THE RHETORIC OF AGITATION AND CONTROL
IN THE CHARTIST MOVEMENT IN
ENGLAND, 1837-1848

THESIS

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By

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Chapter I includes a description of the Chartist Movement and discusses the criteria found in John W. Bowers and Donovan J. Och's *Rhetoric of Agitation and Control* that were used to analyze the agitation and control groups of the movement.

Chapter II describes the ideologies of both groups.

Chapter III analyzes the rhetorical strategies of the agitation group: petition, solidification, promulgation, polarization, non-violent resistance, and confrontation-escalation, and the strategies of the control group: avoidance and suppression.

Chapter IV concludes that Chartist agitators effectively used rhetorical strategies; however, the control strategy of suppression was stronger and brought about the demise of Chartism.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Chartist Movement was a political and social movement of the British working class during the first half of the nineteenth century. An observer of the conditions of the working class during that period reported: "Any man passing through the district and observing the condition of the people, will at once perceive the deep and ravaging distress that prevails . . . Hungry and half-clothed men and women are stalking through the streets begging for bread." Economic distress and social discontent provided the background for the drawing up of a proposed parliamentary bill which became known as the People's Charter and which gave the movement its name.

Chartism aimed at transforming society into a more democratic system without delay, and many of its participants were willing to violate law and order to expedite the movement.

That Chartism was an agitative movement has already been established. Frank Rosenblatt, in The Chartist Movement, called Chartism "a distinct labor struggle for the reconstruction of society." Charles W. Lomas, in
The Agitator in American Society, said that Chartism was "a classic example of agitation, designed to change the whole political base of power, making subsequent economic and social change inevitable." 3

Agitation is defined as that which exists when people normally outside the decision-making establishment persistently advocate significant social change and encounter a degree of resistance within the establishment such as to require more than the normal discursive means of persuasion. 4

Although Chartism was born in the early 1830's with the Factory Act, Chartism as an agitative movement did not reach its greatest notoriety until Feargus O'Connor became one of its chief spokesmen in 1837. O'Connor was a barrister by education, a noted orator, and was elected to Parliament in 1833 for the County of Cork. He was re-elected to Parliament in 1835, but was unseated due to the lack of property qualification. 6 O'Connor used his newspaper, The Northern Star as a vehicle for Chartist ideology. He also organized and held field meetings where he and others made fiery and extravagant speeches proclaiming Chartism. Furthermore, he led groups in protest marches to publicize the grievances of the Chartists. These actions subsequently brought about several arrests in the 1840's, including one long prison confinement for O'Connor.

There were others who were also active in the Chartist
movement such as William Lovett, Joseph Rayner Stephens, George Harney, and Bronterre O'Brien, and they, too, were often arrested for their activities. The periodic removal of the leaders from the movement brought about its definite decline in the latter part of the 1840's, and, although Chartism survived until the 1860's, it was no longer of any particular significance. Thus, for the purpose of this study, the years 1837-1848 have been selected to focus on Chartism because this was when it was at its height.

Although the Chartist Movement has been the subject of much historical research, the study of the elements of its rhetoric have barely been touched. One article has been published in the Quarterly Journal of Speech on three religious orators in the movement, but other than that, no one has selected Chartist rhetoric as a focal point of analysis. Furthermore, the rhetoric of agitation of the Chartist Movement has not been analyzed at all. The study of the rhetoric of this movement should complement the historical research that has been done, and, as Leland Griffin stated in an article entitled "The Rhetoric of Historical Movements," "such a study might possibly bring one closer to discovering the degree of validity in our fundamental assumption: that rhetoric has had and does have a vital function as a shaping agent in human affairs."

John W. Bowers and Donovan J. Ochs, in The Rhetoric of
Agitation and Control, have designed a method of analyzing the strategies and tactics of both the rhetoric of agitation and the rhetoric of control. Control refers to the response of the decision-making establishment to agitation. The examination of control is necessary when examining agitation because whether agitation progresses or declines is dependent upon the amount of resistance to agitation by the controlling group. The type of resistance to agitative demands usually determine the agitators' selection of subsequent strategies. When control does resist, agitators usually react to that resistance by changing tactics or increasing the amount of agitation in order to obtain their goal. The combination of agitation and control, therefore, provides an opportunity to observe and describe the elements of conflict within a social and political movement.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the elements of the rhetoric of agitation and control in the Chartist Movement, 1837-1848.

Methods and Procedures

The material from the Chartist newspaper, The Northern Star, was obtained from the British Museum Newspaper Library in Colindale, England. The research was done during a four-week period in July-August, 1972.
The primary material from pamphlets, tracts, and song books was obtained in the British Museum Reading Room in London also during that time.

The books that were chosen as secondary sources reflect the viewpoints of those living in the nineteenth century during the Chartist period, as well as twentieth-century historians who have considered the movement in retrospect.


The following breakdown represents a composite of the ideas in the above works which will be used in analyzing the rhetoric of agitation and control; however, the major headings are those of Bowers and Ochs. Using these areas, the rhetoric of the Chartist Movement will be analyzed.

The design of the thesis is in three parts:

I. The ideology of both the agitative and control groups.

Ideology is defined as a set of statements which express the unique set of beliefs, goals, and myths to
which the members of a group theoretically subscribe. These statements can be found in the speeches, newspapers, letters, diaries, and pamphlets of the Chartist Movement. Joseph R. Gusfield, in *Protest, Reform and Revolt*, said that ideology is not only the set of beliefs of a particular group, but is also a skepticism of the ideas and representations advanced by their opponents. 

II. The strategies of the rhetoric of agitation and control.

Agitation usually goes through a series of stages, although all might not be followed. If one stage is not developed, the agitators tend to move on to one of the succeeding steps. At times, some stages occur simultaneously. Agitators will ordinarily use petition, which is the use of normal discursive means of persuasion, before moving on to the strategies of agitation. Petition is not agitative because it is within the practices accepted by establishment, but it is usually tried by the agitators because it allows them to say that they tried normal avenues and failed; thus it provides a justification for the agitative strategies. If petition fails, the next possible stage is solidification, the rhetorical processes by which an agitative group produces or reinforces the cohesiveness of its members, thereby increasing their responsiveness to group ideology and tactics. The tactics in this strategy include plays, songs, slogans, symbols, and in-group publications.
Solidification is an on-going strategy throughout all stages of agitation. Another stage of agitation is promulgation. This strategy includes all those tactics designed to win social support for the agitator's position by attracting public sympathy and publicity through picketing, posters, handbills, leaflets, and mass protest meetings. Almost every agitation movement makes deliberate attempts, once it has attracted a substantial following, to employ the strategy of polarization. This strategy assumes that any individual who has not committed himself in one way or another to the agitation is supportive of the establishment. The two main tactics under polarization are the exploitation of flag issues and flag individuals. These are issues that and individuals who, for one reason or another, are especially susceptible to the charges made against the establishment by the agitators. Sometimes instead of an individual, agitators choose to oppose a group or an organization. An agitative movement may move into the stage of non-violent resistance. This strategy places agitators in a position in which they are violating laws or customs which they consider to be unjust and destructive of human dignity. Resistance such as sit-ins, boycotts, strikes, and marches are tactics which may be a part of this strategy. The last step of agitation is confrontation-escalation and is used when the agitators feel that the establishment will over-prepare for agitation and will thus be made to look foolish in the
confusion. Rumor, threatened disruption, and non-verbal offensive are examples of the tactics of this strategy. If the movement goes any further, it employs, in all probability, violence or token violence. Violence itself is not rhetorical, because the agitation is aggressive and real, rather than symbolic. A strategy that is both rhetorical and violent is Gandhi and guerrilla. This strategy confronts the establishment with a large group of agitators committed to the strategy of non-violent resistance and another group committed to physical destruction of the establishment. The first group is rhetorical, for their behavior is instrumental and symbolic. The second group is mainly nonrhetorical, for their behavior, though instrumental, is actually, not symbolically, aggressive.

When the control group is confronted with proposals requiring change in the establishment's structure, policy, ideology, or power it can adopt one of four rhetorical strategies. The first of these is avoidance, which is the use of counter-persuasion, evasion, postponement, secrecy and/or denial of means. These tactics enable the control group to block the movement of the agitators or to force them into illegal acts for which they can be stopped. Using this strategy first, allows the control group to say that they attempted to communicate and failed, thus justifying the subsequent steps of control. A second strategy an establishment can adopt in responding to
external challenge is suppression. This step calls for harsher tactics, such as harassment of agitation leaders, denying of demands, banishment, and the nonrhetorical act of purgation. The third strategy of control is adjustment. This strategy calls for modification in which the control group allows token demands or makes token changes to appease agitators. These adjustments may be real or they may be only apparent; for example, the tactics of changing the name of the regulatory agency after a confrontation with an agitative group is seldom a real adjustment in an establishment's structure, personnel, or ideology. The House Un-American Activities Committee is now known as The House Committee on Internal Security. The negative-income tax proposal is rapidly becoming known as a special "family security system." The use of the word "black" rather than "negro" is often a token adjustment, not a real one. The last strategy the control group may adopt is capitulation to the challenging ideology and agitative personnel. To be totally successful, an agitative movement, its ideas, goals, policies, beliefs and personnel must replace those of the target institution. Capitulation is an establishment's last resort. Total capitulation is not rhetorical, it is complete defeat.

III. Conclusions will be drawn concerning the aftermath of the rhetoric of agitation and control, as well as a
general assessment regarding the success or failure of the rhetoric of the Chartist Movement.

Summary of Design

Chapter I includes a description of the Chartist Movement and the method of analyzing the strategies and tactics of the rhetoric of agitation and the rhetoric of control. Chapter II contains a study of the ideologies of the agitation and control groups of the Chartist Movement. Chapter III offers an analysis of the rhetorical strategies of the agitation group of the Chartist Movement: petition, solidification, promulgation, polarization, non-violent resistance, confrontation-escalation, and the rhetorical strategies of the control group of the Chartist Movement: avoidance and suppression. Chapter IV offers conclusions concerning the aftermath of the rhetoric of agitation and control and a general assessment of the success/failure of the rhetoric of the Chartist Movement.
Footnotes


4 This is a composite definition derived from Lomas, pp. 2-6 and John W. Bowers and Donovan J. Ochs, *The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control* (Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1971), pp. 3-8.

5 The Factory Act of 1833 was an attempt at factory regulation. It set up provisions such as: nine-hour working day for children, no employment of children under age nine, working day for young people between ages of thirteen and eighteen limited to sixty-nine hours a week with a maximum of twelve hours a day, an hour and a half a day set aside for meals, while children were to go to school for two hours a day. The act also provided for appointment of inspectors to enforce these regulations. Although these provisions were an improvement for the working class, evasion was still possible and unscrupulous employers could deceive inspectors by giving false information or by resorting to fraud.

6 Rosenblatt, p. 106.


8 *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 38 (1952), 188.


10 Bowers and Ochs extend the scope of the traditional definitions and define rhetoric as "the rationale of instrumental, symbolic behavior." A message or other act is "instrumental" if it contributes to the production of another message or act. Behavior is "symbolic" if it stands for something else.
CHAPTER II

IDEOLOGY OF AGITATION AND CONTROL IN
THE CHARTIST MOVEMENT

Ideology of Agitation

The agitation group of the Chartist Movement consisted of members of the middle and lower laboring classes in early nineteenth century England. The agitation group's ideology can best be defined as desire to change the condition of the laborer and the poor of England. It was the overwhelming desire to improve these living and working conditions that promoted the need for change which appeared possible with the passing of the Six Points of the Charter. John Francis Bray expressed the desires of various segments with differing needs for change: "The productive classes want a remedy for their incessant toil--they want a remedy for their compulsory idleness--they want a remedy for their poverty--they want a remedy for their misery, and ignorance, and vice, which such toil, such idleness and such poverty produces."\(^1\)

The agitator's ideology was set forth very well in two resolutions which were presented at Chartist meetings:

(1) That this meeting is of the opinion that there is no permanent remedy for the distress and difficulties which at present exist among the
commercial manufacturing, trading, and working classes of this country, until our representative system is founded on a basis more in accordance with the principles of justice, brotherly love, and the increased knowledge of the people.

(2) That the principles defined by the People's Charter are just and reasonable embracing as it does Universal Suffrage, Annual Parliaments, Vote by Ballot, No Property Qualification for Members, and pay for their attendance in Parliament; and that the practical operation of these principles would be the means of securing just representatives in the House of Commons--this meeting therefore adopts the People's Charter and will by all legal means endeavor to obtain it."

The Chartist leaders asserted that the laboring class had rights, and that the laborer should be the first consideration of his employer. The Manchester and Salford Advertiser quoted an unidentified Chartist in 1840: "The labourer has a right to receive an adequate remuneration for his toil, before the landowner, whose soil he cultivates, or the master whose goods he manufactures, is entitled to receive rent or profit." A poem written in 1832 and used by Chartist speakers and writers contained in succinct form the whole case for "the right to the whole product of labor:"

Wages should form the price of goods;  
Yes, wages should be all,  
Then we who work to make the goods  
Should justly have them all;  
But if their price be made of rent,  
Tithes, taxes, profits all,  
Then we who work to make the goods  
Shall have--just none at all.

The Chartist felt that labor was the most important ingredient in the economic process. "Labour not capital was the
all-important element in industry."\(^5\) Asa Briggs in *Chartist Studies* quoted a Chartist argument, "The real strength and all the resources of a country ever have sprung, and ever must spring, from the labour of its people. The people are those who have built our towns, who have made England what she is."\(^6\)

The Chartist denounced both of the political parties in England, the Tory-Conservatives and the Whigs. They strongly felt that both parties were upholders of a system of class legislation which deprived the laborer of the fruits of his toil. It was often the Chartists' indictment that the two governing parties in England were "robber factions, tyrannical plundering Whigs and tyrannical plundering Tories."\(^7\) This idea of opposing either party is present in a great deal of the Chartist literature. An editorial in *The Northern Star* in 1838, stated: "We have all, in former days, entered into conflict with, and beaten back, the enemies of the people, when they were called Tories--let us do the same again now that they are called Whigs. The bloodless war of agitation must once more be entered into, and again will our enemies be driven from authority followed by the universal execrations of the people they have deceived and betrayed . . . no longer waste our time and energy in seeking for those insignificant but cunningly devised dribblings of justice."\(^8\) The Chartists
urged that governments should be elected by and be responsible to the entire people. A Chartist leader, G. Julian Harney, displayed this kind of thinking in a portion of his speech which was quoted in The Northern Star, September 26, 1846: "We believe the earth with all its natural productions to be the property of all; we, therefore denounce all infractions of this evidently just and natural law as robbery and usurpation. We believe that the present state of society which permits idlers and schemers to monopolize the fruits of the earth and the productions of industry to be essentially unjust. The principle of universal brotherhood commands that labour and rewards should be equal."9

The agitators seemed to have an absence of a sense of time in their pursuit for better working and living conditions. This explains their keenness, their faith in the vast and radical changes to be instantly effected by universal suffrage and their willingness to sacrifice themselves for its achievement. A lengthy editorial supporting universal suffrage found in The Northern Star in February, 1838, stated: "Universal suffrage would, at once, change the whole character of society from a state of watchfulness, doubt and suspicion, to that of brotherly love, reciprocal interest and universal confidence."10 The agitators were convinced that with the passing of the six points of the
Charter, their misery would be ended and their needs fulfilled.

The main difference of opinion in the Chartist cause seemed to be how far to go to effect these changes. Some advocates for political change boldly confessed that no beneficial measure could be obtained unless the people resorted to violence; others maintained that everything would ultimately be acquired by persuasion. The non-violent believers urged that "the establishment of the proper remedy does not depend upon the subversion of a government, but upon the destruction of the existing social system; and therefore reason and not force—conviction, and not compulsion—purchase and not plunder—a systematic application of combined forces, and not an undisciplined and chaotic movement—are the proper instruments to be employed." Thus, the question of physical force or moral persuasion became an all-important issue of the Chartist Movement. The desire to change the system and bring about better conditions for the lower class of England was the goal of the Chartists. How to accomplish this goal was the constant problem, and it depended a great deal on the response of the control group. In turn, the ideology of the control group determined the reaction of control to the agitators' strategies.
Ideology of Control

The control group consisted of members of the nobility, the country gentry, and the bourgeois including especially, but not exclusively, those members of these social classes who held political or legal office. The control group of the Chartist Movement saw Chartistism as a threat to public order.13 "The politicians, Whig and Tory alike, regarded the Chartists as enemies of property and public order. When the Duke of Wellington wrote of the Chartists in 1842, 'Plunder is the object. Plunder is likewise the means,' he was expressing in rather immoderate language what most men of affairs felt about Chartistism.”14 Law officials feared disruption which would endanger life and property. At the outset of the movement, law officials were slow to react and appeared to watch and wait to see the course of the Chartists. However, as the agitation increased, controlling measures on the part of law officials increased, and steps were taken to uphold law and order to put down that which would endanger the public social order.

The employer-businessman, who stood to lose the most if Chartist demands were met, feared the loss he might incur economically as well as loss of power within his business. The employer spoke often of the "work of masters and men being complementary,"15 that they depended on each other and had everything in common and should live and work
together in amity. This argument was based on the wages fund theory and on the theory of beneficient self-interest. "According to these theories even the most selfish employer was providing blessings for his workpeople. The more profits he made, the more was the fund augmented from which his workpeople derived their wages." The employer often attempted to give the impression to the working man that he was attempting to better the conditions of his employees. Of course, there were employers who showed more compassion than others, but the number seemed small to the masses in the laboring class. The employer often charged that the working man was ignorant of business affairs and could not understand the economic system. For example, when Manchester handloom weavers petitioned for a legislative minimum wage in 1837, a local newspaper, The Manchester Times, on December 16, 1837, denounced their request as absolute folly and called it a scheme founded in utter ignorance of the circumstances which regulate the wages of labor. However, in contradiction, another newspaper, The Ipswich Journal, August, 1838, seemed to imply that the Chartists were not so ignorant as to be able to plot to acquire their property. The editorial stated that it appeared from Chartist speeches that "their covert object is a general confiscation of property, to be effected under pretext of securing equal political rights,
or in other words: to bring all men to the same level. When men like these talk of 'rights of equality by nature' and blurt out their venom at those who have amassed property . . . and call them knaves and plunderers of the working classes; their object is too apparent to be concealed by the transparent veil of 'patriotism' which they invariably raise to hide their real motives."

It would appear that opinions differed, but the ideology of control seemed to add up to a common point of view that the working man should not gain control of establishment political and social holdings.

The ideology of the control group is further seen in the control response to several points of the Charter. Employers were quoted in The Manchester Guardian in 1837, "Annual parliaments would only increase the expense, the trouble and the turmoil of electioneering." The Northern Star reprinted a statement made by an unnamed member of Parliament in The Leeds Mercury in 1838, "If the system of representative government were founded on the principle that the representatives are mere delegates sent to execute the mandates of their constituents on a public question, then annual parliaments, however great a nuisance, would be necessary. But if as we have always understood, representative government implies a large and honorable trust . . . then it is neither needful nor desirable to renew the
choice year by year."\textsuperscript{20} The Manchester Guardian, which reflected the views of the employer-businessman, included the following statement in the December 1837 issue:

"Payment of members would bring the lucre of private gain into politics . . . Universal suffrage would give the vote to every drunkard and blackguard in the kingdom. The suffrage is not a right as the Chartists claim: it is merely an expedient for obtaining good government, that, and not the franchise it is to which the public have a right."\textsuperscript{21}

O'Connor stated in The Northern Star that the attitude of the control group regarding equal electoral districts was one of apprehension. The group feared that the ratio of one hundred and seventy-five members for England to one hundred for Ireland would diminish England's control.\textsuperscript{22}

The employers, particularly, the owners of factories, also objected to Chartist endeavors to get the conditions of work regulated by law. They saw in the contention of the legislature to limit the hours of child labor "both a dangerous thin end of the wedge (for in many factories how could the grown-ups go on working without the children's help?) and an irreligious attack on the principle of parental responsibility. Moreover, the employer could not afford to do without the 'last hour' of the children's labour. If hours were shortened, there would not be enough child labour to go round; and misguided philanthropy
would only result in throwing the children's parents out of work."²³

G. D. H. Cole, in Chartist Portraits, reported another statement of the employers which was even more outspoken, and although all employers did not accept the severest aspects of this ideology, it should be considered:

Were they, the 'masters of implements,' not more productive than any the world had known; and did it not stand to reason that the new methods were better than the old, and ought to be used to the fullest extent? If some people suffered, that was but a passing trouble, for if they were left free to develop the powers of production by their enterprise, goods would become cheaper and more plentiful, and society as a whole was bound to be better off. If people suffered, this was not the employer's doing, or his fault; and anything which interfered with the free course of production would be certain to make them suffer more. Hard work never hurt anybody: it was good for men, women and children alike. It kept them out of mischief: leisure only bred bad habits and encouraged vain amusements. The soul mattered: not the body. It was the employer's mission to make money, and to spend it to God's glory. If the poor had it, they would only get drunk. They were poor because they were thriftless—not the other way round. Let them profit, if they were fit to profit, by the employer's good example."²⁴

R. G. Gammage, in History of the Chartist Movement, suggested that a part of the control ideology which was directed against the Chartist Movement was the inbred self-image of the aristocracy: "The aristocracy pride themselves on their distinction of birth, and on this distinction they found exclusive privileges which they seek to guard with jealous care. To stand aloof from general society, except
insofar as that society contributes to their necessities and pleasures, has ever been with them a favourite practice. Under this phantom of superior birth they have shielded themselves from contamination with the 'inferior orders.'"25

To summarize the ideology of the control group it appears that each faction saw Chartism as a threat to their individual and group security. Their systematic response to Chartism was to call it robbery and the destruction of society. The manner in which they dealt with the Chartists affords an excellent study of the rhetoric in agitation and control.
Footnotes


2 The Northern Star, October 27, 1838, Volume I, No. 50.

3 Briggs, p. 34.


5 Briggs, p. 34.

6 Briggs, p. 34.

7 Briggs, p. 372.

8 January 6, 1838, Volume I, No. 8.


11 Bray, p. 212.

12 Bray, p. 215.

13 Briggs, p. 372.

14 Briggs, p. 372.

15 Briggs, p. 32.

16 Briggs, p. 32.

17 Briggs, p. 32.

18 Briggs, p. 159.

19 Briggs, p. 38.

20 October 27, 1838, Volume I, No. 50.

21 Briggs, p. 38.

22 October 27, 1838, Volume I, No. 50.

24 Cole, p. 2.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF THE RHETORICAL STRATEGIES
OF THE AGITATION AND THE
CONTROL GROUPS

Strategy of Petition

The first step generally taken by an agitative group is that of petition. It is the failure of this step that sets agitation into motion. Until an agitative group experiences control reaction to the original petition attempts, there is no real purpose to the agitator's movement. With reaction, the agitators can then determine the next step toward achievement of their ultimate goal. The Chartists began with the preparation and submission of a document entitled The People's Charter, which outlined their goals in six points: (1) universal male suffrage, (2) equal electoral districts, (3) the abolition of the property qualification for members of Parliament, (4) the payment of members of Parliament, (5) the secret ballot, and (6) annual parliaments. These points were accompanied by a lengthy statement declaring public and private suffering of the working class due to taxes and lack of adequate remuneration, with the conclusion that only political reform could correct
the existing problems. The working class had faith in political institutions, believing that the control of Parliament was the decisive factor in transforming society. The Charter was presented to Parliament on three occasions during the ten years of Chartism. The signatures on the first and second presentations numbered one and a half million. When the petition was presented the third time, Feargus O'Connor stated that it contained five million signatures. An investigation was conducted by the Committee on public petitions. This committee reported that the petition actually contained only two million signatures, and a great number of these were fictitious. At each presentation, the Charter was strongly rejected by Parliament. Individual petitions were also submitted to the House of Commons on several occasions. Different representatives presented singular petitions for secret ballot, extension of suffrage, and annual parliaments.

Throughout the movement, a few Chartist sympathizers requested that there should be no advancement of agitation, and that petition should be the only step taken. An example of this philosophy is seen in a tract written under the anonymous authorship of "C. L., a working man." He warned Chartists that the leaders might not be honest reformers and might be only attempting to "feather their own nests." He urged the people to remain rational and true
to law and creator, supporting only the Charter itself, and striving for patience as they wait for "better times." This philosophy represented only a small minority. Asa Briggs suggested that petition was the political beginning and that social grievances became the outcome; thus the agitation of Chartism began.

**Strategy of Solidification**

Solidification attempts to reinforce cohesiveness in order to gain response to the ideology of the movement. It is accomplished through use of songs, poetry, slogans, symbols, and other unifying tactics.

Chartist songs were very prevalent during the movement. They were often verses stating Chartist goals put to the tune of well known songs. Examination of portions of a few of these songs reveals the solidifying intent aimed at the members of the Chartist cause.

"Chartists are Coming"
(Tune--"The Baliff is Coming")

What a row and a rumpus there is I declare,
Tens of thousands are flocking from everywhere,
To petition the Parliament onward they steer,
The Chartist are coming, oh dear, oh dear.
Hurrah for old England and liberty sweet,
The land that we live in and plenty to eat;
We shall ever remember this wonderful day,
See the Chartist are coming get out of the way.

A song from the Manchester area seemed to voice the feelings
of the working man:

How little can the rich man know
Of what the poor man feels
When want, like some dark demon foe,
Nearer and nearer steals!
He never saw his darlings lie
Shivering, the flags their bed;
He never heard that maddening cry
"Daddy, a bit of bread!"

"The Song of the Factory Slave," written by Ernest Jones, a popular Chartist leader and writer, whose poems and songs appeared in newspapers and pamphlets, displayed the futility of the working man and his hope for a new future:

The land it is the landlords'
The traders' is the sea;
The ore the usurer's coffer fills;
But what remains for me?
The camp, the pulpit and the law
For rich man's sons are free,
Their, theirs are learning, art
and arms;
But what remains for me?
The coming hope, the future day,
When wrong to right shall bow,
And hearts shall have the courage, man,
To make that future now.

Songs like these were often printed in Chartist literature and were sung at many Chartist gatherings.

Many Chartist verses were not put to music but were printed in Chartist literature as poems supporting the cause. In a pamphlet entitled, "The Poor Laws Unmasked," a poem, "The Poor Man's Lament," depicted the plight of the laboring class and what they hoped to escape through Chartist.
My children stand around my board
In wretched, trembling plight
I know not how I shall afford
A meal for them tonight.
My wife sits toiling with her thread
At eightpence by the day,
She's sinking fast, she's nearly dead,
Though once so light and gay,
Work hard I would, if trade there were,
But nought is to be had.
This world they say's a world of woe
In that I must agree.
Can joy from sickening hunger flow,
Content from misery.

Poetry was used not only to give hope to Chartists, but also
as warning to those regarded as enemies to the cause.

Ay, tyrants, build your bulwarks!
Forge your fetters! Link your chains!
As brims your guilt cup fuller,
Ours of grief runs to the drains;
Your feet are on us, tyrants:
Strike, and hush earth's wail of sorrow,
Your sword of power, so red today,
Shall kiss the dust tomorrow!12

The Northern Star also recorded many Chartist poems. An
elegant example of the rallying-type verse to solidify
was found in the December 26, 1840 issue:13

Shout for the Charter and freedom is near,
Hearts of old England, poor and degraded.
Up, and give over your sighs to the wind,
Strike for Freedom, and be not upbraided.
As cowardly serfs by the rest of mankind,
What are ye dreading? Can worse come than
hunger?
That knaws out your vitals, and wastes you
to death?
Tis easier to die where the battle shall
thunder,
Than perish thus slowly and gasp out your
breath!

Another method of solidification was found in the
in-group publications that one group of Chartists in an area wrote to another, urging constant unity and loyalty to the cause. This was particularly effective when all those outside the movement were called derogatory names. This tactic strengthened the ties of the movement's participants. An example of this technique was found in the issue of The Northern Star dated October 27, 1838:

Address of the Radicals of Ashton-under-Tyne to the Brother Radicals of the United Kingdom, but particularly those Yorkshire and Lancashire Lads that met on Kersal Moor and Peep Green:

We most sincerely hope that the brave Radicals of Yorkshire and Lancashire will not sit down congratulating themselves under the pleasing supposition that they have done their duty. . . . All that we as a section have done has been nothing more than an introduction to the glorious struggle we are about to undertake for the recovery of our rights. When we consider what a powerful host of wealth and intelligence is arrayed against us in the shape of aristocrats, landholders, money-mongers, middlemen of all sorts with the army, the navy, and all the squadrons of churchmen, pimps, parasites, harlots and slaves that form the establishments our oppressors, we cannot but be convinced that nothing but union can effect our deliverance and that union must be of the strongest and best organized description. We know "He that is not for us is against us . . . ."

The use of solidification in Chartism seemed quite frequent, and was one of the factors that kept agitation alive, insuring the continuation of the Movement.

Strategy of Promulgation

The tactic to win social support that was most used by Chartists was that of mass meetings. These meetings were
begun at once to stimulate and educate the working man regarding Chartist ideas and ideals. R. G. Gammage, a Chartist, wrote that "the agitation for the Charter was now proceeded with in downright earnest. It was determined to hold a series of demonstrations in all the great centers for the purpose of invoking the national spirit and urging onward the common cause." Meetings were conducted throughout England, with leaders traveling from place to place, rousing the people with speeches that called the working man to unite in the Chartist cause. People were advised of these meetings in advance by notices in local newspapers such as the one that appeared in The Northern Star:

Working Men of Leeds: Now is the time to prove whether you are willing to be everlastingly the stalking-horse and dupes of faction. Hereditary bondsmen! Know ye not, who would be free, themselves must strike the blow? The Working Men's Association have made arrangements for holding a Public Meeting in the Large Room at the Commercial Buildings on Monday, 8th of January at seven o'clock to petition Parliament for Universal Suffrage, Annual Parliaments and Vote by Ballot.

The Northern Star and other Chartist newspapers reported results of meetings daily as they occurred in various locations during the movement. Historians have also recorded these meetings. At the outset of the movement, the meetings followed a pattern such as one described in The Northern Star that was held at Newcastle-upon-Tyne in January, 1838. The meeting began at 10 A.M. in a public
meeting room, which soon filled to capacity. Then a marching band led the group to a nearby parade ground. People carried flags and banners. Later, when more meetings were held, the number of participants increased, and therefore the majority of Chartist mass meetings were held out-of-doors.

The degree of agitation aroused depended a great deal on the particular Chartist leaders speaking at that meeting. Some leaders were more conservative than others, advocating the petition by lawful means. However, as the movement progressed, several Chartist leaders began to encourage followers to gain their rights in possibly illegal ways. A good example of these two methods occurred at the meeting referred to previously. John Cobbett, a conservative Chartist, pointed out that he would not advise working men to appeal to force to resist law; they must be satisfied with constantly petitioning. On the other hand, Raynor Stephens, an ex-minister who was a fiery orator, advised people to "resist law by all means--try at first every effort to obtain peaceably and if not successful resort to force, but never allow the law of God to be violated by law of man."\(^{18}\) He further urged them to arm, and, if they had no money to buy muskets, to provide themselves with pikes. Stephen's speech was interrupted at several points by cheering and applause.\(^{19}\)
At a meeting in Bradford on January 10, 1838, in a hall which held 3,000, Feargus O'Connor said: "If moral force will not do then physical force is necessary, and if people at last unwillingly compelled to have recourse to physical force, I am sure we will triumph in the end. Provide yourselves with musket. I have done so." Cheers again greeted these remarks.

Another meeting was reported in The Northern Star under the heading: "Great Radical Meeting at Halifax." The article reported that due to large numbers, the meeting adjourned to a large area behind Talbot Inn. Two bands of music played. Many flags were displayed. Three or four thousand men stood amid snow and rain for three and one-half hours to listen to speeches.

The meetings were becoming more than just occasions to obtain signatures for the Charter. They were apparently becoming the necessary fuel to keep the fire of Chartism alive. The increase and influence of these meetings is made obvious in the report of a meeting held in June, 1838, at Newcastle. It was reported as the "most numerous, powerful, orderly and important of all assemblies yet convened. People with banners and the bands assembled, and as the clock struck ten, the dense mass was put into motion by respective leaders to move the crowd to an adequate meeting place. It is impossible to guess numbers, but the first flag had reached Hustings (distance of two miles) before
the rear of cavalcade started. Thousands appeared in windows and on roofs to watch."22

The use of banners as a method of promulgation has been mentioned previously from newspaper accounts of Chartist meetings. These banners displayed the feeling of individual Chartists and became group attitudes which were shared at meetings. The banner messages varied and were quite numerous, as can be seen in reported examples.

A death's head, crossbones, and a hand grasping a dagger with the inscription: "Oh tyrants! Will you force us to this?" appeared on one banner.23 Other banners were inscribed: "We demand our rights, liberty, justice and humanity."24 "For children and wife, we'll war to the knife." "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one."25 Several banner inscriptions are listed in The Northern Star edition of January 6, 1838:26 "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for the miseries that will fall upon you." "They that be slain by the sword are better than they that be slain with hunger." "Working men the true nobility of the country." Another listing is found in the October 27, 1838, issue:27 "Death or Freedom." "Death or Liberty," "Thrice armed is he whose cause is just." "Equal Rights and equal laws," "Universal Suffrage, the principle that takes from no one but gives to every man his inherent rights." "Slavery shall no longer continue to
disgrace our native land." "Freedom is the birthright of every person." A last banner is described as a picture of the Charter in one hand, sword in another, with the inscription: "We demand." Messages such as these encouraged the cause of Chartism.

Another method of promulgation was the distribution of handbills and leaflets to persons whose participation in the cause was sought. Chartists also made these items available during the movement. A portion of such a handbill (with some borrowing from Thomas Paine's The American Crisis) circulated in Manchester read:

Dear brothers! Now are the times to try men's souls! Are your arms ready? Have you plenty of powder and shot? Do you intend to be freemen or slaves? Are you inclined to hope for a fair day's wages for a fair day's work? . . . Now or never is your time: be sure you do not neglect your arms, and when you do strike do not let it be with sticks or stones, but let the blood of all you suspect moisten the soil of your native land.28

This is one of the more extreme examples that were circulated. The message contained within the handbills was similar, varying only in the degree of extremity each suggested. Handbills were also circulated that were simply reminders of Chartist meetings which were to be held, and the message was factual rather than emotional.

Strategy of Polarization

Polarization utilizes the exploitation of flag issues and flag individuals with an intent on polarizing individuals
uncommitted to the agitator's cause. The agitator attempts to force such a strong negative reaction to the flag issue that condemnation of flag individuals and groups will follow. Another polarizing tactic is the invention of derogatory jargon for establishment groups.

The Poor Law Act of 1834 was the major flag issue for the flag targets of the Chartist Movement. It was due to the severity of the Poor Law and its unfairness to the working class that Chartism began and increased. The laboring class did not always understand the political ramifications of Chartism, but they understood the degradation they had suffered because of the Poor Law. As was seen in the solidification tactics, the Poor Law was often bitterly referred to directly or indirectly, sometimes with exaggerated statements by both the poor and their leaders. A man who could not find work was forced to report to the local workhouse, where he and his family were imprisoned in separate areas, and thus not allowed to live together. They were forced to live on a diet insufficient for the bare substance of life. Mothers were dragged away like criminals from their infants. All were put to work at tasks much too hard and far too many hours each day. "Tears and starvation became the poor man's lot." It was this law that became a key issue in the movement, and presentation by the Chartists of the bad aspects of the law
invariably brought response from the poor. Asa Briggs, in *Chartist Studies*, pointed out that "It is noteworthy that in their speeches in the county of Ipswich, Chartists often referred to the evils of the Poor Law. In 1838, when their activity was getting under way they blamed the Poor Law Guardians in Ipswich for prohibiting the supply of food or indulgences to the inmates of the workhouse by friends or relatives of the paupers."\(^{30}\) This criticism of the Poor Law was found in *The Northern Star*, January 6, 1838: "The law whose spirit aims at the extermination of the sons of poverty because other laws have caused them to be, or to become, poor, is *Hellish* in its character and bears witness by its deadly operation to its infernal origin."\(^{31}\) Resentment of the Poor Law was also a part of many Chartist speeches throughout the movement. Derogatory jargon was used with respect to the Poor Law Commissioners, calling them "bashaws of Somerset House" and "concentrated icicles."\(^{32}\) The hatred of the Poor Law and resistance to it was the theme of a speech by Stephens in London in May, 1839: "I have never acknowledged the authority of the New Poor Law, and so help me God, I never will . . . I tell you that if they attempt to carry into effect this damnable law, I mean to fight."\(^{33}\)

The Poor Law also provided an individual to be exploited by the Chartists. The flag individual was Henry Lord Brougham, who had written the Poor Law Bill of
On June 27, 1838, O'Connor alluded to Brougham in a speech in which he accused Brougham of disregarding the plight of the poor to further his own political and financial position. O'Connor drew a verbal picture of Brougham and his wife being forced into a workhouse and the horrors that would await them there. He pointed out that pity might be given Lady Brougham, but none to "Lord Harry." Sarcasm such as this in reference to Lord Brougham was repeated often in Chartist speeches.

Groups can be made into flag issues as well, and the Chartists often accused law officials and the military in speeches and literature. The troops sent to control the agitators were often referred to with hatred and ridicule, particularly when soldiers were present in meetings. O'Connor often called them the "brats of aristocracy." Other examples of jargon used for the military and law officers are "blue vampires," "the unboiled blue," "scientific cut-throats," and "hired assassins." Along with the verbal denunciation of these groups were the numerous attempts to seduce the troops away from their loyalty to the government. In February, 1838, The Northern Star took up the subject of the brutal practice of flogging as a military punishment in a series of letters and articles accompanied by vivid pictorial illustrations. Pamphlets were frequently handed soldiers which read in
part as follows: "Ask yourself the following question: Must I, at the word of command, fire and destroy my fellow creatures, more especially when policemen have aggravated them almost to madness . . . and I as a soldier at 13 d. per day, exposed to all kinds of weather, harassed almost to death in protecting those very policemen who have been the aggressors?" No historical evidence indicated that the troops ever faltered in their duty to put down the Chartists and other disturbances, but they were constantly subjected to name-calling from Chartists.

Within a year of the beginning of the Chartist Movement, the agitators used the rhetorical strategies of petition, solidification, promulgation, and polarization. The reaction of the establishment to these strategies determined the progression of the movement.

Strategy of Avoidance

When the establishment is confronted with proposals requiring change in structure, policy, ideology, or power, it can adopt one of four rhetorical strategies: avoidance, suppression, adjustment, or capitulation. The factions comprising the control group of the Chartist movement first reacted with the strategy of avoidance. This tactic was to ignore the Chartists or attempt to steer their attention in other directions. The government acted against the movement only when they were
convinced that the peace was seriously threatened. They held back until the very last moment before striking a blow and seized the earliest opportunity to proclaim the emergency at an end.40 F. C. Mather referred to the outset of the control group as maintaining "an attitude of non-intervention."41

In the early phase of the movement, law officers were advised not to prosecute the editors of The Northern Star and other Chartist newspapers for printing seditious articles or reports of speeches unless "real practical evil has been found to result from the circulation of that paper."42 The government was also apprehensive about prosecuting Chartist leaders at the outset of the movement for fear of unsuccessful charges and lack of sufficient evidence against them.43 Thus, evasion was the first reaction to agitation. The Chartists reacted by stating that it was due to their strength. In a mass meeting, a Chartist, identified only as Mr. Fletcher, pointed out in his speech that "Lord John Russell has promised, kind soul, that he will not put down those great meetings." The audience reacted with cries "He dare not," and the speaker continued, "You have it, he dare not; the people are too strong for that and the soldiers would not do the work."44

Although evasion was the outward strategy, the government at the same time was gathering material to keep
abreast of the agitation and its progress. A systematic military intelligence service was designed to acquire information about the feelings of the general populace concerning the movement, the attitude of the middle class and amount of alarm in that group, and the number of firearms and other weapons purchased by Chartists in several locations. These investigations and the reports therefrom were carried on secretly.

The method of counterpersuasion also became a strategy of control very early in the movement. If the followers of Chartism could be persuaded to consider aspects which made them question the movement and their activity in it, then the strength of the movement would be greatly reduced. An example of this was found in a tract which presented the following points: (1) It is impossible to keep wealth divided. (2) The government is like a home—all cannot be equal, someone must have the upper hand. (3) How could manufacture go on if all were equal? (4) Trade would end—no capitalists to buy, so foreigners wouldn't send. Another tract attempted to show what the Lords had done for the country, pointing out the interest in England that the peerage had and how they always did what was best for the country to protect the best position. The main thesis was to show the fear of radicalism and point out that no law can make all men
happy or provide that all should be rich. With new legislation, in fact, some persons would have been miserable. A third tract compared Chartism with the revolutionary movement progressing in France. The anonymous writer pointed out that the French doctrine of Fraternity is the same as Chartism. By being shown the horrors of Republicanism in France, a Chartist might fear the same result in England.

Counterpersuasion by employers was also found in parodies written on Chartist songs, for example:

We're not in an ideal world,
And speeches won't allay
The cravings of hunger - no!
The more excellent way
Is to get plenty work to do
For this is what we want,
And this will serve us better now
Than all the Chartist's rant.

The conservative government thought that the movement might also be made unstable if distrust could be sowed among the insurgents to demoralize them. This idea originated with the Duke of Wellington and was accomplished by spreading news that Chartist information had been given to magistrates by Chartist informers. The government's plan is seen in a portion of a letter written by one law official to another in 1842: "If once these rioters were aware that their plans were discovered, their secrets known, and their evil advisers watched, distrust would be sown amongst them, and the efficacy of your repressive force
would be greatly augmented. It seems probable that a Royal Proclamation issued in 1842 offering a reward of £50 for the apprehension and conviction of the authors or perpetrators of violence was designed to destroy the self-confidence of agitators.

Members of Parliament who opposed Chartism often tried to divert attention by upholding miscellaneous bills which would be of benefit to the working class. O'Connor, in a speech at Liverpool in May 1838, urged the Chartists, "whosoever fights for universal suffrage fights the whole battle; whereas he who fights now for a modification of tithe and for a Corporation Bill, a Railroad Bill, and a Bank Stock Bill, and all the other absurdities, fights the battle of the enemy, which place those fly-traps before them for the mere purpose of catching them unwary."50

The aristocracy often used the press to attempt persuasion of Chartists. One method was to attack the Chartist leaders, questioning their motives and methods, thus creating a schism in the membership of the movement. Another attempt to avert attention was to warn of the possibility of war. The Northern Star reacted to this as follows: "The London papers have for some time been filled with gloomy apprehensions and awful certainties of war and rumours of war and preparations for war with Russia. They would like to seduce the people from the pursuit of some-
thing which should turn out to be more empty than a shadow."51

The last strategy of avoidance utilized was denial of means. By disallowing various strategies of the movement, the control group attempted to hinder the success and progress of that movement. The Chartists were often denied right to have their letters and other material printed in establishment newspapers and periodicals. Often letters were written in answer to charges against Chartism, but the editor of the paper would refuse permission for the answer to be published. An example of this was found in a tract that Chartists published as a letter to the Reverend R. S. Bayley, in reply to his attack on Chartism. The Rev. Bayley had written an address to the Chartists of Sheffield, severely criticizing the movement, and the letter was published in the Independent. The official reply by Chartists was refused insertion on grounds of gross personal abuse. The tract pointed out the abuse of Chartism by Bayley and declared that Chartists often were denied use of newspapers excepting those like The Northern Star that favored the movement.52 Another denial occurred when Chartist meetings and processions were banned in London in 1842.53 The government at that point decided that meetings in small towns would be less dangerous than those held within the city of London. This was a great hindrance to the movement
due to the loss of the number of people in the metropolitan area. Mass meetings were more successful in city areas, where the business transactions that Chartists were protesting against were more prevalent. Also, forcing Chartists into rural areas and smaller towns fragmented the movement, and therefore reduced its significance somewhat. A third denial of means tactic was the use of law officials to continually check Chartists for the collection of arms for the "purpose of plunder and insurrection." This became a diminished threat to Chartism, for action was brought against magistrates on several occasions for searching without proper cause. Therefore, search and seizure was carried out by law officers only when information was obtained that indicated rioting and other violence was imminent.

It appeared that the first strategies of Chartism were met primarily by the control group with strategies of avoidance. To evade, postpone, counterpersuade, and deny means seemed the most beneficial reactions at that point. With this reaction, then, the Chartists would of necessity move into the more drastic steps of agitation in order for the movement to continue.
Strategy of Non-Violent Resistance

The first real violation of laws by the Chartists came with the planning and carrying out of strikes in several areas. Chartist speakers urged that if the petitioning failed, a national strike should begin, at which time "not a hammer should be wielded, nor an anvil sounded, not a shuttle moved throughout the country." Manifestos were drawn up in several areas, calling for general strikes. One manifesto ended: "Strengthen our hands at this crisis; support your leaders; rally round our sacred cause; and leave the decision to the God of justice and of battle."

The Plug Plot Strikes of 1842 were an example of this type of resistance. These strikes were carried on from factory to factory and from town to town by large numbers of men who, arriving at a mill, insisted that its inmates come out and join them. In order to prevent an early resumption of work, they drew the plugs from the factory boilers, thus extinguishing the fires and stopping the engines. When the factories were turned out, a warning was left behind that if any local operatives resumed work before demands were met, their properties would be destroyed. The strikers demanded changes within the factories and better pay, as well as continued requests in the name of Chartism. Resolutions in favor of remaining out of employment until the People's Charter became the law
of the land were passed by the strikers in public meetings.\textsuperscript{58} In some areas the Chartists urged that the time absent from work should be devoted to solemn processions and meetings.\textsuperscript{59} The strike movement was remarkable for its peacefulness. One newspaper reported: "The object has not been to destroy but simply to stop, and the simplest and least destructive manner has been chosen."\textsuperscript{60}

But peacefulness could not in itself make the strike a success. The employers were confident in their economic beliefs and in the support of the military; therefore, they offered no concessions. Reluctantly, but steadily, the strikers returned to work in order to exist at all. Strikes apparently were not enough threat to the establishment. More violence, or at least an increase in the threat of violence, was necessary to obtain their goal.

Strategy of Confrontation-Escalation

The rumor that Chartists were obtaining guns and other weapons was one of the first threats to the government and law officials that began to have a significant effect. Newspaper accounts that firearms were being "hawked" in various market places made the law officials somewhat nervous.\textsuperscript{61} Lists were compiled by the police stating numbers of firearms sold to what type individual, thus discerning whether or not Chartists were gathering these firearms. Reports were also verbally made regarding this
matter. Lord John Russell, as Home Secretary and Whig leader of the House of Commons, told the House in May, 1839, that while he wished on one hand to guard the House against any exaggerated notion of there being large bodies of men regularly armed, on the other hand he believed there were a considerable number of persons in possession of very dangerous and offensive weapons. Also, the threat increased with the knowledge that Chartists were frequently training and drilling for defensive combat.

Much of the material in Chartist newspapers, often direct quotations from speeches of leaders in mass meetings, began to be alarming to the control faction. Threats in early speeches could be overlooked and avoided by the control group; however, as the meetings increased, the number of participants increased, the strikes attempted, and as the meetings began to take on a more violent form, the employers and law officials would obviously become more alarmed. Julius West, in his history of the Chartist movement, stated: "Virtually every volume of memoirs covering 1838-1841 testifies to the prevailing fear of a revolutionary outbreak." The threat of violence was present in speeches very early in the movement by physical force leaders, as has been pointed out. O'Connor, in a meeting in Manchester in 1838, said, "We are resolved to stand up for your rights, using our hearts and our hands
if necessary." Stephens, in a speech on the same day, pointed out that there were 5,000 stand of arms in the neighborhood of Ashton. In an editorial of *The Northern Star* early in the movement, O'Connor wrote: "Rather than submit to the reign of tyranny and lewd domination of a faction, I will lead people to death or glory." Stephens, in a later speech called upon his hearers who had firearms to fire them by way of demonstration and all who intended to procure firearms to show this intent by holding up their hands. In the third year of the movement, a Chartist was reported to have said in a speech that "Before the end of the year the people will have universal suffrage, or die in the attempt."

Chartist leaders soon discovered that their verbal threats were working. In *The Northern Star* June, 1838, O'Connor answered a charge that had appeared in the *Spectator*, an establishment newspaper. The *Spectator* alleged that Chartist leaders menaced with threats. The Chartist answer was that they were attempting merely to warn. Apparently, threatened disruption had become successful; therefore, if Chartists now used the strategy of confrontation-escalation, reaction of law officials would continue the rhetorical process.

The increase in the amount of confrontation was seen in several accounts of Chartist gatherings. In an early
mass meeting, in November, 1838, a speaker pointed out that the Manchester Guardian and The Times had implied that Chartism was not to be taken seriously, and, in answer, the people in attendance burned the two newspapers on a torch pole. The speaker further pointed out that now the enemy could see those papers in their true light. In 1839, rioters in Trowbridge and Bradford smashed church windows; children bearing Chartist mottoes paraded the streets; bullets were displayed in show windows labelled "Pills for the Tories." In July, 1839, Chartists poured into the Bull Ring in Birmingham, proceeded to break open shops and warehouses. They carried contents into the street, set fire to them, and carried them back into the buildings blazing. A two-horse fire engine extinguished the flames after the destruction of only two shops. The intervention of police and dragoons prevented the possible burning of much of the city. In 1840, the Chartists planned demonstrations affecting a wide area. At Sheffield, a large body of armed men converged on the Town Hall, holding a short demonstration. At Dewsbury, a parade of more than one hundred persons marched in military formation with guns and bludgeons. This group chased the Deputy Constable and fired shots in the market place. In 1842, the miners at North Staffordshire raided the police station for arms, leaving a trail of destruction behind them by burning the
houses of the vicar, the magistrate, a local coal-owner, and his agent. In 1848, the Trafalgar Square riots occurred. A group of approximately two hundred broke away from the mob in the Square and proceeded through Pall Mall, St. James Park, and Westminster, smashing street lamps and windows. These few examples represent only a few of the demonstrations which were held throughout England during the movement.

The confrontation-escalation strategy began with rumor and threatened disruption which in the early stages did not reach violent proportions. However, as the movement progressed within the years of Chartism, it became non-rhetorical as it reached the violent stage. Resistance was given at points by the control group, and, therefore, Chartists had to either accept defeat or increase the degree of agitation. They chose the latter as can be seen by the examples of agitation given above, but the strength of the control group was too great and Chartism came to an end. Control strategies ultimately defeated Chartism.

Strategy of Suppression

Suppression of the Chartist Movement by the control group began when it appeared that violence would occur and the avoidance strategy would no longer suffice. Throughout the movement a pattern seemed to prevail: (1) the first agitation strategies of petition, solidification,
promulgation, and polarization met with avoidance by control; (2) agitation strategy of escalation-confrontation met with suppression by control. When suppressed, the Chartists lost strength, retreated somewhat, and began to rebuild again. Therefore, the series of steps was repeated often within the years of Chartism. The amount of suppression finally became so great and Chartism became so weak, that the movement died as abruptly as it had begun. A look at the tactic of suppression and its effectiveness explains the demise of Chartism.

Harassment of leaders was one of the most effective tactics of suppression. At mass meetings of the Chartists, large troops of military would assemble and pose menacingly around the crowd. Long lines of cavalry, accompanied usually by cannons, would surround the Chartists on all sides. At times a few people in the crowd would attempt to attack a small portion of the troops, but the soldiers would invariably force them back with threat of use of firearms. The Northern Star reported one of the first intimidations by harassment on June 30, 1838, at a demonstration at Newcastle. The cavalry and infantry marched in front and rear of the meeting, cutting the group into three sections to weaken its strength. O'Connor observed in his speech at the time of this activity that as good courage was under a blue or black coat as was under a red
coat, and that the only reason he suggested people stay in subjection was because they didn't have the arms to meet the foe at the moment.\(^7^3\) Harassment of meetings occurred frequently as a primary step of suppression.

The Northern Star pointed out in 1840 that "The military is vigilant and constantly in attendance with lancers, companies of rifle corps, and light infantry kept close so they may be summoned quickly."\(^7^4\)

Another method of harassment was to issue Royal Proclamations against meetings used for training and drilling. The magistrates were encouraged to arrest offending parties at illegal meetings and to seize the weapons of those who were armed. The creation of the Riot Act of 1838 was added to this type proclamation. This Act issued the warning that lighted torches, firearms, and bad language were a breach of public peace and alarmed the orderly and well-disposed inhabitants of the district. Therefore, it was the duty of the magistrate to give public notice that such processions and assemblies would be considered illegal. "Any individual taking part therein renders himself liable to penalties of the law as a disturber of the public peace and we do hereby make known our firm determination to put the law in full force against any party or parties hereinafter so offending."\(^7^5\) The Riot Act became a weapon that could be wielded by law
officials at will. At the point of any Chartist gathering in which any sign or even threat of violence might be observed, the military could quickly put an end to that gathering, using as much force as deemed necessary to enforce the Riot Act. At the reading of the Riot Act by the mayor of a town, many Chartists reacted by throwing stones and other measures, but with the threat of gunfire from troops, the reaction would stop. At times, the troops were assisted in putting down Chartist uprisings by the middle class merchants and townspeople. They would attack small gatherings of Chartists and attempt to stop the speaker, using stones and bludgeons. The group with the largest number would usually become victor; however, often the military would join the middle class attackers, and this would insure Chartist defeat.

It soon became evident that the government was not satisfied with mere restoration of order, but that they would intervene with necessary force as soon as it became clear that a disturbance was imminent rather than wait until acts of violence had been committed. Many Chartist meetings were banned in advance by magistrates of local areas. It appeared that the control group wanted to break up Chartism by halting demonstrations before they occurred. Methods to achieve this were to seek information from those who could be induced to become informers, and to apprehend Chartists for questioning. Warnings appeared in Chartist
newspapers to beware of plainclothesmen who were going from town to town inquiring about Chartists' names and gathering incriminating information. The Northern Star, May 9, 1840, encouraged people to beware of questions about Chartists: "The gentlemen in blue have been crawling into the houses of inhabitants in several areas to induce any weakminded brother to lay information against the cause."77 Proof that intimidation was working was found when the Chartists began trying to schedule secret meetings instead of the open announcement method used earlier in the movement. Often Chartists found difficulty in finding locations for meetings, because the owner of the land was afraid of being arrested and would withdraw his assent for a meeting to be held.78

Probably the most successful strategy of suppression was that of banishment of Chartist leadership. It was not at all unusual for law officials to arrest as many as forty leaders at one Chartist gathering. Some were released after questioning, while others were held for trial and would receive sentences varying from two to eighteen month's imprisonment. The most prominent leaders were sentenced to the longest prison terms, removing them from the movement for extended periods of time. John Frost, one of the early Chartists, was arrested in 1839 and spent fifteen years in prison. O'Connor was sentenced to eighteen months
imprisonment in 1840. Stephens was arrested on more than one occasion and served several short sentences. Lovett was arrested early in the movement in 1839 and released in 1840. O'Brien was held in jail for eight months awaiting trial in 1839-1840.

R. G. Gammage, in his *History of the Chartist Movement*, pointed out that arrests often took place just before the time for simultaneous meetings and were probably made with a view to intimidation. 79 Julius West in his work, also entitled *History of the Chartist Movement*, wrote: "One after the other the Chartist leaders found themselves in prison . . . by the middle of 1840 the work of the Home Office was completed and virtually, without exception, the principal sources of Chartist energy were no longer able to cause the government any anxiety. About this time the total number of Chartists thus out of the way was between three and four hundred." 80 Frank Rosenblatt in *The Chartist Movement in Its Social and Economic Aspects*, shows the distribution of Chartist prisoners confined for various terms for seditious libel, for riot, for attending illegal meetings, for possession of arms, and other political offences from January 1, 1839 to June 1, 1840. The total for England during this time was 480 prisoners. 81

Some Chartists, however, were not taken prisoner because they lost their lives during battle between Chartist
and the military. The strategy of purgation was obviously effective since it removed the threat of those individuals permanently. Twenty-two Chartists were shot in a riot at Newport in 1839. Several were killed in 1840 when a group of 300 Chartists went as a group to demand release of prisoners. There are many such examples of purgation during the highest points of suppression of the Chartist Movement.

Suppression by legislation and physical force seemed to be the necessary ingredient to end a movement that had lived for a decade. George Harney, the publisher of the Red Republican, who attempted with little avail to give Chartist ideas rebirth for a short period after 1848, summarized the success of control suppression: "It is too often forgotten how many rank and file Chartists, as well as their leaders, were imprisoned or transported; how widespread was the use of police spies and agents-provocateurs; how skillfully the ruling groups combined force with the threat of force and how powerful the influence of intimidation by example could be upon ordinary people." "The luckless Chartists--hunted by the police, entrapped by spies, condemned to imprisonment and transportation by justice-hating jurors and judges; denounced by Parliament, press and pulpit; made the sport of buffoonery on the stage; ridiculed, slandered, execrated on every
hand, the Chartists seemed doomed to extinction."\textsuperscript{85}

The Chartist Movement was an excellent example of the utilization of rhetorical strategy. The aftermath of the rhetoric of agitation and control can be observed to determine the success or failure of each group's strategy.
Footnotes

1 West, p. 101.


3 Gammage, pp. 316-318.


6 Briggs, p. 25.

7 (London: C. Paul, 1848).

8 Briggs, p. 32.

9 Cole, p. 337.

10 The following issues of The Northern Star reports songs as part of the program at Chartist meetings:
   January 6, 1838, Volume I, No. 8.
   January 20, 1838, Volume I, No. 10.
   January 27, 1838, Volume I, No. 11.
   June 30, 1838, Volume I, No. 33.
   December 15, 1838, Volume I, No. 57.
   January 4, 1840, Volume III, No. 112.

11 Author uses anonymous title of "A Late Relieving Officer" (London: Barnett, 1859).


13 Volume IV, No. 163.

14 Volume I, No. 50.

15 Gammage, p. 19.

The following works have descriptions of Chartist meetings:

R. G. Gammage, History of the Chartist Movement
Asa Briggs, Chartist Studies
Mark Hovell, The Chartist Movement
G. D. H. Cole, Chartist Portraits
F. F. Rosenblatt, The Chartist Movement
Julius West, A History of the Chartist Movement

23. Gammage, p. 60.
25. Gammage, p. 95.
27. Volume I, No. 50.
32. Rosenblatt, p. 44.
33. Cole, p. 70.
34 Rosenblatt, p. 50.
36 Cole, p. 301; Gammage, p. 4; Rosenblatt, p. 141.
37 Rosenblatt, pp. 141-142.
38 Briggs, p. 114.
40 Briggs, pp. 384-85.
41 Mather, p. 30.
42 Mather, p. 46.
43 Briggs, pp. 376-77.
44 *The Northern Star* November 17, 1838, Volume I, No. 53.
48 A satire in verse on the Chartist League Agitators (Sunderland: G. Barnes, 1845).
49 Briggs, p. 389.
51 November 10, 1838 Volume I, No. 52.
53 Mather, p. 38.
54 Briggs, p. 381.
55 Gammage, p. 43.
57 Mather, pp. 15-16.
58 Briggs, p. 385.
59 Mather, p. 16.
62 Mather, p. 20.
63 West, p. 123.
64 The Northern Star, June 9, 1838, Volume I, No. 30.
65 The Northern Star, June 30, 1838, Volume I, No. 33.
66 Cole, p. 63.
67 Derry, p. 123.
68 June 16, 1838, Volume I, No. 31.
69 The Northern Star, November 17, 1838, Volume I, No. 53.
70 Briggs, p. 184.
71 Mather, p. 13.
72 Mather, p. 102.
73 The Northern Star, June 30, 1838, Volume I, No. 33.
74 February 1, 1840, Volume III, No. 116.
75 The Northern Star, December 15, 1838, Volume I, No. 57.
76 Briggs, p. 183.
77 Volume III, No. 130.
78 Gammage, p. 116.
79 Gammage, p. 122.
80West, pp. 148-49.
81Rosenblatt, pp. 205-6.
82Briggs, p. 383.
83The Northern Star, January 4, 1840, Volume III, No. 112.
85Harney, Volume II, p. 165.
"Contemporaries, whether friendly or hostile to Chartism, had no hesitation in declaring the movement fruitless. The judgment of its own age has been accepted by many later historians, and there has been a general agreement in placing Chartism among the lost causes of history."¹ This is the verdict of Mark Hovell, a historian who has made an in-depth study of the movement. Some of the reasons for this failure can be seen in a summation of the agitation and control of the Chartist Movement.

Friction within the leadership of Chartism was one of the reasons that the movement declined. The argument ever present in the movement was whether Chartism should remain wholly political or whether social gains should be achieved by threat and force. The followers were forced to take one viewpoint or the other, and this division of forces was obviously a weakening factor.

John W. Derry, in Reaction and Reform, has suggested that the movement was weakened because Chartists insisted on all points of the Charter instead of trying to win
concessions one at a time.\(^2\) Perhaps if the leaders had endeavored politically to achieve one point at a time, Chartism might not have seemed such a threat to the establishment. Mark Hovell presented the idea that it seemed impossible for the Chartist consensus to focus a united body of opinion in favor of a single definite social ideal.\(^3\) George Harney continued this idea with his feeling that Chartism should have been socially as well as politically grounded. "Such reforms as universal suffrage are utterly valueless unless associated with such social changes as will enable the great body of the community to command the actual sovereignty of society. Political freedom is incompatible with social slavery."\(^4\)

It would appear that the failure of Chartism might have been due to mistakes of the agitation group. However, without reaction from the control group, Chartists might have solved their problems and found the unification of ideals that was necessary for success. The rhetorical strategies of petition, solidification, promulgation, polarization and non-violent resistance were the primary strategies that held the movement together and determined the progress of agitation. However, when agitation progressed into the strategy of confrontation-escalation, the control group reacted with suppression. Without question, the rhetorical strategy of suppression from the control group
was the foremost cause of the decline of Chartism. With its leadership in prison, Chartism was thrust back on the ingenuity and resource of the local rank and file with no organization to keep the agitation alive. John Derry suggested that "this is when the essential weakness of the movement became apparent, for there was no systematic discipline or oversight." Without leadership, the followers of Chartism did not know how to maintain the movement. They had simply followed the words of the fiery orator and without him, they were helpless and hopeless. The banishment of Chartism leaders undoubtedly also had another detrimental effect. With the continuing intimidation and fear of imprisonment, many chose to remove themselves from leadership capacity. This same threat was in all probability the reason that new leaders did not emerge in the last few years of the movement.

Another effect of the strategy of suppression is found in the evidence that a large portion of the Chartist press went out of existence; thus, the solidifying aspect of the movement was greatly reduced. The Northern Star remained in print while O'Connor was in prison, but began to reflect the decline in the movement and was not able to survive to the end of Chartism. The last issue appeared on November 23, 1844. It became obvious in reading the last year's issues that Chartism was declining and that the
small support of a few papers and a handful of leaders were not enough to hold the movement together. The reporting of Chartist meetings was extremely moderate and were introduced as seemingly very plain public meetings. There were no vivid descriptions of the mass meetings that were present in the early stages of the movement. An attempt was apparently made to emphasize the peaceable nature of each meeting, both before and after its occurrence. Reports of mass meetings were very short and there was no mention of the rhetorical strategies of flags, banners, bands, and other aspects of early meetings. There was evidence that Chartism had been assimilated into other movements, even though O'Connor in The Northern Star urged that Chartism should not die. Letters were printed in the January 6, 1844, issue, which advocated joining the Sharmon Crawford Plan by which a few members united in the House of Commons might during ensuing sessions offer a strong resistance to government and secure a continuous and ample exposure of the grievances. There were references to several other groups that ex-Chartists were joining—the Anti-Corn Law League and Complete Suffrage Party. The Chartists were apparently losing their separate identity. In the last issue of The Northern Star, it was obvious that there was a trend developing to print news other than that of the movement. There were no long articles about
Chartism as had been found in earlier issues, and the space was used for other items. A great deal more reporting of foreign news was evident. In the April 27, 1844, edition, O'Connor appealed to Chartists for monetary support, saying that it remained with them whether the Chartist cause through The Northern Star was to go on and prosper. Apparently, support was not given, and one of the strongest voices of Chartism, The Northern Star, came to an end.

Like The Northern Star, in a short period of time, Chartism also failed. It failed because of flaws in the structure of the movement. It failed due to the absence of its leaders for long periods of time due to the strategy of suppression, with no leadership emerging to take their places. It failed due to the loss of Chartist literature which had provided solidification for the movement, and thus no continuation of the movement's ideals. It failed because with the continuation of the strategy of suppression the working man was the only remnant of Chartism left, and that remnant was not strong enough to keep it alive. Although the reasons for the decline of Chartism can be investigated and, thus, the failure of Chartism can be analyzed, the movement was not a complete failure. Chartism mirrored the aspirations of the working classes and the greater solidarity which was manifesting itself among
working men. But Chartism also played a part in stimulating middle-class consciousness. Perhaps those changes were the primary reasons that although the points of the Charter were not granted during the decade of Chartism, within the following forty years all but one of the points became established by law. Several social gains were also achieved as a result of these laws. The New Poor Law was adjusted with the removal of most of its harshness and its application made more equitable. In addition, the government directed its attention increasingly to the improvement of working class conditions and legislation which enforced better wage distribution. Chartism has also been suggested as being a part of the impetus that impressed upon the government the need for additional churches and schools especially in crowded urban centers which would remodel the outlook of the turbulent masses.

Chartism has appeared to be one of the movements in history whose success can be seen only in retrospect. The history of England after Chartism seems to indicate that the agitators did not fight in vain. "They left the mind of England changed,--perhaps the greatest of all possible revolutions."
Footnotes

1Hovell, p. 300.
2Derry, p. 128.
3Hovell, p. 303.
5Derry, p. 124.
6Gammage, p. 182.
8Volume VII, No. 337.
9Briggs, p. 399.
10Briggs, p. 403.
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