cleary's propaganda for Cartwright and to refute his (or rather Cobbett's) charges against the

1. Despite the contacts established between the Westminster group and the 'left wing' Whigs, yet it is further evidence of what Place viewed as the incredible blindness of the Whigs in these years that - as Tavistock letter to Hobhouse, infra., makes clear - even at this stage they still saw the Westminster Committee rather as Burdett's agents, than as an emanation from 'the people' of Westminster itself, and were surprised to find out the real state of affairs. The extract from Romilly's Memoirs, 11.360, which shows him referring to... "a little committee of tradesmen who persuade themselves they are all powerful in Westminster, and can bring up any man they choose"... has often been cited, sometimes in conjunction with Hall's remark, Memoirs 11.75, about a little faction of shopkeepers who set themselves above the operative classes (e.g. by Halévy, Growth of Philosophic Radicalism, P.427) to illustrate growing recognition in the country that the Westminster group were representatives of the new lower middle classes. It may well do so. Romilly, if any Whig did, should have known what the Westminster group were. But, more narrowly, it simply reflects the, 'party line' and the contempt of the Whigs for the Westminster group at this time.

2. Plate fl.11. Place's MS. 'Diary' Notes, 'Committee' meeting of June 6th.
the 'Rump'. On the 6th, immediately after Perry's 'Leader' appeared, Hobhouse took it upon himself to draw up and to pay for a bill in reply, attacking and ridiculing Perry, and asserting his announcement about Romilly was nothing more than a Whig trick to cause confusion. Within a matter of hours, however, it was found out just how wrong this supposition was, when it was reported that Perry himself was even at that moment making out a list of names of electors who would propose Romilly. Further investigation led to the discovery that he had employed a "kind of agent" of the Duke of Bedford, to approach likely tenants of his to obtain their signatures to a notice requesting a meeting for his 'adoption.' Apparently it was considered those whose leases were running out would be most likely to favour Romilly, and at least two, whom Place knew, were in the middle of negotiating new leases when they were approached. Thus, when an angry Perry called at Brooks' house two days later, to complain about the bill they had issued against him, he was able to announce that, at that very moment, a meeting was being held to arrange for Romilly's 'adoption.' Furthermore, he added, his election was to be carried out on principles of purity, entirely free of expense and trouble to him.

1. ibid. under June 5th, 1818; also ibid. f. 126, for Hobhouse's Bill.
2. ibid. under June 6th, 1818.
3. ibid.
4. ibid. f. 123. Place refers to a certain 'Barker Beaumont' as the agent. He may have been an army officer, cf. Champion May 22nd, 1814. The two tenants whose leases were running out - Richards and Allen. - lived in Tavistock Square.
5. ibid. Place MS. 'Diary', under June 8th, 1818. Certainly Romilly did not attend the Hastings - thus proving he was 'not a candidate'.
On the following day Romilly was "officially" adopted.1

Place was aware of the danger from Romilly. The popularity he had won during the session when he had denounced the ministry's use of the spy Oliver, made it extremely difficult to attack him. He was, he admitted, "... the most formidable opponent that exists."2 There need be little doubt that Place, like Bentham, found much to admire and respect in Romilly whom he had met in the previous year, when staying with Bentham. Could he have been persuaded to express agreement with their parliamentary reform views, it is likely that Place would long ago have advocated his election for Westminster. As things were, however, he was not only no strong believer in parliamentary reform, but he was the candidate of the Whigs. Thus, though any attack on him personally must be guarded, it was still necessary that 'the people' be made aware that, as a member of the Whig party, he was not to be trusted, and now even more necessary that the Westminster Reformers should continue to uphold Kinnaird, against him.3

Few of the Westminster Reformers however had such confidence in the correctness of their course, as Place. Under fire from all points, the majority, though holding on, were becoming less and less steady. The 'challenge' of Romilly on one side, and the pressure of Cartwright and Hunt and their respective supporters on the other, was, indeed, bringing them to a point where uncertainty was tending to prevent them taking any action at all.

2. Place Papers B.M. Add. M.S. 27841 f. 56.
3. Cf. supra pp. where Place's attitude is more fully discussed.
The campaign of all the other candidates were now well under way. The Westminster Reformers campaign had not even been launched. It is evident they were becoming increasingly unhappy at the way Kinnaird had been set up, and were tending to stay away from Committee meetings.

The 'unofficial' printing sub-committee, meeting at Brooks' house, had issued posters advertising Burdett and Kinnaird, and Committee rooms had been found, but so far a Management Committee had not even been appointed. 1.

On the 8th Place received two notes - one from Percy, the paid secretary of the 'Westminster Committee,' and the other from Henry Brooks.

The former wrote... "Every face was new to me last night, and all at sea, as it could hardly be expected that a stranger could be listened to..."

It was essential he and Henry Brooks be properly authorised to proceed with the necessary arrangements. "What a disgrace if we are shamefully beat". 2.

The latter wrote... "We are much in want of your assistance this morning, as there not any of the persons present who were engaged in 1807. The chief thing we need is to be put in a way to proceed... Therefore I trust you will not fail in coming. 3.

1. Place, Papers B.M. Add.MS. 27,841 f. 11. Place MS. 'Diary' Notes under June 8th and ibid. f. 91. cf. also Hobhouse's poster against Romilly, ibid. f. 134.

2. Ibid. f. 154. Percy was employed at 1 gu. p. d. ibid. Place's 'Diary' notes under June 8th. One of Percy's great difficulties, as a letter from M.H. Nangle to Place, makes clear (27841. f. 154) was that Kinnaird's aristocratic friends did not like accepting the direction of a 'paid agent.'

3. Ibid. f. 154. Henry Brooks must have meant those who took the lead in 1807 were not attending the Committee, since most of the familiar names were still strong supporters of the 'cause.'
So Place went to the Committee rooms and did what he could to help. He produced a plan of campaign, similar to his earlier plans, and arranged for the proper books to be compiled. Various rules and arrangements he proposed were discussed and agreed upon. At the same time he discussed with those present their future course of action in view of the desertions they were facing. The same day Joseph Hume had written to him expressing regret he was unable to attend meetings owing to a riding accident. He went on...

"I am anxious to know what steps have been taken to get the Major to withdraw. I think Romilly a very proper person to represent Westminster, the first city in the Empire, and there are many thinking likewise. Great exertions are necessary to carry those whom you have brought forward".

Place must have made his own opinion regarding Romilly even clearer to those at the meeting, than he did in his reply to Hume. Romilly he was more than convinced must be opposed, and their supporters must be stiffened against him. At the same time, in view of Hume's hint and another note he had received, he must have warned them that it was essential some effort be made to get Cartwright to withdraw.

On the previous day, Samuel Miller, a supporter of Burdett from the turn of the century, had written saying he had gone to Walker to get him to abandon Cartwright, but he had been 'won over'. He said he thought Cartwright deserved to be elected and that it would be a good "example" if he were rewarded.

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1. ibid. Place's M.S. 'Diary' notes under June 9th, 1818.
2. ibid. The letter, cf. ibid f. 168, was produced at the meeting.
3. ibid. f. 168. Place's reply to Hume, 8th June 1818. He wrote...

"A man who entertains no more useful opinions than he does does not really deserve to be elected by anybody or independent men. So far as possible I shall try and prevent his election for Westminster. It would be the fault of his managers if Kinneir failed."
At the same time, "would it not extinguish Hunt," since his friends had offered to support the Major? Moreover, since Cartwright could not live long, there would soon be another vacancy. If Cartwright should be taken up, it would bring unanimity now, and Kinnaird's election after.\(^1\)

Place had already exchanged letters with Cleary, before they went to the Committee rooms, and it was obvious there was little hope of persuading him to drop Cartwright.\(^2\) In these circumstances, it was decided to send a deputation, including Place, to see Cartwright personally, and to persuade him to resign.

But on the 11th June, and after Place had written again to Cleary, the deputation could only report failure.\(^3\) Later on the same day, Cartwright's supporters intimated they wishes to talk further and on the following day a further parley was held.\(^4\) Both sides then agreed that for the well being of their cause unanimity was essential, but neither was willing to give up their own candidate.\(^5\)

Thus matters continued to drift and the 'Westminster Committee' remained disorganized. On the 12th June, Percy wrote to Place again, complaining everything was still in a mess. Though he had at last got a proper printing committee formed and a sub-committee forming, he had but one assistant.

\(^1\) ibid.f. 132.
\(^2\) ibid.ff. 150. He had also written to Wooler, ibid.f. 115.
\(^3\) ibid.f. 151. Place to Cleary June 15th, 1818, and ibid.f. 11 Place's MS. 'Diary' notes, under 11th June.
\(^4\) ibid.f. 11. 'Diary notes under June 11th, and ff. 115,150.
\(^5\) ibid., and under June 12th, 1818.
When he had to attend General Committee meetings there would be no-one to attend to business.

He concluded... "I attribute it all to your absence - one word or proposition from you to form the arrangements would have done it." 1

But Place still refused to be drawn into managing the election. He would, he replied, continue to help and advise, but no more. In view of his special knowledge and interest in the legal side of the arrangements with the High Bailiff, he did, however, agree to handle them. Again, neither Burdett or Kinnaird were to be 'candidates' 2.

On 14th, Percy, having, perforce, resigned himself to continuing as best he could, wrote saying he hoped to get a "full" Committee on the morrow, which would sanction the setting up of various sub-committees. But, he warned Place, he believed Cartwright's supporters were planning to publish their recent negotiations in order to show how they had tried to get Cartwright to withdraw.

"I suppose they are acting upon the old Major's plan to do anything and everything if Burdett's election is lost, for so he said distinctly to -?". 3

Though Place did not take the hint, it is clear from some of the records preserved that on the 15th, a Management Committee and Printing, Accounts, and Parochial Committees, were formed. 4

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1. ibid. f. 178.
2. ibid. f. 11. Place's MS. 'Diary' notes under June 15th, 1818, and ibid f. 211, for meeting on the subject at Place's house on 15th.
3. ibid. f. 211.
4. ibid. Place MS. 'Diary' notes under June 15th, 1818.
But the forming of these committees still brought no increased vigour to the 'Westminster Committees' actions. Confronted by the obvious glee with which both parliamentary parties were seeking to exploit the disunity of Reformers, aware of the hostile reception given to Burdett's universal suffrage proposals, even by Reformers, their failure to secure Cartwright's withdrawal, was rapidly sapping all remaining resolution from those who had put Kinnaird forward.

If some of the Westminster group, like Miller, favoured supporting Cartwright as a means of putting down Hunt and other 'extremists,' and of securing unity against the parliamentary 'factions,' the majority were more and more coming to believe - partly because of their favour for Romilly personally - that to attempt to carry Kinnaird would be to hazard Burdett's own election and to court disaster;— that it was necessary to take up a position nearer to that of the Whigs.¹

It was at this point, that Sturh, another of the original members of the 'Westminster Committee,' and a man whose long service to the cause was well known to the public, took the initiative into his own hands. He had never favoured putting Kinnaird forward. Now, he believed, the time had come to make his feelings public. In a letter to the 'Chronicle,' he deprecated the attempt to 'force' Kinnaird on the electorate, and the hostility shown by the Westminster group to Romilly. — no para. —

¹ The Champion and White's 'Independent Whig' were now constantly urging them to do so. cf. Champion June 7th, 14th, 1818, Henry White junior's article, Independent Whig, June 14th. Place Papers B.M. Add MS. 27,841, f. 213. At the same time, however, it was obvious if they did so they would completely sacrifice 'working class' support, Wade's Gorgon, hitherto, and later, in their favour, was now attacking them. ibid f. 273.
Romilly should be supported with Burdett, and Kinnaird would then give way. ¹

Few of those responsible for putting Kinnaird forward were prepared to go so far as Sturch. Few believed it desirable to give open support to Romilly. But they were coming to feel it would be better to say nothing against Romilly, and were coming to be convinced they must drop Kinnaird. Though Sturch’s attitude was clearly a reflection of the attitude coming to prevail among them, his public ‘desertion’ can only have been a further and considerable embarrassment to them.

By the following day, so many among them had come to be convinced of the danger, that an approach was made to Kinnaird respectfully asking his permission to withdraw his name, if it was considered necessary, by the ‘Committee’ to concentrate their efforts behind Burdett alone. ² It seems that only the fact that they had committed themselves to him and were uneasy at letting him, and themselves, down in the eyes of the public, prevented them changing their course now.

On the day before the election was due to begin, a General Committee meeting was summoned to discuss the whole matter finally. ³ It appears that Sturch and a deputation from Cartwright’s committee, and probably other outsiders too, were invited. Kinnaird’s reply—that he was willing to allow himself to be withdrawn at any time the ‘Committee’ thought fit—had been received through Hobhouse, and was before the meeting.

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¹ Place Papers B.M. Add.MS. 27841 f. 262. The Chronicle ‘Leader’ of June 16th, claimed Sturch had offered Romilly’s committee his support.
² Place Papers B.M. Add.MS. 27841 f. 11. Place’s MS. ‘Diary’ notes under June 14th, 1818, and ibid f. 281.
³ For this meeting of ibid f. 11. Place’s MS. ‘Diary’ notes under June 17th, 1818.
Sturoh was for dropping Kinnaird at once. He advocated that
electors be asked to vote for Burdett only. Kinnaird was not known.
Any attempt to return two candidates could only help the 'court'.
Cartwright's deputation also urged the dangers of disunity and made a
final effort to secure the withdrawal of Kinnaird on his behalf. Though
there was no sign of weakening in the opposition to Cartwright's candidature,
yet it seems that Sturoh's proposal was well supported. At the same time, however,
it is evident many had become stiffened in their original resolve, and were
now determined to proceed with the attempt to return Kinnaird.

Precisely what had happened cannot be certain. But two factors
are likely to have influenced the meeting. First - there must have been
many at this moment, who had been freshly angered by the Whigs. Second -
there must have been many, too, who had been drawn up by Place's bitter criti-
cism of their behaviour.

On the morning of the 17th, the 'Chronicle' had printed a further
attack on the Westminster Reformers, included in a speech made by Brougham
during his campaign to secure one of the 'Lowther family's' seats in
Westmorland.¹ Brougham likened the Westmorland scene to that in West¬
minster. In Westmorland the usurpation of 'the people's' rights was by a
family, in Westminster, by a 'junto'.

¹ cf. ibid. p. 244. for N.C. account of Brougham's speech. Brougham,
It may be imagined, enjoyed making it enormously. As A. Aspinall,
Politics and the Press. P. 305, shows, Perry and Brougham were on close
terms in 1817, and it can only be assumed they still were now, and in
1819.
He recollected the efforts of 'the people' in Westminster in 1807, when they had triumphantly returned two members of their own choosing. In 1812 and 1814 they had done the same. The individuals who had conducted those elections, who had brought order, purity, and cheapness, to the election scene, deserved every praise. But power in human hands was always likely to be abused. The 'Westminster Committee', or a part of them, now felt they were in charge of the whole place, and proceeded to nominate whom they chose without consulting the electors. Kinnaird was not even known, except as 'Burdett's friend'. One seat for Burdett was not enough. Just as the Lowthers in the County - so the 'Westminster Committee' in the capital, were determined to have both seats. But 'the people' of Westminster had risen against the 'Committee,' as those of Westmorland would rise against the Lowthers. Usurpation by a family or by a 'junto' was equally to be resisted.

Brougham, who must have had his tongue in his cheek, was clearly seeking, in part, to increase the uncertainty and to widen the divisions among Reformers, with the aim of bringing as many as possible over to support Romilly. In fact, however, his attitude seems to have stiffened the resistance of the Westminster group. To many, Brougham's attack was infuriating. That they should find themselves, after all the years of sacrifice, likened to the Lowthers, was more than enough to strengthen their resolve to have nothing to do with the Whigs.

1. Symptomatic of the Westminster group's uneasiness was the fact that advertising for Burdett and Kinnaird gave Burdett 'Star' billing in large type, and Kinnaird's name appeared below in small type. e.g. Place Papers B.M. Add. MS.27841. f.91.
Place, who had continued to receive requests for his assistance, and who now found that, because he had refused, he was being blamed for the mess his friends were in, had written to Brooks on the same day. He was, he said, very much against the abandonment of Kinnaird, especially after money had been accepted from his friends on his behalf and expended. To think of deserting him, was cowardly and dishonest...

"I was sorry to find too, that notwithstanding I have done much more than I promised I would do, when, at the first meeting at your house, I distinctly told the company not to put others into a situation they themselves would not be willing to be placed in, and that I was resolved not to go on any Committee; but if there were gentlemen resolved to go on, I would assist them until a public meeting had been held, but no longer. I say I am sorry I am again to be talked of as having behaved ill, although I have done ten times as much as they who choose to propagate these calumnies.

"I am also sorry to observe that those who interfered in Westminster solely, as they said, for purposes of reform are now willing to sacrifice that reform by a coalition, which in my eyes is as base as anything the sort can possibly do"...

In these circumstances, it must be easier to understand why, at the General Committee meeting, it was resolved to proceed with the nomination of Kinnaird, and to answer a resolution, which a deputation from Cartwright's committee had tabled—to the effect that the coupling of Kinnaird's name with that of Burdett endangered their cause—by promising, in a show of bravado to consider it... "this day three weeks" (hence)!

Thus a final decision was reached at the very last moment. But with the election to begin on the morrow the Westminster Committee was in a sorry state to repeat its triumph of 1807.

2. ibid f. 11. Place's M.S., 'Diary' notes, 'Committee' meeting, June 17th.
With the single exception of the 'Examiner', all newspapers and journals - including many which had formerly backed the Westminster Reformers - were against the course they had now elected to pursue. Further, they were, technically speaking, still totally unprepared to conduct the election properly. After the committee meeting, Miller wrote to Place:

"It is evident to me that they still want method and arrangement"... "I do still hope and trust you will favour them with one more visit and put them into method, as, after tomorrow, I fear it will be too late." 

Unable to bear the thought that everything might be thrown away, Place gave in. On the day polling began he agreed to manage the election for the Committee.

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1. True, some papers, e.g. the Scotsman and the Weekly Dispatch blamed Hunt for causing divisions among the Reformers, but it does not seem at this time that any other paper, except the Examiner, favoured Kinnaird. cf. ibid. f. 272.

2. ibid. f. 253.
The Westminster election which now began, excited and fixed attention all over the country. Not only was it the first contested election there since 1807, but almost certainly the most violently fought since 1788, or even 1784. Quite certainly, though other elections - particularly that at Westmorland where Brougham was opposing the Lowthers - attracted considerable notice, no other constituency at this time was for so long, in so great a state of uproar.\(^1\) In and around Covent Garden, the crowds, largely composed of the poor and shiftless, were easily roused to disorder. Excited by the speeches of politicians or by sheer devilry, 'led' or 'misled' by Maxwell's gangs of sailors and hired roughs, or by Whig 'chairmen', they appeared one seething clamorous riotous mob. Day after day, there were fights and brawls and stone throwing incidents, which the handful of constables or special constables could not prevent, and which they may even themselves have helped to encourage.\(^2\)

Had the 'Westminster Committee' made a determined effort before the election began to organise the electorate and to mobilise the strong popular feeling which undoubtedly existed against such disorders, the case might have been different.

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2. Hunt claimed they did. \textit{Hunt, Memoirs} 11, 526 et. seq.; \textit{ef.} also, \textit{Champion}, Oct. 25th. After he refused to pay the High Constable's charges, the matter was taken to court, whereupon he gave way; \textit{ef.} also, results of an investigation by the Westminster group, \textit{Place Papers} BM. Add. Ms. 27, 841, ff. 411, 479; and \textit{Times} June 29th, 1818.
Though other factors may have contributed to the comparatively good order of the election of 1807 their influence need not be disregarded. Even though the 'Westminster Committee' could not prevent disorder in the election of 1819, when it was better mobilised than ever before, yet the disturbances then were, beyond doubt, caused not by the spontaneous actions of the crowds of poor, but by the incitement of gangs of roughs hired by the Whigs. 1

But whatever a determined effort to persuade the public to maintain good order might have achieved, it is quite clear that the Westminster Reformers had been far too disorganised to make it. Indeed, it was not until some two days after polling commenced that their election campaign could properly be launched at all. Indecision up to the very last moment, and the lack of men of business-like ability, had left matters in a chaotic state. Despite the appointment of a Managing Committee, there had been no decisive leadership, and canvassing, upon which success or failure so greatly depended, had scarcely begun.

Thus, when Place determined he must go the Committee Rooms and give his whole time to the election, he found, as he later wrote, that he was....

..."at once King, Lords, and Commons, Judge, Jury, and Jack Ketch, I found a number of people employed as clerks, a room engaged for me, everything in the utmost confusion and no person there of any authority or consequence, and in fact, no one whom I could consult. So I went to work with the tools I found, did just what I pleased, got the matter into form in about three hours, issued books, summoned everybody,
set them to work and in two days had above 200 regular canvassers"...1

Place went on to describe how he went to the committee rooms each day, from six in the morning till ten or eleven at night, to attend to business, but added that he never "saw" (i.e. attended) a single meeting of the General Committee. There can be no doubt that it was Place who came to make most of the important decisions and that it was he who really directed the Westminster Reformer's campaign, throughout the election. But for the first few days, and it cannot be surprising, Romilly and Maxwell leapt ahead on the poll, each enjoying the second votes of the other's supporters, and Romilly enjoying the second votes of 'Burdettites' too.

For some time the Tories had been angling for a coalition with the Whigs to keep Burdett out, and even when they met no enthusiastic response from the Whigs, their press continued to advocate that electors should support Romilly as their second choice, and to imply that Romilly's supporters should give their second votes to Maxwell.2

Whig tactics were different. Aiming more directly at securing the second votes of the Burdettites, the 'Chronicle' and the 'Independent Whig', which had turned to support Romilly and the Whig party, both continued to seek to draw over the more moderate Westminster Reformers. The 'Chronicle', on the 18th, tried gentle persuasion.3

3. Morning Chronicle 18th June, 1818; also ibid., f. 22.
Kinnard, it said, was already canvassing for another seat at Bishop's Castle and would probably be elected anyway. If Romilly were rejected, one of the 'brightest jewels' in the House would be without a seat. All good Reformers were assured they could best serve the interests of their cause if they concentrated on making sure of Romilly's election along with Burdett. The approach of the 'Independent Whig' was calculated to play more on the dislike of the Westminster Reformers for the 'extremists', but its aim (to win them over) was the same. But though the Whigs made public their favour, or at least preference, for Burdett, next to Romilly, there can be no doubt that, at this stage, many of Maxwell's supporters' second votes went to them.

At the same time, though the poll for Burdett was very much lower, and for Kinnaird much smaller still, the numbers of votes cast for Cartwright and Hunt were negligible, and it was almost at once quite obvious they had not the slightest chance of success. In the circumstances, Place might well hope and undoubtedly did, that, once the 'Westminster Committee's' campaign was properly organised, once the parish sub-committees were properly controlled and directed, and canvassing systematically pushed forward, the day might yet be completely saved.

1. Place Papers B.M. Add.Ms. 27, 841, f. 302, Independent Whig June 21st. White reminded Burdett he had supported him for 15 years, but would do so no longer if he attempted to compete with Hunt.

2. For the daily poll state, cf. Times, June 19th and consecutive issues. At the end of the Second day's poll Romilly had 1014, Maxwell 930, and Burdett only 430.

3. cf. Place Papers, B.M. Add.Ms. 27, 837 f. 166. Place to Hobhouse Aug. 7th, 1812; and infra, p. 262-4.
But by the end of the second day, at the very time when he had at last got the Committee machinery to work properly and efficiently, he had to meet difficulties of a new kind - the opposition of the 'Committee' itself. Lacking the confidence which he derived from his close study of the polling and canvassing reports, the majority of the 'Committee' had, by this time, become seriously alarmed that their attempt to carry Kinnaird would lead to their failure to carry Burdett. Doubtless they found Burdett's low poll worrying enough, but even more worrying to them were the demands, which came in from parish sub-committees, that Kinnaird should be withdrawn, and that Burdett himself must appear on the Hustings to gratify the demands of electors.

In the circumstances, though there were those who agreed with Place that the panic was unnecessary, it was resolved, despite Place's opposition, that Kinnaird must be withdrawn from the poll. At the same time, stifling their ill-will and recognising their own cause must in any case be lost, Cartwright and his supporters agreed that his name too should be withdrawn, and that henceforth they would join with the Westminster group and concentrate on securing Burdett's seat only. Thus, on the 20th, after a letter from Kinnaird offering to withdraw had been received, an apologetic letter of explanation to him was drawn up for publication and Kinnaird was withdrawn at the end of the day. About the same time Cleary, speaking for Cartwright, announced that though he (Cartwright) had not approved of the setting up of Kinnaird, yet, now that he was withdrawn, he, too, wished to

1. *ibid* 27,41 f. 11. Place Ms. 'Diary' notes of General Committee meeting 19th, 20th June. 2. *ibid*, under 20th June.
withdraw so that every effort could be concentrated on securing the return of Burdett.¹

The demand for Burdett's appearance on the Hustings, however, was a different matter. It is clear why the demand arose now in a way it had not done before. Burdett's supporters, frustrated themselves and angered on Burdett's behalf, that the charges of the 'extremists' against them had so far remain unanswered, were worried by the effect they were having, or might have, on 'the people' at large, and were anxious their own case should be stated in reply. Place himself was only too well aware of the damage the 'extremists' had done and were doing to their cause....

"What was it", he wrote later, "that did us the original mischief in 1818......Why were we obliged to fight up Burdett to the popularity he had lost.... how did this happen? Simply by the incessant din that Cobbett rang in the ears of the people and the assistance it received from the old Crazy Cartwright and others"........²

Burdett himself clearly considered that it was quite beneath his dignity as a 'gentleman' to answer Cobbett's abuse personally, much less to answer his spokesman Hunt, on the Hustings. Place, for his part, believed that to return abuse with abuse must harm, rather than help, their cause - that it was far more important that they set 'the people' a good example and show their independence of the Whigs. But, apart from these factors, it was impossible for Burdett to come to the Hustings without ruining their arrangement that he should not be a 'candidate'. The Hustings charges they would have to bear would be bad enough; the further embarrassment they would suffer if they gave up their principle

that they, the electors, were seeking to elect a man, who did not himself seek election - might at this moment do serious harm to their cause.

Thus it was decided to publish a letter, signed by a large number of electors, requesting Burdett's presence on the Hustings, and to secure a letter from Burdett explaining his attitude and his reasons for not attending the Hustings which could be published simultaneously. It was also arranged that Kinnaird, now that his name had been withdrawn, should speak on the Hustings on his, and their, behalf.¹

By Monday 22nd, and after a week-end's intensive work, the 'Westminster Committee' was ready for a big effort. As in 1807, and it may be assumed to Place's resigned disgust, bands to provide music while electors were conducted to the poll had been engaged.² Now that Kinnaird had been dropped, virtually all the London daily and weekly journals, save those committed to Maxwell, and those like 'Sherwin's Register', to Hunt - came to puff Burdett in one way or another, and by the end of the day it was clear Burdett had gained tremendously.³ His poll had leapt, and was far higher than that of Romilly or Maxwell. In one day he had secured very nearly double the number of votes he had already been given on the previous three.⁴

¹ ibid., 27, 841, f. 11. Place's 'Diary' notes under June 20th, 1818.
² ibid., and under June 21st.
³ cf. e.g. ibid. f. 370. for the Gorgon's change in attitude.
⁴ His total poll at the end of the third day (June 20th) had been 484, as against Maxwell's 1241 and Romilly's 1267. On Monday, June 22nd, he secured 779 against Maxwell's 485, and Romilly's 612. cf. Times June 23rd, 1818.
The following day his poll was higher, and well on the way to being as large as that of Romilly and Maxwell combined. ¹ Thereafter, of the remaining ten polling days, Burdett failed to head the day's poll on three occasions only, and even on these occasions was only 30, 34 and 25 votes respectively behind the leader. ²

Though the assistance of numbers of Cartwright's supporters, and Cartwright himself, must have helped the Westminster Reformers, though it may be agreed that the attitude of journals, hitherto wholly or partly hostile, must likewise have helped them, yet it seems clear that the principal reason for the success which Burdett enjoyed from the 22nd onwards was, above all, the result of Place's own energy, the energy he had infused into others and the thorough canvassing which had properly begun over the week-end. Cartwright's group was small in number and it can scarcely be supposed that, in resigning in Burdett's favour, Cartwright led a large number of electors, who would otherwise have voted for him, to vote for Burdett. ³ Again, with the exception of Cleary, none of Cartwright's followers had any executive responsibility for the management of Burdett's campaign. ⁴ But even allowing that, psychologically, their

¹. The respective figures were Burdett 906, Maxwell 445, Romilly 667.
². cf. Times 27th, 29th June, 2nd July.
³. His total poll was 23, including, presumably, his own Committee's.
⁴. Cleary came to work with the Westminster on June 21st.
ef. Place Papers B.M. Add. Ms. 27, 841 f.11. Place's 'Diary' notes, June 21st, 1818.
support must have helped to bring Reformers together, it is quite clear, since they did not even join the 'Committee' until Sunday, that they can have had little or no part in producing nearly eight hundred electors to vote for Burdett on Monday - his total poll before had only been 484 - and over nine hundred, on Tuesday. The increased support of the press may have helped to influence many in favour of Burdett, but there can be little doubt that, at this time, it took far more than the exhortation of the press to bring electors to the Hustings. In any case the change in the attitude of the press was not immediately obvious.  

It would seem, then, that though Cobbett’s and Hunt’s attacks on, and Cartwright’s criticism of, Burdett and the Westminster group may have produced uncertainty among the rank and file of 'Burdettite' electors - though his popularity had suffered to this extent - yet it needed only a determined personal canvass to persuade them they had no good reasons for doubting him, and to mobilise their support. As Place himself found, many of those who had become prejudiced against Burdett through reading Cobbett, were, when challenged and brought to consider why, forced to confess they had no real reason for their doubts at all.

1. ef. Place Papers B.M. Add. Ms. 35,150 ff. 147-8. Place to Falconer, 22nd Sept., 1836, referring to his election experience. "Men are childish and ridiculous. They must be canvassed or they would not vote. It is, they say, a 'compliment'. I have known a man who, after canvassing for days, complain he hasn't himself been canvassed."

More particularly, it may be quite certain that one prime reason why Place had objected so strongly to the dropping of Kinnaird at the week-end was because he remained convinced, was indeed even more certain as the results of the canvass came in, that Kinnaird as well as Burdett could be returned, and that a determined effort and a strong lead to the electors would bring complete success.\(^1\) When, therefore, on the Monday and Tuesday, Burdett polled nearly 1700 votes, he was without doubt very bitter in his recognition that these could have been, very largely, shared with Kinnaird.\(^2\)

But there had been, clearly, another important reason in Place's eyes for maintaining Kinnaird on the poll - the same reason that had convinced him that he or some other second candidate must be brought forward in the first place, and the same reason that had long ago convinced him that the 'Westminster Committee' must always run two candidates. Under the existing system whereby two candidates were returned and two votes allowed each elector, an elector would either 'waste' his second vote or give it to another candidate whom he might prefer to a third. But as Place saw clearly, unless that candidate was in agreement with the first, the elector's second vote would be likely to cancel out his first vote, prevent his 'will' being expressed effectively, and perhaps help a rival cause to triumph over his own. Important as it is to understand the attitude of and

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1. Hobhouse was later convinced after his own study of the poll books. *cf. ibid.* f. 166. Place to Hobhouse, Aug. 7th, 1819.
2. Burdett's actual poll in these two days was 1685. *cf. infra.* p. 271 n.1
the course followed by the Westminster group in 1819, it may help to clarify matters if Place's attitude is considered more clearly at this point.

It is evident that long before the dissolution he had believed that if the 'Westminster Committee' was to make the firm independent stand he regarded as essential, if 'the people' of Westminster were to be shown declaring against both Whigs and 'extremists' at the same time, it was not only necessary that a suitable partner for Burdett be found, but necessary, too, that arrangements for putting them forward be made firmly, quickly and in such a way that opposition would be discouraged.¹ If no second candidate were put forward, the opposition of Tories and Whigs as well as 'extremists', not to mention the embarrassment of Cartwright, would be virtually certain.

Hunt's appearance, therefore, had made speed and decisive action in putting forward a second candidate with Burdett, vital. In the first place, Hunt was not for a moment to be tolerated by the people of Westminster on personal or political grounds. In the second, since he would be even less acceptable to Tories and Whigs, one or both must be quite certain, if no other candidates were in the field, to put forward candidates of their own. In such circumstances it would be the Whig candidate who would reap the benefit (i.e. the votes of electors equally anxious to keep out the 'court' candidate and Hunt). Or, in other words, the 'best' that could happen might well be the worst, since it

would be impossible to demonstrate clearly, the Westminster electors' distrust of the Whigs.

Kinnaird had indeed been nominated first, but hesitance and indecision, and in Place's eyes gross mismanagement, had positively encouraged and invited the opposition of party candidates. Even so, though he might blame the bungling of his friends, though he must have been more than half prepared for the Whig action, he had been considerably angered by the 'selfish' refusal of the Whigs to accept Kinnaird, who was not only 'respectable' but one of their own friends, and angered, too, at their readiness to turn the Westminster Reformers' embarrassments to their own party advantage. But whoever he blamed the most, there is no doubt Place had believed the behaviour of the Whigs had made vigorous action by 'Westminster Committee', on behalf of Kinnaird, more necessary than ever.

In putting forward Romilly after Kinnaird had been nominated and in direct opposition to him, the Whigs were showing their contempt for 'the people'. If the 'Westminster Committee' backed down and dropped Kinnaird, it would allow Whigs as well as the 'extremists' to claim a victory, and would encourage both to pursue their respective courses in a way which might ultimately prove disastrous to the country. More immediately it would give every advantage to the Whigs.

If the Westminster Reformers were even so much as to recommend Romilly, let alone form a coalition with his supporters, the immediate benefit to the Whigs would be obvious. It was the Whigs
who stood to gain from the votes of their — i.e. the Westminster groups’ — supporters, not vice-versa.¹ But far worse, it would be certain to convince the country they had 'surrendered' to the Whigs, and would be, as such, almost certainly the most disastrous course of all.²

If, on the other hand — his personal fitness aside — they were to take up Cartwright, it might well be taken as a sign that they had joined with the 'extremists', with longer term consequences, almost equally disastrous. Immediately, however, it would be virtually certain to lead the majority of 'Burdeettite' electors to vote for Romilly and the Whigs.

But even if they ran Burdett alone, it would still be impossible to prevent the Whigs from benefitting. They might emphasise Burdett's and their own independence, but 'the people', for the reason already suggested, (viz. their anxiety to keep out the court candidate, Maxwell and Hunt) would still vote for Romilly. Since the Whigs must, in any case, be likely to share in the Tory votes it would be madness to present them with 'the people's' votes as well.

But despite his advice, lack of confidence among the Westminster Reformers had increased, and had all but given the Whigs the game before the election began. Chiefly because there was strong feeling that he was personally unsuitable, their decision

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1. On this point cf. infra p. 271 n. 1
2. This 'danger' was already real enough. Waithman and Wood had already accepted Whig support, as well as the support of the Westminster group, on June 11th. cf. Times, June 12th; also Chronicle, June 15th, 1818.
against Cartwright had remained firm. Probably because the majority had come to recognise the dangers of recommending Romilly or of coalescing with his committee, that course, too, had been rejected. But partly because they had lacked conviction that Kinnaird could be carried, partly too because of genuine personal favour for Romilly, they had, as already noticed, been very near to dropping Kinnaird, before the poll commenced. It is not surprising, therefore, that after the first day's poll, they should have been frightened into believing that the consequences if they did not drop Kinnaird, might prove far worse than if they did. They must have been in the worst possible state to receive Place's confident assertion that if Kinnaird's name were kept on the poll, Burdett would be returned and Kinnard with him.

Yet, from the very moment Kinnaird was dropped, precisely what Place had foreseen came to pass. Whatever the circumstances, the Whigs would have been likely to have come to treat the Westminster Reformers more gently, in order to win the favour of Burdett's supporters. ¹ As things were, however, Burdett's daily poll became so great that the Whigs came to have serious cause for alarm. Maxwell's committee, recognising how the second votes of their supporters were keeping Romilly at the top of the poll, and fearing lest Romilly get 'Burdettite' second votes too,

¹. Long before the election, indeed, the Whigs, as well as Cartwright's and Hunt's supporters, were coupling their respective candidates' names with Burdett. Cf. e.g. Place Papers B.M. Add. Ms. 27, 841. f. 188, for a Whig pamphlet; also ibid., f. 251, for a bill put out by Cartwright's supporters.
now urged their supporters to vote for Maxwell only. As a result the Whigs were driven to recognise that they must secure the second votes of Burdett's supporters - otherwise Romilly might not even secure the second seat.

The change in the attitude of the Whigs could not, in fact, have been more striking. Ceasing to attack the Westminster Reformers, they came to praise Burdett and to seek, in all manner of ways, to convince electors that Romilly and Burdett were united. There can be no doubt that many of the younger Whigs genuinely and in a positive sense, desired that Burdett should secure one of the seats - indeed some even seem to have desired to see him at the head of the poll. There can be equally no doubt that, to the majority of the Whigs, it was necessary to profess, or to allow it to be supposed, they favoured Burdett, simply because it was even more undesirable that Maxwell should be seated, and because his supporters' votes were necessary. In the circumstances it is not surprising that they had few scruples about the means they used to sway 'Burdettite' electors.

Thus they made fresh efforts to secure the Westminster Reformers agreement to a coalition, which the latter promptly refused. Nothing daunted by their failure, they made every

1. The change in attitude may be noticed by comparing the Morning Post of June 15th and June 19th, ibid., ff. 217, 265.
2. Broughton Papers, B.M. Add. Ms. 36, f. 57, f. 73. Lord Tavistock to Hobhouse, undated, but early August 1818. He claimed some of his friends did want to see Burdett at the head of the poll.
3. ibid., f. 80. Hobhouse to Tavistock, 12th Aug. 1818, (in reply); also Place Papers B.M. Add. Ms. 27, f. 11. Place's MS. 'Diary' notes under 22nd June, 1818; ibid., f. 389. Letter from George Lamb to 'Westminster Committee.'
effort thereafter to imply that a coalition did, in fact, exist. 
Not only did the 'Chronicle' thenceforth link the names of Romilly and Burdett together, but special posters, handbills and cards were printed with both names upon them. The latter indeed were even distributed at Burdett's Committee rooms.¹

At the same time, Romilly was presented to electors, not as a Whig, but as a Reformer. In fact Romilly was never even referred to as a Whig, and votes for him were never called for as votes for the Whigs. Moreover it was implied he was entirely in agreement with Burdett's real sentiments on parliamentary reform.² A very old trick too, was that of advertising public breakfasts for Romilly's and Burdett's supporters, with the specific aim of catching Burdettite votes.³

It may well be, that within a few days, many among the Westminster Reformers began to regret the haste with which they had dropped Kinnaird. There was the evidence of Burdett's rapidly mounting poll -- increasing so quickly, indeed, that he had overtaken Maxwell by Tuesday morning. There was the evidence that large numbers of their supporters' second votes were being given to Romilly, when they might have gone to Kinnaird. As they came to appreciate the difficulties of restraining their supporters from giving their second votes to Romilly, and to recognise the


2. Chronicle June 27th, 1818. This could have meant Burdett had become more moderate or that Romilly was now a 'Burdettite.' It was clearly designed to mean either!

consequences more clearly, they are likely to have regretted it even more. Certainly there was a very decided stiffening in the attitude of the 'Committee' thenceforward. ¹

It is clear the Westminster Reformers did their best to prevent their votes going to the Whigs. They emphasised their independence; ² they publicly denied there was any coalition with the Whigs; ³ they made fresh efforts to show Romilly was not personally a sincere believer in reform — indeed that, as a Whig and as a party man, he could not possibly be a Reformer at all. ⁴ But though they succeeded up to a point — on two occasions particularly they prevented a large body of their voters being inveigled by the Whigs into attending public breakfasts — their success was limited. ⁵

The reason is obvious enough. Romilly was doubtless a difficult person to oppose. But Westminster Reformers were greatly hampered, and prevented from making any really strong opposition to the Whigs, because they had only one candidate. Whatever their attitude towards Romilly before, there can be no doubt that after Kinnaird had been dropped, he appeared automatically to them as the only other acceptable person beside

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1. Place Papers B.M. Add. Ms. 27,841 f.11. Place M.S. 'Diary' notes 22nd and. Following days, show their energy and tactics.
2. Cartwright came to the Hustings and very deliberately 'plumped' for Burdett, which was, indeed, a noble gesture on his part. Times 29th June, 1818.
3. Times 24th, 26th, 27th June, 1818, for Kinnaird's and Michael Bruce's speeches.
4. It is well known that even Bentham himself drew up a poster against him; cf. Place Papers B.M. Add. Ms. 27,841 f.318.
5. ibid. 35,148. f.22. Place to Unett and Parkes, Jan. 8th, 1828.
Burdett to represent Westminster. Though it was unthinkable a Tory should be elected, it was equally unthinkable they should give the impression they supported the Whigs, especially after the recent attacks upon them. Yet they dared not attack the Whigs too vigorously lest, in their embroilment, the advantage went to Maxwell. Their policy, therefore, was to continue to assert their own independence and to appeal to electors, as in 1807, to help themselves, and to show favour to Romilly only as an individual. At the same time, they sought to permit only sufficient of their supporters to give their second votes to Romilly as would ensure that he finished behind Burdett.

But it was impossible to adjust matters so finely. The obvious preference of the Westminster Reformers for Romilly as a colleague for Burdett, can only have helped to increase the volume of support for him, far beyond the point where they could control it closely. Thus Romilly, who still received some of the second votes of Maxwell's supporters too, despite official edicts against it, came also to receive a much larger number of the second votes of Burdett's supporters. The Westminster Reformers succeeded in keeping that number from getting too large, but they did not quite succeed in keeping it small enough. Burdett, rapidly gaining, almost but not quite overtook Romilly — who led, when the poll closed, by 101 votes only. Romilly had 5339 votes; Burdett 5238; Maxwell 4808.

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1. ef. e.g. *Times*, June 27th, Kinnaird's Hustings speech; July 3rd, Bruce's Hustings Speech.
Burdett had lost none of his popularity. Indeed his poll was greater than his poll of 1807. For the moment, consideration of the Westminster group’s reaction may be deferred. But they were to have reason to regret they did not secure the few extra votes necessary to place Burdett at the head of the poll.  

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1. Though conclusions drawn from the poll figures cannot be considered reliable unless related to the Poll Books (in Middlesex Guildhall) yet certain of the more obvious facts must appear significant. The total polls - 10542 in 1818 (cf. Add. Ms. 27, 341 f. 476), and 10562 in 1807, (cf. Cobbett’s Register May 23rd, 1807) - were approximately the same. The following figures are taken from the same references.

   In the first place, Burdett had slightly increased his total poll over his 1807 poll figure - 5238 against 5134. The number of 'plumpers' he received may, however, be taken as a better measure. In 1807 he had received 1672, the highest total of all candidates; in 1818, 2308 or 364 more, with only 12 days effective canvassing.

   In the second place, and viewing his poll in relation to those of Romilly and Maxwell - again his total of 2308 plumpers was the highest. He had 104 more than Maxwell (2204) and Romilly secured no more than 453. With regard to the shared votes: - Burdett shared 2547 with Romilly; Maxwell shared with Romilly only 213 less - viz: - 2334; Burdett and Maxwell shared 263. Though it must be impossible to prove without exhaustive enquiry, and possibly not even then, it may be virtually certain that the greater proportion of the votes which Romilly shared with the other two candidates, represent the second votes of Burdett's and Maxwell's supporters respectively. After a close and careful analysis of the Poll books, Place believed the Whigs did not poll more than 1500 of their 'own' votes in all (Place Papers B.M. Add. Ms. 27, 842, f. 36. 'Narrative' by Place of preliminaries to 1819 election, and ibid 27, 837 f. 166). This figure may or may not be regarded as false and/or partisan, but it should said that the Westminster Reformers made no effort to publicise it, and certainly based their own subsequent election calculations on it. Moreover, taking the figure further, provides an interesting result. Assuming what is unlikely - that no Whig second votes were given to Maxwell, and that all were given to Burdett as the Whigs
liked to claim – then they would have given him, at most, 1047 votes – i.e. 1500 minus his 453 plumpers. If that were the case, then Burdett and the Westminster groups must have given him 1500 i.e. – 1047 plus 1500 make the total of shared votes 2547. In any event there can be no doubt that Place and his friends regarded Romilly’s triumph as completely hollow, and believed it arose solely from Tory desire to keep out Burdett, and the desire of Reformers to keep out Maxwell.
So far nothing has been said about the other side of the election -- the 'Hustings contest' between the Westminster Reformers and Hunt.

Hunt had sworn, in his pre-election Addresses, to stand the full fifteen day's poll and to unmask the Westminster 'Rump! He had, in fact, literally made affidavit to do so, before the Lord Mayor of London, and had, unlike Burdett, Cartwright, and Kinnaird, agreed to be technically a candidate and to pay his share of the Hustings expenses to ensure he had access to them. 1 Rejected out of hand by the Westminster Reformers, he can scarcely have expected to be elected even before the poll commenced, and it may, therefore, be virtually certain that his pre-election arrangements were made entirely with the aim of making it all but impossible to sweep him aside. His prime concern clearly was to take advantage of the election to get his speeches reported, and to reach the ear of the country, (i.e. the 'common people'). More particularly, and avowedly so, he was out to cause the maximum trouble for the Westminster Reformers with Cobbett's advice and backing. Readers of his 'Memoirs' are supposed to infer that it was positively impudent of the Westminster Reformers to call upon him to follow the example of Kinnaird and Cartwright and stand down in order that Reformers might unite in assuring the election of Burdett. 2

He certainly received publicity. No single individual attracted - nor perhaps could have attracted - greater attention during the election. His fame was greatly increased and doubtless his stock was raised among those provincial workers who read and accepted Sherwin's, and later Cobbett's, comments. But there can be little doubt that, among the great majority of those who were in a position to witness the election in the capital, the feelings he roused were of disgust and contempt. He did not even carry the so-called 'mob' with him. In the first few days, it is true, the crowds in Covent Garden showed violence to Maxwell. Spat upon, hit with stones and sticks, he was, on the fifth day, so injured that he could not return to the Hastings for the rest of the election. 1 The same crowds, however, did not take up Hunt. He claimed the voteless 'working classes' and the poor as his supporters. But it is obvious that the majority of those among them who went to Covent Garden, went not to support Hunt, but solely for the excitement, and that they soon found there was more sport to be obtained in provoking him, than in any other way. More respectable 'working class' elements were completely disgusted by him. On many occasions he was unable to secure a proper hearing, and on more than one occasion he was so violently assailed by the crowds that the police were unable to protect him.

1. Place Papers B. M. Add. Ms. 27, 841 f. 326.
Hunt's personal campaign on the Hustings, supported by Gale Jones, began comparatively quietly. For the first few days, he concentrated on attacking Burdett and the Westminster Reformers for forcing Kinnaird upon electors. It was not until after Kinnaird had been withdrawn, however, not until after he had been encouraged, by the failure of Burdett and his supporters to reply to him, to denounce their 'betrayal' of 'the people' even more violently, that he began to run in to serious trouble.

As it has been noticed, the 'Westminster Committee' was aware of the strength of the demand from their followers, that Burdett should come to the Hustings to defend himself. At the same time they were also receiving letters begging them to make an effort to put down Hunt. Partly perhaps, because they believed Hunt was more likely to hang himself if they left him alone, the Westminster Reformers for a long time refused to make any direct reply at all. They may well have reflected that almost the entire press was, in any case, already directed against him.

Thus Hunt was given a great deal of rope, and was enabled to give currency to the idea that Burdett was mounting on the poll solely through the power of his purse and the frenzied

3. Place and his 'Benthamite' friends always preferred to assume truth would always ultimately prevail. *ibid.* 27, 837, f. 164. Place to Hobhouse July 11th, 1819.
efforts of his supporters to bribe electors in one way or another. He wrote later...

"About the 8th or 9th day a dreadful effort was made by the party and money flew about in all directions... all the sources of bribery and corruption (were) resorted to by the friends and supporters of Sir Francis Burdett, which were employed by the ministerial faction of Sir Murray Maxwell."

As in 1807, the idea was easier to accept than reject, and there can be little doubt that the majority in the country -- particularly the upper classes, little able to credit Burdett could achieve success otherwise -- accepted it. Though the Westminster Reformers sought to combat the rumours by publishing their accounts after the election, by opening them to inspection, and by offering to prove that no other money was spent, they were quite unable to check them.

Hunt followed up the line of attack laid down by Cobbett in the 'Register' closely. He added little to what Cobbett had already said, save on points of detail, but he did add his own particular brand of violently offensive allusion to individuals. As it happened it was Cleary who, after Cartwright's withdrawal, had joined Kinnaird in speaking for Burdett on the hustings, who was first goaded beyond endurance. Just over a week after polling had started - on Friday 26th June - he brought up the 'Derbyshire Rising', with the broad aim of denouncing, as Cobbett had done, the callous attitude of Burdett and the

2. The Post and Courier in particular, were most ready to oblige Hunt by giving his charges the widest currency. Place Papers B.M. Add Ms. 27, 841 f. 408. The Times also gave them countenance, ef. ibid. f. 358.
Westminster Reformers towards the ring-leaders of the affair. It can scarcely be doubted, however, that his more immediate aim was to humiliate Cleary, against whom he had obviously harboured particular resentment.

It was now that he chose to make public that he had tried to get Burdett and the Westminster Reformers to aid the Derbyshire prisoners at their trial. He had, he claimed, applied to them to help raise a subscription for them. Cartwright and Cleary had at first appeared to favour the idea. But then Cleary had written to him and it had become clear that Burdett had determined to remain carefully out of the way in Ireland, whilst the rest of his 'men' had shown they were determined the prisoners should be ignored altogether. Cleary, he implied, was now showing his true colours by supporting Burdett. He had all along been his, and the Westminster group's agent. He had helped to thwart Cartwright then, as he thwarted him now. Hunt further implied that Burdett and his 'tools', who had been indirectly responsible for inciting the actions of the Derby men, had allowed them to go their death without a word on their behalf. Cleary, he added, had said in his letter that he could hang them himself. Obviously he implied he and his friends were as guilty and as contemptible as Oliver.

1. Times 27th June, 1818.
2. Ibid. Hunt, of course, re-emphasized the point that Burdett's own estates were in Derby.
A violent altercation followed and the same night Cleary wrote challenging Hunt to a duel. Hunt refused the challenge replying by letter he would not meet a "paid agent" but that if Cleary cared to call he would "chastise him as he deserved".¹

The following day and during the next week, the battle was renewed on the Hustings.² Cleary, denying Hunt's charges, tried to explain the truth of the matter. He and other Reformers had wanted to help but there had been too much uncertainty as to the real extent of the influence of Oliver. The words he had used expressed irritation at the damage to the Reformers' cause. He now regretted them, but in their context, they would show he had not been unsympathetic. He repeated his challenge to Hunt. Hunt, who had promised to bring Cleary's letter to the Hustings had so far been unable to obtain it.³ He tried, however, to read Cleary's letter challenging him to a duel, and his reply. But the uproar which greeted him — the cries of 'White Feather', 'Coward', etc., — and the stones which flew, prevented him getting a proper hearing. As he left the Hustings the police could not prevent his being savagely attacked.⁴

From then on, it was more than clear Hunt had lost the 'mob'. His language and his bullying manner began to earn

2. Times 29th June, 1818, reporting the election scene on Sat. 27th June.
for him the same treatment as Maxwell had received. Thenceforth his deaf and dumb brother and his son became a kind of 'bodyguard', ready to defend him wherever he went.¹

It would be tedious to recount the Cleary/Hunt embroilment in detail. On the Monday following, Cleary managed to read his version of the letter he had sent to Hunt on the matter of the Derbyshire subscription.² Hunt, who had now secured his copy of the letter, had been totally unable to obtain a hearing, and the crowds now became so angry that, when constables tried to protect Hunt, a riot ensued which led to a part of the Hustings being demolished and to the military being called out.³ (Hunt's version was that the crowds were seeking to protect him from the High Constable and his men!)

Thereafter, almost every appearance of Hunt led to some kind of incident and he xx was able to press his charges against Burdett and the 'Rump' only with the greatest difficulty. He managed, however, to bring up another matter — the failure of Burdett to support Cobbett's election in Coventry, where, despite his absence, he had been nominated.⁴ Since Wooler had gone there to stand himself with Cartwright's blessing, they, too, were equally meant to share his censure.⁵

3. *ibid*.
5. *Cobbett's Political Register* June 20th, 1818; *Black Dwarf*, June 24th, for Wooler's explanations.
It was, however, his attempt to discredit and counter Press attacks on him which brought him the most trouble. All along decried as a revolutionary, the press was delighted with the opportunity he had given them to turn his charges against Cleary and the 'Burdettites' against himself. In opposition papers he was the 'spy', who, like Oliver, was acting in the minister's, and his own interests, seeking to lead 'the people' astray so they could be repressed. In ministerial papers, he and the 'Burdettites' equally, were entirely responsible for inflaming 'the people'.

Already he had several times been round the newspaper offices creating scenes. Now he denounced the hireling press on the Hustings, and singled out in particular, Dowling, the ministerial 'Observer' reporter, who had acted as an informer at the time the Watsons and others were planning the Spa Field meetings of 1816. He had given evidence against them at their trial, and had recently written against Hunt taking advantage of his embroilment with Cleary to castigate him. It was, Hunt said, 'spies' like him who would lead 'the people' to disaster.

The following morning Dowling arrived at the Hustings with a horse-whip and proceeded to put it to effective use on Hunt's back. Hunt, his brother, and his son retaliated until constables intervened. Rightly or wrongly, the crowds were now with Dowling, as they were to be with Cleary later in the day.

1. *ef. e.g.* Weekly Despatch, Champion June 28th, 1818, Place Papers B.M. Add Ms. 27,841 ff. 387-8.
2. *ef. e.g.* Morning Post June 30th. 3. Place Papers B.M. Add.
It has so far been considered by other writers that, when Cleary, at the close of the day's polling, read the old letter, which Cobbett had written against Hunt in 1808, which Place now handed to him to use as he chose, that Hunt and Cobbett too, were very ill-used. It has been held that Place and Cleary acted in gentlemanly terms - unpardonably, in brisker terms - with "singular malevolence". The suggestion has been that their actions completely overstepped the limits of decency and fair play of any age.

That it overstepped the limits set by modern standards of conduct may be admitted. That it went beyond the contemporary limits is far less clear. But even granted that some absolute tribunal would condemn their action, yet, if the circumstances are considered more closely, it would seem, upon reflection, that the same tribunal would as surely forgive it.

It must be borne in mind that Cobbett, and Hunt, who took up his refrain, had been publicly attacking Burdett personally as well as politically for nearly a year, and that Burdett had not, and did not, make any reply at all; that they had too, been attacking the Westminster Reformers, again personally as well as politically, for six months, and that they also had so far made no reply. Week after week Cobbett's articles had heaped upon them what could not but appear to them the most disgusting calumnies. They had been accused of personal as well as political

1. To M.W. Patterson, op. cit. 11,461. he acted unpardonably.; to G.D.H. Cole, op. cit. p.223, he acted with "singular malevolence."
fraud, and had more recently, since April, come to be classed by them along with Oliver, Castles and other ministerial agents.

It was this species of attack on them which was now renewed by Hunt. But up to this point, excepting only Cleary's personal defences of himself — and Cleary was not, whatever Hunt might say one of their group, still less their paid agent — no direct reply or counter attack had been made. Despite the demands of their supporters that they should do so, the temptation had so far been resisted. Yet Hunt had insinuated and propagated all manner of falsehoods about them personally, had used language about them, strong even by contemporary standards, had even accused Cleary himself, for example, of sodomy.

Nothing then was done officially by the Westminster Reformers until this moment, when, polling having closed on Friday, there remained only a few more hours' polling on Saturday before the election closed. Even then it was done only after Hunt had produced another letter of Cleary's with the aim of 'finishing off' both Cleary and Dowling at one go. It is probable that it was for this specific reason that Place furnished Cleary with the means of making an effective reply.

Cleary's letter, as read by Hunt, was held to show that he had known Dowling had threatened to horsewhip him (Hunt) for having given evidence in the Spa Fields trials against him. Cleary, he implied, had sympathised with Dowling - the spy - and was of the same stamp.

1. e.g. Wade, editor of the Gorgon. Place Papers B.M. Add. Ms. 27,841. f. 382.
3. Times July 4th,1818.
Watson Senior, himself, then spoke up for Hunt, and all the other speakers on behalf of the other candidates had finished before Cleary made his reply. Speaking last, he certainly secured maximum effect when, despite Hunt's efforts to prevent it, he read the now famous letter, which Cobbett had written in 1808. Cobbett referred to Hunt so:

"There is one Hunt, the Bristol man - beware of him! He rides about the country with a whore the wife of another man, having deserted his own. A sad fellow! Have nothing to do with him."......

There can be no doubt that at this time, it achieved its designed effect of discrediting Cobbett, as well as Hunt, completely. Moral considerations aside, it was, at this moment, in the hands of Cleary, who had suffered personally at Hunt's hands most of all, the most perfect and effective reply possible. It was Cobbett and Hunt who had set the fashion in language and innuendo. Cobbett had directly implied they had shown themselves as bad or worse than Oliver by their failure to help the Derby prisoners. Hunt it was who had started producing personal letters and had developed Cobbett's accusations in an even more personal manner. Now, to counter months and months of abuse, the Westminster Reformers made one short answer. There was no 'follow up!"

1. G.D.H. Cole, op. cit. p. 224 speaks of the action destroying Hunt's chances of election and the whole value of Cobbett's support. Apart from the fact that the election was over, it may seem this judgement somewhat overestimates Hunts chances, and Cobbett's influence on Westminster at this time. Hunt's total poll was 84.
It is well known that Cobbett, furious when he heard, took up the matter later;\(^1\) that Cleary was eventually to fight a court action with him over this.\(^2\) Further reference, now however may be deferred. Hunt had little or no chance to protest in the uproar which followed, and when, next day, he attempted to read one of Cobbett's recent 'Register' letters against the 'Rump', the clamour which greeted him prevented him securing any attention before the poll closed.\(^3\)

Burdett had been returned. Publicly, the Westminster Reformers hailed it as another triumph of 'the people' and did their best to capitalise their success. There was much trumpeting about 'the people's choice' and how they had repeated their victory of 1807. Advertisements were sent to papers all over the country.\(^4\) There was a triumphal procession and a grand celebration dinner. Privately, they were extremely dissatisfied with the way matters had turned out and extremely angry with the Whigs. Place, who believed things had been completely mishandled from the start, and their chances of improving their position in the country thrown away, was as bitter as he had ever been. But it may be certain that many, probably the majority, were coming to feel like him, long before the election ended.

2. In December 1810. cf. ibid. Dec. 9th, 16th, 1819, and Place Papers B.M. Add. Ms. 27,843, f. 308 for Place's part in it; also Papers B.M. Add. Ms. 27,841, f. 520 for 15 towns to whose local papers adverts were sent.
3. Times, July 4th, 1818.
4. Place Papers B.M. Add. Ms. 27,841, f. 520 for 15 towns to whose local papers adverts were sent.
Viewing matters with their eyes, the reasons are not hard to explain. The Whigs had attacked them - had attacked 'the people' of Westminster - and had treated them with contempt. They, not the Westminster Reformers, had 'forced' their candidate upon the city, and had sought by corruption, force, bribery and fraud to secure electors' support. They had not 'dared' to present Romilly as a Whig. They had presented him as a Reformer and every effort had been made to represent that he was the true 'people's candidate'. They had implied he agreed with Burdett's views on reform. They had implied, when Kinnaird had been withdrawn, that Burdett and the Westminster Reformers had seen reason and had taken up Romilly in his stead. ¹

All this might well, and did, anger them. The behaviour towards them of men who knew many of them personally, the indifference with which those who had professed themselves anxious to cooperate with the Westminster group now set themselves to undo all they had tried to do to improve election morality, was in itself extremely galling. Yet, had it not been that the eyes of the country were upon the Westminster election, had it not become perfectly obvious that the Whigs fully intended to turn election success there to party advantage in the country at large, there must have been, so far as the situation in Westminster itself was concerned, consoling factors. Burdett might be second on the poll, but it was clear support for him

¹. For these views cf. e.g. J.C. Hobhouse's Defence of the People against Lord Erskene's Two Defences of the Whigs, (1819)
had increased. Further, it was made clear that the Whigs had no real strength in Westminster. Romilly's position on the poll had reflected not positive favour for the Whigs, but principally the anxiety of the Court, and of 'the people', that the other's candidate should be kept out. In other words Whig corruption and trickery had had little effect. Electors had not been 'deluded'.

But the eyes of the country were on the Westminster election and the Whigs were trying to turn election success there to their party advantage, and principally at their expense! Already well before the election ended, Perry's 'Leader', in the Chronicle of June 30th, had made Whig tactics and intentions quite clear.

 Everywhere, he had said, - ostensibly surveying elections in the country as a whole, but very clearly with his eyes on Westminster - everywhere the country had proclaimed against senseless and visionary reform. The Cobbetts and Hunts, and the 'universal suffrage men', were silenced, and ministers would no longer have the excuse of repression they derived from their behaviour. The enlightened part of the community were now behind the Whigs in seeking retrenchment and sensible reform, and ministers, it was implied, could scarcely hope to survive in the new parliament. The omission of any reference to Burdett and the Westminster Reformers, so recently attacked as having joined the 'extremist' group, was very obviously intentional.

and his 'signal' to them was no less clear. They must now recognise they had no choice but to join with the Whigs. At the same time the article was arranged that the public should draw the inference that, having returned to their senses, the Westminster Reformers had already recognised it!

Appearing at a time when Romilly was hard pressed by Burdett and far from certain of finishing at the head of the poll, it was, and is, obvious that the 'Leader' was partly designed for immediate election effect, viz, to win more votes, more narrowly, 'Burdettite' votes, for Romilly. But it was the evidence it provided of Whig intentions, of what would follow if Romilly did head the poll, and the effect it was calculated to have in the country at large, which caused the Westminster Reformers far greater uneasiness. The Whigs, it seemed clear, looking to the Westminster election particularly, were now beginning to feel themselves secure, were now coming to feel quite sure there would be no need to press for parliamentary reform. Hungrier than ever for office now their appetites were whetted, they were now preparing to persuade the country to support them in their quest by promises to pursue minor reforms which, whatever they might be, would certainly not harm their own party interests. More particularly, they were preparing to use the evidence of the Westminster election to show that not only had the 'extremists' been put down, not only had the Court been badly bruised—its candidate had literally been beaten from the field— but that the 'Burdettites'
too, having been taught a lesson, had now been brought to heel. The Reformers were to be blamed for the recent troubles; the country, though it was to be reassured, was to see it must now be quite safe to turn ministers out and to accept the 'natural' leadership of the Whigs!

To such a man as Place it was bad enough, in any circumstances, that a Whig should be allowed to head the poll. But now, after the Whigs had attacked the Westminster Reformers violently, after they had used every kind of corrupt means and trickery to win support, and had even then secured only the hollowest of victories, it would be far worse, if they were allowed to claim they had triumphed over them. It would be worst of all if it was allowed to appear, as the Whigs were seeking to make it appear, that they had now joined with them. Burdett might be returned, but the danger to their own position, and hence the danger to the country as a whole too, would be increased. Scarcely credible even to Place, it seemed the Whigs actually believed the 'evidence' before them. But it was one thing they should delude themselves, quite another if they should succeed in deluding the country as well. Though the 'extremists' might temporarily be discredited,¹ the Whigs and 'the people' too would soon find the Court was very far from defeated. But if the Whigs should have been allowed to crow over them, if by that time 'the people' should have come to believe they had really surrendered to them, then the influence of the 'extremists'...

¹. Thelwall spoke of the election as being "glorious" because it separated the party of Reformers from the Anarchists. *Champion*, Dec. 27th, 1818.
would not only be rapidly regained but greatly increased. It was, therefore, imperative that the Westminster Reformers prepare to take positive action to make their position clear. The electors of Westminster might not be taken in, but unless they made an effort to reassure them, it must be likely that 'the people' elsewhere, unable to watch matters so closely, would all too easily be deceived.

After Romilly had headed the poll, it is clear he and others watched developments with growing bitterness and frustration. The Whigs duly claimed the victory of the 'Reformer',Romilly, as their own. They claimed that the poll showed clearly that the sense of 'the people' was now decisively and positively in the favour! They claimed that Burdett had been returned with their assistance, and implied he might not otherwise, despite the bribery and corruption on his behalf, have been returned at all! Partly it was hinted, because he and his close followers had begun to show some sense, far more, it was now emphasised, because it had been necessary to elect him to keep out the Court candidate, their supporters had given him their second votes!

The Tory press, refusing to believe and refusing to allow it to be believed, that Burdett could have been returned honestly, were only too glad to adopt a similar tone to explain his return, though it aimed to incite conservative distrust for the

1. Place Papers B.M. Add. Ms. 27,841 ff. 469-475 for selection of newspaper xx cuttings. Romilly himself, in his close of Poll speech, spoke only generally of 'Shorter Parliaments and a more equal representation'. ibid. f. 470.
Whigs, by holding that it showed their lack of sense! Nonetheless Tory papers agreed it was quite clear that Burdett, who had so long affected to despise them, had now had his fill of the 'rabble' with whom he used to associate! The 'extremist' 'Sherwin's Register' was only too delighted to show how Burdett had been returned by Whig votes and had deserted 'the people'.

No less convinced that the need to bring the Whigs to move for reform was becoming far more urgent, there were, it has been suggested, many among the Westminster Reformers, who had come to believe that it was better not to antagonise them but to seek to win them over by argument, and by giving them positive encouragement. Later they would still show themselves to prefer this approach, and even at this moment there were those still prepared or half-prepared to try it.

Thus in the 'Examiner' of July 12th, Leigh Hunt in a 'Letter to the Electors', showed great disappointment that 'the people' of Westminster should have allowed themselves to be deluded into choosing a Whig. Obliquely, those of the Westminster group, who had allowed it to happen, were censured, and 'the people' warned, that the course the Whigs were pursuing was highly dangerous. But, in the same issue, he sought to make clear, not only to the Whigs, but to the 'Burdettites' as well, that unless they came together they would both be ruined in the ultimate struggle between the Court and 'the people' led by the 'extremists'. The Whigs must move for reform; Burdett himself must
be less indolent. There must be concessions on both sides.

It is clear that Leigh Hunt was prepared to agree with the Whigs that the Westminster Reformers would never secure their aims if they pursued the dogma of, and competed with, the 'extremists'. But, in due course, even those like Leigh Hunt, who had always, at bottom, believed in a policy of 'conciliation' were to be gradually driven to feel that there was no hope that the Whigs would, at this time, be won over by gentle methods - that in hanging back themselves, they were not only compromising their own position, but increasing the dangers. As for those, like Place, completely persuaded of the folly of hanging back, their conviction was very shortly to be increased by the reaction occasioned when the very policy advocated by Leigh Hunt was tried.

At the Westminster group's celebration dinner on July 13th, Burdett first clarified his views on parliamentary reform. His views, he said, had not changed. He wished for a reform which would ensure the interests of the whole body of the people were comprehended. He did not, however, believe in holding to Cartwright's term, 'universal suffrage' since it was too imprecise and indefinite. It was never meant to be carried into effect literally. He would, himself, prefer to use the term 'general suffrage' and would like to see the franchise given to the head of every family so that he could vote for the preservation

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1. Place Papers B.M. Add. Ms. 278, f. 500, for an N.C. account
of their interests. This would be sufficient to ensure 'universal liberty.' Having earlier praised Romilly, he went on to refer to the Whigs as men of "honest though unfounded prejudices" and expressed his belief in the importance of "combining" with men who had "different views of arriving at the same end."

Burdett's statement upon his reform views, it is now obvious enough, show clearly that he still held fast to 'household suffrage'. Indeed it must be - and was to many contemporaries- equally obvious he had never in his mind gone further. It is also quite clear he was still trying to persuade the Whigs to come that far. Kinnaird, speaking also at the dinner, was more specific in saying that the Westminster Reformers wanted what the Whigs had wanted in 1793. Few, if any, contemporary politicians can have supposed he really believed in, or intended to press for, 'universal suffrage' even when he had moved for its consideration on June 2nd. Then, however, the 'extremists' had withheld the full force of their attack on him, and it had been the almost universal cry of conservatives that he had joined the 'wild men'. Now, there arose an even louder cry, with the 'extremists' acting as 'cheer leaders', that this was clear proof he had gone over to the Whigs - that his self-interest, and vanity were now displayed to all.

2. This view later expressed by James Mill in his famous Encyclopaedia Britannica Article, 'On Government', almost (cont.)
Wooler's 'Black Dwarf' led the way for the 'extremists' with some crisp comments of Wooler's own on Burdett's attitude, and a long letter from Cartwright, which showed that, while he did not like being 'pushed about' by Cobbett and Hunt, he felt even more bitter at the way he had been rejected by the Westminster Reformers, which he, too, was now prepared to call a 'junto'. Though he made no specific mention of Burdett, professing to blame the 'illiberality of a faction' it was, and is, quite clear he believed that Burdett, having rejected him at the election for one of his 'friends', was even now moving back among them.  

Though Cartwright, as he later explained, had moderated his letter out of "tenderness to the public cause", Wooler himself, and others were much less considerate. Sherwin, for example, roundly condemned Burdett as a Whig, using Whig sophistry, seeking to convince 'the people' that Cartwright was deluding them. Even Wade in the 'Gorgon' certainly came to Burdett from, or via Mill at this time. Mill was on the Westminster group's 'General Committee' at this time and helped to arrange the dinner. cf. Place Papers B.M. Add. MS. 2784, l.f. 518.

2. Life of Cartwright. II. '55, which makes Cartwright's feelings even clearer.
though showing he believed middle and working classes must work for reform, together, made quite clear he had no favour for Burdett's 'shuffle' back to 'household suffrage', which, he held, was "clearly in the interests of a distinct class". ¹

The Tory press, too, was delighted to grasp the opportunity to embarrass their enemies more. The ministerial 'New Times', for example, professed to be extremely pleased to see a "compromise" between the democratic baronet and the Whigs he had long affected to despise. ² There could be no doubt he had never favoured universal suffrage, and though he had taken it up to win popularity, "he and his blockheaded committee" had soon found that it was unacceptable in Westminster. ³ They had thereupon dropped it and shared 2,500 Whig votes. No wonder he had lost his popularity when he had been taken up and supported by the party he had so long vilified. And the attitude of the Whigs themselves? Their party 'Manifesto' in the 'Edinburgh' written by Brougham affected complete indifference to the overture, and the greatest contempt for the Westminster Reformers. ⁴


². Place Papers B.M. Add. MS. 27541 f. 504 for cutting of July 11th.

³. It would certainly seem the Westminster group had found it advisable, to play down Burdett's 'Annual Parliament, Universal Suffrage' resolutions during the election. Though they were earlier distributed as a pamphlet, cf. ibid. f. 93, they were not emphasized by the Committee's spokesmen on the hustings.

Brougham's article will be considered below in the concluding section. Meanwhile it is instructive to notice two letters - one from the Whig, Lord Tavistock, to his personal friend Hobhouse, who would certainly have preferred to have been friends with the Whigs politically had he considered it possible. The other - Hobhouse's reply. They are summarised because of their length.

Tavistock wrote complaining of the Westminster Reformers' attitude towards the Whigs during the election, and of Hobhouse's own part in maligning them. As a member of the printing committee he had, Tavistock claimed, been responsible for calling them the "basest of factions". Yet his "hero", Burdett, had "condescended to act with them on every occasion of importance in the eventful period of the last two years", and he hoped Hobhouse felt in "good humour" about the cordial support Burdett had received from many of them in the recent election. But, he went on, it seemed Hobhouse was determined they should not be friends. The Whigs, so far as Tavistock could see, "had evinced nothing but moderation and good taste from the commencement of the canvass", though Hobhouse's "Committee" had put the worst construction upon everything they had done. There

1. cf. infra pp. 301 et seq.
2. Broughton Papers B.M. Add.MS. f. 73, Lord Tavistock to Hobhouse, early August 1818.
3. ibid f. 80. Hobhouse to Tavistock, 12th August 1818.
might have been exceptions on both sides, but he was convinced most Whigs had gone into the struggle for 'the people' against the Crown, not with any feelings against Burdett.

He could not, he said, approve the system Hobhouse was pursuing, "especially after the reconciliation which took place two years ago at Burdett's house". The fault was with "Burdett and his friends". There could be nothing but mischief to the country if they did not cease abusing each other. He had admired Burdett's character and was loth to think him in the wrong. Hobhouse, who must have weight with his 'Committee', must speak to the 'Committee men' about it.

Hobhouse's reply began by denying that any of the advertisements hostile to the Whigs had originated with him. Usually he had not even been consulted about them and had seldom seen them until they were printed. He would certainly not make any public disavowal of them which would bring discredit upon men whose conduct he approved. Privately, however, he would admit that he and Michael Bruce had originally objected to going on the 'Committee', if they were to be made a party to the abuse of the Whigs, but they had finally agreed to have their names set down as a formality. Those advertisements he had seen before publication, had contained no offensive allusions to the Whigs, and he knew that on other occasions several 'near
the knuckle' allusions had been expunged, since it was known his personal attachment to individuals among the Whigs made hostility, identified with him, awkward.

At the same time, Tavistock must consider the reasons for the 'Committee's' hostility. The "party paper" had said Westminster had been disgraced for years, and had compared one of the candidates with Hunt. The "party orator" in Westmorland had compared Westminster to that county, and ...

"men who had devoted time, money and labour for eleven years to send two patriots to parliament"... to the Lowthers. What was the 'Committee' to know of the feeling of individuals towards them? Indeed, what did it matter after the party organs had trampled on them?

From the moment Maxwell's supporters had given single votes to their candidate, the Whigs had tried to get Burdett's second votes. After a coalition with the Whigs had been denied by the Reformers, the Whigs had practiced all manner of tricks, which...

"the laws of election, loose though they are, don't allow". Both parties had seen where the real strength lay and had sought to tap it. But the "court people did not canvass like the Whigs in our committee rooms" nor did they offer public breakfasts.

It was no use Tavistock saying the Whigs wanted to see Burdett at the head of the poll... "for the head of the party...(Grey)...I know was in a great fright lest he would be". It was for that reason so many shabby Whig tricks were played. Their "committee books were filled
with notices of these same means". It was like the bad old days when Duchesses kissed butchers and the actual struggle was between the press gang and the Admiralty. Had the 'Committee' not made an all out effort, all the anti-Burdett prophesiers would have been proved right. If Romilly had shared their plumpers, he would have had a nominal majority of more than 2000... "It would have given a fatal blow to the popular cause if the man of the people had seemed to have so few friends in comparison to one who, whatever his opposition to, was assisted by, government".  

How could they have put the child of party first—especially when "Perry and Co" were attacking them.

He had felt it his duty to help to show Burdett had no connection with 'party', but was, as before, the representative of 'the people'. He had done his utmost to secure plumpers for him. But he had done no more. He had wanted to "avoid the scandal of abusing the Whigs" and to give the honest men among them a chance of rallying to 'the people' instead of thinking only of their party interests. Tavistock must not, however, suppose Burdett had anything to do with it. "I do assure you on my honour that he never had the least communication, direct or indirect with the 'Committee' from the beginning to the end of the election".

1. Underlining my own.
He had not been consulted on the proceedings, nor had he known what was going on with regard to advertising. Whatever feelings he may have had, whatever blame there might be, the conduct of his campaign was the responsibility of the 'Committee'. Burdett had even praised Romilly at the celebration dinner. Tavistock must realise that part of the system on which 'the people' of Westminster had acted, was that there should be none but public communications between him and his 'Committee'. Though Perry and Brougham, used to corrupt contests, did not see this, it relieved an M.P. from the taint usually attaching to "common candidates". ..."Indeed it is my notion that Burdett's opinion on this point, or any other relative to the mere operation of the 'Committee', would have no sort of weight".

Burdett, therefore, could not be in the wrong. He had merely been elected without his interference. Were his 'friends' in the wrong? If the 'Committee' - then they could hardly be so-called. If himself, Bruce or Kinnaird, he had already defended himself and Bruce, and as for Kinnaird, it should be recollected some reply was allowable from a man classed below Hunt. But, whoever his friends were, they would doubtless suffer social proscription for their lack of selfishness, in the way all men who preferred the nation at large to faction, suffered.

At this time, there was, among the Westminster Reformers, not only considerable bitterness at the Whigs,
not only an increasing recognition that they must be prepared to stand out against them, but also a determination that, so far as it was possible to prevent it, the Whigs should never again be allowed such a victory in Westminster. At any time the King might die, and there might be another general election. On July 30th, at a full General Committee meeting, it was officially approved that Place, who had been putting the election books in proper order for future reference, should go ahead and produce a thorough and efficient scheme for conducting a future election, which would fully mobilise 'the people'. Though the precise course was not yet clear, though the opportunity had yet to offer itself, it is apparent that many had already determined that the Whigs, riding too high, must be pulled down. They should be forced to see that 'the people' had, indeed, "returned to their senses".

1. As the law then stood, these must have been a general election within six months of the King's death.
III. The Whigs Ride High.

There can be no doubt that the Whigs believed they had every reason to be delighted with the results of the election of 1818. Their optimism at this point was perhaps not unjustified. They believed, and claimed, they could count on thirty new supporters. Some, it must be likely, were returned after local bargains in which anti-ministerial feeling had played little part. Again, among the thirty, were included Reformers such as Waitman, Wood and Hume, as well as Wilson returned for Southwark by the Reformers. The fact remains that a fair number of Whigs were returned after contests with ministerial candidates in open constituencies. As it has been pointed out by Miss Martineau, though the number of contented elections - 115 - was not as high as it might have been, yet it was surprisingly high considering the imminence of the King's death and the inevitability of a further general election shortly. It would certainly suggest that 'party feeling' was strong and excited, and it cannot be surprising the Whigs, rejoicing in the evidence they found of a strong anti-ministerial temper, should be only too ready to believe that it represented a strong positive feeling in their favour, which properly encouraged, would soon bring them to office. Particularly pleasing to them was the idea that they had not only shaken the ministry, but defeated both wings of the Reformers. As Brougham wrote to Holland:

"The elections have done a world of good, both by beating the Government and destroying or nearly destroying our worst enemies, the Hunts and Co. It is our own fault if we don't make some play by this means."...5

Taking the "Hunts and Co." to refer only to the 'extremists', Brougham and the Whigs must have looked with delight to Coventry as well as Westminster. There, Hobhouse's Whig friend, Edward Ellice and the Whig 'sitting member', Peter Moore, had beaten a 'friend of the ministry', and had had so to speak, a double victory over, the absent Cobbett, and Wooler in person.

1. A. Aspinall, op. cit. p. 86.
2. Hume was returned for the Montrose Boroughs.
4. ibid. Miss Martineau believed their hopes were higher than at any time since 1806-7.
5. A. Aspinall, op. cit. p. 93, quoting Holland House MS. n.d.
But it is evident that it was from the Westminster result, particularly from the reflection that they had there triumphed over the Westminster Reformers as well, that they derived the greatest satisfaction, and it is beyond doubt that the latter's defeat was very much in Brougham's mind at this moment. Continuing his letter to Holland, he went on...

..."We have it once more in our hands, and once more I fear we shall throw it all away. I have been endeavouring to improve it in various ways and particularly by drawing up a dissertation on the state of parties and an argument in favour of parties generally for the Edinburgh Review which you will soon see"...1.

Brougham's idea of what was most important to do "to improve it" appears very clearly! The Whigs themselves must unite and give the country a strong lead. At the same time they must finish off the Westminster Reformers once and for all! In his article, cast and generally taken as the Whig party 'Manifesto,' his principal argument - that 'the people' had now turned again to their 'natural' leaders - was based on the premise that they had long been led astray by the Westminster Reformers, who were now defeated. It was their behaviour, their absurd ideas, which had long prevented the country from benefitting from Whig rule. In effect it was a Whig party reply to the Westminster Reformers' use of Bentham's 'Catechism' as their 'Manifesto.' Since his article was to play a very important part in increasing the bitterness of the Westminster group towards the Whigs, since his attitude - taken as the official Whig attitude - helps to explain why, in due course, the Westminster group launched a full scale counter attack on them, it is desirable to view it in summary form. It may well be felt that Brougham was personally delighted at this further opportunity to crow over his erstwhile allies.2

Brougham was first concerned to defend 'party' generally and the Whig party in particular, using Burke's arguments in a way the 'Edinburgh' had many times done before.

1. ibid.
2. The article, entitled 'State of Parties,' appeared in Edinburgh Review Vol. XXX, June 1818. It cannot, however, have appeared before July. For Brougham's authorship of J.C. Hobhouse's Defence of the People in Reply to Lord Erskine's Two Defences of the Whigs, 1819.
The change from war to peace, he said, had opened the eyes of the people to their real interests. Politicians could not hope to secure the confidence of 'the people' unless they showed they were acting for the good of the nation. Scrambles for power among a few great men could no longer be dignified with the title of 'party differences'. Public principle must be the guiding star of all politicians, and party discussions must take into account the voice of the community.

But even the "more thinking classes" of the community were apt to distrust parties. They saw something factious in a systematic opposition; it seemed as if men, not measures, were the criterion of praise or blame. They objected to "coalitions", failing to see that men who had minor differences could unite when circumstances changed. The two most celebrated coalitions of modern times (1784 and 1806) had given rise to infinite misunderstanding. People were ready to distrust the conduct of every opposition the moment it acceded to power. Before it had a chance to do good there rose a cry - 'the new men are as bad as the old'.

These were among the principal objections to 'party'. 'Party' could be faction, but 'party' was essential to the carrying on of government and essential if full influence were to be given to different principles. It was also essential as an opposition. An administration which had the advantage of the use of Crown patronage to hold its supporters together, could only be watched and checked properly if it were opposed by men who were themselves united and whose voting power was mobilised. It was, in any case, natural that men should unite, and it was a principle of society itself, that men should sacrifice small insignificant objects for the general good.

Men and measures must be regarded equally. The men might be good and the measures bad, or vice versa. But every measure must be considered in relation to the men proposing it, whether in or out of power. In 1806, the clamour raised against the men, who had tried to bring forward a fair measure of Catholic relief, had brought twelve years of oppressive measures. Even when the present ministry had been forced to make some effort to meet the popular outcry, their measures had been at best feeble, since their principle was to extend, not to lessen Royal influence.

The support of party could not harm the men of tender conscience nor stifle the men of original views. It could not be harmed by the support of men whose interests were selfish or with lesser talents. It would be better if such men joined with a party. "He who cries out against faction only means that there shall be one faction unopposed".
Aristocratic influence was vital to parties. It was vain to say a King was better than a domineering aristocracy; vain to say that the contention that the power of great families was necessary to preserve the liberty of the people against the Crown, was a contention of the grandees only. The "minions of arbitrary power" and the Reformers had combined to elevate the Crown. The latter claimed the grasp of one was better than the grasp of many. But "these descriptions of persons was daily lessening..." and the Crown's allies were, therefore, diminishing.

The natural wholesome influence of the aristocracy exercised through a political party, was a very different matter to government by an Aristocracy. Whenever its leaders should come to power, they were subject to the same checks as previous ministers. True, there had been abuses in the past. But, at the present time, such a perversion was impossible. The "formation of a ministry on purer principles and composed of more trustworthy men was the only legitimate object of all constitutional opposition".

Aristocratic coalitions had been much abused. Yet the coming together of men, who had formerly opposed each other, because the ground of their political differences had disappeared, or because circumstances made it possible to shelve them, might well mean sacrifice of private animosities for the public good. Sometimes, as in 1784, they had been repugnant to the country. But a coalition, when it entered office, must be checked as much as any other ministry. It would be watched by the new regular opposition; but should that fail in its duty there "could not fail in these times to arise a third party out of doors..." which would watch the interests of the people if their present defenders should fail them. This had been proved in 1806.

A coalition must be judged on its merits. It was wrong to condemn it per se. Ministers in 1806, had had no chance to prove themselves.

There was one other common objection to party—that it encouraged factious proceedings, violence and turbulence. But the fuel of popular discontent existed outside 'party', and the influence of a regular and respectable party must serve to calm the people down.

So much for the arguments against 'party!'. Brougham now turned more directly to his purpose.
It was clear that the attacks to which the present opposition had been exposed had really been those to which all such parties must have been liable. In fact, it was certain that at no period of English History was there ever embodied so formidable an association on behalf of the principles of civil and religious liberty, and in general of liberal enlightened patriotic policy, as the great body of the Whigs; then were. It was equally certain that the present ministers were the most contemptible ever.

How them did such a ministry stand against such an opposition? It was because a "third party", insignificant in numbers and weight, but claiming to represent 'the people', had long since sought to delude them and turn them away from their natural leaders. They had defamed the regular opposition, had strengthened the hand of ministers and all but undermined the credit of the country.

There were, first the "Cobbetts and Hunts". Such men had long sought to persuade the country that no public men were to be entrusted. But, of late, it was only the lowest and most ignorant part of the community which heeded them. They had even blamed the Whigs for urging the ministers to suspend the Habeas Corpus!

There were second, the Westminster Reformers. Brougham, on this occasion had no intention of leaving his reference to them oblique.

Although the permanent influence of such men as these had now been confined to the 'rabble', yet...

"another class, far more respectable, very numerous and generally speaking of honest principles" (who) having suffered themselves to be led away by false theories of government, in which the Whig party never could occur, were disposed to view that body with suspicion and to incline towards the tales propagated against the members!

Formerly, Major Cartwright had had much influence with the Now, it was Mr Bentham. They called dogmatically for universal suffrage and annual Parliaments and now the ballot too, and believed everyone who disagreed with their demands, ignorant. Parliamentary reform might be important, but it was absurd to suppose nothing else, and nothing less than they demanded mattered. It was absurd to say every male over twenty-one must vote and therefore the franchise could not be confined to Householders: Their efforts to trage the history of parliament and to prove them annual, had made them ridiculous.

But these limits, this arbitrary doctrine had become the shibboleths of the party. "Greater dogmatism, more gratuitous..."
assumptions, more intolerance towards other sects never marked the doctrines or the proceedings of any religious party or establishment"...

It was obvious why they should be jealous of the Whig party. Part of the Whig party was that the Crown would have no ministers in a renovated parliament, but only government orators to explain measures without a deliberative voice. The whole business of the state would be conducted by ministers whose actions parliament could not check save by impeaching them. Public affairs could not be conducted under the eye of the "Great Council" of the nation—whose function would simply be to vote supplies. The Crown would be restored to its ancient prerogative of ruling unchecked. It was, therefore, easy to see why they should abhor any regular party in their Utopia.

But the Whigs had other crimes to answer for. None of them, on long reflection, were for Universal Suffrage. Some, though not against reform, no longer believed it as important as they had once thought. At once the cry was raised against them. Moderate reform was held up as worse than the present system. The Whigs, the only people who could hope to carry any measure, were decried as supporters of abuses.

It was evident why. If the leaders of the third party were to gain the ear of the people, they could only hope to do so by destroying their confidence in the Whigs. In 1806, therefore, the moment the Whigs had taken office and before they had had a chance to prove their worth, they had defamed them, had claimed that 'place' alone was their object, and that all public men were alike. The only hope for the people, it was said, was to throw off all party connection, and to think and manage for themselves. In other words they were to follow their new leaders into turbulence and disorder.

But it soon appeared they were better at railing at others than proposing any good measures themselves. Their only success was in dividing the people to the advantage of the ministers. They produced a new Shibboleth each week to attract attention. Everything they brought up was held to be a major scandal and the result of the 'system'. There had been Wellington's peninsula campaign; the Duke of York and Mrs. Clarke's case; the Walcheren expedition; the question of the privileges of the Commons and on the morrow, tithes, taxes and parliamentary reform, the aristocracy and its vicious accomplishments! All gentlemen, who were at odds with society, were praised to the skies. As
any creed began to gain ground they went further so as to have exclusive and pure use of its cries. As soon as any candidate for popular favour began to associate with the upper classes he was denounced.

But while patriots rose and fell, the Whigs held steadily to their course and their vigilance had roused 'the people'. They had cultivated the respectable part of the community and had opposed the influence of the Crown. While Reformers had abused each other they had been responsible for securing from the ministry such concessions as had been made. This they had done without a thought for themselves, place, or power.

Now 'the people', though once misled, had begun to see the situation more clearly. Already they had begun to condemn attacks on the popular party in parliament. The recent elections had shown 'the people' were no longer under the guidance of shallow pretenders to constitutional learning... and... "even the more respectable zealots of Reform had failed to estrange them from their natural leaders". To these leaders they had evinced their willingness to return.

The country as a whole must now see it was vital the nation secured new ministers. Present ministers, concerned solely with their own interests, were hostile to all improvements and ready to defend abuses. But a set of men, who would investigate and reform those abuses in the country's interest, was essential. The end of the war had deprived the Court of all the arguments it had formerly used to deny the Whigs office. They were known to be loyal to the throne, jealous of the country's honour abroad, and hostile to traitors at home.

The Whig leaders must continue to combat the extravagant doctrines recently promulgated, but must not allow themselves to be put off by them. They must work "to promote the rational amendment of the constitution" and to build up a powerful party in the country and the Senate, which must speedily triumph.

Reflecting on Brougham's 'Manifesto', it must be easy enough to see why earlier historians should so readily have accepted the Whig 'case'—should so readily have condemned Tories and Reformers with equal vehemence. It must be equally easy to see how acceptance of that 'case' must inevitably obscure the true state of affairs, and be misleading, not only as to their real character, position, and aims, of their two equally 'contemptible' opponents, but as to their own role in affairs as well.
Even today, however, after later research has made a closer understanding of the period possible, even after it must be recognised that Tories and Reformers, equally, have 'cases' deserving of sympathy and understanding, and that their contribution to the political development of the country cannot be ignored, it must still, at times, be tempting to accept the Whig 'case'. Reading the articles and speeches of individual Whigs, it must be difficult not to allow a sense of relief that the moderate Whig body did exist, and was able to perform, politically, a mediating role between two diametrically opposed extreme parties, to colour one's judgement.

Doubtless the positive influence of the Whigs did help to keep the two extremes - Tories and Reformers - from drifting too far apart. Doubtless their positive influence was important later, especially in 1832, in helping to bring them well together. Their Reform Bill, it may be argued, was a practical, acceptable, and hence successful, compromise. But whilst it may be well enough to approve that a moderate course was chosen and to applaud the Whig share in directing the country towards it, it may still be that too much credit is given them for their moderation...
and for their positive contribution towards bringing about the 'right' political solution. Just as it is possible to invert both the Tory's case and the Reformer's 'case' against themselves - that, respectively, they were driven to act as they did because of the attitude of the other, and because of the attitude of the Whigs - just as it is necessary to do so to preserve a proper sense of proportion, so too is it possible, and necessary, to invert the Whig 'case' against its authors.

Viewing Brougham's article in isolation, it must still be deceptively easy to picture a grimly determined, united party of selfless Whigs desperately battling to save the country from revolution against a corrupt depotism. There can, indeed, be little doubt that that is how the majority of contemporary Whigs did picture themselves. But it is no less essential to remember that had the Whigs made a real effort to give the country a firm, positive and moderate lead - which it is so tempting to believe they did - then there might well have been no trembling depots, holding desperately on to power by 'corruption', and no 'wild revolutionaries' for them to complain about. In fact, instead of helping to bring both extreme parties together, their 'moderation', for much of the early nineteenth century, consisted of an attitude so indeterminate, and a policy so often negative, that in inspiring the distrust and contempt of both, it positively drove them, in their own fears and uncertainties to take up positions further apart. It was too often easy for Tories to believe they would betray the country to the Reformers, and for Reformers to believe they would sacrifice everything for office and power, and both were undoubtedly encouraged to act with a sense of desperation. But it must also be recognised that, persistently hoping it would be possible to win the Whigs over, both - the Reformers particularly - were encouraged for calculated tactical reasons to take an extreme tone, encouraged by Whig hesitancy and fears to play upon them, in order to force them to take their side. The despotic tone of the Tories and the 'wild' tone of Reformers are themselves, in fact, often misleading. The fact remains that, as often as not, Whig moves, far from being the result of considered policy, were the moves of individuals or of small groups, or the moves which were forced upon the party by pressure from either side, undertaken in panic. It is in this light that the relations between the Whigs and the Westminster Reformers, during the next year, must be considered.
In particular it must be kept in mind that, behind Brougham's 'Manifesto', there is to be seen not a firmly united body campaigning vigorously to win support away from its extreme rivals, but a body loosely knit, still influenced strongly by personal considerations, still uncertain as to policy, which Brougham was now desperately anxious should unite, should move, and should give the country a firm lead. At this moment the Whigs appeared heartened by election success. But, as Brougham showed in his letter above — and as his 'Manifesto' must make even clearer — he was only too conscious that unless the Whigs now came to move positively, and unless they came to act as he believed a party must act, their moment of opportunity, perhaps the best for over a decade, would, as on other occasions, be thrown away.

As it has been shown above, like many others of the Whig 'left wing', Brougham had long before recognised that, necessary as it was for the Whigs to band together and to act determinedly to 'oppose the Crown', it had now become more than ever necessary to do so in order to 'oppose the Reformers', as well. In defending 'party', in defending the Whigs in the eyes of 'the people' and in taking a 'Tory' attitude towards Reformers, Brougham was not only admitting that he no longer regarded the Crown, but the Reformers as the greater menace to the country — but was urging the Whigs to see they were the greater menace to themselves. What, he asked in effect, kept the Whigs from office? The influence of the Crown? But ministers so contemptible would never stand for a moment if public opinion were behind the Whigs. It was the influence of the Reformers, frightening some, and 'deluding' others, which had prevented the country giving the Whigs its support, and it was their influence, which they must make the greater effort to combat.

His views are evident enough. It was still vital the influence of the Crown should be opposed. It was still essential that the Whigs show they were alive to the dangers if its influence were not properly kept in check, and should seek to rouse the country to support them. But it was more immediately necessary to make greater positive efforts to re-assure those who were, or were likely to be, alarmed or 'deluded' by the Reformers, that the Whigs could be trusted to look to their interests. It would not, however, be enough, merely to attack the Reformers, to tell them, and 'the people', they were wrong, and that all they really needed to worry about was the influence of the Crown. The days had passed when it was possible to expect the country to support them

merely on the promise that it would be protected against Crown influence. It was no longer possible to expect them to trust a few great families to look after their interests and to pursue only such measures for their benefit as they alone chose. It was certainly necessary they show the country they believed in the dangers from the Reformers, but even more important they show the country they were doing, and would continue to do their best to pursue measures which would gratify the popular demand. They must show that criticism of them, particularly the criticism of Reformers, was unfounded, and the only way they could do this was by going part of the way to meet them. The conception of party government must be broadened and the Whigs must be better defended in the press. But only effective way of showing the Reformers' accusations - that they were entirely self-interested - were false, the only way of winning those who were being alarmed, and 'deluded' by them, back to their natural leaders, was for them to agree on a popular policy, to pursue it vigorously and to prove by their actions they were anxious to promote the interests of all.

It is, in fact, significantly clear that, in the very article in which he attacked the Westminster Reformers so strongly, Brougham was seeking to make clear to his party that if they hoped to win the support of the country, if the people were to trust in 'party', they must pay greater heed to their criticisms. So far was he from regarding Bentham's views as ridiculous, that he had, a few days before the 'Manifesto' was written, shown that, as an individual, he was inclined to accept them in toto. Even as a Whig, it is obvious he believed there was much in them his party could not afford to ignore. It is obvious, too, that it was for precisely this reason - that he himself recognised the force of the Westminster group's criticism, and was only too ready to be apprehensive about the influence of Bentham's 'Catechism' among the middle classes - that he devoted so much of his 'Manifesto' not only to attacking their actions but to ridiculing their ideas and to defending the Whigs and 'party' against their criticism.

1. A. Aspinall, op. cit. pp. 88-90. In late June, believing that the Whig leaders would keep him out of parliament if he failed to carry Westmorland, he had tiraded bitterly against the "futility of all party connection" in a letter to Holland. He found later, however, that he could obtain a seat for the close borough Winchelsea, and did so, accompanied by the ironic cheers of Sherwin. cf. Sherwin's Register 11th July, 1818.
Important as it is that it should be emphasised how it was that party politicians were being forced, largely by the pressure of the Reformers upon them to broaden the conception of 'party', and to make greater efforts to win the favour of the 'public', it is more immediately important here to notice how Brougham's great and formidable body of Whigs did, in fact, seek to follow up the advantage they believed they had gained in the general election.

For some time it did seem as if they might succeed in turning opportunity to their advantage, and in strengthening their hand. Brougham himself, who had for some time been wooing the moderates in the party, partly to secure the party leadership in the Commons if Tierney's temporary position were not confirmed, was much chagrined in July to find that it was. But he did his best to mask his feelings and, though these were well enough known or imagined, his immediate professions of loyalty to Tierney saved any awkwardness which might have hampered Whig actions. Tierney, who had recently expressed doubts as to the existence of the Whig party, now professed himself confident victory and office would soon be won.

It was then, Tierney who must have been most directly responsible for the subsequent efforts made to keep the spirits of party members high, and to encourage popular support for them, during the recess. The 'Chronicle' continued to praise them, and the Whigs themselves praised each other at numerous large dinner meetings in the capital and in the country. It seems a substantial majority of the parliamentary party was mustered for a dinner at the Freemason's Tavern. Other equally large or larger dinners were held where prominent Whigs, somewhat unwillingly pushed forward, addressed local Whig supporters. Long hibernating 'Fox Clubs' sprang to life and also held dinners.

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2. Place certainly knew the circumstances of Tierney's confirmation as leader of the party. of. Place Papers EM. Add.MS. 35,146. Place's unpublished MS. reply to Lord Erskine 1819.
3. A. Aspinall, op. cit. p.94.
4. Authentic Narrative of the Westminster Election of 1819. Appendix. Conduct of the Whigs in the late Session; G.M. Trevely-an op. cit. p.163 quotes Grey... "I cannot tell you" (his wife) "how this Fox Dinner annoys me, and the idea of being set up there as a sort of show"...
Contemporarily, it is evident, plans of action for the new session were discussed. Despite the appearance of Brougham's 'Manifesto', there can be no doubt that the question of pressing for a measure of parliamentary reform was seriously discussed. The Westminster Reformers may ultimately have been proved right in their conviction that the Whigs would never take the matter up as a party question at this time, but it is evident that a number of Whigs did now favour a moderate measure, virtually certain it was considered as a party question, and quite certain some assurances of party support in pursuing it were given to Burdett.

But it is equally certain the Whigs remained half hearted, and whatever was arranged on this point it was emphatically not made clear to the public. Nor, indeed, was anything the Whigs intended to do made clear. It would seem that it was decided that, as in the previous session, individuals should continue to pursue various special reforming measures and that the main party action should be on the question of the resumption of cash payments by the bank. But even this decision, as Professor Aspinall points out, was taken with little enthusiasm, and it does not seem the public can have known about it before the session. The Whigs might now be a little more ready than usual to address dinner meetings of their own supporters, but the measures they hoped to pursue were generally referred to vaguely as the 'reform of abuses'. At most it must have been clear that the Whigs were seeking the support of moderate men.

1. It would seem Burdett, and almost certainly Bentham too, were concerned directly or indirectly in negotiations with the Whigs on the subject, possibly even before the close of the 1818 session. In the summer and autumn of 1818 several liberal or reforming periodicals, e.g. Champion and Examiner, persistently pleaded for a union of moderate Reformers in favour of House-Suffrage and Triennial Parliaments. A little earlier, Bentham wrote to Burdett (in March - Works x.498) saying he hoped to get Ricardo to agree to this, and it would seem there was a concerted effort to get the Whigs to agree to this too. Bentham certainly succeeded in persuading Romilly to agree (cf. Bentham MSS. Univ. Coll.132. Unpublished letters to Erskine xi). For the rest of 1818 there can be no doubt Burdett continued to court the Whigs, and it would seem there were definite hopes of building an alliance between Whigs and Reformers through the fact that Burdett and Romilly shared the representation of Westminster and Wilson was a member for Southwark. Whatever the case, Burdett made clear in a speech in December, at the Liverpool Concentric Society, that he had been given certain assurances by the Whigs as to support for Triennial parliaments and

2. Of over page
Household Suffrage (cf. infra) and a letter of Brougham confirms assurances were made.

He wrote to Grej, on Jan. 1st, 1819, after relations with the Westminster group had greatly deteriorated (Life and Times of Lord Brougham 11. 340) referring to the Burdett party.... "I trust we shall not make any concession to the set beyond what we should have done if Romilly had lived. Nay, I am sure for conceding less on that account; and it is with me a very great doubt whether we should not still abstain from reform as a party exactly as we always have done!.... Brougham's 'Manifesto' had almost certainly been meant in part as a signal to the moderates of the Westminster group. (underlining my own)

2. A. Aspinall, op. cit. p95.
Even had their programme become known, however, it may reasonably be doubted whether it would have made any appreciable difference to their future. If they had shown they intended to pursue a moderate measure of parliamentary reform, it must be an open question whether their boldness would have been rewarded. But their aim of opposing the ministry over the matter of the Bank restrictions was scarcely far sighted. True, it was calculated to win them the support of merchants and manufacturers whose desire for the resumption of cash payments was strong, and it showed a certain boldness in that it risked losing support among the country gentry. But, at best, it offered no scope for following up a victory and keeping such support as that victory might win them. At worst it made no provision for defeat. It might have been foreseen that ministers had only to give in, as they did give in, and satisfy the commercial classes they did not intend to defy them, for the latter to continue, as they did not, to give them their support. In the circumstances, the Whigs would virtually cease to have any 'programme' at all.

But whatever their 'programme', much must have depended on the energy with which the Whigs followed it up. Yet, in the event, though at times they were to have the Tory ministers tottering, it was the Whigs who cracked first. They not only failed to secure office - they failed even to hold together as a party. They utterly failed to strengthen their position in the country.\footnote{A. Aspinall, op. cit. p96.}

True, they had personal difficulties - the death, or illness of prominent members. Romilly's death in particular was a severe blow.\footnote{cf. infra p.108-9, and Ch. xiv.} Brougham's illness for much of the session doubtless weakened them.\footnote{cf. infra where their progress during the session is further, though briefly, examined.} A worsening economic situation, and the reappearance of 'working class' unrest in the provinces in early 1819 may well have worked to their disadvantage. They certainly had to withstand a tremendous onslaught from the Westminster Reformers. At bottom, however, it would seem they had only themselves to blame for their failure. They had had six months to make plans and preparations for their campaign at a time when, except for a tense moment in August, caused by large scale strikes in the Lancashire cotton area, the country had remained calm.\footnote{H. Martineau, op.cit. Bk.1 p.253 et seq.}

\footnote{1. cf. infra p.108-9, and Ch. xiv.}
\footnote{2. cf. infra where their progress during the session is further, though briefly, examined.}
\footnote{3. A. Aspinall, op. cit. p96.}
\footnote{4. H. Martineau, op.cit. Bk.1 p.253 et seq.}
Though they had earned the enmity of the Westminster Reformers, yet the latter made no attack on them until after the 1819 session began. In any case, had they earlier secured strong support in the country, they might have ignored them. More precisely, had they shown any real unity and determination in attitude and action as Brougham had recommended, they might never have been attacked by the Westminster Reformers at all. They need not be blamed for failing to take up parliamentary reform as a party. It can, indeed, be argued that if they had taken it up at a time when tension had relaxed and the middle classes were calmer, then the tension and the 'crisis' of 1819 might never have arisen. Their uncertainty on the matter is, however, understandable. But, in any case, it was not, at bottom, their ultimate failure to take it up as a party question which brought the Westminster Reformers' wrath. It was one thing to leave parliamentary reform an open question, and though the Westminster Reformers would not have agreed—reasonable enough. Even so, had matters been left like that, the story might have been different. But it was quite another when numbers of the Whigs privately sought the co-operation of Burdett and his friends and wooed them with promises to pursue parliamentary reform whilst others attacked the Westminster Reformers in the name of the Whig party, spoke of their views with contempt, and persistently sought to create the impression the Whig party had 'captured' Westminster. Whether parliamentary reform was ever decided upon as a party question, or whether it was all along left an open question, it was to be particularly unfortunate for the Whig party when it was so near office, that individual Whig spokesmen should contrive to convince 'the public' that it was wholly against it, and entirely succeed in convincing the Westminster Reformers that their sole aim was to draw over and compromise their leaders, and put them down completely, so that, when they entered office, they could safely drop it altogether. And for this state of affairs the total lack of unity and discipline in the Whig party was to blame.

The attitude of the majority of Reformers at the time of the appearance of Brougham's 'Manifesto' has already been considered. Though, together with other Whig party statements, it was later to come under their heaviest fire, it provoked no immediate reply from them. Its effect on them may be regarded

1 Supra, p. 296, 298-9.
as hardening an existing attitude rather than bringing any fresh reaction. The line it took cannot have been in the least unexpected. Brougham's aim was clearly to force them under the Whig banner.

At the same time there can be no doubt that it increased their bitterness towards the Whigs, especially as it appeared just after Burdett's overture to them. ¹ There was much in it that was unfair to them. Doctrinaire-idealist - some of them might be, but the majority were practical men, ready enough to support any genuine move for parliamentary reform. There was much that they must have greeted with amused cynicism. After the recent election, the claim, for example, by a Whig, that 'party influence' would discourage popular tumult, must have seemed ludicrous. Again, recalling the actual state and behaviour of the Whigs in 1817, the picture Brougham drew of the Whigs as the most "magnificent association ever embodied on behalf of.... liberty in English History," may well have left them speechless. There was much too, however, that which they viewed more seriously. It was particularly galling they should now be blamed for all the evils which had beset the country since 1806.

For the moment and for the rest of the summer, Place and the Westminster Reformers made no move hostile to the Whigs. Though they distrusted them completely, it is probable that Place and his friends knew Burdett was negotiating with them, and that others too were still hoping to argue them into taking up parliamentary reform, and were therefore disposed to do nothing which would spoil matters if there was even the slightest chance the divided Whig party could be brought to see 'reason'. Place himself, now so strongly roused that his old objections to taking the lead of his 'party' in public were to be cast aside, was busy for some time perfecting the election campaign plan referred to above, and making preliminary arrangements to launch a campaign for the Repeal of the Combination Laws. ² But it is evident that he and his political friends watched the developments of the next few months closely and that, as they did so, they became even more alarmed at the prospects appearing.


² The fresh vigour with which Place was working at this time to prepare a campaign to secure the repeal of the Combination Laws - arranging for articles in Wad's Gorgon, distributing them to M.P.s, etc., etc. - cf. G. Wallas, op.cit. pp.204 et seq. - may be seen as reflecting the political situation of the
Westminster group, and as a further move to win back the confidence of the 'working classes' at a time when the country had become calmer. Doubtless the stir caused in August 1818, when something like a union of trades and widespread strikes in the Lancashire cotton districts occurred, helped to rouse interest among parliamentarians, who were temporarily alarmed, and among working men whose strikes gained them nothing. It was at this time that Hume came to work with Place on the subject more closely. [cf. G. Wallas, op. cit. p.205. Place Papers BM. Add.MS.27842 f.49. Hume to Place 6th Nov.,1818.] The Gorgon took up the workers' case in August and September, and so too in part, did the Examiner. But it is obvious Place was dependent on the working classes maintaining good order if he were to persuade parliamentarians and the respectable press to take up their cause. In the circumstances his apprehension lest the attitude of the Whigs, and the activities of the 'extremists' between them, lead to further disorders at this time, and his subsequent delight when, by mid-1819, the working people had remained steady despite trade depression, are the more understandable. Place and his Benthamite friends firmly believed that repeal of the laws would, inter alia, encourage the independence and self-confidence of the working men.
Ignoring Whig attacks on the Westminster Reformers and the Whig press reaction to his speech at the June celebration dinner, Burdett continued to act in a manner which could only help to strengthen the impression the 'extremists' had been fostering, that he had himself gone over to the Whigs. Speaking at the dinner arranged to honour Cartwright's service to the cause, which had finally been arranged in August, he showed that he had recognised it would be better if he made clear he still held fast to his June 2nd Resolutions for annual parliaments and universal suffrage. But, at the same time, he said he despaired of achieving so much, and urged again that 'general' or, in effect, 'household' suffrage was more practicable. In September, attending a reform dinner at Reading to celebrate the return of C.F. Palmer and Lefevre, two 'whiggish' Reformers, he again made evident, by his references to Romilly and the Whigs, that he favoured them. But there were others, too, who acted in such a way as to suggest the Westminster Reformers were now anxious to woo the Whigs. In particular, it was at this time that John Thelwall emerged from the retirement which he claimed had been forced on him by ministerial persecution in the nineties, and arranged to purchase the 'Champion' with the principal aim of promoting union between the Westminster Reformers and the Whigs.

Contemporarily, the 'extremists' forgetting that Brougham and Perry had put them down completely, continued to show the strongest disapproval of Burdett's actions and continued to work to secure the leadership of 'the people' in the provinces, in his stead.

Cartwright did not attend the dinner in his honour owing to illness. But he sent a letter via Cleary in which fulsome praise for Burdett was combined with a reminder that his own Reform Bill had long been published, and a plea that he bring forward a radical reform bill, in such a way that to anyone who knew of Cartwright's feelings, his determination to maintain pressure on him must have been obvious. Wooler, in the 'Black Dwarf', spoke his sentiments.

3. Thelwall bought the Champion in November because he believed it was doing a great deal of injury to the cause of reform. J.C. Jennyns of suppr. had been particularly busy attacking the Westminster group. Place Papers BM. Add. MS.27848. Westminster Group's Managing Committee Minutes, for election of 1819. 30th Nov., 1818. For his persecution cf. Champion Feb. 21st, 1819.
4. Life of Cartwright 11 149; Black Dwarf. August 26th, 1818.
more clearly. He could not have made more obvious his distrust for Burdett and his belief 'the people' must now look to Cartwright. As for the Whigs - Burdett's new 'associates' as he called them - he drew attention to their recent 'Manifesto' in the 'Edinburgh'. They were now openly confessing their sole object was - place, place, place. Cobbett's and Sherwin's 'Registers' took a similar line.

It was not only their words, however, but their deeds which must have worried the Westminster group. In August, Sir Charles Wolesey, Wooler and Edwards, former chairman of the local Hampden Club, attended a large reform meeting in Birmingham, which, in retrospect, must clearly have been held in pursuit of the scheme Wooler had advertised in February and which was to prove so disastrous the following year. In the same month, the unrest which led to strikes in the cotton disrricts immediately drew the attention of the 'extremists', and when, on September 2nd, a riot led to the arrest of the ringleaders they made immediate efforts to rouse sympathy for them, and to organise protest meetings. A Stockport meeting of protest was held and Wooler publicised the subscription launched on their behalf, which Cleary, and it may be certain, Cartwright too, pushed in London. In Westminster, on the 7th September, Hunt held a meeting of the labouring classes and did his best to present the petition it approved to the Regent. In October, new Clubs started to appear in Stockport, Manchester and other northern towns, and it is clear their organisers were in touch with Cartwright.

2. Ibid Aug. 12th
3. For the circumstances of the riot cf. H. Martinesw, op. cit. Ek.1 p.254
4. Black Dwarf Nov. 4th, 1818
6. E. Haly, op. cit. p.60. referring to the Liverpool Courier and Manchester Observer. Wooler was in touch with the Manchester Observer. cf. Black Dwarf. Jan. 2nd, 1822. He had, he said, "endeavoured to support this medium of communication between the Reformers of the North". He frequently quoted from it.
No general political agitation developed, however, and the country came to appear more tranquil for the rest of the year than it had done in a very long time. Yet, to close observers, it must have been evident what was preparing should severe economic depression once more descend on the country, and to Place and his friends obvious that the 'extremists' were continuing to gain ground among the 'working classes'. More and more it must have seemed to them that it would be fatal to remain silent. As matters stood, if the Whigs should get office and make no move for reform, the 'common people' would surely be driven into the arms of the 'extremists'. If it should appear they had surrendered to the Whigs, as the actions of Burdett, Waithman, and others, and their own failure to reply to Whig attacks were making it appear, they as well as the Whigs would be swept aside. If they did not move now to draw their own party together, to warn the middle classes of the blind stupidity of the Whigs, and to reassure the 'common people', it might well be too late.

SECTION VI

THE CRISIS AND ITS PASSING (1819-22)

In 1819, economic depression once more descended on the nation. Once more fears of revolution mounted among the ruling classes as they witnessed the new phenomenon of mass meetings of the unemployed and poor in the northern and midland towns. For a moment in August, after the clash between the authorities and the 'common people' in Manchester, derisively dubbed the battle of 'Peterloo', it seemed to many that the crisis—the revolution they had long half expected—was now at hand. Once more, ministers, seeking to rally conservative opinion, called for, and secured, special security powers.

Time passed, still no revolutionary movement developed, and fears of violent upheaval once more diminished. Improving economic conditions and circumstances which diverted 'the people's' attention from their own grievances, helped to bring men to view matters more calmly. At the end of 1822, there were few who still believed revolution a serious possibility. But contemporarily, there had grown in the country at large a conviction that the policy of repression was played out, and as the tension of the post war years relaxed, an atmosphere of flatness took its place, in which dissatisfaction with traditional ideas and modes of government became increasingly apparent. By the early 1820s, the nation had come to be ready for fresh leadership—ready to receive a new political creed.
During this same period, the Westminster Reformers were to meet and surmount the crisis in their own fortunes. By 1820, they had once more restored their position in the eyes of the country and were secure in the lead of the reform movement. Further, it was in this period that they came to publicise the arguments of Bentham and the economists associated with him, with a new and increasing vigour. By the end of 1822 'utilitarian' doctrines had been clearly laid before the nation, and growing numbers of men were coming to pay more heed to them. The period after 1822 was, for the Westminster Reformers, a time of opportunity to revive or awaken middle class desire for reform, by drawing their attention to the teachings of the Westminster School.
Chapter Xlll.
The Westminster Committee's Fight Back.


As soon as the news of Romilly's tragic suicide on November 3rd, became known - within a matter of hours - there was immediate speculation on the future disposal of his Westminster seat. On the same day there was a report that the Tories had sent for Maxwell, who was to be nominated in his place.↑1 Hunt, himself, claimed that, within ten minutes of his hearing of the news, he had determined to oppose whomever Burdett and the Westminster Reformers should nominate.2 On the following day Kinnaird's name was before the public, and the Westminster Reformers themselves were busy discussing what action they would take.3 The Whigs, too, though greatly upset by their loss, were no less ready to move quickly. Already, Grey Bennet and Brougham had been asked whether they would be willing to offer themselves in Romilly's place, though both had refused.4

Since no writ for a new election could be issued until after the new parliament met in January, the haste of all parties may seem not merely indecent but unnecessary. It was,

1. Place Papers B.M. Add. MS. 27842 cf. 36 ("Narrative" (notes) by F. Place - hereafter, Notes, Place - Nov. 3rd, 1818).
2. H. Hunt, Memoirs 111. 551.
3. cf. infra, pp. 6-7
4. cf. infra, p. 6.
in fact, commonly represented to be so in the press, particularly by the Whigs.¹ But it is quite clear it reflected, most of all, the acute political tension, which existed between the various opposition parties at this time and the desire of each to prevent either of the others securing the advantage.

The Whigs, viewing with dismay the prospect that the Westminster Reformers might still claim a victory over them before the new parliament met, recognised the danger that unless they acted at once, all their previous exertions would prove to have been wasted. The 'extremists', doubtless delighted at the opportunity of obtaining further national publicity so soon, were quite determined that any move by the Westminster Reformers must be opposed. The Westminster Reformers themselves, determined they must seize the opportunity to return a Reformer, who was neither a 'friend' of the Whigs nor of the 'extremists' - and in a manner, which made quite clear they had no intention whatever of compromising with the former - believed speed and decisive action essential. It was, however, entirely on Place's initiative that Kinnaird's candidature was publicly announced so quickly. Convinced it was vital there should be no repetition of the hesitancy

¹ cf. e.g. Chronicle, Nov. 5th, 1818.
and fumbling which had been their undoing earlier in the year, he decided to give a bold lead himself.¹

Place had already made up his mind as to the course of action which should be followed, even before he discussed matters with others. It was essential they return a Reformer. If the Whigs sincerely intended to move for reform they could scarcely oppose them. If, however, the 'Westminster Committee' hesitated, it might be certain a Whig candidate would be set up - perhaps a man whom electors would be unwilling to see opposed. But unless they wished to prove to the country they had indeed gone over to the Whigs, and unless they wished to convince the Whigs themselves they were of no account, the 'Westminster Committee' would have to oppose him. Again, if they waited to negotiate with the Whigs with the aim of finding a candidate acceptable to both - which was unthinkable in itself - the knowledge this was happening, and the delay it would envolve, would be almost equally certain to encourage Hunt's or Cartwright's supporters, or both, to make trouble. Therefore the quicker their man was proposed, and a meeting called in his favour, the better. Kinnaird was not only willing to stand but was now known by the public, after the attacks on him in the last election, to be 'no Whig'. Further, his

¹ Place Papers B.M.Add. MS. 27842, f.43. Place to James Mill, Nov. 5th, 1818; also, G. Wallas, op. cit. p. 132, quoting Place to Ensor, Feb. 1819.
renewed nomination would make it quite clear that the Westminster Reformers had not bowed to the Whigs. He must, therefore, be put forward immediately.

So convinced was he as to the correctness of this course, that he had, early on Tuesday morning (4th), drawn up a bill, lamenting Romilly's death and advertising Kinnard, and sent it to the printers so that copies would be ready for circulation the moment his action was approved by a semi-official meeting of his friends. ¹Shortly afterwards Bentham called to see Place - doubtless shocked by Romilly's death and anxious to talk about it. Discussing the future of his seat, he agreed with Place's views on the action which must now be taken by the Westminster group, and both went to see Bickersteth to talk over the matter further. Bickersteth likewise agreed that Kinnaird was really the only man, though he believed Hobhouse "more likely to fulfill the wishes of the people". ²

Returning home, however, Place received other and more disconcerting callers. Grey Bennet with whom Place was still personally very friendly, called to discuss the situation, and on hearing of the intention to put Kinnaird forward, said he believed the Whigs would insist on a "better man". He told Place he had himself refused to stand and that Brougham had also refused, but made it clear that the Whigs were still looking for

¹ ibid, f.36. (Notes, Place, Nov. 4th, 1818).
² ibid, and f.43.
a candidate. Later, others came, among them Campbell, an old elector and a convinced Reformer since the seventies, and Maclaurin, really James Mills' friend. The former, now of 'Whiggish' persuasion, was against any precipitate action. The latter, and it transpired later, Hobhouse too, who had called to see Brooks, were both more definitely for "watching what the Whigs would do".

Unwilling to risk their influence should induce hesitancy where none existed, Place promptly arranged to distribute his bills in favour of Kinnard without waiting for a meeting of his friends, confident they would approve his action later. He sent several thousands, in bundles, to thirty electors active in their cause in the last election, asking them to distribute them if they met with their approval, and arranged for others to be posted in ale-houses as well. Shortly, he found that the public had quickly taken up Kinnaird's name and that the "printers were beset for copies". Satisfied, Place called on Brooks and, together with Adams, they arranged a meeting of their friends and prominent reforming electors at Brooks' house for the next day.

1. ibid.
2. ibid, f.43.
3. ibid.
4. ibid.
5. ibid. f. 36 (Notes, Place, Nov. 4th, 1818).
But the meeting, of some twenty persons, was very far from being as satisfactory as he had hoped, and may well have been influenced by the 'Chronicle' in the morning, which had vigorously protested at the setting up of Kinnaird and reminded its readers how Reformers had been forced to withdraw him before. It is clear that the majority of those present were quite satisfied with Place's action and quite prepared to agree they should take up Kinnaird. But they were not prepared to agree with Place, that they must now immediately summon a meeting in his favour before the Whigs, or anyone else, had a chance to set up other candidates.

It is, and was, ironic that whilst the very novelty of the appearance of a body of middle and lower-class electors, seeking to manage election matters, made the attacks on them - as a 'Junto', a 'Rump', and very shortly after this as a 'Caucus' - all the fiercer, yet it was, time and time again, their determined insistence upon following up their democratic principles to the very letter, which encouraged these attacks in the first place. Had they been more ready to decide and act by, and for, themselves - had they really been a 'Caucus' in the sense the term was applied to them, there can be little doubt that they could have arranged matters so that, though there


2. Place gives an account of the meeting in his letter to Mill of Nov. 5th, 1818, 'Place Papers B.M. Add. MS. 27482 f. 43', and in his notes for Nov. 5th, 1818, f. 36.
would still have been protests, they might have been substantially unchallenged in Westminster save by the Tories. In this case, because many were worried by the charges of 'Juntoism' in the last election - charges which had had no sound basis whatever and which they had encouraged by their own slowness - Place's friends would not agree to calling any other kind of public meeting save a general one to 'consider nominations'.

It was Maclaurin who succeeded in carrying the meeting against Place. The Whigs, he urged, would not be pleased with Kinnaird. The 'Westminster Committee' would again be charged with 'dictation'. They must consider who they would select in public. He, himself, inclined to favour Mr. Fawkes. This was the signal for other to raise objections. Parr, for example, favoured paying a compliment to Cartwright. Hobhouse, for reasons at this time unknown to Place, even showed himself uncertain about Kinnaird at all.

It was, thereafter, in vain that Place urged that delay could only bring trouble and a public meeting of this kind would be likely to lead to a riot as before. As he recorded afterwards, he had insisted that ...

1. On the application of the term 'Caucus' to them, cf. infra p. 36. n. 1.
2. For Place's account of the meeting, cf. Place Papers, BM. Add. MS. 27842. ff. 36. (Notes, Place, 5th Nov.) and ibid ff. 43., Place to Mill, 5th Nov. 1818.
"The usual mode of proceeding was for those who wished to return a particular person, to call a meeting of his friends. (...) (We) were the only persons who did not follow this rule and we had always done mischief when we invited contention."¹

He had then developed his proposals. They should immediately summon a public meeting to promote Kinnaird and invite Burdett to take the chair. They should arrange for a letter, to be signed by electors in every parish, to be sent to Burdett asking him to attend. The electors were calling for Burdett, and he must now appear before them. If this course were followed, and the election campaign plan he had now drawn up, acted upon, he would promise them success. But though his proposals were approved by the majority, it was still insisted that there must first be an open general meeting to 'consider nominations' before they were pursued. This it was agreed, should be arranged for 17th November.

Place went home angrily, convinced there must be a repetition of the fiasco such proceedings had caused before, convinced it would encourage Hunt's party, Cartwright's party, Whigs and even Tories to try to break up the meeting. He wrote in the evening to James Mill, recounting what had passed, making clear his vexation, and his inclination to do nothing more. If the election failed, he told Mill, it would be the fault of the "silly sheep". Little could be done

¹. ibid. ¶f. 43. Place to Mill, Nov. 5th, 1818.
without money; no money could be collected until Kinnaird was nominated; and it would be likely enough none would be collected anyway. Hobhouse, he added, seemed hurt he had not been proposed.¹

In the next few days, nothing occurred to alter Place's conviction that the consequence of the course being pursued would be disastrous. Indeed it must have been strengthened. Electors generally, it seemed, were satisfied enough with Kinnaird, but Cartwright's supporters were making preparations to propose him, and several others, it appeared, were still anxious to propose Fawkes.² Some of Place's own friends now favoured Hobhouse, and he had heard that the Whigs intended to propose Lord Holland's son. The name of Fox was "to accomplish all things".³ Joseph Hume wrote doubting the chances of Kinnaird and argued...

"if Lord Folkestone would consent he is the man, or... Bennet"... (if he) "would agree to Household Suffrage".⁴

On the 7th November, Miller wrote admitting disorganisation and their seeming failure to learn by past mistakes. He was strongly against Kinnaird being dropped, but, like Place, feared the worst.⁵

1. ibid. ¶. 43. Place to J. Mill, 5th Nov., 1818.
2. ibid. ¶. 36. (Notes, Place, 6th Nov., 1818).
3. ibid., ¶. 43. Place to J. Mill, 5th Nov., 1818.
4. ibid., ¶. 49. J. Hume to Place, 6th Nov., 1818.
5. ibid., ¶. 53. S. Miller to Place, 7th Nov., 1818. His letter was a reply to a letter from Place, which had railed at him for his own and his friends faint heartedness.
On the 10th November, matters appeared to be getting into a more chaotic state than ever. Kinnaird, himself, called on Place, and after some 'shuffling' said, though not entirely convincingly, that he would have nothing to do with the election, and would not stand.¹ He gave Place the impression that his reason was because of the arrangement for an open public meeting which he called "damned stupid", and "insane", and because he had quarrelled with Hobhouse, who, at the meeting on the 6th, had insisted Kinnaird himself wanted an open meeting. Kinnaird now said he would send a letter resigning his pretensions to the public meeting, and added that "Hobhouse will do" instead.²

Apart from his concern at the prospect of complete confusion, Place was now personally upset. He knew Kinnaird had been willing enough to stand earlier, but, if he now backed down, it would look as if he had done so because Place had taken an unwarranted liberty in putting his name forward. On the face of things it seemed as if Hobhouse had been intriguing against his friend, and at first, though unwillingly, because he "had the greatest expectations from Hobhouse", he was inclined to blame him.³

On the 12th, however, Bickersteth, having seen Adams and heard the news called on Place to discuss the situation and

¹ ibid. cf. 36. (Notes, Place, 10th Nov., 1818).
² ibid.
³ ibid. (Notes, Place, 10th, 12th Nov., 1818).
matters became clearer. At the root of the trouble were Whig insinuations that they would support Hobhouse and not Kinnaird. Indeed, they seem to have told Hobhouse this personally. James Perry had been with Brooks, saying all his influence would be given to Hobhouse, but he would oppose Kinnaird. Kinnaird had, indeed, originally authorised Hobhouse to insist that he be nominated at a public meeting. Hobhouse, Bickersteth believed, had had a letter asking him to insist on that course, on the assumption he would be taken up without opposition. Now, however, his pride was wounded, and he was half inclined to withdraw altogether.

Place was personally relieved, and glad that he now understood Hobhouse's position. But he was far from pleased with the situation, and must have regretted all the more they had not pressed forward quickly. He, Adams, Brooks and Bickersteth, all agreed it would be disastrous to appear to back down before the Whigs, whose aim they now believed they saw clearly. The Whigs were unwilling to accept Kinnaird now, since they had earlier, for party reasons attacked him vigorously. Unable to find a man of their own likely to succeed with electors, though they would doubtless continue to

1. ibid. (12th Nov., 1818).
2. ibid.
try, their aim in insinuating they would support Hobhouse, was to divide Reformers and... "to gain the credit of having, by their influence, induced them to take up with Hobhouse, and if he should be returned, of having made the election".¹

On the same day there was yet another indication that Place's fears about the coming public meeting would prove only too well founded. Hunt issued an 'Address', violently attacking them and offering to stand again himself.² But all that could be done at the moment was to carry on and hope for the best - viz: that Kinnaird would be taken up at the meeting. Kinnaird himself, it appeared, was not really determined to refuse to stand, but, huffed as he was, hoped, that by drawing back, he would encourage more energetic and positive efforts on his behalf, and that the "people...(would)...pull him forward".³ Though he and Hobhouse were in a tiff, it would probably resolve itself.

Whatever happened, however, it was agreed there must be no compromise, and that the Whigs who could "not poll 1500 votes for anybody" must not be allowed to claim a victory.⁴ Place was persuaded to draw up resolutions proposing Kinnaird at the meeting, and when Grey Bennet wrote urging him Kinnaird

¹ ibid.
² ibid. cf. 62. It was issued as a pamphlet and reprinted in Sherwin's Register. 14th Nov., 1818.
³ ibid. cf. 36. (Notes, Place, 15 Nov., 1818).
⁴ ibid. (12th Nov., 1818).
had no chance, that 'the people' only knew him as a canvasser and a 'barker' on the Hustings and that it would...."never do for (them) the high popular party, to take such a hero"....he gave him a short reply.¹

Three days later, however, it seemed either that they were mistaken as to Kinnaird's real feelings, or that he was determined on a course that would make matters worse. Scrope Davies called to tell Place that Kinnaird had actually written to Burdett refusing to stand. Place, Kinnaird had said, already knew of his intention.² Shortly after, Bickersteth also called, expressing his belief that though Kinnaird did intend to send a letter to the meeting professing unwillingness to seek election, he was still hoping that he would be taken up.³ Since he had made no further move since the 10th to stop preparations on his behalf, this was credible enough. But if it was so, it was, even in the eyes of his friend, Bickersteth, a selfish and dangerous course, since the meeting was likely to be anarchic anyway. In the circumstances, it was agreed preparations must be made to propose Hobhouse instead, if an

¹ ibid. ⁵f. 58. Grey Bennett to Place, undated, but approx. 14/15 Nov., 1818. Place replied, ⁶f. 59, on 15 Nov., 1818, saying he disagreed entirely.

² ibid. ⁷f. 36. (Notes, Place, 15 Nov.).

³ ibid.
emergency arose, and Place hastily framed a resolution which would allow this to be done if necessary. The same evening great efforts were made to contact both Kinnaird and Hobhouse, and Henry Brooks finally succeeded in getting them together and establishing definitely that Kinnaird, whatever his feelings earlier, would not stand now. Hobhouse, however, expressed his willingness to stand instead.¹

At a meeting on the 16th, therefore, it was agreed it would now be quite absurd to propose Kinnaird only to read a letter of refusal in reply, and that it was necessary to make the best of matters, and propose Hobhouse straight away.² Since he had had no advance publicity whatever, it might well be exceedingly difficult. But, if they were now to have any chance of success at all, they had to secure Hobhouse's nomination, even if it did appear that the Whigs and Hunt had again forced them to drop Kinnaird. If, for the moment, the Whigs would crow, then crow they must. There would be time enough afterwards to check any attempt the Whigs made to claim a 'victory'. At this time it seemed the Whigs, cock-a-hoop with their 'success' would not now 'accept' Hobhouse either.³ Maclaurin told Place that he had visited Wishart, and that he, Bennet and others who had been there, had said that "for

1. ibid. (16th Nov. 1818).
2. ibid.
3. Authentic Narrative of the Westminster Election, pp. 6 et seq.
Westminster a man should have served his apprenticeship in the Commons, and his position should be known"...that..."this was the case with Lord John Russell, and not with Kinnaird or Hobhouse. ¹ If Russell, who had all the weight of the Bedford influence behind him, were proposed at the meeting, it might well be, now that Kinnaird had withdrawn, that he would be taken up instead of Hobhouse. This would certainly be disastrous. At the same time, if an attempt to bring Russell forward were made and it failed, it would at least make it more difficult for the Whigs to claim Hobhouse was their candidate!

Despite their gloomy and apparently far from unjustified apprehensions, Place, and those who had agreed with him, were to have more reason for satisfaction at the outcome of the public general meeting on the 17th, than they can possibly have expected. Efforts were indeed made to break the meeting up. Attended by some five hundred people there was a great deal of disorder and shouting, but their main immediate purpose—to secure Hobhouse's nomination—was accomplished, and more than satisfactorily.²

Burdett, who had been persuaded of the importance of his attendance, and who was well aware of the likelihood of trouble

¹ ibid.
² For an account of the meeting of the 17th Nov. cf. B.M. Add.MS/PP. 65 et seq., for newspaper cuttings; also f. 36, Notes, of Place, 17th Nov., 1818, "Authentic Narrative of the Westminster Election of 1819, p. 9. (Hereafter Authentic Narrative.)
Was ready to be firm in the chair. Respects were paid to Romilly, and Kinnaird's withdrawal was announced, without too much upset. The meeting was then thrown open.

Thelwall, emphasising his long service to the 'cause', and his continued support for Burdett over twenty-one years, began by making a special plea that Whigs and Reformers should unite - scarcely satisfying to those who, at this time, wished above all to make their independence clear! But though, at a later date, he was to show he believed Reformers should have made a greater effort at this time to please the Whigs, he made clear enough during the meeting that he would back Hobhouse. When Thelwall had finished, Bruce proposed Hobhouse, and Hobhouse, in turn, made an energetic, though by no means violent, speech declaring himself a convinced Reformer. Then trouble loomed. A certain Jenkins proposed the absent Cobbett, and Hunt who had, it seems, expected someone to propose Cartwright at this point, jumped to second Cobbett instead and to attack Hobhouse. Who was he? Was he any relation to the Tory Sir Ben Hobhouse, etc. etc.? Hunt, later, was only too delighted to declare how the 'illiberal faction' had shouted him down and rejected a real friend of freedom - Cobbett.

1. Authentic Narrative, p.3. Burdett had been asked to chair the meeting in view of the trouble at the similar meeting of June 1818.
2. Champion, March 7th, 1819. Thelwall's Leader.
3. Ibid. and H. Hunt, Memoirs, lll, 555.
4. H. Hunt, Memoirs, lll, 555 et seq.
But it was a tense moment, made tenser when he became newly embroiled with Cleary over Cobbett's letter, which Cleary had read on the Hustings, and Cleary declared he would fetch the letter and prove it not to be a forgery. Having done so and given it to Burdett for scrutiny, Burdett declared he believed it to be Cobbett's writing, but if it were not, it was so clever a forgery as to deceive the majority. No one sought to propose Hunt himself.

Meanwhile, though it seems Cartwright's supporters had come to a decision not to put him forward at this time, his name was called and Wooler, who was present, was urged to propose him. Burdett had to be firm in decreeing that, as he was not an elector, he could not do so. At the same time he expressed his belief that Cartwright's return was impossible. When Hunt protested he was not an elector but he had been allowed to speak, the reply was that it was believed he had intended to propose himself. Since no-one else sought to propose him, Cartwright, too, was rejected.

Somehow the uproar started by Hunt, and encouraged by Gale Jones, was silenced, and then it was the chance of the Whigs. Wishart proposed Lord John Russell. His brother, the

1. *ibid.* Hunt says Cartwright's friends at this time had no heart to try to secure his election after their failure earlier in the year. *cf. infra.* p.51.
Duke of Bedford, he said, had recently shown favour to Hone, and he had himself shown his mettle by his vigorous protest against the recent Habeas Corpus suspension. Sturch seconded him, and was, noted Place... "for delaying all proceedings for the present, for the purpose of strengthening the Whigs"...¹ But it seems the majority like Place, that quite apart from his being a Whig, his nomination since he had already had a seat, was 'indecent'. If he was a good man, then they were fortunate that he was already in parliament!

Despite a determined attack on 'Juntoism' by one Pitt, which brought a further uproar, Burdett succeeded in summing up, and getting a vote on the nominations taken. All but some forty for Cobbett, and six for Russell, gave solid support to the almost unknown Hobhouse.² Even Hunt, for reasons of his own, agreed to support Hobhouse.³

Not without reason, Place and his friends were enormously relieved, and they united in giving full credit to Burdett himself for keeping order. Even Place, who apart from his natural and characteristic distrust for Burdett's aristocratic ways, had his own good reasons for feeling bitter

¹. Place Papers B M. Add. MS. 27842 ff. 36. (Notes, Place, 17th Nov., 1818).
². ibid.
towards Burdett, wrote that he had summed up,..."with much ability and with what is not usual with him, great discrimination"... Further, he had firmly put down troublemakers. If he had not been there, Place acknowledged, no one would have been heard.¹

Their candidate approved in a manner which renewed their confidence, and took a great deal of the weight from the subsequent attacks on them, as a 'Junto', dictating who electors must choose,² they could now turn to the more immediately important business of raising money and launching their campaign. Maxwell was now definitely standing for the Tories. He was finally nominated at a meeting called in his favour on the same day.³ There was every reason to suppose there would be further trouble from both the Whigs and the 'extremists', and it would be essential to watch developments closely. But, at this moment it was necessary to set in motion the machinery carefully devised by Place for mobilising the support of the electors, and to make sure that it was working smoothly.

¹. Place Papers B.M. Add. MS. 27842, ff. 36, (Notes, Place, 17th
². For a typical attack on them as a 'Junto' cf. Nov., 1818). Cha mpion, Nov. 22nd, 1818. The Leader may have been written by J.C. Jennyns.
³. Place Papers B.M. Add. MS. 27842, ff. 65. His name had been kept before the public since Nov. 4th, 1818.
A beginning was made immediately. On the evening of the meeting itself, and thereafter each day until a 'General Committee' was elected at a special Crown and Anchor meeting, on the 23rd, a small group of men, including Place, made preliminary arrangements. Because Hobhouse was 'unknown', it was agreed he must make a number of public appearances, must address meetings, and speak from the Hustings. He had, therefore, to be technically, a candidate. When the 'General Committee' was elected, arrangements already made were approved and Place's campaign plan was formally adopted. Puller, Richter, Andrew Wilson, Henry Brooks, and Samuel Brooks as Treasurer, met daily until everything was properly organised.

Place's plan was, in its fundamentals, no different from previous plans he had produced in 1807 and subsequently. As Wallas has said, it projected a centrally controlled "federal organisation of the various parishes of Westminster on the lines of the ward committees of a modern political association." But the conception itself, the idea of a

1. ibid. f.1. Extracts from Minute Book, 17th Nov., and following dates.
2. ibid. The Westminster Reformers thus had an even greater interest than before in preventing yet another renewal of the Hustings act early in the new year. cf. infra p. 47. They made a great point of emphasising that Hobhouse would not canvass for votes himself, ibid. f. 178.
3. ibid. 23rd, 24th & 25th Nov., 1818.
central committee directing the operations of Parish sub-committees, was much older than Place, and his present scheme varied from his own earlier plans, only in the meticulous care with which it was prepared and executed.  

It would be tedious, and in any case quite impossible, to give a picture of all the arrangements Place considered essential, or to describe all the rules he believed it important must be kept. Every committee, every person, everything was, in his mind, to be directed to one end, viz,- efficiency of conduct. The temptation to smile at his attention to the tiniest detail, is easier to resist when the laxity, extravagance and the sheer inefficiency of contemporary election management is recalled.

Though there may have been nothing new in the aim of setting up Parish sub-committees, yet, undoubtedly it was the first time that the attempt was made to set them, as Place's plan envisaged, on a genuine democratic basis. Further it is unlikely any Parish committees before had been called upon to undertake as much, and unlikely that arrangements for the central direction and co-ordination of their work had ever been planned so systematically.

1. As it has been shown above, Parish Committees, commonly based on the Vestries, existed far back into the eighteenth century or earlier. Place's very carefully worked out scheme is to be seen, Add. MS. 27842, ff. 9-21. The Whigs were to have similar Parish sub-committees in the subsequent election cf. Bundles of election papers of the Parishes of St. Margaret & St. John in the possession of the Westminster Public Library, Archives Dept.
The central 'General Committee', composed of men from the various parishes, had, at the beginning, undertaken to organise local parish general meetings, and to assist the formation of local committees, which would then direct canvassing operations and make their own arrangements for further meetings in their own localities. These meetings were to be attended by Hobhouse and/or Burdett or other prominent Westminster Reformers. There is plenty of evidence in the contemporary press of local meetings addressed by Hobhouse and others, to show Place had good reason for the satisfaction he later showed. Describing the scene to Ensor in February 1819, he spoke of the results their activities had, by then, achieved.

"...a large committee in each of the parishes, a general public meeting in each of the parishes, a complete canvass of the whole city and liberty by the parish committees, and books in as fine a state as it is possible to make them; a public dinner also in each of the parishes....You must know that we never before dared to call a public meeting in the parishes, never had a proper parish committee and no system of regular canvassing....(by them)."

It had, he said, all been done quickly and with little expense. Further, the enthusiasm roused amongst 'the people' at the beginning had never subsided. There were now 330 persons on the General Committee, and £1800 had been collected. By this time, however, he had other reasons for satisfaction. His

1. Also quoted by G. Wa^llas, op. cit. p. 133.
'party' was more solidly behind him than ever.

The Westminster Reformers had been right to concentrate their energies upon launching their campaign for Hobhouse immediately after his nomination. It would have been necessary in any case to prepare to oppose the Tories. But, convinced as they were, and rightly so, that there would be no further trouble from the Whigs and the 'extremists,' speedy action to strengthen their position had seemed even more vital. For once, even Place, must have been pleased at the rapidity with which business was attended to.

Attacked as they were by the press of all other parties, immediately after the meeting of the 17th, it was, however, the Whigs' reactions which drew their closest attention.¹ For some time the Whigs continued to seek to raise a man of their own to set up against Hobhouse. Not until the 29th November was it finally announced that Lord John Russell would not come forward, and thereafter the name of Whitbread - first 'one of the sons of Whitbread' - later 'Samuel Whitbread' - was put forward in Russell's stead.² Grey Bennet, and other parliamentary and local Whigs held meetings on the subject and

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¹ The Black Dwarf did not attack them, cf. B.D. Nov. 18th, 1818, but Sherwin's Register, the Post and the Chronicle did.
² Authentic Narrative, pp. 30 et seq. Apparently the speed of the Westminster Reformers' moves after Nov. 17th discouraged further attempts to set up Russell.
the Whig press continued to claim, until mid-December, that it was confidently expected a Whig would start. Contemporarily, however, some of them still continued to hint, and indeed, more than hint, that if Hobhouse would declare his faith in the Whigs they would not only make no effort to oppose him, but would even support him. As it became clearer that even if they did find a Whig, his chances of success in a three-cornered contest for one seat were doubtful, so the Whigs concentrated more and more on attempts to persuade the Westminster group, and Hobhouse particularly, that they should co-operate with them. It becomes evident that the continued press reports of intended Whig action, were partly designed to show the country their distrust of Reformers, and partly to bring pressure upon them to do so.

More and more it became certain in the minds of the Westminster Reformers, that the Whigs, staking everything on securing office, were deliberately playing a two-faced game. Aware that the eyes of the country would be upon them and upon

1. ibid and p. 200. At one point Perry and Grey Bennet and others pushed Wetherall as a candidate. Holland House was the centre of the efforts to set up Whitbread.
2. ibid. p. 200, also Place Papers B.M. Add. MSS. 27843, ff. 390; 35, 154 ff. 20.
Westminster at the opening of the new session, they were anxious to avoid embarrassment and were becoming less and less inclined to risk their own prestige in a contest. If Hobhouse should win, however, they would immediately claim his success as another Whig victory - as they had done in similar cases earlier in the year.¹ If Maxwell should win on the other hand, they would doubtless immediately denounce Hobhouse as a contemptible 'wild man'. Even if the Whigs did have any intention of making a move for reform, should they get office, it was now 'obvious' that that move would, at best, be very half hearted. What other explanation could there be of their refusal to allow a改革者 to be returned? All the evidence, since the election earlier in the year, had continued to suggest that the Whigs, believing the 'extremists' no longer of any account, were now quite determined they would 'put down' the Westminster Reformers as well, and so free themselves entirely of all embarrassment. 'The people', it had constantly been emphasised and re-emphasised had returned to their 'natural leaders'. Their 'natural leaders' would make them no promises, but 'the people' might rest assured their 'natural leaders' would look after their interests for them.²

¹ Place Papers B.M. Add. MSS, 27843 ff. 390; 3515 ff. 21, 23. The Whigs had claimed, inter alia, the victories of Waithman, Wood and Wilson as their own.

² cf. e.g. Hobhouse's Defence of the People in reply to Lord Erskine's Two Defences of the Whigs, passim.
It was in these circumstances that the Westminster Reformers became more and more determined they must make a move to force the Whigs into the open before their hopes of office materialised. If Hobhouse were beaten they would be further encouraged to do nothing. If Hobhouse succeeded and his victory was looked upon, and held up by them, as a Whig victory, they might or might not make a half-hearted move for reform as a gesture to 'the people', but, if they felt free to please themselves, it might be certain that whatever they did, they would infuriate 'the people' and strengthen the hand of the 'extremists'.

As the majority had long recognised, it was not merely vital the Whigs be reminded of the consequence unless a proper measure of reform was pursued, and 'the people' be warned against them, but vital, if their own position were to be maintained, that they do the 'reminding' and they do the warning. Now it was more imperative they move quickly if they were to move at all. It was not only necessary to 'display' the Whigs before they could get office - it was more immediately necessary to do so before they could represent that Hobhouse was supported by the Whigs, and that his success - if he were successful - was a Whig victory. It would be far better to provoke the Whigs into a

contest, far better, providing the Whigs were 'displayed', to be defeated by them, than to allow 'the people' to believe they supported them. It was not, however, until just after the turn of the year that a definite plan of action was agreed upon and steps taken to implement it. By that time, the situation had, for a number of reasons, become even more intolerable.

Firstly, whilst Burdett continued to show favour to the Whigs, Hobhouse too, having forgiven them for their behaviour in the election of the previous June, became, personally, more and more inclined to come to an agreement with them and to accept their support. Eventually, probably sometime after the middle of December, he gave way to this inclination and agreed to make common cause with them. Grey showed himself against any further effort to find a Whig candidate to oppose him.

Secondly, Thelwall, who had now secured control of the 'Champion', and had advertised it in such a way as to give the impression it spoke the sentiments of the Westminster Reformers, began writing to hasten the fulfillment of his "long cherished

1. ibid. cf. 22.
2. ibid. 27,843, cf. 390. Place noted in 1826 that he had "a sort of compromise with Lambton, Ferguson and others and was to have been the Whig candidate; he had in fact committed himself to them". He was to have..."made common cause with the Whigs". Burdett, he was convinced, would have done the same had he not been checked.
hope" that Whigs and "Constitutional Reformers" should draw
together. 1 He had, as he said later, deplored the Reformers
hostility to Romilly, and had been far from happy at the way
they had pushed Hobhouse forward. 2 His aim in addressing a
series of gently phrased articles to Lord John Russell,
appearing in successive weeks in December, was, however, to
bring the Whigs - more narrowly the 'popular' Whigs - to see the
Reformers' viewpoint. 3 As he himself said, he hoped at least
to bring about their cordial co-operation in the Westminster
election.

Viewing his articles in retrospect, the emphasis he laid
upon the corruption, extravagance, violence and brutality of
eighteenth century Westminster elections, and the great and
contrasting improvement since the Westminster Reformers - 'the
people' - had taken matters into their own hands, appears clearly

1. Place Papers B.M. Add. MS. 27848. The Minute Book of the Managing
Committee of the 'Westminster Committee' in 1819 election,
30th Nov., 1818, records a letter from Thelwall announcing
his purchase of the Champion, having paid far "more than it
was worth" because of the harm it was doing the cause, and
offering to take adverts from the Westminster group. For
contemporary advertisements of the Champion itself cf. e.g.
ibid. 27,842 sf. 716. For Thelwall's aims cf. Champion,
March 7th, 1819. He may have had the backing - if not the
financial support - of some of the Whigs cf. Broughton
Papers BM, Add. MS. 36457. sf. 418.

2. Champion, March 7th, 1819.

3. ibid. 6 Edn, 13th, 18th, 27th Dec., 1818. Thelwall slated the
'extremists,' by implication the 'anarchists,' severely.
enough to show he had no intention of bowing to the Whigs. He was to make that quite clear himself - later. Then, however, it was his praise for the good actions and intentions of the 'better men' among the Whigs, his insistence on the need for conciliation, and his almost apologetic efforts to persuade the Whigs to accept Hobhouse which attracted the greatest attention. In circumstances when the Whigs publicly referred to the Reformers only in terms of abuse - the only impression he created, was that he, as a Reformer, was seeking to deliver the Reformers over to the Whigs.

Thirdly - and the reports appeared in the press in the last week of December - Burdett and Hobhouse both publicly professed their belief that the Whigs would, as a party, come out for reform. Burdett, at the Liverpool Concentric Society's Dinner on December 18th, not only spoke flatteringly of the Whigs, and of the need for union among Reformers, - but expressly stated his belief that the Whigs would generally profess themselves at no distant period Parliamentary Reformers to the extent of "Triennial Parliaments and the

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1. *ibid.* March 7th, 1819.
2. He very soon ran into trouble with the Westminster group, cf. *Champion,* March 7th, 1819; *Broughton Papers,* B.M. Add. MS. 36457, *f.* 418. Place to Hobhouse about the same time.
Suffrage of Householders". Hobhouse, attending a parish meeting of the out-ward of St. George's, likewise spoke flatteringly of the Whigs, and of how little he would have liked to have opposed them in the election. He believed, he said, that the Whigs and the Westminster Reformers should unite. He was delighted to tell his listeners that Burdett had informed his Liverpool audience, that he believed the "party denominated Whigs" would soon profess themselves in favour of "Triennial Parliaments and Household Suffrage". Coming just before the beginning of the session this statement must have encouraged many to believe the Whigs intended to move immediately.

Fourthly, the 'extremists' not only continued to make public their distrust and hostility for the Whigs, Burdett and the Westminster Reformers equally, but in the way already indicated, continued to prepare the ground for 'working class' meetings and demonstrations in the provinces when opportunity would appear.

Thus, Cobbett's 'Register', particularly the issues of November 28th and December 5th, 19th and 26th, had many hard things to say about the summer general election, about the utter selfishness and uselessness of the Whigs, and about the absurdity of supporting them. He ridiculed Bentham, warned his

1. Place Papers B.M., Add. MS. 27842. cf. L81 for a newspaper
2. Thelwall gave this prominence in the Champion, Jan. 10th, 1819.
readers in even more violent language about Burdett, Waithman and others who were 'betraying' their cause, and again set Cartwright up before the electors in a 'Letter' to him asking why he had forborn from attacking Burdett openly in his own public 'Letter' of 11th July. Cobbett may have been thousands of miles, and months in time, away, but he undoubtedly kept those who controlled the Register supplied with articles appropriate to the moment.  

1. The Register of 19th Dec., 1818 urged the Coll. spinners of Manchester, whose strike in the summer had caused temporary consternation, to wake up and defend their right to form Trade Unions.

2. An illustration of Cobbett's attitude towards Burdett may not be inappropriate, e.g. in the Register Dec. 12th, he said he would knock him to pieces like the man did his wooden god in the fable..."I will beat him and thump him about and kick him up and down and to and fro"....In the Register of Dec. 26th."I will give the world a full length portrait of a real monster of wickedness, hypocrisy, perfidy and ingratitude....I shall undress the doll merely for fun. We of the lower orders will have a laugh at this high blooded thing". This sort of attack eventually provoked some of the Westminster group to make a reply. Cobbett, having called for the publication of letters of his to Burdett and others, concerning a loan of £4000 Burdett had made him in 1811, with the aim of showing how hard Burdett had been in venturing to raise the matter of its repayment and how ill-used he was - the letters were published together with a reply to Cobbett from Burdett which clarified the position and showed his indifference as to whether he was repaid or not. cf. a later pro-Cobbett pamphlet giving the Cobbett-Burdett correspondence, together with a letter to the Examiner of Jan. 17th, 1819, unfavourable to Brooks and Leigh Hunt, and a letter, also in defence of Cobbett, to the Liverpool Mercury. Also M.W. Patterson, op.cit. 11.474.; Examiner Jan.17th, 24th, 1819.; Champion, Jan.10th, 1819.
Cartwright, not yet ready to move, but, it seems, being primed ready to act by Hunt, as well as Cobbett, did not make any direct attack on the Westminster group at this time, but his five 'Letters to the Duke of Bedford' in successive issues of the 'Black Dwarf' from November 18th until January 27th, gave a clear enough warning to the Whigs and lead to 'the people'.

Sherwin's 'Register' of November 21st, discussing the horrible action of the Westminster group in allowing Cleary to read Cobbett's letter to Hunt, accused Burdett of having sent Hone at least one of the parodies for which he was prosecuted, but of having done nothing for his family.

The violence of the 'extremists' language -excepting Cartwright, but scarcely his friend Wooler - seemed, as Thelwall said, almost enough to give ministers the excuse for further repression. The evidence of the preparations to stage mass meetings in the northern industrial towns in January, to greet the opening of parliament, may well have seemed even more ominous. Calling for parliamentary reform and the repeal of

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1. Hunt was planning to set Cartwright up in the election, but was deliberately keeping quiet about it until the last moment, cf. infra p.51 n.1.

2. Champion, Jan. 10th, 1819.

the Corn laws, these meetings were at first encouraged by middle class manufacturers who, feeling the pinch of trade recession and so far without the same fear of an agitation among the working people as in 1816, were anxious to secure the repeal of the Corn laws and direct representation in parliament.\(^1\) Almost immediately, however, the danger that these meetings would be led into violence appeared when, on January 18th, Hunt attended and harangued a vast assembly in Manchester on the futility of petitioning.\(^2\)

In the circumstances, it must be even more understandable why the Westminster Reformers believed it essential to force the Whigs into closer touch with realities as they saw them - why, too, they believed it would be disastrous for themselves if it continued to appear they had leagued with them, as they were constantly accused of having done, by those whose press had the ear of increasing numbers of the 'common people'.

It was, however, the actions of the Whigs themselves which was the most immediate cause of their decision to act. First,

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2. Examiner, Jan. 31st, 1819. Place, Hume, Wade of the Gorgon, and others who were at the time preparing to launch a campaign for the repeal of the combination laws, were undoubtedly in close touch with the situation.
in the December issue of the 'Edinburgh', on sale towards the end of the year, there appeared Mackintosh's well-known article entitled 'Universal Suffrage', reviewing Bentham's 'Catechism'.

As much as Brougham's article in the June issue, it was taken - as it was almost certainly intended to be taken so close to the new parliament - as a fresh Whig 'Manifesto'. It is neither necessary nor desirable to examine in detail how Mackintosh, really refuting his own earlier views expressed in his 'Vindiciae Gallicae', set about pulling down every article of Bentham's (and the Westminster Reformers') political faith. It is, however, necessary to see that whatever academic significance it had, and has, it had also a very immediate political significance - as a further direct attack on the Westminster Reformers.

Taking Bentham's own criterion as the basis for judgement, he first proceeded to argue the Whig case - that the existing system of government was substantially satisfactory - on the grounds of the 'utility' of the system, and on the basis of its effectiveness in comprehending all interests. A uniform franchise would mean the ascendancy of a class. Far better the existing varied franchise, giving representation to

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men of all classes and governmental influence to the natural leaders of society. The Ballot? Here Mackintosh put forward all the traditional arguments against it so commonly advanced in 1832. Electors were the public representatives of their community. The influence of property must be maintained. It would discourage many from bothering to vote. It would, in any case, not achieve the objects of its advocates. As in America—as for example in India House elections here—voting would be directed by small clubs—by a 'caucus'. If its advocates would only see that the value of a popular election lay not in the opportunity it afforded electors to exercise deliberate judgement, but in the encouragement it gave freedom and public spirit. Election clamour was itself a good thing. Having made his and the Whig party's views on the quite unacceptable ideas of the Westminster Reformers clear, he proceeded to defend party government and the Whig party. Parliamentary reform? It was too important a topic to form part of the original contract of one party and must be left to individuals. "Men should not have to sacrifice private judgement to party spirit"… on such a question.

Second, there were the speeches of Grey and Lambton at the Newcastle Fox Club dinner on January 3rd—which could be taken as no other than 'party' pronouncements.¹

¹. Tyne Mercury. Jan. 5th, 1819.
Grey took a line identical to that of Brougham in the 'Edinburgh Manifesto' of June. The war was over and ministers checked in their repressive policy. The late general election had shown 'the people' were no longer indifferent to their harsh measures. The time had come for gradual reform and retrenchment and he hoped the "Whigs of England" would lead the way and that 'the people' would unite with them in pursuing these objects. But - and the direction of his remarks was quite clear - he, and the Whigs were utterly opposed to senseless, theoretical measures. It was the manner in which laws were operated, and the character of the men who operated them which mattered. The present constitution, in itself excellent, now suffered from abuses. But..."may we not suppose them...(arising) as much from the remissness and negligence of the people".... as from the actions of their rulers? It was idle to insist...."nothing can be done unless certain measures are effected". Especially, he emphasised, such measures as the Reformers asked for. As for the ballot - like Mackintosh, he made clear his reference to the Westminster Reformers - it would lead to a body for which the Americans had coined "a new appellation, that of 'Caucus'". Even Cobbett, he said, regarded the influence of a 'Caucus'...worse
than the treasury in London". (!). 1

Lambton followed his leader in both senses, and, referring to the radical reformers, called them "growling, ignorant, but mischievous quacks"...with whom..."the true people of England held no communication." 2 He probably had in mind the 'Hunts and Cobbetts', but after what Grey and the 'Edinburgh' had said, few would suppose he did not mean the Westminster Reformers as well, least of all the Westminster Reformers themselves!

1. Though Grey had set himself against further attempts to oppose Hobhouse, though some of the Whigs positively favoured him and others had perforce accepted him, after he had come to an arrangement with them, yet it is evident that others, Brougham particularly, still intensely disliked the idea the 'Burdettites' should return him unopposed. Brougham wrote to Grey on Jan 1st, 1819..."As for Westminster the whole subject is too disgusting for words. The effects of our last victory over the Burdettites are almost done away, and we are fated to see Burdett returns a second member...with the votes, if not the good wishes, of some of our very best men"...It was a "gross attempt" of Hobhouse's personal friends, that they should profess willingness to co-operate with the Whigs when Hobhouse himself..."goes about comparing the House of Commons to the poison tree in Java in the very language of the Cartwright school". He hoped they would make no more concessions to the 'set' i.e. Burdett, Kinnaird (who was elected for Bishop's Castle) and Hobhouse. Brougham's autobiographic Life and Times II, 340. Whether Grey received his letter before his speech or not, it was this attitude which his speech reflected.

2. Tyne Mercury, Jan 5th, 1819.
The reaction of Reformers everywhere to Grey's speech was immediate. The 'Edinburgh' pronouncements, except in so far as extracts were commented on in the more popular journals, may not have been readily noticed by 'the people'. Grey's speech, however, reported widely, and almost immediately, in the daily papers, certainly was. So, the party leader himself now said all that was necessary was a better administration of the existing system by the Whigs! Once more the 'friend of the people' blamed 'the people' for having been deluded by him and their other 'friends', and assured them if they only returned to their 'friends' again, they would be prevented, in their 'deluded' state, from harming themselves! Office! Change the men but never the system. The Whig cry never changed! Scarcely a reasoned judgement upon Whig intentions perhaps, but a reaction which is pardonable and in no way surprising.

Coming on top of the 'Edinburgh's' second 'Manifesto', Grey's and Lambton's speeches acted upon the Westminster Reformers as the last straw. Nothing could have served better to increase their gall. Both Grey and Lambton had been concerned

1. It was featured in the Chronicle of Jan. 6th, and commented on by the Chronicle of Jan. 7th, cf. Authentic Narrative, p. 34 for the Westminster Reformers noticing it.
2. cf. e.g. A letter to the Examiner, Jan. 24th, 1819.
in persuading Burdett and Hobhouse to co-operate with the Whigs. 1  
Lambton in particular, a personal friend of Hobhouse, and a professed 'Reformer,' might well seem to have used his friendship and to have professed his belief in reform solely for party purposes. But supposing he and others among the Whigs, who had professed their belief in the 'wild and extravagant theories' of the Reformers, were personally sincere, it mattered not one jot if they were prepared to sacrifice that belief and to put the interests of their party first. 2  
At this moment nothing could have seemed more clear than the fact that the Whigs were determined to draw 'the people's' leaders away from them, solely in order to put 'the people' themselves down.

It has often been said, indeed by every historian who has had occasion to touch on the episode, that it was Place who was responsible for the violent attack which was shortly after launched upon the Whig party and kept up for many months thereafter. 3  He has commonly been held responsible for having caused the bitter relations between them, and it has been implied

1. Burdett, of course, had been 'reconciled' with Grey in 1817, cf. supra p. 38.
2. cf. e.g. for this attitude, Hobhouse's Defence of the People 1819, and infra, this chapter, II. passim., and pp. 13-17.
3. cf. e.g. for a very recent comment of this nature, S. MacIvy, op. cit. p. 349.
that it was an unfortunate move of which Burdett and Hobhouse disapproved, both in itself and because, despite all their preparations, it cost the Westminster group the success they might otherwise have gained in the election. ¹

Responsible for the launching of the attack he was, in the sense that it was he who first decided an attack must be made. It will be seen, however, that the attack had the whole-hearted backing of virtually the whole body of the Westminster Reformers, including Burdett and Hobhouse too, when it was made; that it was very far from a momentarily conceived and executed personal action, but a carefully considered and deliberated action of 'the party' as a whole, taken as a matter of policy. ² As for his responsibility for the bitter relations between the Whigs and Reformers, it must, by this time, be quite clear that, though he and his fellows may have been responsible for causing the Whigs to feel bitter towards them, they had every justification for feeling bitter towards the Whigs, and had, so far, unlike the Whigs, kept their

¹. This, of course, is what all other contemporary parties said. ². G. Wallas, op. cit. p. 135, says Hobhouse and Burdett, who were not consulted, "perhaps were annoyed". But though officially Place thought it politic to say they had not been consulted, there is no doubt that they were. C.f. Place Papers B.M. Add. MS, 27482. f. 639, which shows it was well discussed by Kinnaird, Hobhouse and their friends; also Broughton Papers B.M. Add. MS 36457 f. 260. Place to Hobhouse, March 17th, 1819, which shows Burdett was approached. But, in view of what followed, it would be quite inconceivable they were not approached, and Place emphasised (27842. f. 639, Place to R. Taylor, March 8th, 1819) that whatever
feelings substantially private.

Momentary reflection will recall their bitterness at this point was not without justification. To win over 'the people' of Westminster, the Whigs had pretended their man, Romilly, was a Reformer—he had even professed his belief in parliamentary reform, though no definite measure was ever mentioned—and had then claimed a Whig victory as if the whole party were Reformers. They had re-introduced all the election practices the Reformers detested, yet they had made a great show of believing in complete purity of election conduct and had even copied the Reformers' practice of having their procession decked in blue, the 'true Whig' colour, to emphasise their 'purity'. To win over 'the people' in the country, however, they had shown a different attitude. The Whigs, so little proud of their 'natural leadership' that they had readily taken their cue from Cobbett, had abused the Westminster Reformers as a dictatorial 'Junto', a despicable 'caucus' impeding the influence of gentlemen upon honest electors, or, as a paltry despised order of petty shopkeepers, neither gentlemen, nor honest working men.¹

(Footnote 2 overleaf continued:)

Thelwall might say about the way the 'Report' was brought forward, in the pages of the Champion, (in March 1819), it had not been adopted without good reason and much thought.

¹ Place Papers B.M. Add. MS. 35154, f. 69. Place's unpublished reply to Lord Erskine, 1819.
They had gone further. After their election 'success', they had seized the opportunity to blame every misfortune of the country on this same despicable group, and had urged everyone to have nothing to do with them. They had first mocked Bentham and had later emphasised their belief in the dangers of pursuing his ideas if they should in any way interfere with a Whig 'world'. But it was not only their party statements but their actions that showed their attitude clearly. They had wooed and gladly accepted the support of Reformers in the elections. Some of their own men had been returned only with Reformers' help. But these, as well as avowed Reformers, had promptly been incorporated in the "great body" of the "Whigs of England", who then told 'the people' that whether it was decided to grant them reform or not, they must accept whatever was considered best for them. Now Hobhouse, too, was about to be claimed as a member of this "great body", whilst 'the people', who sacrificed their time and money to elect him, were condemned as an ignorant rabble who must learn to leave matters to their betters!

If it be argued that it was not fair or even necessary to attack the whole Whig party, that the attacks on them were the attacks of individuals - of Perry, Brougham, Grey, Mackintosh and Lambton, in particular - that many other individuals sympathised with them, the answer must be first, that the individuals were making what could only be taken as 'party'
statements and were attacking the whole body of Westminster Reformers; and second, that it was precisely because they knew many individual Whigs did sympathise with them, that the attack seemed all the more justifiable and necessary. If something was not done to prevent it, these individuals would continue to 'delude' 'the people' that the whole Whig party would seek a real reform. Assuming their sincerity, it was necessary to show 'the people' how such men would not - could not - move as their consciences dictated, so long as they clung to their party; it was necessary to show these men themselves how their adherence to party hampered and stifled them. If, of course, they were not sincere - and their experience of Brougham, for example, and others who had wooed them recently, must have left them highly suspicious - then they deserved to be attacked anyway.

It was on the receipt of the 'Newcastle Chronicle', containing the report of Grey's 'Fox Club' speech, that the decision to counter attack was taken. On 7th January, it was reported Maxwell would withdraw his candidature, probably

1. They were particularly angry at Wilson's attitude - that he would co-operate with them only if it didn't embarrass him with the Whigs - after his election in Southwark had been secured through them. cf. Place Papers B.M.Add. MSS. 27842 f. 137., Sir Robert Wilson to Place, Nov. 20th, 1818, and 27847. f. 28. Minute Book of 'Westminster Committee' in 1819 election, 26th Nov., where it was resolved to have no further correspondence with him.
because the ministry was unwilling to risk a contest when, it then seemed, Reformers and Whigs would be united against them. As a result, since it now seemed Hobhouse would be unopposed, there could be no further delay before it was made clear he was not a Whig. In other words, contrary to the contemporary, and still usual, assumption that it was pure foolishness on the Westminster Reformers' part to take the action they did, when Hobhouse's return seemed assured, it was at that moment and precisely because it seemed assured, that their action became unavoidable.

Their counter attack on the Whigs - their counter 'Manifesto' - it was agreed, should take the form of a 'Report', reviewing the..."conduct and principles of the Westminster Reformers since the great struggle of 1807"... which should be read to a public meeting of the electors before it was published. Place drew up the 'Report' in the first instance..."at the desire of the Managing Committee". It was considered by the Managing Committee, and James Mill, among others, was invited to give his advice. It was then..."well considered and solemnly

1. Ministers appear to have waited for some time, uncertain whether or not to give Maxwell 'official' support, cf. M. Joyce, _My Friend H_ (Hobhouse), p. 121. It would seem likely that its decision not to do so decided Maxwell to withdraw.
3. ibid, and 27842, f. 639.
discussed by the General Committee, and presumably it was after this that Burdett and Hobhouse were themselves unofficially approached - in Burdett's case, at least, with some misgivings as to what his reaction would be. To the Westminster Reformers' relief, however, Burdett, when their case was put to him, was disposed to see matters in the same light as they, and it does not seem they expected Hobhouse to make serious difficulties. There can be no doubt that both of them did, personally, dislike the harshness of some of the proposed phrases about the Whigs; there can be no doubt either that they were both prepared to agree it was politically necessary they be said.

About the same time, was arranged the Report should be read privately to a meeting of the local Parish Committees, which consisted of 250 electors. It was, thereafter, "re-committed" and later discussed again, with deputations appointed for the purpose by several of the local committees. How much

1. ibid. 35,154 f. 22.
3. ibid.
4. Place Papers B.M. Add. MSS 35154 f. 22; 27484 f. 84. Minute Book of the 'Westminster Committee' 1819 election. Jan. 20th. The deputation from St. Anne's, for example, agreed after argument, that it was better to lose the election than to sacrifice their principles.
of the final draft was still Place's own work must remain unknown, but it is quite clear its issue was the responsibility of 'the party'. Even Thelwall was won over. As Place himself said, it contained nothing new so far as it related to the Whigs and parliamentary reform. All had been said over and over again since 1807, but it had..."become necessary to say them again so that the people should know the Reformers did not, and were resolved not to, proceed on any other ground, but that they had taken in 1807"...1

After a fortnight, arrangements were made to summon the public meeting of electors to whom the Report would be read. The date was finally fixed for February 9th2. Meanwhile other developments served to keep them fully up to the mark.

Parliament had assembled on January 14th and had got down to business a week later. Tierney first led his troops into battle against the Royal Household Establishment Bill, which was designed to make fresh financial provisions for the Royal Household and the care of the King's person by the Duke of York.3 It was, however, to be a few weeks before there were any really important divisions, and their hopes continued high.

1. ibid. 35, 154. f. 22.
2. Hobhouse's, Defense of the People, p. 198.
3. H. Martineau, op. cit. 1 Bk. I. 267 et seq. The problems of George III's care arose through the recent death of the Queen.
Place and the Westminster Reformers for their part, knowing the Hustings Act was to be brought up for renewal immediately, in view of the bye-election, busied themselves trying to prevent its being hurried through parliament without an enquiry. Once again Place 'lobbied' various M.P.'s, especially those Whigs who had professed their belief in 'timely and moderate' reforms; a petition against it was procured from the Westminster electors; a much stronger publicity campaign than on previous occasions, was launched by the Westminster group to rouse public interest in the matter. Long articles appeared in the press stating the Westminster Reformers' case against the Bailiff and the Dean and Chapter, urging an enquiry into their affairs and expressing 'the people's' willingness to pay the costs of election via their local rates, if it were found the Dean and Chapter were not liable. But though Curwen and Wynn, among others, declared their belief that candidates should not have to pay the official costs of election, the majority of the Whigs who spoke on the matter were content to argue they should not fall on the High

1. Place Papers B.M. Add. MS. 27842 f. 271 for newspaper cuttings and an angry letter from Place to Bennet on the subject. For the petition cf. ibid. f. 272; cf. also ibid. 27847, f. 92.
Bailiff either. Only Hume spoke up as Place wished, and, in consequence, the Act was once more renewed without any promise of an enquiry.

Almost immediately afterwards, a new development occurred. It is evident the Westminster group had long half expected opposition from the 'extremists', but so far had no certainty of what form it would take. It had not been expected Hunt would stand himself, unless the Hustings charges were abolished, since he had found the costs of the previous election, not to mention the cost of legal actions arising from refusal to pay them, quite ruinous. It had, however, been considered highly likely he would seek to propose Cobbett, who, in America, could not technically be considered a candidate, so that he would have the free use of the Hustings on his behalf. Thus when Bennet wrote to Place, seeking to persuade him that the renewal of the Act was a good thing, since it would "keep Hunt away" and save Hobhouse the expense of a fifteen days poll, Place replied sharply that the contrary was the case and that it would simply give Hunt the use of the Hustings at their expense.2

1. *Chronicle*, Feb. 2nd, 1819. Curwen and Wynn had tried to secure an improvement in county polls in 1818.

following day, February 3rd, almost, if not quite precisely, what Place expected, came to pass. It was made clear, however, that it was not Cobbett, but Cartwright, whom Hunt intended to propose to serve his purposes. The 'Black Dwarf' of that day told Hobhouse he could purchase immortality by retiring in favour of Cartwright. On the following day Cartwright's 'Address to the Electors' appeared in the form of a bitter attack on Burdett and the Westminster group.

Cartwright, as his biographer makes clear, had remained as keen as ever to secure election. Now, at last, he adopted Cobbett's line in condemning Burdett for 'betraying' 'the people' to the Whigs. Burdett, he argued, would not have him in

1. What his purposes were, are revealed by Hunt himself. Memoirs III, 555 et seq. On failing to secure Cobbett's nomination, he had determined to look for some other 'cock' to fight the 'rump', convinced its despicable schemes must be displayed. He had, however, kept quiet and made arrangements privately because he was sure, if the Whigs knew he intended to move, they would start a candidate too. He admitted he knew Cartwright..."would not stand the slightest chance of being elected", and it is obvious enough his aim was, as Place said, to secure the use of the Hustings. There can be no doubt that Cartwright's candidature was delayed until after it was known what Parliament would do about the act.


4. Life of Cartwright, II. 155.
parliament, as Cobbett had said, because he feared a real
Reformer as his colleague. According to Hunt, his friends had
decided it was impossible to carry him, which is probable
enough, and it was he, supported by Sir Charles Wolseley and
Northmore, who had succeeded in getting enough people and money
together to put him up. Cleary joined them, and Bowie, hitherto
behind Hobhouse, deserted to Cartwright. Hunt was to manage
his campaign - i.e. was to abuse the Westminster group from the
Hustings for fifteen days.¹

Thus, quite apart from additional irritation at further
Whig failure to attempt to do anything worthwhile about the
Hustings Act,² it was, by February 9th, essential for the
Westminster Reformers to make their position clear before the
election gave Cartwright, or rather Hunt and his other
supporters, the chance to claim they were really opposing the
'Burdettite' Whigs!

The great day came. Though the Westminster Reformers' meeting was specifically advertised for Hobhouse's supporters,
there were the expected cries of 'Junto' from the 'extremists'

¹. H. Hunt, Memoirs, III, 555 et seq.
². In 1818 and 1819 the High Bailiff, to save himself expense,
put up very cheap Hustings which the previous High
Bailiff, thought worth little more than £50. B.M. Add. MS. 27842,
f. 492. But it, and the poll clerk charges, still cost the Reformers £300. ibid, 27837, f. 141.
Hunt, Gale Jones, Dr. Watson, Wolseley and Wooler, who attended to protect the interests of the 'common people'. Burdett, Hobhouse, T.T. Clarke and Torrens were among the representatives of the Westminster Reformers. Richter read the report. First, it outlined the successful preparations made for the election — the greater number, and size of local committees formed, than ever before, and the greater number of meetings held.

At all of these meetings there was evidence of complete unanimity in favour of a radical reform of parliament. Everything had been carried on calmly and peaceably over a long period and with the greatest economy. The Committee had used only honest and honourable means to promote its ends.

"The electors of Westminster consider the business of electing their representatives to be their own proper business; they well know how to manage it for themselves, and in calling your attention to the present and former state of our city, the contrast it exhibits will, it is hoped, demonstrate to the nation the great advantage which would result from a conviction in the minds of the people at large that they are competent to manage their own affairs".

Second, it gave an account of what 'the people' of Westminster had achieved for themselves since 1807 — the three

2. The 'Report' is printed in full, ibid pp. 44-70. Because of the light it throws on the attitude of the Westminster group, and on the subsequent reaction of the Whigs, I have thought it fit to try to present it as a whole. In view of its length, however, I have summarised its main arguments, trying so far as possible to preserve the spirit of the original. I have similarly summarised parts of Hobhouse's speech which followed the reading of the 'Report'.

elections they had conducted successfully, the meetings, thirty or more - the six legal actions undertaken on behalf of the electors and many other matters which had cost only £4,300 in all, and which had all been defrayed by public subscription.

Regrettably, owing to division and lack of preparation, the election of 1818 had been more costly and the sums expended amounted to £1,199, some of which was unpaid. At all times there had been the strictest regard to economy and morality. No delusion had been attempted, no drunkenness encouraged, no voters 'hired' and no undue influence used (as by implication the Whigs had).

"The history of these proceedings does not show a mere petty retrenchment - which it has lately become the fashion of the 'outs' to recommend. There has been a radical reform in management and morals demonstrating the people and the people alone can do their own business in the best and least expensive manner"."Thus has Westminster become a school of political morality, instead of being, as it formerly was, one common scene of depravity".

Thirdly, it reminded electors just what the Westminster scene was like, when it was the plaything of Whig and Tory factions, by describing the disorders, the corruption and the brutality of elections.

Electors should recall that £200,000 apiece was spent by Fox and Wray to decide who should be the representative in 1784. But this fantastic expense had exhausted the factions, and after 1788 they had made a bargain not to oppose each other. Horne Tooke had frustrated it in 1790, and his efforts to rouse 'the people' to act for themselves had paved the way for their own later success in electing Burdett.

"From that moment Westminster has become the great well head or natural reservoir of Radical Reform, whence flow so many torrents in various directions, which no barrier can stop in their progress to the ocean of universal opinion and consent"... The Reformers in Westminster were for a constitutional
Reform but for this they had been calumniated and reviled as 'revolutionaries'. But...
"Westminster has proved that, amongst the poorest, the most uninformed and unaccommodated of her people, anarchy has no party"...

Fourthly, the 'Report' denied specifically that any money had ever been spent by Burdett, or Cochrane, in so far as Cochrane had been their representative.

The only sums ever expended had been expended by the Committee and had been stated in published accounts. If there ever had been any cases of expenditure outside these accounts, or of misappropriation, it could be quite certain that the facts would have reached the ears of their enemies and the press. Their own General Committee had seldom been composed of less than 100 men, and on the present Committee there were over 300, who controlled all sub-committees. It was impossible to suppose some person among them would not have known of unwarranted expenditure - impossible the news would not have escaped. In fact only wild and general charges were ever made because there were no specific cases. Their enemies had made them because they knew 'the people' elsewhere would believe that the same corruption was going on in Westminster as was going on in almost every other country, City and Borough in the Kingdom. They knew they would be believed because they themselves could not understand the Westminster electors' virtues.

Fifthly, it tackled the charges that Westminster was influenced by a 'Junto'. Who composed the 'Junto'? When examined there was their present Treasurer, Mr. Brooks, whose honesty and energy electors knew well, who had often advanced money from his own pocket, and who had sometimes refused repayment. There were too, four or five 'common tradesmen' - no one had ventured to make the 'Junto' consist of more. But if the combined forces of the aristocracy, the Church and the government could not destroy the independence of electors - whence came the power of these few tradesmen?
Lastly, the 'Report' reminded electors of the conduct of parties with regard to parliamentary reform since 1792. There were, for example, the efforts made by Whigs in 1793, and subsequently, after they had formed the Society of Friends of the People. This society had recommended the formation of societies in the country which would be affiliated with it. When Pitt had sought to prosecute Reformers, Grey had attacked him and reminded him that he himself had earlier 'recommended the people' to agitate for reform. He had also said he had no hope that the Commons would ever reform itself and had urged the same course as Pitt — viz. — that 'the people' should meet and demand reform for themselves. His indignation at Pitt's apostacy then, had been obvious.

Yet, in 1806, Grey and his followers had apostacised themselves, and, in consequence, the people had lost confidence in all public men. The action of the electors in Westminster had helped to house and direct their attention towards their vital interests and their actions thereafter had helped to draw aside the veil which masked the enormous iniquities of both factions. It had been clearly revealed, for example, that with regard to the traffic in Boroughs, one party was no better than the other. Ponsonby, the leader of the opposition, had unblushingly avowed in defence of ministers that "the sale of seats was as notorious as the sun at noon day". Together both factions had hushed the matter up and pretended that the evil would be checked.

But 'the people's' desire for reform had continued to grow, and had become the subject of more frequent discussions inside and outside the House. In consequence, in 1817, "both battalions of the well trained regiment" had vied with each other in the abuse of Reformers.

..."As soon as the late election was over, the 'OUTS', thinking they had gained an accession of strength, could no longer contain their exultation. When, in delirium, they imagined the whole power of the state was within their grasp, they published a manifesto disclaiming all connection with Reformers and declaring retrenchment and the reform of abuses was the master principle of their party".

Electors had been willing to co-operate with others in pressing for reform, providing the measures were adequate. But they would not be put aside by specious pretences. They must now be convinced nothing was to be expected from any course except the exertions of 'the people' themselves.
as recommended by Pitt and Grey. They would not abandon the cause through the apostacy of others.

The Whigs had been called at one point a "corrupt and profligate faction"; the 'extremists', by implication, referred to as anarchists. But the tone of the 'Report' was in fact a model which both Whigs and 'extremists' would have done well to have copied. Avoiding their abusive invective, it was, when printed, all the more effective.

Hobhouse's speech which followed was a direct reply to the Edinburgh 'Manifestos' of Brougham and Mackintosh.¹

"...The country is sick of Party....I say the country is so sick of party, it will no longer take promises for performance, no longer prefer persons to principles, no longer be caught by names instead of examining into other things. I see no point in the famous co-operation advocated in the Edinburgh Review".

If a man waited until backed up by other members he would get nowhere and do nothing. Worse he might acquiesce in the present vicious system. Co-operation might have 'utility' perhaps, but no certainty of - operation! Co-operation with a party gave a man another cause to fight for, beside the cause his constituents sent him to parliament to fight for. It sacrificed his respectability, converted him from the steward of the people into the pupil of an individual (viz. - the party leader). It cramped and crushed the free exercise of his understanding, interfered with his good intentions and substituted expediency for right (!) It was a "great mistake to suppose party co-operation rendered necessary a sacrifice only of minute differences". It made necessary a sacrifice of vital principles. The leader of such co-operation would keep back issues such as were likely to raise differences, and bring forward only general and minor matters.

¹. This speech is quoted in full, ibid, p. 61.
"If a man be a friend to parliamentary reform he will include his wishes for that great object under the 'reform of all abuses', for fear of driving away the borough corrupters, or the professed abettors of corruption, who may just at that moment happen to frequent his camp"...

It might be necessary for men from places like Old Sarum (and, by implication, Winchelsea;) to join with a party for 'respectability'; it was not necessary for the representative of Westminster to do so. He himself, if elected, might vote with the opposition against ministers, but he would never join it. He would be one of the extravagant Reformers the Edinburgh had abused!

Thelwall followed, calling upon 'honest men' among the Whigs to join them, and urging those who proposed to nominate Cartwright, not to slander him by making it appear he wanted a seat.

Hunt then started to cause trouble by attacking Hobhouse and calling for a Palace Yard meeting to choose a real representative in the open. Wooler proposed Cartwright, and Cartwright's supporters did their best to show the Westminster Reformers had somehow prevented them nominating him, during the whole of the last three months. Burdett had again to explain he did not believe it possible to secure Cartwright's election, and fortunately major trouble was avoided.

For the remaining four days before nominations were to be officially taken, on Saturday 13th, the Whigs took no public notice of the 'Report' or Hobhouse's speech. In private, however, they were seething with anger, and Lambton came to see Hobhouse to ask him to disavow all abuse of Grey in the
'Report'.

On his refusal, the Whigs finally decided on the evening of Friday, 12th, that they must oppose him. Only at the last moment - past twelve on the same night - did they find that George Lamb could be prevailed upon to stand. Only on the Saturday morning itself, did the 'Chronicle' begin to show how great was the injury to their innocent feelings.

Aiming quite frankly to pull down the Whigs, however, the Westminster group believed that no matter what they now did, they must 'display' themselves completely. They were, therefore, delighted to welcome Lamb's opposition, delighted at the opportunity to show the Whigs again that 'the people' could act as well as think for themselves. Brougham had said that only the Westminster Reformers prevented the "great body" of Whigs getting office. The Westminster Reformers were delighted to try to prove them correct.


2. Morning Chronicle, Feb. 22nd 1819. H. Hunt, Memoirs, III. 551 et seq, giving his account of the election, claimed it was really the knowledge that he was going to appear on the Hustings which determined the Whigs to set up Lamb.
II. The Westminster Election (February 15th - March 2nd, 1819).

The bye-election of 1819 proved to be the opening and most fiercely fought phase of a battle between Whigs and Westminster Reformers, which was to be carried on intermittently throughout 1819. Personal friendships were forgotten; the substantial agreement which existed between the two parties as to the desirability and practicability of many measures was obscured. Once again the former leaders of the Corresponding Society challenged the 'Friends of the People'. Old enemies, they faced each other as the representatives of two different worlds and the advocates of two irreconcilable political creeds.

The Whigs had revealed their desire to 'make an end' of the Reformers. Their repeated attacks on them, their efforts to 'woo' their parliamentary leaders from them, to draw away their supporters and to take over the Reformers' 'own' territory in Westminster, had aroused the latters' deepest hostility. Driven by a sense of insecurity, by growing awareness of the dangers to their position and to their very existence, they had determined to counter attack, to defend themselves, and to re-assert the democratic creed before it became too late.

But the Westminster Reformers could not have chosen a time to launch their attack more likely to rouse greater anger amongst the Whigs. With office seemingly within their grasp, it could scarcely have been more embarrassing to them.
Personally, they were outraged. They were aghast at the ingratitude shown them after they had so generously 'agreed' to allow a Reformer to fill Romilly's seat. It had been 'understood' Hobhouse would co-operate with them. How in the circumstances could his miserable supporters possibly have minded being called 'brawling', 'mischievous', 'quacks'? Politically, they were infuriated at having to make arrangements to fight an election at the last moment. After all they had said recently, about 'the people' returning to their 'natural leaders', they could not have everything thrown back in their faces, could not possibly ignore the Reformers' challenge and allow Hobhouse to be returned unopposed. Exasperated beyond measure, the whole Whig body, now in Westminster for the parliamentary session, rose against the Westminster Reformers. Determined Hobhouse should be defeated, they were equally determined to defend themselves, and their claim to govern, and to reassert the aristocratic creed. This time, the account with the Reformers should really be finally settled!

Thus, as on many other occasions before, Whigs and Reformers met as enemies, each intent on destroying the other's position. But there was one novel and very important feature. The Westminster Reformers, for some time re-equipped, were now prepared to make full use of their new weapons - the arguments of Bentham. It had been after their last major clash with the
Whigs in 1817, that the Westminster Reformers had, as a party, been provided with new arguments and a new basis for argument, the principle of 'utility'. So far, however, apart from the 'Catechism' itself, - in its aspect as a 'Manifesto' - no further use had been made of Bentham's arguments to attack the Whigs. In the election of 1818, circumstances had, in any case, prevented an all-out attack upon them. First Brougham and then, more seriously, Mackintosh, had expressed contempt for Bentham's political ideas without reply.

Now, for the first time, 'Whiggism' met 'Benthamism' full tilt. During, and long after the election, the arguments used by Burdett, Hobhouse and Place, in speeches and in pamphlets, were the arguments of Bentham. Many, it is likely, were derived directly from Bentham's 'Political Fallacies', the manuscript drafts of which were, at this time, in Hobhouse's hands to be edited. But, in any case Bentham, closely watching events for himself, was all the time in touch with Place and Hobhouse and, in due course, started to write fresh pamphlets of his own against the Whigs. It must be impossible to illustrate these arguments adequately whilst following the course of the election.

1. Place Papers B.M. Add. MS. 27837 f. 141. Hobhouse to Place, April 13th, 1819. Place himself later helped to put these MSS together. cf. ibid. ff. 166-7. Place to Hobhouse, Aug. 7th, 1819.

2. Bentham MSS. University College. 132. Unpublished letters to Lord Erskine. The arguments of Bentham in these MSS. are of the same kind as appear in the Book of Fallacies, published ultimately in 1824.
itself, though some attempt to reproduce them in summary form has been made. But it is important to recognise that the reading of the Reformers' 'Report' provided the signal, not merely for a full scale attack on the behaviour and tactics of the Whig party, but also for one of the most concentrated and sustained 'barrage' attacks ever made on Whiggism.

The 'Report' was designed, among other things, to 'trap' the Whigs, and to force them into the open - and to force them to make clear whether they were, or were not, proposing to move for parliamentary reform. In effect the Westminster group said to the Whigs:

You have blamed us for all the troubles and difficulties which have beset the country since Pitt's day. In particular you blamed us for frightening the country into the hands of the Tories and for having sought to destroy confidence in your leadership. We claim we have never asked for more than you once did, nor acted in any other way than you once advised. If those in the country who benefit from the present corrupt system prefer the Tories, if 'the people' prefer to act for and by themselves, it is your fault, not ours. If we have attacked you, it is for precisely the same reason that you formerly attacked Pitt - for apostacy - and for having condemned 'the people' for taking the action he had himself advised them to take. If you now care to make clear to 'the people' that you intend to pursue the radical measure of parliamentary reform you yourselves once held to be essential and which you once pledged yourselves to secure, they would be delighted to co-operate with you. If not, you can never expect 'the people', who can manage perfectly well without the assistance of your 'natural' influence, to assist you to get office. They will continue to act for themselves as you suggested.

The Whigs were, however, not to be trapped so easily,
and were to show themselves prepared to try any feint rather than reveal their intentions clearly. Their first public reaction to the meeting on the 9th can scarcely have been what the Reformers expected. Ignoring the 'Report' altogether, the Whigs first sought to turn the tables on them by calling for a clear declaration of Hobhouse's principles in a way calculated to embarrass them with the 'extremists'! On nomination day, the 'Chronicle' seized upon Hobhouse's post-'Report' speech to ask why did he not profess his belief in 'Annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage'. If he were not a radical Reformer, as it seemed, he had no right to attack Fox and the Whigs who also had never been radical Reformers. Fox himself had been only for a 'radical reform of abuses'.

This form of counter-attack was indeed to be pursued by the Whigs, though with diminishing force, throughout the election and after. It was designed to refute the charges that the Whigs had ever themselves been 'radicals'—indeed to divert attention away from their professions in the nineties altogether—and, at the same time, to embarrass Hobhouse and his supporters by constantly implying that all radical Reformers must be 'Annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage men'. Since they

(the Whigs) had never favoured so 'absurd' a programme, it followed they had never been radical Reformers and were not apostates. As for Hobhouse, if he were a full blooded radical Reformer, i.e. a 'wild', 'visionary', theorist, it would be easy for 'the people' to see why such a man attacked them, and conversely why they, as gentlemen, did not care to make too precise a reply. Therefore, if he were, as they well knew was the case, in substantial agreement with them, he must keep quiet and leave reform to men who really knew their business. In fact, they insinuated, since Hobhouse insists on standing against a man who is beyond doubt an honest radical Reformer - Cartwright - and since he condemns us too, he is quite clearly an impostor, an adventurer, and no Reformer at all! 1

On nomination day itself, and for the first week of the election, this approach was to be highly successful. Hobhouse, clearly aware of the Chronicle's remarks and doubtless briefed as to the need to make a clear declaration of his principles, made a speech of considerable precision designed to show it

1. Authentic Narrative, p. 117. Lamb, Hustings speech, 27th Feb. The Authentic Narrative of the Westminster Election of 1819 was compiled under Place's editorship after the election. Its comments, of course, are partisan. Its reporting of speeches, taken from the daily press, is, at least, as fair as any other reporting. For convenience, therefore, I have made extensive reference to this, in this sub-section. Place Papers B.M.Add. MS. 27842 contains Place's great collection of newspaper cuttings and notices of all parties which provide the evidence for the Narrative.
was possible to be a 'radical Reformer' yet not an 'Annual Parliaments, Universal Suffrage man'. In particular he offered to pursue the Westminster Reformers' 'Benthamite' programme. Between Scylla and Charybdis, however, he was not to escape. Referring carefully to the project for 'Annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage', he emphasised they were two distinct subjects.

"Upon the latter of the two I think it right to say I consider the extension of the Suffrage to be not only of secondary, but even of third rate importance. The first object of the people of England to attain, is equality of the right of Suffrage; in other words that there be one and the same qualification, be that what it may, for every elector in the Commonwealth. But security from misgovernment may be obtained quite well, without going as far as Universal Suffrage"...

How far it should be extended was a matter of opinion, but he, himself, favoured the largest extension....

"I have hitherto been able to feel alarm at the notion of a free people being really the choosers of their own representatives"..

As for Annual Parliaments...

"I would think I was a coxcomb or an ass if I said, in regard to Annual Parliaments, that twelve months is the golden time at which elections must periodically recur. If elections happened every 13, 14 or 20 or 24 months, the object of keeping representatives properly identified with their constituents might properly be secured".

1. Doubtless he had in mind too the 'Edinburgh's' criticism of the dogmatic rigidity of the Benthamites.

2. For a report of his speech, cf. Place Papers B.M. Add MS. 27842, f. 326. [Underlining my own]
But...."I see no objection to Annual Parliaments".

No speech could have delighted his and the Westminster Reformers' enemies more. Indeed as the opportunities it offered them sank home, it was greeted with joy and exultation. His meaning may be perfectly clear in print. It was doubtless clear enough when he spoke, to those who cared to listen with sympathetic ears.¹ But it must be regarded as most unfortunate for the Westminster Reformers, that he chose to emphasise his main points in phrases which could be extracted and hammered home to electors to prove he did not believe in reform at all.²

Immediately, on the Hustings, he was attacked by Cartwright's proposers, not only as a tool of Burdett and the Rump - but as a complete fraud.³ When they had finished, Macdonald, Chairman of the now forming Whig election committee, proposed Lamb, implying that the Whigs had decided they must oppose Hobhouse on principle - that sincere Reformers as they were themselves, they could not bear the thought of 'the people'

¹. Burdett had said much the same in his Liverpool Co-centric Society speech on Dec. 18th, 1818.
². Authentic Narrative, p. 368. As Hobhouse jokingly admitted at the May annual dinner - he had, unlike the Whigs, been rather too explicit in his views.
³. Ibid. p. 84.
being deluded by a self interested and possibly dangerous imposter. Lamb himself came forward. He "gloried in the name of Whig", professed "Romilly's principles", and claimed he would seek a more equal representation of 'the people', and the shorter duration of parliaments. In other words he too, contrived to imply, or to leave it to be inferred, that all Whigs were sincere Reformers and then committed them, and himself, to precisely nothing.

The Whigs had indeed turned the tables! So far from being pinned down, they had found seemingly firm ground upon which to launch a counter attack, and an opening which they and the 'extremists' and, indeed, the Tories too, could exploit to the full. By Monday the 15th, thousands of handbills and posters, prepared by Lamb's and Cartwright's supporters, were ready for distribution denouncing Hobhouse as the nominee of the 'Rump', and, by quotation from his speech, proving that he had admitted he and his supporters had no principles whatever.

1. ibid.
2. ibid.
3. As one pro-Lamb poster said..."I promise there shall be weekly parliaments elected every Saturday at a ¼ past eleven o'clock precisely; but I do not think the hour vital, but only of second rate importance, and I'm not such a coxcomb as to insist that a Parliament elected at 20 minutes 25 minutes or even half past eleven would certainly destroy your liberties". The poster went on to suggest every men be given four votes, and slated Hobhouse for deserting to the aristocratic and despotic 'Annual Parliaments, Universal Suffrage man' cf. Bundle of election papers, Parishes of St. Margaret and St. John, Westminster Public Library, Archives Dept.
Other bills warned electors he was like his father and would 'rat' to the Tories. As Place and his friends recognised only too well, the persistent bellowing of a few slogans and meaningless phrases could be remarkably effective in place of argument at such a time.

Thereafter, for the first few days, the Whigs, the parliamentary body well represented among canvassers, did their best to capitalise their advantage. Concentrating upon Hobhouse and saying little about Cartwright, they did everything to convince electors that Lamb and they would work, much more sincerely, for a much wider reform than the Westminster group — everything that is, short of making definite proposals and promises. But how would petty tradesmen care about details? Lamb would help the Whigs uphold the principles of the Glorious Revolution, would help them to follow in the hallowed footsteps of Fox! By returning him electors, too, could help the Whigs in this great work.

1. Authentic Narrative, pp. 116, 155, 159.
2. Ibid. p. 131.
At the same time, the sincere as well as the insincere among Cartwright's supporters joined in playing the Whig game. Cartwright's and Hunt's parties combined, with Hunt, Gale Jones, Northmore, Wolseley and Peter Walker to the fore, not only continued to condemn Hobhouse as 'Burdett's nominee', but joined hands with the Whigs to prove he was personally an imposter. Hunt's party, in particular, showed themselves far keener to pull down Burdett and Hobhouse than to secure Cartwright's election. Lamb, Hunt said, might be a Whig, but he was an 'honest man' - unlike Hobhouse. 1 In the circumstances, it was rather unfair of the Court to urge all Tories to give their votes to Lamb. 2

It was fortunate for the Westminster group that their candidate, and for the first time their 'party leader' too, attended the Hustings daily. They were able to defend themselves against their accusers, to clarify their position, and to counter attack more effectively than lesser members of the group, speaking for them, could have done. It was fortunate for them too, that the crowds in Covent Garden were, throughout the election, very evidently 'Burdettite' in sentiment. Even so, though Hobhouse easily headed the poll for the first few days, though the force of the Westminster group's arguments was again to compel Whig attention, they were, at first, forced on the defensive.

1. ibid. p. 87.
Hobhouse defended himself against various charges. The Whigs, he said, were using every delusive trick in their repertoire. They were determined no one should know what they would do, and were very clearly even more determined no one should know what he would do! In Westminster he was represented as an imposter, and in the country — sometimes in Westminster too, if it suited Whig canvassers — as a revolutionary. A revolutionary! — because he had written a book on the Hundred Days which defended the right of the French to choose their own governors. But what of the very claim Lamb himself had made to stand on the principles of the 'Glorious Revolution'? What of the favour the Whigs themselves had shown to Napoleon for the same reason as himself?

An imposter elected by a 'Rump'! No one knew better than the Whigs that he was elected at an open public meeting attended by over 1500 persons — a meeting to which the Whigs were specifically invited by written invitation sent by himself, and at which they had put forward their own candidate. It was Lamb who had been foisted upon electors at the last moment at a 'hole in the corner' meeting, and even now he was forced to rely on the support of the Tories he professed to condemn.

1. The following arguments of Hobhouse are taken from his Hustings speeches of Feb. 15th, 16th, 17th, 1819. Authentic Narrative pp 87, 100, 117.
3. Cf. next page.
3. The Whigs issued a series of handbills purporting to be different edition of the *Rump Chronicle* of Place Papers E.M. Add. Ms. 27,82 ff. 534, 593.

What did Lamb offer? The 'name of Whig', which meant nothing! There was no Whig party in the sense of a body united in principle. Some had been in favour of repression; some had been against it. Some Whigs had never done anything but seek to 'delude' 'the people' and were even now coming to the Hustings to see them for the first time! Some were better men, but how could they do anything if the rest of their party opposed them? The very name Whig was a delusion. The Whigs - as Whigs - had no principles. Burdett and he were both to press this argument hard. As for his own principles Would the Whigs who attacked him extend the franchise to the "ingenious artisan, industrious mechanic and humble labourer", as he would? It was transparent he was opposed by them solely because he would not join with them in 'deluding' 'the people'.

Burdett stood solidly beside Hobhouse. The Whigs, he said, always disguised themselves as Reformers before they came before the public, but the support they were receiving from the Tories, made their position clear enough...

..."Mr Hobhouse as well as myself, has purposely avoided using the word Universal Suffrage, because, when limitation is intended it is absurd to use a term which admits of none. I know of but one person, but that a very great authority Mr Jeremy Bentham, who uses the expression correctly"....

1. ibid p. 100.
2. ibid p. 109 Burdett’s speech, Feb. 16th.