



RECENT EVENT at MANCHESTER.

A representation of Peterloo from "Disturbances at Manchester".

THE DAY OF PETERLOO

Joyce Marlow

The Radical intent was to make the public meeting 'to consider the propriety of adopting the most LEGAL and EFFECTUAL means of obtaining Reform of the Commons House of Parliament', with Henry Hunt Esq in the chair, the most numerous, best organised assembly ever seen on England's soil. The final date was 16 August, 1819, and the venue was the area near St Peter's Church in Manchester. By 1819 Manchester had grown into England's second largest, and the world's first industrial, city but its status remained that of a medieval market town owned by the Mosley family, it had no Member of Parliament, and magistrates from the Counties Palatine of Lancaster and Chester were empowered to take control in times of unrest. Before August 16th a Select Committee of Magistrates had already assumed control of the town, which was regarded by Lord Liverpool's administration as the most troublesome, turbulent, seditious and wicked area in the country.

When the great day dawned warm and fair, the local leaders surely believed the gods were on their side. Samuel Bamford whose *Passages in the Life of a Radical* provides the most readable and human account of the period, described the scene in his home town of Middleton, one of the pre-arranged assembly points. From first light, thousands of men, women and children walked in from the nearby villages and hamlets, clad in

their best clothes, shabby as many of those were, clutching their packets of food. Whilst the majority were aware of the seriousness of the meeting and the tensions that existed, the occasion was regarded as a day out, a few hours away from handloom or mill or the miseries of their existence. In the town square they formed into groups of one hundred, behind a leader whose orders they were to obey. In their turn the leaders obeyed the orders of 'the principal conductor' who, in Middleton's case, was Sam Bamford. Soon after eight o'clock he addressed his cohorts, reminding them of Mr Hunt's exhortation to attend the meeting 'armed with no other weapon than that of a self-approving conscience', assuring them they need have no fears for this day was their own. Then 'the music struck up, the banners flashed in the sunlight, other music was heard, it was that of the Rochdale party come to join us. We met, and a shout from ten thousand startled the echoes of woods and dingles'.

Bamford exaggerated somewhat and the largest contingent apart from Henry Hunt's, assembled on Oldham Green. It included a young spinner named John Lees who had fought at Waterloo and whose subsequent inquest was to be used by the Radicals to try to prove that the magistrates had acted illegally on St Peter's Field. By mid-morning the disciplined columns with their banners and bands, were pouring through the toll gates and

marching through the streets of Manchester to converge on St Peter's Field. Two spectators observing the scene from Mount Street which bordered the field, were Archibald Prentice, a Scottish journalist who had settled in Manchester, and John Benjamin Smith (later a Liberal MP). The former said he had never seen a gayer spectacle, while the latter, noting the numbers of children among the assembling crowd, commented, 'These are the guarantees of their peaceable intentions — we need have no fears'.

Long before the first contingent from Stockport marched on to St Peter's Field, the Select Committee of Magistrates had made up their collectively fearful minds. Having dispensed with the services of Major-General Sir John Byng, the cool-headed, liberal-minded commander of the Northern District, whose enthusiasm for employing his forces in aid of the civil power was limited, they had requested the officer in command of the Manchester District, Lieutenant-Colonel Guy L'Estrange, to stand by with military assistance. From early morning of 16 August, some 1500 soldiers were as busily engaged taking up their positions as were the Radical contingents. Unfortunately, they included the whole of the volunteer Cheshire Yeomanry Cavalry and two troops of the Manchester and Salford Yeomanry Cavalry. Apart from being strictly part-time soldiers and not necessarily brilliant horsemen, the animosity between the Radicals and the staunch loyalists of the Manchester and Salford Yeomanry Cavalry — known as the MYC — was already intense.

Unconscious of the troops surrounding them, the crowds waited patiently in the hot sunshine for 'Orator' Hunt to arrive. How many people were present on St Peter's Field which covered some 14,000 square yards — the hustings were close to the present site of the old Theatre Royal — remained a contentious matter. The highest estimate was 150,000, the lowest 30,000 but at least 60,000 became the generally accepted figure. Astonishing evidence of popular feeling and Radical organisation it was too, 1 in 2 persons from the area on which the meeting drew.

The plan was for the Manchester Female Reformers, dressed all in white, to lead Henry Hunt's barouche on to St Peter's Field. Owing to the density of the crowds along his route, this proved impractical and the ladies fell in behind but at Hunt's suggestion their leader, Mrs Fildes, was lifted into the barouche to sit by his side, holding the Female Reformers' colours aloft. There was a strong feminine upsurge during this period — the Royton contingent had a large group of Female Reformers carrying their own banner and similarly dressed in white — and it may be recalled that as a Radical MP in the early 1830s, Henry Hunt presented the first petitions for women's suffrage. However, the women's appeals to their 'Dear Sisters of the Earth' were for them to band together to fight for and with their menfolk, not then for their own emancipation. The independent female action was nonetheless regarded by loyalists as 'more menacing to established institutions than the education of the lower orders'. It was 1 o'clock before Hunt's barouche arrived on the edge of St Peter's Field. To the accompaniment of the massed amateur bands' rendering of *See the Conquering Hero Comes* and the roar of 60,000 voices, followed by the Female Reformers the vehicle made its slow way to the hustings, not finally reaching them until 1.20.

Since 11 o'clock the members of the Select Committee had been gazing down from a Mr Buxton's house situated at 6 Mount Street. What exacerbated their fears was, with tragic irony, the absence of the confusion attendant on

previous Radical meetings, the obviously disciplined manner in which the contingents arrived and maintained their ranks whilst waiting for their hero. Concluding that 'the whole bore the appearance of insurrection, that the array was such as to terrify the King's subjects', upon Hunt's arrival the magistrates asked loyal respectable citizens to swear and sign an affidavit for his arrest and that of other leading Radicals, on the grounds that an immense mob had collected and they considered the town in danger. This was willingly done.

The warrant for the arrests went down Manchester's antiquated chain of command, through the gentlemanly Boroughreeve and senior Constable, to the decidedly ungentlemanly and much hated Deputy Constable, Joseph Nadin. he duly passed through the line of special constables from 6 Mount Street to the Hustings and back again to Mr Buxton's house — an important passage because one of the magistrates' later justifications for sending in the military was that the avenue of access to effect the arrests was blocked. Having done so, Nadin informed their chairman, William Hulton, that it was impossible to execute the warrant without military force. Hulton replied, 'Then you shall have the military force. For God's sake don't sacrifice the lives of the Special Constables'.

Once that decision was taken, some sort of chaos became inevitable and it was compounded by two requests for military aid being despatched, one rightly to Colonel L'Estrange as the senior officer, the other to Major Trafford who commanded the MYC. Why Trafford, but nobody else, received a separate request was never explained. Alas, one troop of the MYC was positioned just off Portland Street, close by St Peter's Field, and dozens of eye-witnesses later testified to their condition. When asked why he believed the MYC were intoxicated, one man replied simply, 'Because they rolled about on their horses', while another said of a particular yeomanry cavalryman, 'He could hardly sit on his horse, he was so drunk; he sat like a monkey'.

Hugh Hornby Birley who led the MYC into action, asserted that they set off at an easy trot but a witness in Cooper Street said they galloped past furiously 'as though they were flying': It was in Cooper Street that the first fatality occurred. A Mrs Ann Fildes, no relation of the female reformer, happened to be passing with her two-year-old son in her arms. In the MYC's choice wording Mrs Fildes 'came into contact with a horse', which contact stunned her and killed her infant son. Even William Hulton admitted that the MYC arrived at Mr Buxton's house 'in a certain degree of confusion', though he attributed this to their horses being raw and unused to the field; factors which of themselves would seem good reason for not sending in the MYC to help effect the arrests.

The time was now 1.40 and Hunt had finally started to address the crowds, though as a witness said, 'I could not have read two chapters of the Bible before the soldiers turned up'. For a few minutes everything hung in the balance. The noise of the MYC galloping towards Mr Buxton's house was believed to herald the Blackburn contingent's belated arrival, then those on the edges of the field saw the horses, the cry went up 'The soldiers, the soldiers', and there was a panicky sway among the mass of the crowd. Whilst the halted MYC tried to control their steeds, Hunt reacted fast, shouting, 'Stand firm, my friends. They are in disorder already. This is a trick. Give them three cheers'.

Reassured, the crowds cheered lustily but the magistrates interpreted Hunt's calming of the incipient panic as 'a

most marked gesture of defiance', though momentarily even they had doubts about the wisdom of sending in the MYC. Might it not be wiser to await the arrival of Colonel L'Estrange and the regulars? But anything could happen before they reached St Peter's Field, and after only a brief pause for consideration the fatal decision was taken. The MYC were ordered to accompany Nadin and the constables to execute the arrests.

Prior to August 16th the MYC had sent their swords to be sharpened; because they were blunt being the explanation for an action they had never before taken. The minute Hugh Hornby Birley received the message to proceed to 6 Mount Street he ordered his men to unsheathe swords, they immediately started 'righting and lefting' and it was with drawn sabres that they advanced from Mr Buxton's house. The famous avenue of access was wide enough only for pedestrian traffic; between the MYC and the hustings people were packed so tightly 'their hats seemed to touch'; the further the MYC's untrained horses proceeded the more frightened they became, and the less their partially or very drunken riders were able to control them. Any attempt to hold ranks was abandoned and it became every yeomanry cavalryman for himself, each vying with his fellow trooper to be the first to reach the hustings. The initial panic and injuries were confined to the area round the avenue of access and the actual arrests were effected with comparative ease, if considerable viciousness.

When Mrs Fildes was pulled from the hustings, her white dress caught on a nail and as she frantically tried to free herself, she was 'slashed across her exposed body by one of the brave cavalry'. For whatever reason, perhaps because the brave cavalryman turned his attention elsewhere, Mrs Fildes was not among those arrested. In all, thirty-five people were dragged by the special constables to Mr Buxton's house, including a heavily pregnant woman named Mrs Elisabeth Gaunt. On the arrival of Hunt's procession at the hustings, somebody noticed Mrs Gaunt in a distressed condition and helped her into the empty barouche. It could well have been Hunt himself, ever gallant towards the fair sex, but Mrs Gaunt paid for the act of kindness by being hauled from the barouche and imprisoned in the New Bailey, though she was released without charge.

Anyone on the hustings was fair game for the MYC and John Tyas of *The Times* was also arrested. The already august newspaper did not appreciate having one of its reporters incarcerated in the New Bailey and Henry Hunt wrote: 'This circumstance I shall ever consider most fortunate. Mr Tyas is a gentleman of most respectable family and connection . . . and as he was totally unconnected with any of those who called the meeting, he was capable of giving and he did give, the most unprejudiced evidence upon the subject'. From which it may rightly be inferred that when John Tyas was released, he upheld the Radical contention that the meeting had been peaceable and the magistrates had no justification for the arrests.

The arrest of *The Times* special correspondent was of no immediate help, though the worst of the disaster could yet have been avoided, had anybody been in control of the situation or had the MYC contented themselves with having effected the job they had been sent to do. Their blood was up, now was the hour when they could repay the insults they had endured from the Radicals and they went on the rampage round the hustings. It had not rained for some time, there was no wind, the rampaging MYC horses caused a cloud of dust to rise from the hard-baked

INHABITANTS OF Manchester And Neighbourhood.

FELLOW COUNTRYMEN:

Our enemies are exulting at the victory they profess to have obtained over us, in consequence of the postponement *for a week*, of the PUBLIC MEETING intended to have been held on Monday 18th.

The Editor of the *Lancashire Courier*, (although he admits that we are only *chicks* not *adulterers*) appears to be as much rejoiced as *he*, and his *caudipitons*, had for a time escaped outbreak from the effects of an Earthquake or some other great National Calamity; his *blatantly* insulting of the local press of Manchester, cannot disguise the fears of their employers, although I am informed that they attempt to do so, by resorting to the most vulgar and impotent abuse. To reply to any of their malignant and contemptible efforts, would only tend to drag them forth, for a moment, from their natural insignificance and obscurity; therefore you will bestow on their petty exertions the most perfect indifference; for as they are beneath your anger, so you will not even suffer them to attract your notice.

You will meet on Monday next my friends, and by your *steady, firm, and temperate* deportment, you will convince all your enemies, you feel that you have an *important and an imperative public duty* to perform, and that you will not suffer any private consideration on earth, to deter you from exerting every nerve, to carry your praiseworthy and patriotic intentions into effect.

The eyes of all England, nay, of all Europe, are fixed upon you; and every friend of real Reform and of rational Liberty, is tremblingly alive to the result of your Meeting on Monday next.

OUR ENEMIES will seek every opportunity by the means of their sanguinary agents to excite a Riot, that they may have a pretence for *SPILLING OUR BLOOD*, reckless of the awful and certain retaliation that would ultimately fall on their heads.

EVERY FRIEND OF REAL AND EFFICIENT REFORM is offering up to Heaven a devout prayer, that you may follow the example of your

brethren of the Metropolis; and by your *steady, patient, persevering, and peaceable* conduct on that day, frustrate their *HEATHEN AND PERVERSE* Designs.

Come, then, my friends, to the Meeting on Monday, armed with no other Weapons but that of a self-approving conscience; determined not to suffer yourselves to be irritated or excited, by any means whatsoever, to commit any breach of the Public Peace.

Our opponents have not attempted to show that our reasoning is fallacious, or that our conclusions are incorrect, by any other argument but the *blatant Violence*, and to put us down by the force of the *Sword, Bayonet, and the Cannon*. They assert that your leaders do nothing but mislead and deceive you, although they well know, that the eternal principles of *truth and justice* are too deeply engraven on our hearts; and that you are at length become (fortunately for them) too well acquainted with your own rights, ever again to suffer any man, or any faction, to mislead you.

We hereby *divile* the Boroughs, or any of the *Nine* *most* *important* *Wardens*, who signed the Proclamation declaring the meeting to have been held on Monday last, *blatant*, and threatening at the same time all those who obtained from going to the said Meeting; we invite them to come amongst us on Monday next. If we are avenged it is their duty as *Men, or Magistrates*, and as *Christians*, to endeavour to set us right by *equity*, by *reason*, and by the *most* *reasonable* *precepts* of *genuine* *truth*; we promise them an attentive hearing, and to abide by the result of *conscience* *alone*. But once for all we repeat, that we *despise* their *THREATS*; and *despise* *and* *defy* *them*; who would direct or control the mind of them by *THREATS* or *FORCE*.

I am, my Fellow Countrymen,

Your sincere and faithful Friend,

Henry Hunt.

Burdley Cottage, Wednesday, August 11, 1819.

4 WARD, PRISTON, OVER THE OFFICE, MARKET STREET, MANCHESTER

Notice of the meeting, signed by Hunt.

ground so that what was, or was not, occurring in the area of the hustings, was obscured from the eyes of the magistrates peering down from 6 Mount Street.

At that moment, Colonel L'Estrange and the 15th Hussars arrived on the scene. L'Estrange asked what was happening, to which William Hulton replied, 'Good God, Sir, don't you see they are attacking the Yeomanry. Disperse them'. Intent on their orgy of destruction the MYC had become scattered but it was they who were attacking the unarmed men, women and children, not the other way round. L'Estrange had not the faintest idea what had been going on, it was his duty to aid the civil powers and he immediately ordered the 15th Hussars to clear the field. Even then, surprising as it may seem, the chaos remained confined to the immediate area round the hustings. Although the thousands stretching across the field knew something had gone wrong, they had no clearer idea than L'Estrange exactly what.

Professional soldiers had been given their orders to clear the field and once they charged, 60,000 people were enveloped in a panic that spread like a bush fire. In the Hussars' path, bodies collapsed like stacked dominoes, women with babies, men with children on their shoulders, young and old struggled to escape from the death-trap St Peter's Field had become. While the screams rent the sultry air, amidst the maelstrom of galloping horses, flashing sabres, falling bodies, trampling hooves, the MYC continued to indulge themselves.

As they plunged about their carnage, the yeomanry underlined their actions verbally: 'Damn you, I'll reform you'; 'I'll let you know I'm a soldier today'; 'Spare your lives? Damn your bloody lives'. Attackers and attacked often knew each other. An old woman cried out to a man

she had nursed as a child, 'Nay, Tom Shelmerdine, thee wilt not hurt me, I know', but 'deaf to her supplications he rode her down'. The behaviour of the MYC and later of the Cheshire Yeomanry Cavalry was confirmed by Major Dyneley of the Royal Horse Artillery. He missed the actual dispersal but said he had been 'very much assured to see the way in which the Volunteer Cavalry knocked the people about during the whole time we remained on the ground; the instant they saw ten or a dozen Mobbites together, they rode at them and *leathered* them properly'.

John Lees from Oldham had what seemed the good luck to find a place near the hustings and was consequently among the earliest casualties, slashed by an MYC sabre, then ridden over as he fell to the ground. There was the inevitable miraculous escape. A man who had not eaten all his cheese, put it under his hat for safe-keeping. When the Hussars charged he attempted to flee but found himself in the direct path of a volunteer cavalryman. Up went the MYC sabre, down it came on the hat, to embed itself in the cheese and save one head from being split open.

The tides of humanity were swept towards the outskirts of the field where further chaos awaited them, with the avenues of escape blocked by the oncoming troops of the 31st and 88th Foot, the Cheshire Yeomanry Cavalry, and the six-pounder guns of the Royal Horse Artillery being brought up at a hard gallop by Major Dyneley's troopers. The place where the worst pile-up of bodies occurred 'to a considerable elevation above ground level', was by the Friends' Meeting House which lay in a direct line from the hustings. The woman living in a nearby house described what happened: 'The people came in great crowds past my door, and a parcel of them beat down the fence . . . The people were so pressed they could not get away. They (the MYC) kept cutting them in the corner, and the shrieks would astonish you, and they were laying on them all the time as hard as they could, and an officer belonging to the soldiers (i.e. the Hussars) came up and said, "Gentlemen, gentlemen, for shame forbear. The people cannot get away". Just as he was saying so the rail broke and let a whole number of people into my cellar.' The woman at the bottom of this particular 'parcel' was 'took up dead'.

Many Radical witnesses testified that the Hussars tried to hit with the flat of their sabres, rather than deliberately lashing out, and that their officers berated the yeomanry. Undoubtedly it was the MYC who precipitated the disaster and behaved the most viciously, but it was the 15th Hussars who caused the bulk of the casualties. For much as 'Ah, behold their sabres gleaming' became the symbol of Peterloo, most of the dead and certainly most of the wounded suffered from being trampled on or trapped beneath parcels of their fellow-victims during the dispersal.

To bring home the terrifying speed with which everything happened, by two o'clock, only twenty minutes from the time the MYC had drawn up in confusion outside Mr Buxton's house, less than fifteen minutes from the moment the Hussars charged, St Peter's Field was virtually deserted. As his six-pounder guns rattled across the hard-baked ground, Major Dyneley happily observed, 'the field was as complete as I have ever seen one after an action', while Samuel Bamford later penned the most famous description: 'The sun looked down through a sultry and motionless air . . . over the whole field, were strewed caps, bonnets, hats, shawls, and shoes, and other parts of male and female dress; trampled, torn, and bloody. The yeomanry had

The Meeting at Peterloo.

COME lend an ear of pity while I my tale do tell,
It happened at Manchester a place that's known
right well,

For to redress our wants and woes reformers took their
way

A lawful Meeting being called upon a certain day,
So God bless Hunt, &c.

The Sixteenth day of August Eighteen hundred and
Nineteen.

There many thousand people on every road were seen,
From Stockport, Oldham, Ashton & other places too,
It was the largest Meeting Reformers ever knew.

Brave Hunt he was appointed that day to take the chair.
At one o'clock he did arrive our shouts did rend the air
Some females fair in white and Green near the hustings
stood,

And little did we all expect to see such scenes of blood,
Scarcey had Hunt began to speak three cheers was all
the cry,

What to shout for we little knew but still we did comply
He saw the enemies surround be firm said he my friends
But little still we did expect what would be their ends
Our Enemies so cruel regardless of our woes,

They did agree to force us from the Plain of Peterloo,
But if that we had been prepared or any cause for fear
The regulars might have cleared the ground, and they
stood in the rear,

Then to the fatal ground they went, and thousands
tumbled down,

And many armless female lay bleeding on the ground,
No time for flight was gave us still every road we fled.
But heaps on heaps were trampled down some wound-
ed and some dead.

Brave Hunt was then arrested and several others too.
Then marched to the New Bailey, believe me it is true,
Numbers there was wounded and many there was
slain,

Which makes the friends of those dear souls so loudly
to complain.

O God look down upon us for thou art just and true,
And those that can no mercy shew thy vengeance is
their due.

Now quit this hateful mournful scene look forward with
this hope,

That every Murderer in this land may swing upon a rope
But soon reform shall spread around for sand the tide
wo'nt stay,

May all the filth that in our land right soon be wash'd
away,

And may sweet harmony from hence in this our land
be found,

May we be blest with plenty in all the country round.

A Peterloo ballad.

dismounted — some easing their horses' girths . . . some wiping their sabres. Several mounds of human beings still remained where they had fallen, crushed down and smothered. Some of these still groaning — others with staring eyes, were gasping for breath and others would never breathe more. All was silent save those low sounds, and the occasional snorting and pawing of steeds'.

The sobriquet 'Peterloo', initially printed as Peter Loo, appeared the following Saturday, 21 August, which was the publication day of the Radical weekly newspaper, the *Manchester Observer*. Who coined it remains unknown, but with the 15th Hussars and some of the victims, notably John Lees, having fought at Waterloo, the ironic

association was made and the phrase 'Peterloo Massacre' soon resounded round the country. How much of a 'massacre' it was, how many people were killed, became even more contentious than the numbers who attended the meeting. The most careful scrutiny of the conflicting casualty lists, including that of the child William Fildes killed as the MYC galloped towards the field, confirms that at very most there were fifteen deaths. It was by good luck, not good management, they were not higher and the numbers of the injured make the term 'massacre' more viable. The account book of the Metropolitan Relief Committee, set up after the storms of protest had broken, is extant and 420 people, many of them maimed for life or doomed to premature death, sought their assistance.

Manchester Meeting A New Song.

It was in the year one thousand,
Eight hundred and nineteen,
All in the month of August,
Our Weaver lads was seen,
Each bush and tree was in full bloom,
And Phœbus bright did shine
To be a glorious witness
For our weaver lads to join.

Chorus.

Along with Hunt, &c.
From Stockport town and Ashton,
The weaver lads came in,
Who all behav'd with honour bright,
The Meeting to begin,
Upon the ground they all did meet
Like heroes of renown,
Search all the mannor'd nation,
Our match cannot be found.
The weaver lads from Stockport,
Did all come flocking down,
From Oldham and from Middleton,
And all the country round,
Come let us all rejoice and sing,
And hope for better days,
Through Lancashire and Cumberland,
We'll sing the weavers praise.
Then Sir C. Wolseley in Manchester,
Behav'd with honour bright
Squire Hunt spoke up with courage bold
When he appear'd in sight,
With respect unto our weaver lads,
He never meant any ill.
And in bright shining pages,
We'll sing his praises still.
Now here's a health to Mr. Hunt,
Long may he rule this soil,
And likewise all his gentlemen,
Long may they live and smile,
And let us not forget the day,
That we held up our hands,
We hope to flourish once again,
All in our native land.
Now to conclude and end my song,
I have little more to say,
May our british Manufactures
Flourish more every day,
And our trade shall flourish again,
Through all the British Isle,
Both Lancashire and Cumberland,
And Cheshire likewise.
Innes, Printer, Manchester.

A Peterloo ballad.

The magistrates continued to contend that the arrests and dispersal had been necessary, with stones thrown and shots fired. That some people tried to defend themselves or their loved ones is unsurprising and Bamford wrote of finding temporary sanctuary inside the Friends' Meeting House and of 'a heroine, a young woman of our party, with her face all bloody, her hair streaming about her, her bonnet hanging by the string' who hurled stones collected in her apron at the attacking yeomanry. The matter of guns was not seriously raised. Even Major Dyneley said no more than eight shots were fired from the crowd, and Radical witnesses attested to one or two shots fired by a member of the MYC.

Despite pressure from many sources, Lord Liverpool's administration resolutely refused to hold an enquiry into the conduct of the magistrates, or the behaviour of the yeoman cavalry. The coroner at the inquest on John Lees did his utmost to suppress statements, constantly saying 'I will not receive this testimony' and 'That is not evidence and I shall not hear it'. Eventually he adjourned the inquest which was then declared null and void on a technicality. The last attempt to establish that what had happened on St Peter's Field in August 1819 had been unlawful was made in 1822, when Thomas Redford who had carried one of Middleton's banners and had his shoulder split open by an MYC sabre, brought a personal action for assault against Hugh Hornby Birley; though like John Lees's inquest it was backed by Radical and Whig campaigners. The jury however accepted the defendant's plea that the assault had been properly committed in the dispersal of an unlawful assembly.

The 'revisionist' case in favour of the magistrates, Birley and the MYC has been made. Apart from the non-Radical witnesses already noted, the Reverend Stanely of Alderley happened to visit Mr Buxton's house on the morning of 16 August and viewing proceedings from exactly the same position as the Select Committee, he too bore witness for the Radical side. It seems to me difficult, though obviously not impossible, to dismiss the subsequently published shorthand notes of 'the Whole proceedings' of John Lees's inquest, which provide vividly damning accounts by scores of eye-witnesses, as more sedately does the report of Redford v Birley.

Of Peterloo Samuel Bamford wrote passionately: 'If the people were to rise and smite their enemies was not this the time? Was every enormity to be endured, and this after all? Were we still to lie down like whipped hounds, whom nothing could rise to resistance? Were there not times and seasons, and circumstances, under which the common rules of wisdom become folly, prudence becomes cowardice, and submission criminal? and was not the present one of those times and seasons?' To which questions Bamford obviously expected resoundingly affirmative answers, but Peterloo was the high water mark of the Radical upsurge in Lancashire and its short-term repercussions were dispiriting. With final irony, the transfer of the parliamentary seats of Grampound and Penryn to Manchester, which occurred in 1832, was largely the work of Hugh Hornby Birley and his Pittite colleagues. They made it clear that business interests had been their sole spur.

The quotations are from Samuel Bamford's *Passages in the Life of a Radical; Inquest on the Body of John Lees, the Whole proceedings before the Coroner's Inquest at Oldham on the body of John Lees, who died of sabre wounds at Manchester*; Home Office and Treasury Solicitor papers.