



**OXFORD JOURNALS**  
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

## The Past and Present Society

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Popular Protest in Early Hanoverian London

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Source: *Past & Present*, No. 79 (May, 1978), pp. 70-100

Published by: [Oxford University Press](#) on behalf of [The Past and Present Society](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/650249>

Accessed: 14/06/2013 17:06

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## POPULAR PROTEST IN EARLY HANOVERIAN LONDON\*

THE RIOTS AND DEMONSTRATIONS OF THE HANOVERIAN ACCESSION HAVE seldom attracted the attention they deserve. In spite of the resurgence of interest in popular protest, most accounts of the striking disaffection which marked the opening years of George I's reign remain impressionistic if not anecdotal. Historians have traditionally conflated popular unrest with the succession crisis in high politics and have assumed that the ferment was incited by Tory extremists in an effort to discredit the Whigs and topple the Hanoverian dynasty. The possibility that popular unrest might belong to a tradition of independent street politics has been ignored. What is more, the tendency to view protest from above, as a problem of management, has pre-empted any discussion of popular grievances and plebeian political culture beyond noting the xenophobic prejudices of the crowd and its intrinsic gullibility, while the conspiratorial version of discontent has implicitly exonerated Whig policy. A study of London disaffection during the years 1714-16 challenges the orthodox interpretation on a number of accounts, and throws further light on the theatre of street politics, the symbolism and calendar of riot, for example, and the use of public spectacle to defuse unrest and consolidate loyalism.

### I

In the years prior to the Hanoverian accession London was the stronghold of militant Toryism. The religious animosities set alight by Sacheverell, the general desire for peace, and the growing unpopularity of wartime profiteers and financiers, all redounded to Tory advantage after 1710. Outside of commercial and Dissenting circles the Whigs appeared as a beleaguered party, unable to arrest the advance of Tory extremism and dependent for the resuscitation of their fortunes on a quick change of dynasty. To further compound their difficulties the threat of a contested succession loomed large. Although the Tories in Parliament professed allegiance to Hanover, Jacobite sentiments were openly voiced in London. During the succession crisis of 1713, rumours that the Tories would declare for James Stuart ran high, engaging, according to Defoe, the attention of

\* I should like to thank Professor John Beattie for his helpful criticism of an earlier draft of this essay.

footmen, kitchen-maids and apprentices as well as the propertied.<sup>1</sup> It was the fear of an impending crisis that prompted the Whigs to launch a new series of pope-burning processions and to conspire with French refugees and London merchants to defend the Hanoverian succession by force.<sup>2</sup>

In the event these preparations were never put to the test. The leading Tories abandoned all thoughts of a Stuart restoration several months before the queen's death and publicly recognized Hanover. Both Bolingbroke and Oxford attended the herald-at-arms at the proclamation of the new reign; the former even set up a bonfire and "the finest illumination in town" at his residence in Golden Square. And the Tory-dominated lieutenantancies of the City and Tower Hamlets organized militia patrols to prevent "any tumult or insurrection".<sup>3</sup> This studied loyalism inhibited any major protest against the accession. While the proclamation ceremony and Marlborough's triumphal home-coming several days later revealed that party antipathies were very much alive,<sup>4</sup> London remained strikingly immune from the large-scale demonstrations which other cities experienced in the opening months of the reign.

There were signs, however, that popular acceptance of Hanover would be contingent upon the political complexion of the government. The king was personally reminded of the strength of popular Toryism on his return from the Lord Mayor's banquet in October, when a crowd greeted him with shouts of "Ormonde, No Marlborough".<sup>5</sup> And the same month saw further instances of party fervour, including a riot at Whitechapel, where a High Church congregation assaulted a visiting preacher who praised William III and the hero of Blenheim.<sup>6</sup> Tory militancy became more pronounced after the 1715 elections, which confirmed the Whigs in power. On the anniversary of the late queen's accession, bells were rung, flags displayed, and a man pilloried at the Royal Exchange for speaking treasonable words against the king was released to the cry of "High Church and Sacheverell Forever" and "Down with the Whigs".<sup>7</sup> The situation became particularly acute once Parliament had met and the

<sup>1</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Reasons against the Succession of the House of Hanover* (London, 1713), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Basil Williams, *Stanhope: A Study in Eighteenth-Century War and Diplomacy* (Oxford, 1932), pp. 144-5.

<sup>3</sup> *The Wentworth Papers, 1705-1739*, ed. J. J. Cartwright (London, 1883), p. 409; Corporation of London Record Office (hereafter C.L.R.O.), Lieutenantancy Minutes (1696-1714), fos. 242-6. I should like to thank the Chamberlain of London for permission to view these records.

<sup>4</sup> Brit. Lib., Loan 29/204, fo. 400; *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Harold Williams, 5 vols. (London, 1963-5), ii, pp. 103-4.

<sup>5</sup> Brit. Lib., Add. MS. 22202, fo. 212.

<sup>6</sup> Abel Boyer, *The Political State of Great Britain*, 60 vols. (London, 1711-40), viii, p. 439; Brit. Lib., Add. MS. 22202, fos. 200-1.

<sup>7</sup> *Post Boy*, 8/10 Mar. 1715; *St. James's Post*, 11 Mar. 1715.

full implications of Whig retribution against the former Tory ministry became clear. In mid-April a Brentford wool-comber was indicted for maligning the king's speech; three other men were charged with drinking the Pretender's health, including one who offered "to lay fifty guineas that the king did not reign twelve months";<sup>8</sup> and there were further provocative demonstrations. On 23rd April, the anniversary of Queen Anne's coronation, crowds from the western parishes of the city assembled before a bonfire on Snow Hill. There they displayed a flag and hoop and a portrait of the queen, stopping coaches and passers-by for money to toast her. Later they paraded the neighbourhood crying out "God Bless the Queen and High Church", jostled unsympathetic spectators, and ordered householders to light up their windows, assailing those houses where Dissenters were known to reside. One rioter was fined £10 for "raising a Mobb" outside the house of a Saffron Hill broker "and assaulting him and other persons by throwing Bones into his Shop because he refused to set out candles in his windows".<sup>9</sup>

This defiantly Tory celebration was followed by another, six days later. The occasion was the birthday of the duke of Ormonde, a great favourite among the London crowd. By May a predictable pattern began to emerge, every public anniversary precipitating flamboyantly anti-ministerial demonstrations. On the evening of the king's birthday a riotous crowd gathered at the Stock Exchange "armed with great Clubs and crying out High Church and Ormonde". At Cheapside they displayed effigies of Cromwell, William III and Marlborough, shouted "Down with the Rump" and "No Hanoverian, No Presbyterian Government", and attacked a bystander who had the temerity to cry "Long Live King George".<sup>10</sup> A number of arrests were made during these disturbances and the City militia was called out, but this did not deter the populace from celebrating the anniversary of Charles II's restoration the following day. On this occasion they broke windows that were not illuminated, including those of the Whig Lord Mayor, Sir Charles Peers. At Smithfield, Abel Boyer reported, "there was one of the greatest mobs that had been known since Sacheverell's trial, who burnt in great pomp the effigy of Oliver Cromwell". According to other accounts they also burned a print of King William and an effigy of the most unpopular Whig clergyman in the metropolis, Benjamin Hoadley.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Greater London Record Office, Middlesex division (hereafter G.L.R.O., Midd.), MJ/SR 2246, indt. 75, recs. 56, 61, 212, 241-2, 270; see also Public Record Office (hereafter P.R.O.), K.B. 1/1, affidavit bundle, Easter 2 Geo. I, no. 80.

<sup>9</sup> *Flying Post*, 23/26 Apr. 1715; G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2248, indt. 14, unnumbered recognizance.

<sup>10</sup> P.R.O., S.P. 35/74/33-4; Boyer, *op. cit.*, ix, p. 335; C.L.R.O., Lieutenancy Minutes (1714-44), fo. 27.

<sup>11</sup> *The Annals of King George*, 6 vols. (London, 1716-21), i, p. 433; Boyer, *op. cit.*, ix, pp. 444-5.

The riots of April and May revealed that the government could only impeach the Tory lords in the face of considerable popular opposition. It was apparent that the Whig victory at the polls had not filtered down the social scale and that further demonstrations were likely. This predicament clearly alarmed the Whigs. Not only were there reports of disaffection in the army, but the local machinery of order was far from satisfactory. Although the Westminster bench had taken special precautions to suppress public disturbances, the zeal of Whig aldermen in the City of London was neutralized by recalcitrant constables and disaffection in the trained bands. Even in pro-ministerial wards, peace officers could not always be relied upon. In June 1715, for example, John Blackwell, the constable of Cheap ward and a militia captain, informed the Secretary of State that he had been forced to hire twenty men to assist in the arrest of demonstrators on 28th and 29th May.<sup>12</sup>

Not surprisingly June saw a fresh crop of disorders as the impeachment proceedings began. Particularly alarming were the celebrations of the Pretender's birthday in Clerkenwell, St. Dunstan-in-the-West and Whitechapel, where enthusiasts sported white cockades in their hats. At Blackfriars, Wright's Presbyterian meeting-house was systematically gutted, over four hundred assailants, many of them "masked or in women's apparel", beginning their task on 9th June and removing the tiles of the roof on the celebrated 10th.<sup>13</sup> The next month saw further denunciations of the king and some harsh words from two Westminster artisans about the Committee of Secrecy set up to investigate the conduct of the former Tory ministry. There were also a few defiant declarations in favour of Ormonde, whose impeachment had been moved by Secretary Stanhope in late June.<sup>14</sup> And the rough music of marrowbones and cleavers in Holborn and Whitechapel rallied Tory supporters to salute Oxford on his way to the Tower to await his trial. Although the officer in charge of his committal deliberately avoided the main thoroughfares in Westminster, a "great Mobb" followed the former Lord Chancellor "all along to the Tower crying high Church and down with the wiggs".<sup>15</sup> By mid-July, as the political trials moved towards their inevitable resolution — only Ormonde's was seriously in the balance — the government had to contend with angry crowds in London and an escalation of violence in the provinces.

It was probably the mounting tide of protest in the Midlands that ultimately prompted the ministry to redefine the laws regarding riot.

<sup>12</sup> P.R.O., S.P. 35/6/1; P.R.O., S.P. 35/7/108.

<sup>13</sup> *Flying Post*, 11/14, 21 June 1715; P.R.O., S.P. 35/3/168.

<sup>14</sup> G.L.R.O., Midd., WJ/SR 2250, recs. 40, 177; G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2251, rec. 61; G.L.R.O., Midd., WJ/SR 2255, recs. 18, 456-7.

<sup>15</sup> Brit. Lib., Loan 29/204, fo. 503; *Historical Register*, 23 vols. (London, 1717-38), i, pp. 327-8.

Nevertheless it is clear that the Whigs had for some time considered them unsatisfactory. Common and statute law distinguished riots against the state (treason) from riots of a private nature (misdemeanour).<sup>16</sup> The distinction gave a grand jury some leeway in the interpretation of popular grievances and, where it was indulgent or in sympathy with the rioters, effectively prohibited exemplary executions. Furthermore, if a riot was regarded as a misdemeanour, then the civil and military authorities were liable to prosecution for injuries they had inflicted in its dispersal. In practice an unpopular ministry could not rely on the law as a powerful deterrent, and the rigorous suppression of public disturbances was inhibited by the possibility of subsequent legal action.

These constraints troubled the Whigs in the first six months of the Hanoverian accession. The correspondence of L'Hermitage, the Dutch ambassador, reveals that the government hoped to make an example of the Bristol rioters in the trials of November 1714.<sup>17</sup> But the grand jury ignored the stern address of the special commission sent down from London to try the rioters, and simply fined and imprisoned them. Similarly in London, the Whigs failed to secure what Lord Cowper termed "a seasonable use of some severity"; none of the May rioters was successfully indicted for treason.<sup>18</sup> Indeed John Blackwell, the zealous constable responsible for the arrest of the Tory demonstrators, found himself the object of a counter-prosecution, and was ultimately forced to appeal to King's Bench to reverse the judgement against him.

This, then, was the background to the Riot Act. Historians have tended to overlook the political implications of this statute, seeing it as a clarification of a rather complex body of laws whose potential severity shocked the public conscience, or alternatively, as a logical requirement of an unpoliced society.<sup>19</sup> In fact it was a response to a tense political situation in which the credibility of the government was at stake. The government could not brook the indignity of popular juries flouting its will and of hostile crowds enjoying local licence. The law was making a mockery of Whig rule, and the party

<sup>16</sup> Sir William Holdsworth, *A History of English Law*, 16 vols. (London, 1903-32), viii, pp. 324-9.

<sup>17</sup> Brit. Lib., Add. MS. 17677 HHH, fos. 449, 486, 491-2; *Annals of King George*, i, pp. 314-16.

<sup>18</sup> John, Lord Campbell, *The Lives of the Lord Chancellors*, 2nd edn., 8 vols. (London, 1846), pp. 357-9; P.R.O., S.P. 35/74/33-4; C.L.R.O., Sessions file, July 1715, gaol calendar nos. 3-4; C.L.R.O., Lieutenantcy Minutes (1714-44), fo. 109.

<sup>19</sup> Holdsworth, *op. cit.*, viii, p. 328; John Owen, *The Eighteenth Century, 1714-1815* (London, 1974), p. 8. Basil Williams relates the Riot Act to the growing unpopularity of the Hanoverians, but his discussion is very brief. Basil Williams, *The Whig Supremacy, 1714-60* (Oxford, 1962), p. 8. Recent historians of the Whig ascendancy tend to ignore the Act altogether.

modified it accordingly. Under the terms of the new statute, rioters numbering twelve or more were guilty of a capital felony if they failed to disperse within an hour of the proclamation summoning them to do so. Furthermore magistrates and those acting under their authority were indemnified if, in the course of dispersing rioters, they killed or injured them. In other words the doctrine of constructive treason was supplemented by a broader definition of riot as a capital offence which ignored all consideration of popular grievances whatever their justification. The purpose of the act was clear: to circumscribe the powers of juries; to enhance those of the bench, now dominated by ministerial sympathizers; and to widen the opportunities for judicial terror and the swift suppression of public disorder.

Before the outbreak of rebellion, therefore, the Whig government had adopted new legal sanctions to deal with the growing discontent that had accompanied its remorseless attack upon the Tory ex-ministry. By the time the Riot Act came into operation it had been supplemented by the emergency legislation designed to meet the threat of open rebellion: the suspension of Habeas Corpus; the statutes against Catholics; the administration of oaths to all those suspected of treasonable practices. The powers of the government were in fact wide enough to stifle the slightest outburst of political dissent, and without doubt the administration extended the range of its operations in this direction. The duke of Newcastle, Lord Lieutenant of Middlesex, is said to have directed the interrogation of eight hundred men suspected of disloyalty.<sup>20</sup> The uprising in the North also gave the Whigs an opportunity to play their trump card, to whip up anti-Catholic sentiment and parade as the only viable alternative to foreign absolutism and popery. Press and pulpit once more resounded with the lurid tales of Catholic atrocities and new renderings of the warming-pan legend. John Dunton, one of the most inveterate Whig writers of his generation, avidly drew attention to the consequences of Stuart rule for liberty and property, depicting a country overrun with “pamper’d Priests, and domineering Papists” not to mention “itinerant cut-throats and Dragoons”.<sup>21</sup> In a more constructive vein Richard Steele set the impeachment proceedings within the context of the rebellion and the defection of both Ormonde and Bolingbroke, and undertook a point by point repudiation of the Pretender’s declaration.

The insurrection proved a godsend for the Whigs. Not only did it force their opponents on the defensive and bolster loyalism among the London bourgeoisie, but it effectively obviated any examination of

<sup>20</sup> Reed Browning, *The Duke of Newcastle* (New Haven, 1975), pp. 9-10.

<sup>21</sup> John Dunton, *A King or No King: or, The Best Argument for a Just Title* (London, 1715), repr. in *St. James’s Evening Post*, 1/3 Nov. 1715; “*The Englishman*”: *A Political Journal by Richard Steele*, ed. Rae Blanchard (Oxford, 1955), *passim*. Steele was paid £500 by the government to revive *The Englishman*.

the sources of discontent beyond pointing out the “self-evident” correspondence between riot and rebellion. Even the Tory Common Council fell victim to this logic, declaring in its loyalist address to the crown its “utmost Abhorrence and Detestation of all seditious Rioters and tumultuous persons”.<sup>22</sup> But in spite of this public condemnation of violence by a body noted for its anti-Whiggism, popular unrest continued. On the first anniversary of the accession the Bridewell apprentices disrupted loyalist celebrations on Ludgate Hill and Cheapside, and in nearby Blackfriars a local bricklayer “raised a great Mobb of at least 40 or 50 persons” in front of the door of his pro-Hanoverian neighbour and heaped abuse upon him and his wife.<sup>23</sup> By mid-September, when the rebellion in the North was well under way, popular ferment against the king and his ministry had developed Jacobite overtones.

In an effort to curb the tide of discontent in the metropolis, the Whigs had recourse to three strategies: legal terror, political spectacle, and “vigilantism”. Serious cases of disaffection were severely dealt with by the courts. In October, for example, three soldiers in the First Regiment of Foot Guards were convicted of high treason at the Old Bailey for enlisting with the Pretender and were hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn. The head of the recruiting sergeant, Joseph Sullivan, was then fixed on Temple Bar as a gruesome reminder of their crimes.<sup>24</sup> This awesome example was accompanied by a calculated manipulation of ceremonial. The king periodically reviewed the troops at Hyde Park and, according to L’Hermitage, sometimes mingled with spectators. On 13th August he participated in a water triumph from Whitehall to Limehouse, the whole river-side illuminated with lanterns and candles and bedecked with loyalist mottos. A month later his return from Greenwich was heralded with guns and illuminations.<sup>25</sup> Hanoverian anniversaries were also staged with traditional liberality: ox-roasting and barrels of beer. And on Guy Fawkes’s night the magistrates and deputy lieutenants of Tower Hamlets organized a huge rally on Tower Hill with hautboys, kettledrums and sky-rockets. According to one Whig account it was attended by well over ten thousand spectators.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> *London Gazette*, 26/30 July 1715. A loyalist address from the merchants of London was presented by the Lord Mayor, Sir Charles Peers, in mid-October. See *Daily Courant*, 15 Oct. 1715.

<sup>23</sup> James L. Fitts, “Newcastle’s Mob”, *Albion*, v (1973), p. 46; P.R.O., S.P. 35/4/143. For Jacobite declarations, see G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2256, recs. 27, 48.

<sup>24</sup> *Flying Post*, 18/20, 27/29 Oct. 1715.

<sup>25</sup> *St. James’s Post*, 12/15 Aug. 1715; *Flying Post*, 13/16 Aug. 1715; Justin McCarthy, *A History of the Four Georges*, 4 vols. (London, 1884), i, p. 159; Brit. Lib., Add. MS. 17677 III, fos. 248-9.

<sup>26</sup> *Flying Post*, 8/10 Nov. 1715. For other loyalist celebrations on Hanoverian anniversaries, see *Flying Post*, 2/4 Aug., 1/3 Nov. 1715; *St. James’s Evening Post*, 6/9 Aug. 1715; John Doran, *London in the Jacobite Times*, 2 vols. (London, 1877), i, p. 125.

The most interesting examples of political spectacle, however, were the pope-burning ceremonies. Anti-papal pageants had been revived by the Whigs in the final years of Queen Anne's reign to counteract the growth of popular Toryism and to pave the way for the Hanoverian succession, and it is hardly surprising that they should have continued during the rebellion of 1715. The first one was scheduled for 20th October, the anniversary of the king's coronation, when the Loyal Society of Young Men and Apprentices planned to display the triumvirate of Pope, Devil and Pretender, and also the Tory rebels, Bolingbroke, Ormonde and Mar, in mock triumph throughout the City and Westminster.<sup>27</sup> But it had been rumoured that the Whigs also intended to burn effigies of Dr. Sacheverell and the queen, and so the Lord Mayor banned the parade for fear it would end in uproar. He did, nonetheless, permit the loyalists to burn effigies of the Chevalier and the Tory defectors before St. Mary le Bow, and another figure of the Pretender was burned at Cornhill, in the mercantile quarter of the City.

A pope-burning procession was nevertheless staged just over two weeks later, on the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot. It featured an effigy of the infant Pretender on a warming-pan, and two carts in which the Pope, Pretender and Tory rebels were drawn backwards with halters around their necks. To the tune of Lillibulero and shouts of "No Pretender, no Tyrant, no Run-a-way Generals", they were conveyed from the Roebuck tavern in Cheapside along Newgate Street and Holborn Hill to Lincoln's Inn Fields, where huzzas were raised before Newcastle House. The parade then moved on to St. James's, and returned via the Strand and Fleet Street to Cheapside and the Royal Exchange, where the effigies "were hung out in chairs on a high gallows" and eventually burned.<sup>28</sup>

Similar processions were promoted the following year on the anniversary of the victory of the government forces over the Jacobites at Dumblane and Preston, and again on the return of the king from Hanover in January 1717.<sup>29</sup> On this occasion in particular, the pageant was replete with the stock-in-trade images of popery and Stuart despotism as well as the symbols of victory. The rebel generals Mar and Forster headed the procession. Then came the Pretender's standard depicting "Tyranny, Popery and Slavery". It was followed by four Highland rebels and two Jack Puddings, who sprinkled "Holy

<sup>27</sup> *St. James's Evening Post*, 15/18 Oct. 1715; *Flying Post*, 20/22 Oct. 1715; C.L.R.O., Jls. Common Council, lvi, fo. 203.

<sup>28</sup> *Flying Post*, 5/8, 19/22 Nov. 1715; *Weekly Jnl.*, 12 Nov. 1715; Boyer, *Political State of Great Britain*, x, pp. 581-2.

<sup>29</sup> Anon., *An Account of the Whole Procession, as It was Carried thro' the City and Suburbs, and Burnt at Charing Cross, on Saturday Night Last* (London, 1717). See also Paul Fritz, *The English Ministers and Jacobitism between the Rebellion of 1715 and 1745* (Toronto, 1975), pp. 28-9.

Water on the People as is done at many Romish Processions". These clowns prepared the way for the three central pageants: the warming-pan scenario; the Pope in his pontificalibus accompanied by an animate Devil and the Pretender in black, holding "Wooden Shoes, Trowel, Beads and other Popish Trinkets"; and a float representing Cardinal Gualterio, Ravaillac, two friars and a corpulent monk "who by his Bulk and size" denoted "the voracious and devouring Jaws of the Church of Rome". The parade was concluded by the "King's Champion", a man on horseback bedecked with orange ribbons and feathers. It culminated, predictably, in the burning of Pope, Pretender and rebel generals at Charing Cross.

The sponsors of these processions were the loyalist societies which had sprung up soon after the outbreak of the rebellion, and principally the one that met at the Roebuck tavern on Cheapside. The leading stalwarts of these clubs were members of the Whig gentry and bourgeoisie. The most notable was undoubtedly the duke of Newcastle, Lord Lieutenant of Middlesex and a former member of the Hanover Club, who is said to have provided vast sums for their activities.<sup>30</sup> Indeed the societies appear to have been modelled on the Hanover Club, the circle of eminent Whig politicians which had met weekly at Jenny Man's coffee-house at Charing Cross during the last years of Anne's reign and had organized the first revival of anti-papal parades.<sup>31</sup> Of course their membership was more diverse. The Tavistock Street club was patronized by army officers, the one in Long Acre by "a mixture of Gentlemen, Lawyers and Tradesmen", and the one in Spitalfields by Huguenot manufacturers. Dudley Ryder thought many of the members of the society which congregated at Read's mug-house in Salisbury Court were "prentices and ordinary tradesmen", although others referred to them as "gentlemen".<sup>32</sup> What is clear is that the driving force behind these clubs was the Whig gentry and their professional and commercial allies in the City: men like Sir Charles Peers, a City merchant and alderman, and Jonathan Blenman, a lawyer of the Middle Temple. Together with their employees and retainers — the society which met at the Black Horse near Lincoln's Inn Fields was the resort of Newcastle's servants — they constituted the mainstay of mug-house support.

The objective of the societies, as Ryder explained, was to animate loyalism and eventually "gain over the populace".<sup>33</sup> As one might

<sup>30</sup> Fitts, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-9; Ray A. Kelch, *Newcastle. A Duke Without Money: Thomas Pelham Holles, 1693-1768* (Los Angeles, 1974), pp. 42-3.

<sup>31</sup> Boyer, *op. cit.*, vi, pp. 283-5; "The Englishman", ed. Blanchard, p. 509.

<sup>32</sup> R. Chambers, *The Book of Days*, 2 vols. (London and Edinburgh, 1863-4), ii, pp. 109-12; *The Diary of Dudley Ryder, 1715-16*, ed. William Matthews (London, 1939), p. 280; *Weekly Jl.*, 4 Aug. 1716; John Macky, *A Journey through England* (London, 1714), p. 70.

<sup>33</sup> *Diary of Dudley Ryder*, ed. Matthews, pp. 279-80.

guess, pope-burnings were only part of this programme. Equally important was vigilante activity. The mug-houses, as James Fitts has recently pointed out, were strategically situated to enable their members to make lightning forays against demonstrators.<sup>34</sup> The first encounter with Tory crowds occurred on 1 August 1715. A second broke out on the public anniversary of the Prince of Wales's birthday, when a loyalist squad dispersed the Bridewell boys who had broken windows and scattered bonfires on Ludgate Hill. And November saw a fresh train of violence, each side attempting to outwit the others as the year's political calendar came to a close.<sup>35</sup> On 4th November, King William's birthday, the "Jacks", as the Tory demonstrators were nicknamed, planned to burn an effigy of him before the former house of Henry Cornish, the Whig republican executed for his part in the Rye House Plot. But the Roebuck Whigs captured the effigy at the corner of Old Jewry and thrashed their opponents with oak staves. The following evening, Guy Fawkes's night, a crowd disrupted the bonfire at which the Roebuck's figures were to be burned. And on Queen Elizabeth's day the Whigs captured more effigies "in derision of the present government" from an empty house in Little Britain and took them to the Roebuck tavern. The "Jacks", led by a bricklayer dressed as a Merry Andrew, "gathered a large mob" in reply, Dudley Ryder recalled, and "were for pulling down the house and breaking in, upon which the gentlemen in the house fired at them several times and killed several".<sup>36</sup> Eventually the Lord Mayor arrived in his coach and dispersed the crowd. At the coroner's inquest two days later it was decided that the two dead men had been guilty of "open riot and rebellion" and that their assailants had acted in self-defence.

The street battles between the "Jacks" and the "Mugites" developed their own dynamic, their own theatre. Just as the former defined their activities according to a long-established repertory of political folklore, mocking the radical, regicidal lineage of Whiggism which by 1715 had become an embarrassment to the Establishment, so the latter availed themselves of the anti-Catholic tradition, sporting orange ribbons and miniature warming-pans, burning popes and pretenders, and revamping Stuart songs like "The King shall enjoy his own again" with Whig doggerel.<sup>37</sup> This confrontation con-

<sup>34</sup> Fitts, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-6. See also Rev. Henry Hunter, *The History of London and Its Environs*, 2 vols. (London, 1811), i, p. 610.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas Wright, *England under the House of Hanover*, 2 vols. (London, 1848), i, p. 40; *St. James's Evening Post*, 29 Oct./2 Nov. 1715.

<sup>36</sup> *Diary of Dudley Ryder*, ed. Matthews, pp. 138-9; *Flying Post*, 5/8, 17/19 Nov. 1715; *St. James's Evening Post*, 17/19 Nov. 1715.

<sup>37</sup> Anon., *A Collection of State Songs, Poems &c. that have been Publish'd since the Rebellion and Sung in the Several Mug-houses in the Cities of London and Westminster* (London, 1716), p. 4; Claude M. Simpson, *The British Broadside Ballad and Its Music* (New Brunswick, 1966), pp. 764-8.

tinued in the spring of 1716. On the second political anniversary of the year, the accession of Queen Anne, Newcastle's bruisers repulsed a Tory crowd which had assembled outside their headquarters on Cheapside shouting for "High Church and Ormonde". On Queen Anne's coronation day the Whigs assailed more demonstrators in the vicinity of Smithfield and Cheapside who tried to burn William III in effigy and threatened one of their taverns. And on Oak Apple Day, loyalists from two mug-houses broke up Tory celebrations in St. Andrew Holborn, where Sacheverell had earlier delivered a sermon commemorating the Restoration.<sup>38</sup>

By the summer of 1716 it had become apparent that the Whigs had failed to curb popular hostility to the new regime. Neither the anti-Jacobite parades of the loyalist societies, nor the more conventional displays of liberality on royal anniversaries, had seriously deflected the agitation against king and ministry. Furthermore the raids of the mug-house squads had scarcely tempered street demonstrations. If anything, they had exacerbated existing tensions. The government had admittedly staged a triumphant cavalcade of the Preston rebels with a modicum of success. The *Flying Post* reported that the "mob" had singled out General Forster and his chaplain for special vilification, "beating a warming pan before them and crying out 'King George for ever, No Warming Pan Bastard'".<sup>39</sup> But the Tory press believed that this exhibition of plebeian loyalism was manipulated from above, an accusation that may well have been sound, for the reports of the procession mention the "vast crowds on Horseback and in Coaches" as well as the labouring poor. Even the attempt to promote the Jacobite trials with great theatricality backfired. Alongside the flurry of anti-Hanoverian imprecations and the Jacobite toasts and oaths, there were some striking scenes of sympathy for the rebels. In December a man was prosecuted for encouraging spectators "to rescue the Traytors as they were carryd to Gaol Crying God bless you all".<sup>40</sup> During the next month the Jacobite nobles were cheered in the Strand on their way back to the Tower, and the demand for their pardon reached such a pitch that Defoe felt obliged to write a pamphlet and a broadside contrasting the punishment of the rebels with Jeffrey's Bloody Assizes and Tyrconnel's reprisals in Ireland.<sup>41</sup> A letter from one of the first

<sup>38</sup> Chambers, *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 109-12; *Flying Post*, 10/13 Mar., 29/31 May 1716. John Timbs claims that there was a confrontation on 31 January 1716: John Timbs, *Club Life of London*, 2 vols. (London, 1866), i, pp. 45-55.

<sup>39</sup> *Flying Post*, 8/10 Dec. 1715; *St. James's Evening Post*, 8/10 Dec. 1715.

<sup>40</sup> C.L.R.O., Sessions files, Dec. 1715, gaol calendar.

<sup>41</sup> Doran, *London in the Jacobite Times*, i, pp. 128-9; *Jl. House of Lords*, xx, pp. 267-8; Daniel Defoe, *An Account of the Proceedings against the Rebels* (London, 1716); Daniel Defoe, *The Proceedings of the Government against the Rebels* (London, 1716).

Highlanders to be tried in London well illustrates the disposition of the crowd. "The mob stopt our coach", he recalled, "and notwithstanding that our coach hade 6 sojers, they bade almost drawn us out . . . . All the ladyes and mob cryed and weepd, and cryed that the Almighty would preserve us against all our enimies".<sup>42</sup>

The sympathy shown the rebels ultimately prompted the Whigs to call on the troops. On 5 June 1716 three regiments of the Foot Guards and six companies of the Horse and Grenadier Guards received orders to encamp at Hyde Park.<sup>43</sup> After an eventful thanksgiving for the suppression of the rebellion, at which Tory counter-demonstrations were reported and an attack was launched on a Whig mug-house in St. John's Lane, Clerkenwell, the duke of Newcastle solicited military support. On the Pretender's birthday troops were ordered to patrol the streets "with their swords drawn" and to assist in the arrest of Tory demonstrators.<sup>44</sup> In Newgate Street a journeyman printer was killed for calling them "his Majesty's Bull Dogs". At Grays Inn Walk a gentleman wearing a white rose was seriously wounded. And at least a dozen men were arrested. "This town is now become a garrison", one Jacobite observer wrote:

3000 foot guard it day and night, besides the horse dragoons. Three people were killed yesterday, being the Pretender's birthday . . . the soldiers having orders to fire upon the Tories who are 20 to 1 of the people, and to support the Whig mob or my Lord Pelham's, who distinguished themselves . . . by wearing farthing warming pans.

The duke's "cunning contrivance", he believed, had "aggravated the people like fire".<sup>45</sup> And so it seemed, for within five weeks there were further assaults upon Whig mug-houses in Southwark and the City.

The most formidable disturbances took place in Salisbury Court, off Fleet Street. On 20th July a Tory crowd so threatened Read's mug-house in the court that the Whigs had to call upon reinforcements from the officers' club in Tavistock Street.<sup>46</sup> Three days later further affrays were reported. According to Dudley Ryder, the Whigs:

dispersed the mob, but then one of the Mug-House men was taken into custody by the constables, and his friends were resolved to rescue him and broke the windows of the house where he was and made a great deal of noise.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Historical Manuscripts Commission (hereafter H.M.C.), *Menzies MSS.*, p. 703.

<sup>43</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 4/18/138-9.

<sup>44</sup> H.M.C., *Stuart MSS.*, ii, pp. 228-9; anon., *A True Relation of the Most Remarkable Passages that Happened Between Those Persons that Distinguish'd Themselves with White Roses and Nosegays made like Warming Pans, on Sunday the 10th Instant, Being the Supposed Birthday of the Pretender* (London, 1716); Boyer, *Political State of Great Britain*, xi, pp. 744-5; *Weekly Jl.*, 16 June 1716.

<sup>45</sup> H.M.C., *Stuart MSS.*, ii, p. 227.

<sup>46</sup> E. Beresford Chancellor, *The Annals of Fleet Street* (New York, 1912), pp. 290-1.

<sup>47</sup> *Diary of Dudley Ryder*, ed. Matthews, p. 283.

Early the next morning a Tory crowd again assembled outside Read's tavern "crying out High Church and Ormonde, down with the Presbyterians", and proceeded to demolish the furniture and windows with staves supplied by local soap-boilers, forcing the gentlemen inside to escape through the back door and over a high church wall. The tavern-keeper fired on the crowd killing one of its ringleaders, Daniel Vaughan, a small-coals-man and former Bridewell apprentice. The guards from Whitehall were called in to disperse the rioters, the new Riot Act was read, and about thirty were arrested. Most of the assailants were released, presumably through lack of evidence, but six were indicted and found guilty of capital felony under the terms of the Act. Five were hanged at the end of the street. They included George Purchase, a local shoemaker; Thomas Bean, a servant to two of the Preston rebels; William Price, a sword cutler's apprentice; Richard Price, a tramping tailor from Wales; and John Love, a sixteen-year-old button-maker who had been forced to eke out a living as a casual river-side porter. One other rioter, Daniel Delander, a Fleet Street watch-maker, was convicted at King's Bench in December "for inciting the Mobb to throw Stones at the Mughouse windows", but he was eventually pardoned.<sup>48</sup> Robert Read, by contrast, was acquitted of murder after a three-hour trial.

The Salisbury Court demonstrators were the first Londoners to be executed under the new Riot Act. Their sentences were bitterly resented, so much so that the City Lieutenancy, fearing violent reprisals, stationed a company of the trained bands in the vicinity for the rest of the month.<sup>49</sup> Even so, Thomas Bean was given a "popular Funeral", six men leading six female pallbearers dressed in white scarves and favours, and the following Sunday, to the consternation of the authorities who sent the militia to arrest them, they reappeared at St. Bride's to press the point home.<sup>50</sup> As late as October, Read's maidservant was attacked in the neighbourhood to shouts of "Mughouse Bitch", and in the following month one of the jurymen at the trial of the five rioters complained that an Aldersgate bookbinder and coffeeman had together raised "a great Riot and tumult about him crying out no pickt jurymen" and "at divers other Times" had insulted him "when about his lawful occasions".<sup>51</sup>

<sup>48</sup> The coroner's jury initially charged Read with murder but, according to Doran, the jury was reconstituted with Whig partisans. Even so, seven jurymen declared for wilful murder and five for manslaughter. Hunter claimed that Read received £400 from the Treasury in compensation for the damages to his mug-house. Doran, *op. cit.*, i, p. 265; *Annals of King George*, iii, pp. 9-11; H.M.C., *Polwarth MSS.*, i, pp. 45-7; Hunter, *History of London and Its Environs*, i, p. 611. For the rioters, see C.L.R.O., Sessions file, Sept. 1716.

<sup>49</sup> C.L.R.O., Lieutenancy Minutes (1714-44), fo. 65.

<sup>50</sup> Boyer, *Political State of Great Britain*, xii, pp. 440-4.

<sup>51</sup> C.L.R.O., Sessions file, Dec. 1716, recs. 4, 63, 67.

In the press the affair engendered a fierce debate on the merits of the mug-houses. One Tory pamphleteer roundly condemned their belligerent activities and deplored "the dismal scene exhibited at Salisbury Court, where one poor wretch was shot like a Pidgeon, and afterwards five more of them were hanged in the Same Place like so many dogs".<sup>52</sup> Privately a few Whigs admitted the substance of some of these charges. Dudley Ryder, for example, had few doubts that many of the mug-house toasts were unduly provocative, and believed that "some of the members of these societies are apt to be too flushed with their strength and attack persons whom they suspect before they are insulted themselves". But even he was pleased "that a mob may be raised for the government and that a popular show is made on its side".<sup>53</sup> Indeed the Whigs resolutely defended their clubs as a necessary counterpoise to plebeian Jacobitism and showed little inclination to disband them. When the Lord Mayor, Sir William Lewen, did curtail the activities of the City mug-houses in 1718, protests were even raised in the Commons, a striking indication of the support they had elicited from the highest quarters.<sup>54</sup> By this time, however, the first phase of protest had passed, and so no formal complaints were laid against their prohibition.

## II

One of the most remarkable features of early Hanoverian politics was the persistent and deep-rooted hostility of Londoners to the new regime. Despite their popularity in commercial circles and their control of the metropolitan lieutenantcies, despite the virtual capitulation of the Tory opposition after the outbreak of the northern rebellion and the inevitable association of protest with treason, the Whigs had felt the need to nurture loyalism and complement the local forces of law and order with their own auxiliaries. Even this departure, as we have seen, proved only a partial success. Although Newcastle in his old age claimed that the country owed the Hanoverian succession to his band of militants, "vigilantism" had proved largely counter-productive. As the Salisbury Court episode revealed, it had to be bolstered by military intervention, new legal sanctions against riotous demonstration, and calculated acts of legal terror.

But what, we might ask, were the precise dimensions of anti-Hanoverian protest in the capital? Was it as broadly based as contemporaries imagined? And was there any substance to the belief

<sup>52</sup> Sir Humphrey Mackworth, *Down with the Mug: or, Reasons for Suppressing the Mug-Houses* (London, 1717), p. 5.

<sup>53</sup> *Diary of Dudley Ryder*, ed. Matthews, pp. 255, 280.

<sup>54</sup> H.M.C., *Portland MSS.*, v, pp. 557, 567.

that resistance to Hanover was the work of Jacobite *provocateurs* and Tory agitators? Without doubt this line of argument was zealously propagated by Whig spokesmen within Parliament and in the press. It formed the basic rationale for the Septennial Act, the statute most responsible for the development of political oligarchy, and it is the one historians have most frequently followed.<sup>55</sup> Even those who have admitted the ruthlessness of the Hanoverian Whigs have adhered to the view that a Jacobite fifth column was a real possibility. It is these questions that we must now attempt to answer.

We might begin with the social contours of disaffection. This was not an issue which contemporaries systematically confronted. Although Whig journalists drew attention to the riotous activities of the Bridewell apprentices, who were easily distinguishable by their blue liveries, their depiction of the crowd was usually and perhaps understandably impressionistic. Occasionally they alluded to "poor workmen" or, in the attack upon the Blackfriars meeting-house, to "vast numbers of begging seamen and soldiers". But more frequently they indulged in the stock-in-trade caricatures of the day. Thus the *Weekly Journal* portrayed the rioters as *lazzaroni* of London society: "Black Guard Boys, Clean Your Shoes Your Honour, Parish Boys, Wheelbarrow-men, Butchers, Porters, Basket-women, Ballad singers, Bawds, Whores and Thieves".<sup>56</sup>

Predictably this characterization was misleading, even if we divest it of its pejorative image. To begin with, few rioters or men and women accused of disaffection could be classified among the rootless poor of the metropolis. Approximately two-thirds of those brought before the courts were released on bail, some indication at least that the magistrates regarded them as settled members of society. Furthermore, while it is clear that anti-Hanoverianism had penetrated the humbler sections of the capital, the social bases of disaffection were more diverse than Whig accounts implied. Of the 135 dissidents whose occupational status can be traced in the judicial records, 8 or possibly 9 were gentlemen, 4 were professionals, and 16 were engaged in the genteel trades. A further 13 were classified as "yeomen", a difficult designation to interpret in the urban context but one which implied a modicum of wealth and status. Presumably they were self-employed artisans or tradesmen of some substance. The contribution of these groups to the groundswell of discontent, however, was by no means uniform. The leisured element, for example, played a largely passive role and did not feature as

<sup>55</sup> *Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England*, 12 vols. (London, 1806-12), vii, cols. 301, 313-14, 359-61; Wolfgang Michael, *The Beginnings of the Hanoverian Dynasty* (London, 1936), p. 112; J. H. Plumb, *Sir Robert Walpole*, 2 vols. (London, 1956-60), 1, p. 214.

<sup>56</sup> *Weekly Jl.*, 2 June 1716; *Flying Post*, 21 June 1715.

prominently as it did during the Sacheverell riots. Only one gentleman was implicated in the demonstrations of 1715 and 1716, although two others, both non-jurors, were indicted for assault: one for drawing his sword at the Scroop's Court meeting-house and threatening those that "cried out for King George when the p[er]sons there only prayed for the King in General"; the other for beating Susannah Hayes, slitting her nose and "calling her Low Church Presbyterian Bitch".<sup>57</sup> More typical was the gentleman accused of "treasonable practices" or simply "disaffection" — often, one presumes, a Catholic or non-juror who had failed to take the oaths and had become the object of suspicion. The respectable tradesmen, on the other hand, were more active in street politics. At least 20, including 10 "yeomen", 2 lacemen, several upholsterers and a goldsmith, were arrested for rioting on public anniversaries. And a Ludgate mercer named Bedford Loddington was charged with assaulting one Rowland Leach, "throwing him in the Dirt and calling him Hanoverian Dogg".<sup>58</sup> As for the professionals, all save Hugh Hopley, Dr. Sacheverell's clerk, were arraigned for seditious toasts and oaths. One of these cases involved a lawyer's apprentice named John Humphries, who was impudent enough to deny the legality of the succession in a Whig mug-house, for which he was fined twenty marks and sent to jail for three months.<sup>59</sup> Another concerned George Lansdale, a Holborn surgeon, who was twice called to account in eighteen months: first, for swearing he would enlist in the French service in the event of war; and secondly, for vindicating the Pretender's right to the throne.<sup>60</sup>

The main sources of disaffection, nonetheless, were undoubtedly the petty tradesmen and craftsmen of the industrial suburbs. Together with the casual labourers, carmen, porters, and the sprinkling of soldiers and sailors, they made up about two-thirds of the 135 whose occupations are known. Judging from the sureties listed in the other cases, the proportion was even higher. (See Table.) Among the tradesmen, the victuallers, chandlers and butchers predominated; among the artisans, the weavers, tailors and shoemakers, although a comparatively wide range of crafts was represented, including dyers, soap-boilers, paviours, bricklayers and barbers. It is impossible to determine with any precision the social status of the artisans. The rate books for the period do not permit the

<sup>57</sup> G.L.R.O., Midd., WJ/SR 2270, indt. 8, rec. 137.

<sup>58</sup> G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2253, rec. 269; G.L.R.O., Midd., WJ/SR 2255, recs. 456-7; C.L.R.O., Sessions file, Jan. 1717, rec. 44.

<sup>59</sup> Doran, *London in the Jacobite Times*, i, p. 274; C.L.R.O., Sessions file, Dec. 1716, gaol calendar no. 4.

<sup>60</sup> G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2236, recs. 54, 91; G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2268, rec. 24.

## TABLE

THE OCCUPATIONS OF THE DISAFFECTED IN LONDON, WESTMINSTER  
AND URBAN MIDDLESEX 1714-1716\*

Occupation	Seditious words against king and government	Jacobite toasts and oaths	Riotous assembly	Total	Per- centage
Gentlemen	3	8	1	12	5
Genteel tradesmen	2	4	10	16	6
"Yeomen"	1	2	10	13	5
Petty tradesmen	9	9	14	32	13
Artisans	15	6	18	39	15
Labourers, soldiers, sailors	2	9	4	15	6
Servants, coachmen	1	2	2	5	2
Spinsters	1	—	1	2	1
Unidentified	33	49	37	119	47

\* Notes: This table cannot claim to be more than an impressionistic survey of the occupational background of the disaffected. 47 per cent remain unidentified and some attributions — "yeomen" in particular — are difficult to interpret in the London context. I presume the yeomen were middling tradesmen or small master craftsmen. A survey of the sureties suggests that the table greatly underestimates the number of petty tradesmen, artisans and labourers. Together they probably constituted 80 per cent of the London accused. Had Southwark been included in this study the proportion would have been even higher.

kind of analysis undertaken by George Rudé. But it seems reasonable to infer from the social topography of London and studies on the organizational structure of its major industries that they were generally journeymen or apprentices.<sup>61</sup> A few may have been independent craftsmen. Daniel Delander, for example, the Fleet Street watch-maker apprehended during the Salisbury Court riots, employed a number of artisans on a putting-out basis and was also a

<sup>61</sup> By the early eighteenth century most London industries were run on a capitalist basis characteristic of the age of manufacture. In some cases large-scale production in embryonic factories had already emerged. The polarization of capital and labour can be gauged by the growth of journeymen's clubs and combinations, the intermittent recourse to collective bargaining by riot, and the ineffectual efforts to regulate wages by statute. See George Unwin, *Industrial Organization in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London, 1903), pp. 208-24; George Unwin, *The Gilds and Companies of London* (London, 1908), pp. 348-51; Alfred Plummer, *The London Weavers' Company, 1600-1970* (London, 1972), *passim*; T. F. Reddaway, *The Rebuilding of London after the Great Fire* (London, 1940), pp. 112-21; M. Dorothy George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1925), chs. 4-6; J. R. Kellett, "The Breakdown of Guild and Corporate Control over the Handicraft and Retail Trade in London", *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2nd ser., x (1957-8), pp. 381-94. For interesting insights into the structure of the shoemaking industry, see Edward Mayer, *The Curriers and the City of London* (London, 1968), pp. 122-31; Guildhall Lib., London, MS. 6118.

local collector of the trophy tax.<sup>62</sup> Several others appear to have had middling connections, for an attorney and a clerk of the Carpenters' Company are mentioned as sureties. But the majority appear to have been wage-earners in Defoe's "mechanical trades", and scarcely distinguishable in many cases from the mass of the labouring poor.<sup>63</sup>

The essentially plebeian character of disaffection is underpinned in two other respects. First, in those areas where disaffection was rife, particularly in Whitechapel and in the western liberties and out-parishes of the City, where a great many petty trades were clustered together, political protest frequently took the form of charivaris. Demonstrators were summoned to well-known rendezvous by the rough music of marrowbones and cleavers. On several occasions the rioters appeared masked or in female dress, in disguises which symbolized the extraordinary nature of their enterprise. These rituals underscored the communal basis of action.<sup>64</sup> The demonstrators saw themselves as the guardians of local sentiment, reaffirming their solidarities on royal anniversaries by symbolic acts of consecration or desecration, dispensing popular justice upon political deviants, whether Dissenters, unsympathetic neighbours or passive spectators.

Secondly, the Whigs do not appear to have established a strong following among the common people, unless one attributes great significance to the well-organized rallies in Hyde Park and elsewhere. The only occasion when Tory demonstrations incurred popular disfavour was during the impeachment proceedings in June 1715, when a Low Church mob attacked two High Church coffee-houses in Westminster, threatened Ormonde's house and exchanged slogans with their political opponents outside Parliament.<sup>65</sup> Otherwise evidence of plebeian loyalism is scanty, for one cannot regard the mug-house clubs as genuinely popular organizations. Clearly the Whigs could draw some *éclat* from the labouring poor, although to what degree this was prompted by the incidental benefits of liberality — beer and meat at the Hanoverian bonfire — or more permanent ties of dependence, one can only speculate. In the quarter sessions records, it is true, one occasionally encounters a plebeian loyalist.

<sup>62</sup> C.L.R.O., Lieutenancy Minutes (1714-44), fos. 198-205; G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2271, rec. 295; *Weekly Jl.*, 8 Dec. 1716.

<sup>63</sup> This is a contentious issue. George Rudé tends to draw a firm distinction between the artisans and the labouring poor in his studies of eighteenth-century London. Peter Linebaugh's recent work on London crime and labour, however, suggests that this division has been over-emphasized. See Peter Linebaugh, "Eighteenth-Century Crime, Popular Movements and Social Control", *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History*, xxv (1972), pp. 11-15.

<sup>64</sup> Brit. Lib., Add. MS. 17677 III, fo. 235b; *Flying Post*, 11/14 June 1715. For a general discussion of this question, see E. P. Thompson, "Rough Music: le charivari anglais", *Annales. E.S.C.*, xxvii (1972), pp. 285-315.

<sup>65</sup> Brit. Lib., Add. MS. 17677 III, fo. 254<sup>v</sup>; *Weekly Jl.*, 18 June 1715.

Among those who gave evidence against the disaffected we find an illiterate labourer from St. Katherine by the Tower, a servant of White Wykham, Esquire, of Goodman's Fields, and a handful of artisans from the City and suburbs.<sup>66</sup> But overall, a social comparison of the prosecuting witnesses and the accused does not substantiate the view that loyalism was strongly based among the London trades.

Further evidence from the judicial records supports this judgement. At least ten cases before the courts revealed that prosecuting witnesses had been deterred from giving evidence. In March 1716, for instance, a chandler from Thieving Lane was prosecuted "For threatening and discouraging ye kings evidences, raising Mobbs, and calling ye scandalous names, and forcing them to remove their lodgings". Three months later a Whig zealot was forcibly held while two men who had toasted the Pretender's health escaped from an alehouse in Kentish Town.<sup>67</sup> The most interesting case, however, concerned Elizabeth Lucas, a weaver's wife from Shoreditch, who gave evidence against a local chandler for speaking seditiously of the government. She filed five complaints against her neighbours for abusing her, "threatening to have her carted for a perjured whore" and for "raising a Mobb and tumult in her house".<sup>68</sup> Instances like these suggest that men and women threatened with prosecution for disaffection frequently won local sympathy. In some districts they even gained the explicit approval of the constables and the watch. In Fleet Street, for example, the complicity of the peace officers was notorious. During the trial of John Nash, one of the Salisbury Court rioters, a witness testified that the constables on duty had declined Mrs. Read's offer to drink the king's health and had refused to inhibit the demonstrators. Another deposed that "he saw two Constables and several Watchmen in the Street before the House, who encouraged the Mob, for that he was sure they were able to have dispers'd them if they had a mind to it".<sup>69</sup> In Shoreditch too, the constables connived at anti-Hanoverian protest. In 1716 Thomas Lister, a shopkeeper who had already prosecuted a local dyer and victualler for inciting a crowd to break his windows on the first

<sup>66</sup> C.L.R.O., Sessions file, May 1715; G.L.R.O., Midd., M/SP/1715/JY/11; G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2261, rec. 109; G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2256, rec. 24; G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2258, unnumbered rec., 3 Nov. 1715. Of the prosecuting witnesses I have located, 6 were constables, 10 soldiers, 12 were of equivalent standing to the accused, and 9 of higher standing. I have found no example where a prosecuting witness was of lower standing than the defendant. This is strikingly different to the situation in 1745. See my "Popular Disaffection in London during the Forty-Five", *London Jnl.*, i no. 1 (1975), pp. 19-21.

<sup>67</sup> G.L.R.O., Midd., WJ/SR 2265, rec. 167; G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2271, rec. 246.

<sup>68</sup> G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2253, rec. 283; G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2258, indt. 27, recs. 3, 98, 116-17.

<sup>69</sup> Boyer, *Political State of Great Britain*, xii, pp. 429-30, 435.

anniversary of the accession, complained of the inactivity of the constables. While a crowd:

battered his windows, tore down his Ornaments and violently assaulted and abused his person, [he said,] a constable named Thomas Brooks stood by, and when two headboroughs called on him to assist them he replied that he would not stir unless it was to pull down your Petitioner's sd lights, the Mob all the while loudly crying High Church and Ormond for ever.<sup>70</sup>

Two years later, as a result of his assiduous reports to the Secretary of State concerning local demonstrations, Lister found himself the victim of an anonymous letter. "Lester", it ran, "you are an informin Rog[ue] and dog desert from the mischvus you are taking or else you life will be taking a way so god Bles King James the Thurd".<sup>71</sup>

The conspiratorial theory of protest is less difficult to assess. Certainly there is little evidence that Jacobite agents campaigned among the London trades, although there were a number of committed agitators like Charles Micklethwait, who was arrested in March 1716 for reading "the Pretender's Declaration and Lord Marr's manifesto to all people that comes to his Lodging, encouraging people and setting forth the Pretender's Just Title".<sup>72</sup> Indeed, the Stuart court envisaged a specifically secondary role for the London populace in a projected fifth column and concentrated upon winning over the City of London. One Jacobite politician even doubted the political reliability of the crowd "unless first assembled and then led by our men of figure".<sup>73</sup> In this respect the Stuarts were as sceptical of the political maturity of the plebeians as their opponents.

There was, however, some substance to the Whig attack upon the seditious activities of the high-flying clergy. Prominent London Tory preachers never ceased to warn their congregations of the imminent danger of Whiggery, and exploited public anniversaries and thanksgivings with telling effect. Sacheverell's Restoration Day sermons became the occasion for anti-ministerial rallies. In 1716, for example, the *Flying Post* reported that crowds gathered after the service at St. Andrew Holborn with "Green Boughs in their Hats", shouting "High Church and Ormonde, the Dr. and the Queen" and "Down with the Presbyterians", and threatened to pull down the Roebuck tavern.<sup>74</sup> On other occasions too, the well-known demagogue defiantly confronted the Whig Establishment. On 20 January 1715 he

<sup>70</sup> P.R.O., S.P. 35/7/25.

<sup>71</sup> P.R.O., S.P. 35/12/219-20.

<sup>72</sup> G.L.R.O., Midd., WJ/SR 2265, gaol calendar. For Jacobite activities in London, see the testimony of Thomas Wells: Brit. Lib., Lansdowne MS. 817, fos. 27-44.

<sup>73</sup> H.M.C., *Stuart MSS.*, iii, pp. 580-1. Stuart agents were sometimes taken aback by the outbreaks of popular hostility against the Hanoverians. In March 1718, for example, John Menzies alluded to "the new ballads which swarm everywhere in great abundance again . . . There must be some very industrious enemies who underhand promote that engine against the Government": *ibid.*, vi, p. 146.

<sup>74</sup> *Flying Post*, 29/31 May 1716.

boldly attacked the administration for selecting the anniversary of Charles I's trial to celebrate the coming of Hanover. The following year it was rumoured that he had advised the wardens to close St. Andrew's on the public thanksgiving for the suppression of the rebellion because it was in such a bad state of repair.<sup>75</sup> Other divines were scarcely less audacious. The Tory curate of St. George Southwark chose as his text for the 1716 anniversary of Charles I's martyrdom I Samuel, xii. 25, "If ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king", a provocatively anti-Hanoverian verse, and went on to order his audience to eject a Whig spy from the church.<sup>76</sup> Non-jurors were equally inflammatory. Townsend commanded the Lord Mayor to closely watch Mr. Gandy's meeting-house in Scroop's Court, which was thought to harbour Jacobites. And General Stanhope drew the Secretary of State's attention to the goings-on at Trinity Hall in Aldersgate Street, where James Orme had substituted an ambiguous blessing for the prayer celebrating the King's majesty, and instead of the collect for Parliament had read the prayer "appointed for the time of War and Tumults".<sup>77</sup>

Without doubt the Tory clergy were among the most resolute opponents of the new regime, rallying their congregations against Whiggery and nonconformity, supplementing their sermons with anonymous broadsheets and pamphlets like Atterbury's *Bold Advice*. And it is hardly surprising that Whig spokesmen should have exposed their demagogy. Their precise contribution to the wave of protest that confronted the government in 1715 and 1716 is, however, problematical. Certainly there is evidence to suggest that the disaffected imbibed the High Church rhetoric about the threat to the Anglican inheritance from the combined forces of Whig latitudinarianism, Dissent and German Lutheranism. In April 1716, for example, the Lord Mayor jailed a man for "breeding a Riot and disturbance and cursing ye Lutherans and all Presbyterians", and "Presbyterian Devills" or "Presbyterian sons of bitches" were among the expletives levelled against Whig partisans.<sup>78</sup> There was, moreover, some geographical correspondence between disaffection

<sup>75</sup> Doran, *London in the Jacobite Times*, i, pp. 36, 241, 278. In late May 1716 Sacheverell preached at St. Clement's in Westminster. According to one report "he was attended by a numerous mob who testified their approbation of his Billingsgate discourse by huzzaing him to his coach".

<sup>76</sup> Doran, *op. cit.*, i, p. 130. The curate, the Rev. Mr. Smith of St. Sepulchre, was arrested on his way to preach his farewell sermon at St. George Southwark in June 1716. The congregation greeted his successor, the duke of Newcastle's chaplain, with cries of "No Rumps, no Presbyterians in the Pulpits of the Church of England, no Wolves in sheep's Clothing". See *The Shift Shifted*, 23 June 1716.

<sup>77</sup> P.R.O., S.P. 44/1118, 22 Oct. 1715; P.R.O., S.P. 44/117/199.

<sup>78</sup> C.L.R.O., Sessions file, May 1716, gaol calendar no. 1; C.L.R.O., Sessions file, Oct. 1716, gaol calendar no. 1, rec. 27; G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2253, unnumbered rec., 10 Aug. 1715; G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2273, rec. 7; G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2268, rec. 103.

and High Church parishes. St. Andrew Holborn and St. Martin-in-the-Fields were prominent centres of unrest. So too were St. Bride's and Bridewell, where the blue-coat apprentices had been schooled in Tory principles by Francis Atterbury.<sup>79</sup> Whitechapel, where Dr. Welton's meeting-house was located, was also a nucleus of resistance. Indeed the principal social group in his congregation, weavers from Whitechapel and the vicinity, featured quite prominently among the disaffected. Against this, no member of Dr. Welton's meeting-house was brought before the courts for riot or sedition, and one suspects, from the list published in the *Weekly Journal*, that they were of a somewhat higher status than the accused.<sup>80</sup> This statement is corroborated by the comments of contemporaries, who doubted that the rioters were regular church-goers. Furthermore there is no evidence that the Tory clergy actually instigated political demonstrations, despite Whig accusations to the contrary. Ministers did not incite the crowd in the manner of 1710.<sup>81</sup> Their role was less direct, more circumstantial. While Tory churches, chapels and charity schools formed valuable nuclei for political dissent (alongside, it should be noted, alehouses and victualling houses), one cannot explain the wide-ranging antipathy towards the new regime simply in terms of political indoctrination from above, still less as crude rabble-rousing. Instead one has to probe the specifically plebeian images of Hanover and Whiggery, their social associations, and the economic context in which they were voiced.

During the last years of Anne's reign, plebeian hostility towards the Whigs had focused around three points: the Whigs' intimate association with Low Churchmen and Dissenters, whose campaign for the reformation of manners was bitterly detested by the labouring poor;<sup>82</sup> their cosmopolitanism; and finally their war policy. The last

<sup>79</sup> John Nichols (ed.), *The Epistolary Correspondence of Francis Atterbury*, 4 vols. (London, 1784), iii, pp. xviii-xxi. A correspondent of *The Flying Post*, 13/15 Mar. 1716, accused the High Church vestry of St. Martin's of spending half of their charity revenue on "raising Cabals and Riots". For further evidence of the link between London charity schools and political sedition, see M. G. Jones, *The Charity School Movement: A Study of Eighteenth Century Puritanism in Action* (Cambridge, 1938), pp. 110-34.

<sup>80</sup> *Weekly Jl.*, 15 Mar. 1718.

<sup>81</sup> Geoffrey Holmes, "The Sacheverell Riots: The Crowd and the Church in Early Eighteenth-Century London", *Past and Present*, no. 72 (Aug. 1976), pp. 55-85. Holmes has clearly established the complicity of the High Church clergy in the 1710 riots. I have not found such obvious instances of clerical incitement during the years 1714-16.

<sup>82</sup> This theme has not been satisfactorily explored but there are some interesting suggestions in T. C. Curtis and W. A. Speck, "The Societies for the Reformation of Manners: A Case Study in the Theory and Practice of Moral Reform", *Literature and History*, iii (1976), pp. 45-64; W. A. Speck, "Mandeville and the Eutopia Seated in the Brain", in Irwin Primer (ed.), *Mandeville Studies* (The Hague, 1975), pp. 66-79; Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution, 1603-1716* (London, 1961),

(cont. on p. 92)

two were closely connected. Since the time of William's Continental campaigns the Whig party had been overwhelmingly identified with Revolution finance, that concentration of monied power, cosmopolitan in nature and not without Dissenting associations, which had provided the state with its major sources of war credit. The Tory indictment of the monied interest and Whig foreign policy attracted support from a wide range of groups: the lesser gentry, whose pockets were pinched by the increase in the land tax and falling profits; certain vested interests in the City of London which viewed with alarm the new incubus of financial capital; and the metropolitan populace generally, who had to bear the brunt of wartime excise taxes against a background of high prices. Popular opposition to the war was also exacerbated by Whig immigration policy. The decision to admit 12,000-13,000 poor Palatines into England in 1709, 10,000 of whom were temporarily lodged in London and its environs, met with a storm of protest.<sup>83</sup> Tory spokesmen argued that charity should begin at home, and saw the scheme, which gained active support from the Dissenters, as a Whig stratagem to further weaken the Church and deprive English-born workers of their jobs. This was the context in which the Sacheverell riots took place, when Tory crowds, enraged by the government's impeachment of one of their clerical leaders, ransacked Dissenting meeting-houses in the Holborn area and threatened to attack the Bank of England, the pre-eminent symbol of monied power.

The Tory victory at the polls in 1710, however, and the subsequent reversal of Whig foreign policy, abated popular discontent. The Treaty of Utrecht was widely acclaimed in London and remained so, in spite of the growing reservations of the commercial bourgeoisie. Yet the peace only partially mitigated the distress which had been so apparent in 1709-10. The overall trend in bread prices, it is true, was downward during the years 1713-17, although there was a slight upturn in 1715 and 1716.<sup>84</sup> But there were other countervailing factors. The frosts were so severe in the winter of 1715-16 that the Thames froze, throwing many of the river-side trades out of work.

(note 82 cont.)

pp. 296-7. See also Defoe's *Review*, 13 Sept. 1705 and 1 Sept. 1709. I have found one explicit link in the years 1715-16 between popular protest and the campaign for the reformation of manners. In June 1716 a man was charged with raising "a Ryott in the Street crying out no Justice Fuller but Doctor Sacheverell and Ormond for ever": G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2271, rec. 134. Fuller was particularly active in the suppression of brothels and gaming-houses in the Cripplegate area, noted in the mid-seventeenth century for its Ranter influence. See G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2238, recs. 189-92, 204-8; G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2248, recs. 20-4; Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down* (Harmondsworth, 1975 edn.), p. 201.

<sup>83</sup> H. T. Dickinson, "The Poor Palatines and the Parties", *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, lxxxii (1967), pp. 464-85.

<sup>84</sup> W. G. Hoskins, "Harvest Fluctuations and English Economic History, 1620-1759", *Agric. Hist. Rev.*, xvi (1968), pp. 19-24.

The Commons acknowledged that “Multitudes of Poor” had “starved to Death during this most rigorous Winter” and pointed to the striking increase in the number of burials recorded in the bills of mortality.<sup>85</sup> Moreover London was still witnessing the disruptive effects of demobilization. The Jacobite rebellion precipitated a commercial slump. And a cattle plague dislocated the meat trade and also the leather industries, particularly shoemaking, whose masters and journeymen had already unsuccessfully petitioned Parliament to restrict the export of unwrought leather and had complained of the decline in leather imports from Spain, Turkey and Morocco.<sup>86</sup> Finally, the weaving industry was beginning to feel the full impact of competition from the calico trade, which reached crisis point in the years 1719-21. Thomas Eades, one of the leading silk manufacturers and a prominent figure in the Weavers’ Company, testified in 1719 that employment in the industry had “lessened every year for 3 or 4 years past and weavers’ wages had fallen by 25 per cent”.<sup>87</sup>

The early years of the Hanoverian accession were therefore hard ones for many London trades, particularly for the weavers, shoemakers, butchers and also the casual river-side workers. It was against this background of continuing economic uncertainty that the Whigs impeached the Tory peacemakers and revived fears of another burdensome war.<sup>88</sup> A report from Staffordshire revealed a deep-rooted hostility towards further military ventures and a belief that the Whigs had “ruined Trade on Purpose to make the Nation out of Love with the late Peace and Peacemakers”. The letter went on to suggest that the rioters regarded the impeachments as a “Piece of Spight and Revenge in this military Ministry, because the Ratifications of Peace took some bread off their trenchers”.<sup>89</sup> Similar sentiments appear to have prevailed in London. It is significant that when Whig politicians were singled out for vilification, it was not Walpole who attracted plebeian anger, but the war generals Stanhope and Marlborough. The latter was especially detested for his wartime profiteering and avarice, first publicized in 1712 but raised again in May 1715 when his regiment remonstrated in the streets about the

<sup>85</sup> *Jl. House of Commons*, xviii, p. 396.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, xviii, pp. 138, 397; Williams, *Stanhope*, p. 176; Michael, *Beginnings of the Hanoverian Dynasty*, pp. 32-3; T. S. Ashton, *Economic Fluctuations in England, 1700-1800* (Oxford, 1959), pp. 17, 118, 142, 172.

<sup>87</sup> Plummer, *The London Weavers’ Company*, p. 302.

<sup>88</sup> The fear that men would be pressed into service in Flanders was mentioned in the untitled ballad accompanying *The Plagues of Nod* in the Houghton Library, Harvard. For direct links between demobilization and disaffection, see the case of William Colthurst, an ex-soldier deep in debt, who declared during the summer of 1715 that “if they were beating up for Soldiers for the King, and for the Pretender”, he would opt for the latter: C.L.R.O., Sessions file, Oct. 1715. See also G.L.R.O., Midd., M/SP/1718/Feb./63.

<sup>89</sup> *Jl. House of Commons*, xviii, p. 227.

poor quality of their uniforms. Early in 1715, for example, a Cripplegate poulterer described him as a “Villain or Rascally Fellow” who had “cheated the Government of the bread in Flanders”, and later on in the year a Spitalfields weaver damned him for his part in the “Hanoverian shirt” affair.<sup>90</sup> Marlborough’s counterpart was of course Ormonde, a man whose popularity rested in part upon his political magnanimity and hospitality, but also upon his supervision of British withdrawal from Europe. He was the commander who had carried out the famous restraining orders of the Tory ministry, as the Whig loyalists, who lampooned him as the “Padlock’d General”, were well aware.<sup>91</sup>

But the unpopularity of the Whigs went beyond these considerations. In the lexicon of Tory political caricature the Whigs had traditionally been branded as sectaries and republicans. Calves’ heads and axes were the usual symbols of Whiggery; Jack Presbyter its personification. As late as 1726 the Whigs were described as “cursed old Oliver’s crew”.<sup>92</sup> Underlying these bogus images was the suspicion that the Whigs would inaugurate a revolution when in power, if necessary by military force. This did not of course happen. The Whigs did not abandon the rule of law, and they did not introduce radical changes in Church and state. But they did deal more harshly with demonstrators, redefining laws in ways that struck hard at popular notions of the Englishman’s birthright and adopting more naked forms of coercion where persuasion failed. Both the Riot and Septennial Acts greatly circumscribed popular activity after two decades of striking political vitality, and troops were more readily deployed to disperse crowds on public anniversaries.<sup>93</sup> The tougher policy towards popular assembly was clearly visible by 1716. The intervention of the troops on the Pretender’s birthday and the Salisbury Court hangings the following month gave some substance to the fear, sedulously fanned by the Jacobite press and no doubt

<sup>90</sup> C.L.R.O., Sessions file, May 1716, rec. 2; G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2243, indt. 53, rec. 68; G.L.R.O., Midd., M/SP/1715/JY/112; G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2246, indt. 75, rec. 242; William Coxe, *Memoirs of John, Duke of Marlborough*, 6 vols. (London, 1820), vi, pp. 318-19.

<sup>91</sup> Boyer, *Political State of Great Britain*, x, p. 581.

<sup>92</sup> P.R.O., S.P. 35/29/55; P.R.O., S.P. 35/41/195; M. Dorothy George, *English Political Caricature to 1792* (Oxford, 1959), pp. 62-72; anon., *Britannia’s Memorial* ([London], 1715).

<sup>93</sup> The preamble to the Septennial Bill referred to “the danger from general discontents and great disaffection of the people”. But the Whigs also wished to restrain popular activity at the hustings in the interests of work discipline. Hampden supported the bill “to dispose the people to follow their callings and to be industrious”. Defoe believed the Triennial Act had “very much debauch’d the Minds of the Common People” and even attributed the decline of the woollen industry to it! *Cobbett’s Parliamentary History of England*, vii, col. 325; Daniel Defoe, *The Alteration in the Triennial Act Considered* (London, 1716), pp. 13-14.

heightened by the spectacle of rotting heads on Temple Bar, that the Hanoverian accession would soon usher in a military regime.<sup>94</sup>

The Whigs were not, however, the only targets of popular calumny. The king himself received his fair share of abuse. Undoubtedly much of the resentment towards George stemmed from the xenophobia of the poor. According to the earl of Mar, “nothing more disgusted the people of Britain at the Elector than his being ignorant of their language and his saying he was too old to learn it or change his manners”, and this is a view which several historians have echoed.<sup>95</sup> But the hostility towards the monarch also drew its strength from the conviction that there was a collusion of interests between Hanover and Whiggery. George I was regarded as “a German Stooze”, an accomplice of Whig adventurism. “The king had turned out his best friends”, declared a refractory official of the royal brewery in Aldgate, “and put in mercenary people”. He had rejected “honest men”, claimed a Spitalfields weaver, “and put in Rogues”.<sup>96</sup> A Wapping victualler told a ministerial supporter in August 1716 that his “old Master the Turnipp Man King George” had “gone to Hanover with a great deal of money”, and he hoped he would never return. Nine months later a Jacobite tract, deliberately attuned “to the humour of the people”, emphasized not only the parasitism of the Whig élite but “the prodigious sweeps yearly hocus-pocused to Hanover”.<sup>97</sup>

Particularly galling to Londoners was the fact that George appeared to lack all the attributes of kingship. There was nothing majestic about his figure or his court. He had kept his wife under castle arrest for her liaison with a Swedish count, an affair which exposed him to derision in the familiar idiom of cuckoldry. And he had a taste for ungainly mistresses. One man referred to Madame Kielmannsegge as a “She Bear”.<sup>98</sup> More important still, the new king was not seen to be merciful. His refusal to pardon the Jacobite lords (which some thought had evoked divine wrath in the form of aurora

<sup>94</sup> On popular fears of military rule, see Francis Atterbury, *An Argument to Prove the Affection of the People of England to be the Best Security of the Government* (London, 1716), pp. 11 ff.; *Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England*, vii, col. 313.

<sup>95</sup> H.M.C., *Stuart MSS.*, iii, p. 275; Williams, *Stanhope*, p. 175.

<sup>96</sup> G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2273, recs. 26, 331; G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2253, rec. 301; P.R.O., S.P. 44/118, 13 Oct. 1715. Sir Charles Petrie noted a popular ballad of Anne's reign which attacked the commercial adventurism of the Whigs: Sir Charles Petrie, *The Four Georges* (London, 1935), p. 48. In *The Dutch Embassy* (1715), George was described as the “Tinsel King”, the puppet of Whigs and Dutchmen.

<sup>97</sup> H.M.C., *Stuart MSS.*, iv, pp. 275, 303; G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2273, rec. 180.

<sup>98</sup> G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2268, rec. 41. Madame Kielmannsegge was popularly regarded as George I's mistress, although modern scholarship suggests she was not.

borealis on the eve of their execution)<sup>99</sup> was followed by a series of incidents which confirmed his lack of magnanimity. According to Stuart sources his indecent delight at seeing Colonel Oxburgh's head on Temple Bar did "not a little inflame the people". Further, his chance encounter with several rebels "going down to receive sentence of death" was not followed by the customary pardon, and this also embittered the populace.<sup>100</sup> In the popular mind there was nothing regal about George, as these lines from a 1722 ballad show:

Put on his bob wig piss burnt with the weather  
And his grog run Coat in which he came thither  
With his Horns in his head he will look very smart  
And so drive him back in an ould turnip Cart.<sup>101</sup>

The denunciation of George was not necessarily Jacobite. But the reverence for monarchy was such that few could long escape that logic. Sometimes, of course, Stuart solidarities were expressed in terms of divine right, in terms that suggested a prior ideological commitment to the exiled royal family. A Bromley yeoman, for instance, declared that George was "not the lords annointed"; others believed he had "no title to the throne" and that he was a "usurper". One man from the Holborn area swore King James was "the right heir to the throne" and that he "would fight for him to the last drop of his blood".<sup>102</sup> But the defence of the Stuart cause also had a romantic air about it, as if the Chevalier epitomized those qualities that the German Elector lacked. The Pretender was occasionally toasted as the "Best Born Briton". In September 1715 a Savoy victualler was prosecuted for extracting the king of hearts from a pack of cards and burning it in the fire, saying "this is King George" and wishing "the pretender was here for yt he should be a gentleman".<sup>103</sup> In one Jacobite ballad, *The Highland Lasses Wish*, the warming-pan legend and the knotty question of the Chevalier's pedigree are dismissed as irrelevant. Jemmy was "brisk and Lordly",

<sup>99</sup> *Diary of Mary, Countess Cowper, 1714-1720*, ed. Spenser Cowper (London, 1865), p. 91.

<sup>100</sup> H.M.C., *Stuart MSS.*, ii, pp. 298, 304-5.

<sup>101</sup> P.R.O., S.P. 35/31/270. The turnip image was associated with cuckoldry and getting rid of someone by hook or crook. It was doubly appropriate for George because he was widely suspected of plotting the murder of his wife's lover, Count Königsmarck. See Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* (New York, 1970), p. 918.

<sup>102</sup> G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2273, recs. 26, 331; G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2259, gaol calendar nos. 50, 54; G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2241, rec. 14, indt. 11; G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2261, recs. 178, 199; G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2263, rec. 138; G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2271, rec. 11; C.L.R.O., Sessions file, Apr. 1716, gaol calendar no. 1.

<sup>103</sup> Justin McCarthy, *History of the Four Georges*, 4 vols. (London, 1880), i, p. 159; G.L.R.O., Midd., WJ/SR 2255, rec. 76.

a "True Born English Man" of "Noble Race".<sup>104</sup> It is difficult to know which view predominated, or indeed whether they were mutually exclusive of one another. But it is clear that sections of the London public fully recognized the overriding impediment to a Stuart restoration, the Chevalier's refusal to renounce his Catholicism. In January 1716, for example, a Westminster woman, by all accounts the wife of an artisan, was indicted for saying that she believed the Pretender to be the "son of King James and lawful heir of ye Crown of England had he not been a Papist".<sup>105</sup>

It is also difficult to determine the exact dimensions of London Jacobitism. As Sir Charles Petrie once remarked, we can only detect the tip of the iceberg.<sup>106</sup> In so far as the judicial records provide any clue we can conclude that Jacobitism was far more pervasive in 1715-16 than it was in 1745-6. Although the most outstanding cases of Jacobitism reported in the press appear to have involved Catholics or non-jurors, the quarter sessions indictments and recognizances suggest that Stuart sympathies were quite widespread, stretching beyond the predominantly Catholic quarters of the metropolis.<sup>107</sup> The incidence of Jacobite prosecutions, about a third of all the cases of disaffection brought before the courts, provides further insights into how we might interpret the evidence. The cases came in three waves. The most positive and flamboyant professions of sympathy for the Pretender occurred in August and September 1715, at the beginning of the rebellion. Late in September, for instance, a militia sergeant from Whitechapel was accused of threatening to "Cut downe" the king, adding that "we should have such worke in a weeke or fortnight's time as never was in England", and that the "King of Hearts" would soon arrive and "then we will send the Hanover Grenadiers to the Devil".<sup>108</sup> Stuart solidarities again surfaced in the immediate aftermath of the rebellion, when Londoners witnessed the victory parade of the Preston rebels and the trials and executions of the Jacobite lords. And the final phase took place in May and June 1716 following the last crop of executions. At this point the street demonstrations appear to have developed clear Jacobite overtones.

<sup>104</sup> P.R.O., S.P. 35/29/270. It is interesting to note that the King's Touch was associated with the Stuarts until the mid-eighteenth century. See William Lecky, *A History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, 8 vols. (New York, 1891), i, pp. 239-41; G. L. Gomme (ed.), *The Gentleman's Magazine Library: Popular Superstitions* (London, 1884), pp. 165-7.

<sup>105</sup> G.L.R.O., Midd., WJ/SR 2265, rec. 111.

<sup>106</sup> Petrie, *The Four Georges*, p. 60.

<sup>107</sup> I have managed to locate the addresses of two-thirds of those accused of drinking the Pretender's health or of affirming his right to the throne. Approximately half lived in areas where there was a fairly high concentration of Catholics, principally Holborn, St. Giles-in-the-Fields, Soho and Spitalfields.

<sup>108</sup> G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2256, rec. 27; see also G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2256, rec. 24; G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SR 2258, gaol calendar no. 41; G.L.R.O., Midd., WJ/SR 2255, unnumbered rec., 24 Sept. 1715 (the case of Daniel Bays).

More men and women were prosecuted for toasting the Pretender's health than in the previous year, and during the Salisbury Court disturbances the rioters were said to have voiced Jacobite slogans. The chronology of Jacobite protest is instructive. The first outbreak followed the impeachment of the Tory ex-ministers and the news of the northern uprising. The last two appear to have been a reaction to Whig reprisals, a symptom of helplessness and despair. It is noticeable that the imprecations against the king and his ministry follow a similar pattern during the winter, spring and summer of 1715-16. The striking parallel between these outbursts suggests at least some correspondence between Jacobitism and Toryism in decline. In view of what we know of Bishop Atterbury's political proclivities, this seems a plausible interpretation.<sup>109</sup> Although Jacobitism had enduring roots in the Irish Catholic communities of London and clearly attracted support from non-jurors, it should also be read as an index of popular disillusionment, the last resource of a populace inflamed by Whig repression and unable to come to terms with the prospect of a long-standing Whig supremacy.

Jacobitism, then, was as much a consequence as a cause of popular resistance to the Hanoverian accession. Although the Whig projection of an impending Jacobite revolt in London was not without some credibility, it seriously misconstrued the real roots of plebeian disaffection. The first phase of protest, I have suggested, can be attributed to war weariness and to the retributive policy of the new ministry. The advent of a Whig government dedicated to impeaching the Tory peacemakers and sapping their political strength inevitably drew cries of protest from those London trades which had welcomed the Treaty of Utrecht and faced continuing economic uncertainty. But the manner in which the Whigs curbed political dissent prompted further misgivings about the settlement and the alliance of Whig and Hanoverian interest. Some of these fears proved unfounded. The new regime did not promote rabid sectarianism, still less full toleration for Dissenters. And it did not encourage a new influx of foreign artisans and manufacturers in Britain's staple trades.<sup>110</sup> Even so, the Whig record was by 1717 transparently anti-libertarian and it is small wonder that many of the London artisans and petty tradesmen found the rhetoric of the Protestant succession so hollow. Greater restraints were placed on popular political expression; Habeas Corpus was suspended beyond the rebellion; and "vigilantism" was actively

<sup>109</sup> G. V. Bennett, *The Tory Crisis in Church and State: The Career of Francis Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 206-8. On the question of cursing and political impotence, see Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London, 1973 edn.), pp. 608-9.

<sup>110</sup> These fears were voiced in *Robin's Last Shift*, 14 Apr. 1716, and *The Shift Shifted*, 1 Sept. 1716.

sponsored from the corridors of power. Furthermore the fear that the Hanoverian accession would inaugurate a new era of political spoliation, the more devastating because it was vindicated in the name of state security, proved remarkably accurate. Although plebeian aspirations tended to relapse into sentimental Jacobitism, many of them were embodied in the social satire of the 1720s, when the South Sea Bubble raised popular opposition to a new pitch of rancour.

A study of London protest during the opening years of the Hanoverian accession calls for two further comments. First, there is the thorny problem of Whig rule. Few historians would nowadays interpret the Whig victory of 1715 as a triumph of libertarianism. Even the recent admirers of that quintessential Whig Joseph Addison find it hard to accept his vindication of the continued suspension of Habeas Corpus after the rebellion.<sup>111</sup> But Whig apologists might defend the repressive oligarchic measures of the new government for reasons of state: a Jacobite threat necessitated tough policies. The difficulty with accepting this argument is that the Whigs revealed their anti-libertarian tendencies before the outbreak of the rebellion and, by conveniently associating popular dissidence with a genuine insurrectionary impulse (most evident in the debate on the Septennial Bill), prolonged the state of emergency beyond its duration. Indeed the incompetence of the Stuart court and the extensive counter-espionage system of the Whigs allowed for its indefinite extension. The fact is that Jacobitism became a cloak for political careerism. It was less feared than exploited to perpetuate Whig power. The losers were not only the Tory party, proscribed from office for nearly fifty years, but the labouring poor, who faced a battery of sanctions against popular assembly and were vulnerable to the possible confusion of social protest with Jacobitism.<sup>112</sup>

Finally there is the question of plebeian political consciousness. Historians have traditionally assigned the crowd a very subordinate role in the politics of this period. The unenfranchised are often seen as the pliant instruments of the rich or, where there is little evidence of direct manipulation, as an essentially sub-political force operating under licence. Two recent authors, for example, have described plebeian activities as fitful, confined to public anniversaries, vulnerable to intervention from above, and prompted "by a few simple prejudices".<sup>113</sup> An examination of these years suggests a more

<sup>111</sup> E. A. Bloom and L. D. Bloom, *Joseph Addison's Sociable Animal* (Providence, R.I., 1971), pp. 127-9.

<sup>112</sup> These themes have been discussed in E. P. Thompson, *Whigs and Hunters: The Origin of the Black Act* (London, 1975). During the calico riots of 1719 the Spitalfields weavers were concerned that their protests would be construed as Jacobite. See Plummer, *The London Weavers' Company*, p. 296.

<sup>113</sup> G. Holmes and W. A. Speck (eds.), *The Divided Society: Party Conflict in England, 1694-1716* (London, 1967), p. 77.

complex picture. While it is true that popular demonstrations were closely synchronized with political anniversaries and sometimes enjoyed the tacit, even explicit, encouragement of sympathetic constables, middling parishioners and clerical demagogues, they were not simply organized from above. Indeed, one of the most revealing features of early Hanoverian politics in London is the continued persistence of unrest (which extended beyond the years examined here) at a time of Tory disillusionment and disunity. Faced with the defection of Bōlingbroke and Ormonde and the inevitable association of Toryism with insurrectionary activity, neither the party leaders in Parliament nor their City allies were capable of organizing a popular movement against the Whigs. Even the High Church divines found themselves under surveillance. In these circumstances it is worthwhile reconsidering the self-generating aspects of plebeian political culture. Both the state papers and the judicial records contain a considerable amount of fragmentary evidence about plebeian activity in alehouses, taverns, barbers' shops, chandlers, local markets, recreation grounds and buskers' corners.<sup>114</sup> No less than thirty hawkers were arrested in these two years alone, and the continual dissemination of popular political literature so concerned the Whigs that it was proposed in 1722 to employ ministerial hacks to "make sevl Ballads and Storys as might engage ye Ears of ye Mob and those sold by Proper hands to all persons . . . yt have anything of a retail trade".<sup>115</sup> Furthermore, while the public calendar of anniversaries gave popular demonstrations an air of predictability, it also afforded the plebeians a cultural base for noising their grievances. On these occasions their protests were hardly sub-political, let alone inarticulate. Drawing on a well-established repertory of political symbolism, relayed in broadsides and prints, the London plebeians knew how to snub the Whig Establishment and champion its opponents. Moreover they were not gulled by the anti-Jacobite propaganda of Newcastle's men, the attempt to inculcate loyalism by re-enacting anti-Catholic ceremonies in a popular idiom. While their political notions were basically derivative, prone to personification, defined within terms of the existing political structure which allowed them a vicarious birthright, the London plebeians were a more formidable and less malleable force than recent historians have taken them to be. If we are to explain their subaltern nature it should be in terms of the limits of consciousness and the complex theatre of class control, not in terms that presume a sub-ideological venal populace.

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<sup>114</sup> P.R.O., S.P. 34/12/143-5; P.R.O., S.P. 35/11/33-5; P.R.O., S.P. 44/112/515-16; G.L.R.O., Midd., M/SP/1716/Oct./58; G.L.R.O., Midd., MJ/SBB 732/72.

<sup>115</sup> P.R.O., S.P. 35/31/296.