The parliamentary career of Michael Thomas Sadler, 1829-1833

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"The parliamentary career of Michael Thomas Sadler, 1829-1833".


This thesis is presented for the degree of Master of Arts of Edith Cowan University, Western Australia. 1995.
Declaration

"I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text"

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Date: 28 September 1995
USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.
ABSTRACT

The thesis seeks to combine an historiographical reappraisal of Michael Thomas Sadler, 1780-1835, with an account of his political thought and actions during his parliamentary career, 1829-1833. Sadler was a Ultra-Tory, although he has also been called a Radical Tory. Central to Ultra-Tory philosophy was the defence of the Revolution Settlement, or Protestant Constitution.

The thesis opens with an explanation as to why Sadler was chosen as a research subject. Section one gives a general background to Sadler. The thesis begins with a brief biographical sketch followed by a detailed historiographical assessment. Sadler's basic philosophy is outlined and his opposition to Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform is examined.

The second section finds Sadler's social and economic reforming activities the focus of attention. Although we move away from strictly constitutional issues the section explores Sadler's concern for the downtrodden in England and Ireland. Indeed, for Sadler, the 'aristocratic ideal' - the need to look after the material well-being of British subjects - was as important as preserving the political framework of the Constitution. The question of a poor law for Ireland and factory legislation in England are two key areas under examination. Another chapter in the section examines Sadler's attempts at reform on behalf of the agricultural labourers of Britain.

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1 It is as well to point out at the outset of the thesis that although he has been termed a 'Tory Radical' by some, an anlaysis of Sadler's ideological beliefs reveals Sadler to have been an Ultra. However, often Ultra-Toryism and (non-Benthamite) Radicalism were closely linked. For example, both were opposed to Liberalism.
The thesis concludes with a reappraisal of Sadler's contribution to social reform in the early nineteenth century together with a reassessment of his position within the Tory party.

Perhaps at the outset it is as well to state what the thesis is not about. Although research for the thesis included Sadler's work on political economy, his "Law on Population", currency reform based on the Old Testament system of the tithe, theological and philosophical beliefs, for the most part these issues have not been written about. Nor does the thesis seek to include private, personal or family reminiscences, Sadler's business interests in Leeds and Belfast or his pastoral and practical service to the Church, nor, indeed his philanthropic activities. It should be emphasised that the thesis does not purport to be a biography of the subject. Rather it attempts a history of Sadler's life and work during his years in parliament.

The major primary source material utilized in the research for the thesis were the Newcastle MSS and the Sadler Papers. These latter are located at various MSS repositories in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Moreover, Sadler published several social and political commentaries during his lifetime. For example, *The Law of Population... and Ireland; its evils and their remedies...*, as well as several of his political speeches. All Sadler's writing has been closely studied. The Newcastle MSS proved essential to an understanding of Sadler's psyche. Newcastle was Sadler's patron. Indeed, the fourth duke of Newcastle specifically selected Sadler to stand for the seat of Newark-on-Trent in order that he could lead the defence of the Constitution against Catholic emancipation in the Commons. Furthermore, Sadler dedicated arguably his most influential work to
Newcastle. The duke was to return the compliment. Following Sadler's death in 1835, Newcastle was instrumental in having a statue of the deceased erected in the grounds of Leeds Parish Church.

In the introduction an explanation is given as to why the thesis has been researched and written, together with mention of both unpublished and published work on Sadler. Several MSS collections have been extensively used in conjunction with a voluminous selection of secondary source material all of which are detailed in the bibliography.

Whilst the thesis has inevitable shortcomings, the work seeks to provide further insight into an important political figure from the early nineteenth century hitherto largely ignored. The research conforms to the word limit for a Master of Arts degree (45-50,000 words) and it is hoped that the thesis will make a distinctive contribution to the subject and will do so with a degree of originality.
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"I am well aware that I have never written anything but fictions".

Michel Foucault.

However, perhaps it is more apt to quote another wise author – Hans Christian Anderson – who also dealt in fantasy: "out of reality are our tales of imagination fashioned". After all, perhaps reality is, in fact, only a background to a fairy tale.
FOREWORD

It is my pleasure to acknowledge some of the many people who showed me great kindness and who gave much encouragement over the past two years.

I am grateful to my supervisor Associate Professor Ed Jaggard for allowing himself to be persuaded to take Sadler and me on board. Moreover, his wit and wisdom have been invaluable. I am appreciative of the encouragement offered by Dr David Eastwood at an early stage of the project.

Many archivists and librarians greatly assisted me, both in England and in Australia. Of particular help were the staff at the Leeds Central Library and Nottinghamshire Archives, most notably Colin Price. The archivists in the manuscript departments of Nottingham University and the National Library of Scotland, especially Barbara Andrews, Katherine Allcock, Tania Styles and Olive Geddes, as well as the staff at the Senate House Library and the British Library of Political and Economic Science of London University were also all most helpful. I wish to make particular mention of the staff at the Murdoch University Library and Edith Cowan University Library, most especially to the inter-library loans departments.

To my friend Keith Roberts a big "thank you" is in order, for providing me with a copy of Seeley's Life of Sadler. Ronnie Kray would be proud of you Keith. To my chum Mark Connolly the usual "cheers" is much deserved for your humour, hospitality and continued friendship over many years. I have, at last, been compelled to concede that you will, after all, probably always remain "a thoroughly naughty boy".
Other people to whom I am grateful include the Warden of Hugh Stewart Hall at the University of Nottingham for his hospitality in July 1995; Associate Professor Michael Durey who gave encouragement and advice as well as loaning me his copy of Twiss' *Life of Eldon*; Karyn Barenberg for all her hard work in helping me prepare the thesis for examination; my parents-in-law Professor John and Mrs Robin de Laeter for the use of their holiday retreat where I first thought of writing about Sadler; lastly, my friend and erstwhile colleague from Murdoch University, Russell Dean who yet again harassed and harangued me all the way to the finishing line. Doug Molison, late of Kenya Colony also deserves acknowledgement. His technological inventiveness enabled me and my "old bomb" to shuttle between the various university libraries here in Western Australia.

I wish to express my profound gratitude to Lt-Col. Harold E. Scott of Encombe House, keeper of the Eldon Papers, who again gave permission for me to dip into the *Eldon MS* collection and to fossick through the Encombe Library with its rich contents. More precious still was his faithfulness in letter writing over the past five years, even when I proved faithless. Again Colonel Scott extended friendship and gracious hospitality, offered professional cricket commentary during the England–West Indies Test series, and converted me – much to my father-in-law's delight – into something of a golfing enthusiast.

My greatest debt, however, is to my wife and friend, Catherine. To you this thesis is dedicated, with my love.
Prefatory note on MSS. sources

The major MSS used in the writing of the thesis were the Newcastle MSS held in the manuscript Department of the Hallward Library at the Nottingham University Library. The Eldon MSS held at Encombe House in Dorset were also to prove invaluable. Both the Newcastle and Eldon MSS had been used by me prior to my research into Sadler. However, it was essential to revisit both MS collections particularly for information on Sadler's role in the battle to offset Catholic emancipation, Ultra-Tory attempts to form an exclusively 'Protestant' administration, his attitude towards the northern 'millocracy' and his ideas on paternalism and deference.

The Vyvyan MSS held at the Cornwall County Record Office in Truro proved helpful when trying to piece together Sadler's role (if any) in bringing down the Wellington administration in November 1830. Similarly, the Knatchbull and Winchilsea MSS, held at the Kent and Northamptonshire County Record Offices respectively, were gleaned for evidence of Sadler's importance in the Commons, 1829-1832.

There is no Sadler MS collection as such. Some of the personal and political papers belonging or pertaining to Sadler are to be found at six locations in England and Scotland. Here below is reproduced a copy of Sadler's entry on the National Register of Archives (NRA) under the heading Sadler, Michael Thomas (1780-1835), social reformer, M.P.

1) commonplace book
2) 1829, 1830: election returns (with Henry Willoughby). Nottinghamshire Archives. NRA 5838 Tallents.


There also exist certain personal and family papers of a private nature held by heirs of Michael Thomas Sadler in Belfast, Northern Ireland. All these manuscripts were shown to me in July 1995 but I have been asked by the present keeper of the Sadler Papers to maintain a strict confidentiality. However, I am permitted to state that the papers located in Belfast are voluminous and may one day be published in the form of a biographical study.

The Wellington MSS, Peel Papers, Goulburn Papers, Liverpool Papers and Sidmouth Papers were all thoroughly researched. A full list of the manuscript collections and their respective repositories is given in the bibliography.
The following printed and bound works were also extensively used during the research of the subject: Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, the Annual Register, House of Lords Journals, True Patriot, Scottish Protestant and Hansard. In addition Seeley's Life of Sadler¹ and Sadler's The Law of Population² and Ireland; its evils and their remedies³ were thoroughly investigated. All these published works listed above are held in the Encombe House Library and I am grateful to Lt-Col. Scott for making these available to me. Indeed, I was given permission to take away many books and papers to peruse at my leisure.

² M.T. Sadler, The Law of Population; developing the real principle on which it is universally regulated, 2 Vols., (London, 1830).
³ M.T. Sadler, Ireland; its evils and their remedies: being a refutation of the errors of the Emigration Committee and others, touching that country, (London, 1828).
INTRODUCTION

The thesis has been researched and written over a two year period in response to a challenge issued by Dr Robert Eccleshall in 1990. In his English conservatism since the Restoration..., Eccleshall stated that "Sadler is entitled to a prominent place in the pantheon of Tory social reformers, and deserves more than the scant attention he usually receives in Conservative Party chronicles, where the tendency is to depict him as a decent old fogy who, in contrast to Peel, was out of touch with the spirit of the age".1

Eccleshall rightly points out that "although Sadler was a public figure for a relatively brief period – remaining in the Commons for less than four years and dying within another three – he played a decisive role in shaping Tory paternalism into a denunciation of possessive individualism".2 Moreover, Eccleshall notes that "there is no biography of Sadler apart from the hagiographical R.B. Seeley, Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Michael Thomas Sadler...",3 published in 1842.4

Eccleshall's opinion on the sole existing biography of Sadler is echoed by the editor of the Dictionary of National Biography who comments "The Memoir of Michael Thomas Sadler, by Seeley, 1842, is unsatisfactory".5 The editor continues, "Southey offered to write a biography of Sadler, but

2 Ibid.
4 Eccleshall, English conservatism since the Restoration, p.95. See footnote 19. There were only two editions printed, both in 1842.
the family made other arrangements". In fact, the family did not commission a biography. It would appear, therefore, that there is some justification for Eccleshall's plea for something more substantial than the usual dismissive sentences with which Sadler has been accorded until the present time.

It should be pointed out, however, that there is a short life in Taylor's *Leeds Worthies, or Biographia Leodiensis*. Furthermore, Sadler is mentioned, albeit briefly, in *History of the Factory Movement* by 'Alfred' (i.e. Samuel Kydd). Nonetheless, this student has been motivated to formulate a response to Eccleshall's plea. It is not the intention of this thesis to romanticise Sadler. Nonetheless, it does seek to initiate, at least to some degree, his rehabilitation.

A further encouragement to look at Sadler's political ideology came from David Eastwood. Prompted by his article on the origins of Romantic Conservatism the focus of my research initially centered on notions of paternalism and deference - tenets to which Sadler clearly adhered. However, as my studies progressed it became clear that Sadler's specifically political and constitutional thought also warranted attention.

Perhaps inevitably this is not the thesis which I set out to write. At first I had settled on a title which would encompass the "Social and political thought of Michael Thomas Sadler, 1780-1835, with special reference to the natural law tradition". Almost immediately it became obvious that

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7 *Dictionary of National Biography, op.cit.*, p.598.
this was completely untenable given the parameters of a Masters dissertation. Sadler's parliamentary career, 1829-1833, was quite simply more practicable. Somewhat disappointingly, therefore, I have at this juncture decided that a biography of Sadler is not a present concern. Nevertheless, Sadler's short parliamentary career encompasses the dual aspects of political and constitutional history as well as social and economic thought.

The thesis does not claim to be unique, rather it has built upon other forays (all be they superficial) into the exploits of the member for, initially Newark and secondly, Aldborough. The work of B.T. Bradfield, D.G.S. Simes and Robert Eccleshall are acknowledged as important contributions towards the reappraisal of Sadler's political career. Moreover, during my own research into the Protestant Constitutionalists, Sadler was necessarily written of, albeit merely in passing. Consequently, much was left undone.

The principal aim of the thesis is to continue the mild rehabilitation of Sadler initiated by Eccleshall. Whilst his efforts to draw Sadler to historians' attention are to be applauded and while it must be acknowledged that his mentioning of Sadler was in the wider context of English conservatism since the Restoration, at the same time Eccleshall's

inclusion of Sadler in the pantheon of "great conservatives", served merely to whet the historian's appetite.

Sadler has been seen by some historians as a "Radical Tory", by others as a "High Tory" and by others as an "Ultra-Tory". He has, however, been decided by most as a figure of little or no consequence, whether it be as a social reformer, intellectual ideologue or Protestant constitutionalist. Finally, perhaps most damagingly, he has been ignored by some altogether. Certainly the vigour with which he argued for the maintenance of the specifically Protestant Constitution, based on the Revolution Settlement, and the richness of his social programme has been, if not wholly, at least substantially ignored. The thesis will seek to say what Sadler stood for in the period 1829-1833. The thesis will not, I fear, substantially revolutionize the historiography concerning Tory social reformers, or indeed Ultra-Tories, for the political Left - whether they be Whig, Liberal or Socialist reformers - especially in an age of political correctness, will always shy away from waving a flag on behalf of those on the right of the political spectrum. That Sadler was committed to the Anglican Church and motivated by scriptural injunction perhaps necessarily dooms him to obscurity. Clearly it has, until this point in

16 For example, Eccleshall, English conservatism since the Restoration; Bradfield, "Sir Richard Vyvyan and Tory Politics..."; Simes, "The Ultra-Tories in British Politics..."; Karginoff, "The Protestant Constitutionalists and Ultra-Toryism in Britain...".
time at least helped to consign him to "the dustbin of history". Hopefully, however, this dissertation will to some degree prove to be a response to Eccleshall's appeal for Sadler to be given a hearing.
Biographical sketch: Michael Thomas Sadler, 1780-1835.

Sadler was born at Snelston, Derbyshire, into an Anglican family with evangelical sympathies. He was the youngest son of James Sadler of the Old Hall, Doveridge. His mother, Frances, was the daughter of the Rev. Michael Ferrebee, Rector of Rolleston, Staffordshire. The Ferreebees were Huguenots who acquired considerable property in London after fleeing from Nantes.

Between the ages of six and fifteen he was tutored by a Mr Harrison, a schoolmaster from Doveridge. Sadler was to have commenced at a public school at the age of twelve, however, he remained under the care of his tutor. Between fifteen and eighteen Sadler received no formal schooling. These years were spent in the family library bequeathed to his mother by the Rev. Henry Wrigley, Tutor of St. John's College, Cambridge. At the age of eighteen he wrote a pamphlet defending itinerant Methodist preachers against persecution.

In 1800 he joined his brother's flax business in Leeds, and ten years later entered into partnership with a firm which imported Irish linens. Sadler continued his connection with the business until his death. He became a Sunday school superintendent and an administrator of poor relief, joined a 'Church and King' group, commanded a volunteer company and contributed frequently to the Leeds Intelligencer, the leading paper in the north of England, of the "blue", or Tory party. Indeed, the Leeds Intelligencer was arguably the leading Ultra-Tory newspaper in the provinces during the 1820s and '30s.

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1 This biographical sketch of Sadler has been compiled from the following works: Seeley, Life of Sadler, chapters 1, 2, 3, 16 and 17; pp.1-48; 540-622; D.N.B., op.cit., pp.594-598; Eccleshall, English conservatism since the Restoration, pp.85-89, 91, 92, 103-108, 108-109, 129, 131, 184; Sadler Papers, "Diary of S.G. Fenton concerning life of Sadler", located in the Central Library, Leeds. Samuel G. Fenton was Sadler's father-in-law. The portion of his diary held in Leeds was written between "December 1829-31st December 1829". There are 39 pages in Fenton's own handwriting. These pages are otherwise unmarked. (Catalogue number SR 923.2 SA 15). Other sections of Fenton's diary can be found amongst a private collection of papers in Belfast, Northern Ireland.
Moreover, it was during these early years in Leeds that Sadler commenced his philanthropic activities – being an active visitor of the sick and destitute, in connection with an institution called "the Stranger's Friend Society". The office of treasurer of the poor-rates made him fully acquainted with the habits, wants and sufferings of the poor. In 1816 he married Ann Fenton, the daughter of his partner from an old Leeds family.

More importantly, perhaps, Sadler, who had no real liking for business and was already taking an active part in public life, began to take a decided part in political affairs. An enthusiastic Tory, he expressed his political convictions through the pages of the Leeds Intelligencer and in a speech, widely circulated at the time, delivered against Catholic emancipation at a town's meeting in Leeds in 1813.2 In 1817 he published First Letter to a Reformer,3 in reply to a pamphlet in which Walter Fawkes of Farnley had advocated a scheme of political reform. Sadler had intended to write a second Letter against parliamentary reform but instead concentrated on economic questions, and read papers on such subjects to the Leeds Literary and Philosophical Society, of which he was a founder member.

The general distress and his personal experience of poor-law administration led Sadler to examine the principles which should govern the relief of destitution from public funds. Growing anxiety about Irish affairs and the proceedings of the emigration committee in 1827 drew his attention to the condition of the poor in Ireland, with which country his business brought him into close contact. His concern for the unemployed, notwithstanding, by early 1823

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2 Seeley, Life of Sadler, pp.16-28; D.N.B., op.cit., p.595. See my chapter 3.
3 Seeley, Life of Sadler, pp.29-31; D.N.B., p.596. See my chapter 4.
Sadler had been deeply moved by the condition of children employed in factories.

Sadler was returned to parliament as a Tory at a by-election held in March 1829 after Sir William Clinton, Lieutenant-General of the Ordnance, resigned his seat at Newark in protest against the Catholic Relief Bill. It was alleged that Sadler won because supporters of his opponent had been intimidated by the borough's patron, the Ultra duke of Newcastle. The following year parliament voted against referring to a select committee a petition from the inhabitants of Newark, who complained about the election and demanded action to curtail the duke's corrupt practices. In April 1831 Sadler seconded a successful anti-government motion to retain the existing number of parliamentary members for England and Wales, and at the ensuing general election was returned for the safer seat of Aldborough, Yorkshire, for which he had been nominated by Newcastle. Evidently the duke was well-satisfied with Sadler's efforts to maintain the Protestant Constitution, 1829-1831.

In 1828 Sadler published what is perhaps the best-written of his books, *Ireland: its evils and their remedies*, which is in effect a protest against the application of individualistic political economy to the problems of Irish distress. His chief proposal was the establishment of a poor law for Ireland on the principle that in proportion to its means "wealth should be compelled to assist destitute poverty, but that, dissimilar to English practice, assistance should in all cases, except in those of actual incapacity from age or disease, be connected with labour".

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4 See my chapter 1 (introduction). See too Newcastle MSS. Ne C 6, 409-10. Two letters written by Sadler to Newcastle. Friday, 9 March 1829 and n.d. Thursday evening concerning the Newark election and Sadler's subsequent appearance in the Commons.

Sadler now found himself a leader in the reaction against the individualistic principles which underlay the Ricardian doctrines. However, "he essayed the discussion of the more abstract points of political economy, a task for which he was indifferently equipped". He protested that in a society in which persons enjoyed unequal measures of economic freedom, it was not true that the individual pursuit of self-interest would necessarily lead to collective well-being. His point of view, therefore, was essentially that of the Christian socialist. He argued that individual effort needed to be restrained and guided by the conscience of the community acting through the organization of the state. Moreover, he believed that economic well-being could be secured by moralising the existing order of society without greatly altering the basis of political power. Sadler sought to refute Malthus in *The Law of Population: a Treatise in Disproof of the Super-fecundity of Human Beings and developing the Real Principle of their Increase*, published in 1830. Here Sadler advanced the theory that "the prolificness of human beings, otherwise similarly circumstanced, varies inversely as their numbers". It is by no means clear that Sadler succeeded in convincing his critics.

In June 1830 Sadler moved a resolution in favour of the establishment of a poor law for Ireland. A second resolution, moved in August, was lost by only twelve votes, a division which ministers acknowledged to be tantamount to defeat. The Irish Poor Law Act, however, was not passed until 1838. October 1831 found Sadler moving a resolution for bettering the condition of the agricultural poor in England. He ascribed the degradation of the labourers to

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6 D.N.B., op.cit., p.595.
the growth of large farms which had caused the eviction of smallholders, and
to flagrant injustice committed in the enclosure of the commons.

Following the abolition of this Aldborough constituency, Sadler became
prospective candidate for Leeds shortly after assuming the parliamentary
leadership of the factory reform movement. In the months preceding the
general election of December 1832, Leeds was the focus of "a dramatic and
virulent contest" between a Tory-Radical alliance and Whigs. The Yorkshire
Short-Time Committees fought a vigorous campaign on behalf of Sadler, who
received messages of support from operatives throughout the country. His
Whig opponents were John Marshall, a wealthy manufacturer, and T.B.
Macaulay - "scornful reviewer of The Law of Population - who called Sadler 'a
convenient philanthropist' and beat him into third place in the election".

When Lord Ashley re-introduced the Ten Hours Bill in the new session of
parliament, the government set up a Royal Commission and Sadler wrote two
pamphlets condemning the secrecy with which the commissioners conducted
their inquiry. In 1834 he contested a by-election at Huddersfield, but a split
between the Tory-Radical alliance secured victory for the Whig candidate.

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10 Eccleshall, English conservatism since the Restoration, p.106.
11 Seeley, Life of Sadler, pp.406-408.
12 Eccleshall, English conservatism since the Restoration, p.106. See too Seeley, Life
   of Sadler, p.408. Sadler received 1596 votes while his rivals obtained 1984 (Macaulay)
   and 2012 (Marshall).
13 Later the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury.
14 M.T. Sadler, A Protest against the Secret Proceedings of the Factory Commissions in Leeds,
   (London, May 1833); M.T. Sadler, A Reply to the Two Letters of J.E. Drinkwater and
15 I believe Robert Eccleshall is incorrect when he states that the Huddersfield by-
election was in 1833. See Eccleshall, English conservatism since the Restoration, p.106.
   In fact it was in 1834. The eventual outcome was Blackburne 234, Sadler 147 and
   Wood 108 votes.
Meanwhile, Macaulay had resigned from Leeds to join the new Legislative Council of India, but Sadler was too ill to contest the seat.

In 1834 Sadler moved to Belfast, where the family firm still had links with the linen industry. He died there, at New Lodge on 29 July the following year. That "heaven-born man", as Richard Oastler described Sadler, was buried at Ballylesson, Northern Ireland. He was fifty-five years of age.

Postscript

I have come across only two portraits of Sadler. One is reproduced on the first page of Seeley's *Life of Sadler*, the other is printed in Driver's *Life of Oastler*. James Grant records that Sadler "was of middle size. His head was quite grey. In his countenance there was such a seriousness and solemnity, that a stranger might have mistaken him for a clergyman. His features were strongly marked, and his elocution was in harmony with his staid and pensive appearance. His voice was full and distinct, but it had a species of twang about it very much resembling that which is so often heard in the pulpit. This, however, rather aided than impaired the effect of his famous maiden speech ... in as much as its chief characteristics consisted of gloomy forebodings of the effects which, he alleged, would flow from the passing of the Reform Bill."
Grant's recollections of Sadler are important on two main counts. Firstly, his reminiscences are measured, indeed, balanced. This is of significance because Grant was from the opposite end of the political spectrum and certainly no friend of the Ultra-Tories. Secondly, his account of Sadler's oratory, excepting that of the hagiographical Seeley, appears to be the only written observations which remain. However, Grant had earlier lambasted Sadler, for "the fact was, that he was not an extempore speaker". Indeed, Grant claimed that "he could not deliver two consecutive sentences, with any propriety or effect, on the spur of the moment".20

Moreover, Grant asserted that Sadler "was a man who might make five or six good speeches in the course of a Session, which would be allowing about a month for the preparation of each; but that was the utmost extent of his capabilities".21 On the hustings, "where all the 'silent members' are proverbially loquacious, he completely broke down".22 Grant considered that Sadler "could not reply to the attacks of a rival candidate". Even in his own committee room, "if he was, by an unexpected question or other interruption, diverted from his train of thought, the circumstances so disconcerted him as to make it difficult for him to add a single word more on the subject".23 Indeed, Grant recalled an occasion in the Commons when compelled to say something in consequence of some pointed allusions both to himself and his patron, he "stuttered, and stammered, and floundered at almost every second sentence, in such a way as to be absolutely painful to the House".24

20 Ibid., p.104.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid., pp.104-105.
23 Ibid., p.105.
24 Ibid., p.104.
Nonetheless, in spite of the force of his criticisms over Sadler's oratorical abilities (or lack of), Grant considered that "there was not one of their party whose exclusion from the House, by the passing of [the Reform Bill], was more generally regretted by the Tories than was Mr. Sadler's". The sketch is concluded with a favourable reminiscence.

"Mr. Sadler was one of the most benevolent men of the present day. His exertions, both in and out of Parliament, in favour of the factory children, were great and unwearied, and will endear his name to millions yet unborn. For a long time he laboured under great bodily indisposition, brought on, there can be no doubt, by the amount of his labours in the cause of suffering humanity".

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25 Ibid., p.105.
26 In fact, generally, if not wholly, Sadler's name has not been credited with securing an improvement in the lot of the factory children. Rather it has been the name of Shaftesbury which has been endeared to millions. This topic is dealt with in chapter 1.
CHAPTER ONE
HISTORIOGRAPHY: MICHAEL THOMAS SADLER
AND THE HISTORIANS

"... bad history often has a wider and longer currency than good history..."

"The foremost task of honest history is to discredit and drive out its futile or dishonest varieties".

i) Introduction

In his book *The prince and the pretender: a study in the writing of history*, A.J. Youngson has highlighted the practice amongst historians of what he calls "the side-road assassination technique", whereby

"relatively minor characters with whom the historian does not sympathise are taken into a short paragraph where they are made to look wicked or ridiculous or very very small in a couple of sentences, almost in a couple of words; and done away with. There is no argument, no balancing of good and bad, no fuss. It is casual, almost off-stage. The victims have been shot down before you notice. Falsehood is not required, for a partial truth will do".

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1 A.J. Youngson, *The prince and the pretender: a study in the writing of history*, (Beckenham, 1985), p.23. I am grateful to my friend Associate Professor Michael Durey who drew my attention to Youngson's book. Moreover, I am indebted to him for illuminating many of the problems faced by historians writing political biography during a staff and postgraduate seminar at Murdoch University, Western
Such an approach is probably most common among biographers, whose focus on one favoured individual almost inevitably ensures that marginal figures are dealt with both perfunctorily and only in relation to the development of the main character. But historians writing textbooks also encounter this difficulty, for faced with the need to cover wide areas of space and long periods of time, many individuals appear only fleetingly on centre-stage, sometimes as caricatures representing a particular, frequently prejudiced, point of view. Even historians dealing with large groups or classes tend to fall into the same trap; collective nouns such as "aristocracy", "ruling classes", "bourgeoisie" and "working classes" are often used pejoratively. Certainly, many (most?) historians writing about the "Conservative Party" or "conservatism" have marginalised, disparaged and indeed sometimes destroyed any political figure who might have detracted from the lionization of their particular hero and his particular brand of conservatism or Toryism. This chapter will seek to demonstrate that Sadler and Newcastle have been the victims of "the side-road assassination technique".

The roots of this methodological problem lie in the related issues of perspective and subjectivity. For many years now historians have been encouraged openly to explain their particular "biases", so that readers may understand the context in which the history is being written. Although such a procedure,

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privileging the explicit over the implicit, may marginally decrease the influence of subjectivity in history – by forcing historians continually to be aware of their personal predispositions – it does not necessarily increase objectivity. It certainly does not solve the problem of perspective; it merely reinforces it. Youngson's solution to this dilemma is to write history from two directions, covering the same subject but from the different perspectives of the two main protagonists or groups. This is, undoubtedly, a step forward, at least for certain types of history where there clearly exist two or more antagonistic camps, but it does not resolve Youngson's point about marginal individuals being used as counterpoints to the main protagonist in a biography.

There seems to be no reasonable solution to the problem of the bit-player, although to say this probably sentences the marginal to unfair and unsympathetic characterisation. Sometimes this is inevitable, as the minor figure may be known only for one significant action in his or her life, the one which leads to the walk-on part (Andy Warhol's fifteen minutes of fame?). But at other times it is possible to reconstruct significantly more of an individual's life, so that the question of perspective can be addressed. In an age when attention is focused on "the poorest he" as much as on "the richest he" (or she), it should be the responsibility of historians to ensure that where ever possible the role of minor figures in the tapestry should not be determined by the needs of the more powerful or more accessible or even the more fashionable. A case in point is the subject of this thesis.

If most historians are to be believed, Michael Thomas Sadler's fifteen minutes of fame – or in his case infamy (for he was on the losing side of the debate and numbered amongst the bigots) – came in March 1829, when he spoke in the House of Commons against Catholic emancipation. It is ironic, for, according to conventional accounts Sadler, on the occasion of his maiden speech to the
House, acquitted himself nobly. However, his seat was in the gift of arguably the most hated man in England, the fourth duke of Newcastle. Furthermore, it was alleged that Sadler had only been voted in by the electors of Newark out of fear of eviction.

Although Sadler’s role in conservative politics began as early as in 1807, and at times during his short parliamentary career he was of some significance, he is mentioned by historians almost exclusively for his part in the battle to offset parliamentary representation for Catholics or for his unenlightened opposition to Malthusian population theory and hostility for Ricardian theories of political economy. Indeed, many conservative or Conservative party chroniclers scarcely mention him, if at all. Arguably, Sadler’s greatest work was wrought on behalf of the overburdened factory hands yet it is the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury who is remembered exclusively in this regard.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that no published work exists that is devoted solely to Sadler since Seeley’s Life of Sadler in 1842. In the general histories of England written in the nineteenth century, Sadler is dismissed in one or two lines as bigoted and ignorant, being a part – due to his opposition to Catholic emancipation – of a narrow-minded sect of naive, short-sighted and inept old men (it should be noted that Sadler was forty-eight in 1829) who were a mere factious wing of the Tory party. In more detailed histories of the nineteenth century written by Victorian historians and political commentators,

3 Sadler assisted Wilberforce in the York election of that year. Wilberforce obtained 11,806 votes. See Seeley, Life of Sadler, p.16.
this 'old gang' of Ultra-Tories, with whom Sadler had been lumped, are similarly dismissed after a few lines of abusive rhetoric.\(^5\)

Historians writing in the early twentieth century essentially copied the views of their mentors from the earlier period.\(^6\) Disappointingly, in work published more recently, modern historians have likewise written-off the likes of Sadler, whether he be categorized as an Ultra or a Radical Tory.\(^7\) Even research into the Tory or Conservative party, published from the 1960s, dealing specifically with the evolution of the party and the changes in Tory ideology, has given Sadler and his particular brand of Toryism scant attention.\(^8\) The most extensive inquiry into the place of the Ultra-Tories within Toryism is to be found in Robert Stewart's *The Foundation of the Conservative Party, 1830-1867*.\(^9\)


Perhaps predictably, the Ultras were written of in a largely negative way. Moreover, Sadler is given minimal attention.

Other acknowledged experts on the Tory party, Norman Gash and Robert Blake, for instance, have accorded the Ultras even less coverage. Sadler has been marginalized. Often he has been excluded. Harold Perkin and Jonathan Clark in more general works on English society published in 1969 and 1985 respectively, gave more attention to the Ultra-Tories. Sadler in particular fared well, especially with Perkin. Nevertheless, by and large the Ultra-Tories have remained virtually unexplored with Sadler still cast in the role of the bit-player. David Eastwood, as recently as April 1989, acknowledged the intellectual origins of Ultra-Toryism, but this largely mirrored the findings of D.G.S. Simes in 1974. Nonetheless, Eastwood, by revealing Robert Southey as an originator of Romantic Conservatism accorded Sadler a valuable service. Indeed, Sadler looked to Southey as a kindred spirit and saw himself as intellectually, politically and spiritually aligned with Southey. Perhaps there is, in fact, a case to argue for Sadler being a missing link between Southey and Romantic, or, Disraelian Conservatism? Despite Simes' attempts at a reappraisal of the Ultra-Tories and his partial rehabilitation of Sadler, it was

10 N. Gash, Aristocracy and People; Politics in the Age of Peel; Sir Robert Peel; Mr Secretary Peel, (London, 1961); Reaction and Reconstruction in English Politics, (Oxford, 1965); Pillars of Government, (London, 1986).
12 Perkin, Origins of Modern English Society.
really only in 1989 that the shortcomings in the historiography of the Tory party were acknowledged by Professor Eric Evans

Evans identified the Ultra-Tories as a much misunderstood and severely neglected body within early nineteenth-century Toryism. He made "a plea for disinterested appraisal" of the Ultra-Tory position. He pointed out that it simply "will not do to dismiss them as faintly absurd backwoodsmen who vainly strove to hold back the inexorably reformist tide of history". As Sadler has been seen by some as an Ultra he too should be subject to "disinterested appraisal".

The existing published historiography of Ultra-Toryism is uniform in its condemnation of the Ultra-Tories; this obviously includes Sadler, as he was a prominent (some might say) pre-eminent henchman in the Commons, 1829-1832. The origins of such a damning historical judgment on the Ultras generally is rooted in the literature of the 1820s and 1830s, principally in the poetry and magazine articles of the period. For Sadler, however, the origin of his "bad press" is to be found in a magazine article in July 1830. Earlier that year Sadler published an attempted refutation of Malthus, issuing his *Law of Population: a Treatise in Disproof of the Superfecundity of Human Beings and developing the Real Principle of their Increase*. Here Sadler advanced the theory that "the prolificness of human beings, otherwise similarly circumstanced,

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17 Ibid., p.79.
18 Ibid., pp.79-80.
19 Bradfield, Simes, Eccleshall and Karginoff, *op.cit.*
varies inversely as their numbers". In the *Edinburgh Review* for July the Whig Macaulay "triumphantly reduced the new law to an absurdity". In replying to his critic "Refutation of an Article in the Edinburgh Review" Sadler denied that he had used the fatal word "inversely" in a strictly mathematical sense, and admitted that the problem of population was "too complex to admit at present of the establishment of an undeviating law". Party feeling ran too high for dispassionate criticism, and Macaulay's rejoinder "Sadler's Refutation Refuted", printed in the *Edinburgh Review* of January 1831, vituperatively renewed the controversy on the old ground.

Perhaps more importantly, however, was *The Extraordinary Black Book*, edited by John Wade, first published in 1820 with a revised and more detailed edition published in 1831. *The Black Book* was in nature "An Exposition of Abuses in Church and State, Courts of Law, Representation, Municipal and Corporate Bodies" and laid the foundation for the "bad press" to which the Ultras have been persistently subjected to for the past century and a half. *The Black Book* had as a secondary title *Corruption Unmasked*. Wade claimed to reveal corruption in "the United Church of England and Ireland; Civil List and Crown Revenues; Incomes, Privileges and Power of the Aristocracy... Presenting a Complete View of the Expenditure, Patronage, Influence, and Abuses of the Government in Church, State, Law and Representation". It was a vitriolic attack on monarchy, church and aristocracy. As Ultra-Toryism was the ideology of many from the dominant political elite in early nineteenth-century Britain, this meant the aristocracy, or at least a significant part of it. That the

Ultra-Tories sought to uphold the power of the monarchy and as they were united in their allegiance to the Anglican Church, it is axiomatic that *The Black Book* was primarily an attack on the Ultra-Tories as well as on the system which the Ultras defended.

It is significant too that *The Black Book* was reprinted in 1831, at the time when the House of Lords – the power base of the Ultra-Tories – was obstructing the passage of the Reform Bill. The Ultras were not only holding up the progress of democracy but were linked to corruption during a period of general distress when it was believed that a reform of parliament would result in the alleviation of economic hardship. In the Commons Sadler opposed all moves to reform parliament. Indeed, he had refuted the necessity of parliamentary reform since 1817. Moreover, his patron was strenuously supporting all attempts to block the bill in the Lords.

Wade cited the duke of Newcastle, a leading Ultra-Tory as one of the worst offenders of "jobbing".

"... the great object of [the duke of Newcastle] is to maintain his political influence in the borough; for which purpose this property is under-let in small portions to yearly tenants, who are thus constrained to vote for any person the Duke of Newcastle thinks fit to nominate. A striking illustration of the Duke's influence was afforded in the year 1829. Sir W.H. Clinton, differing in opinion with the noble boroughmonger, on the Catholic question, he was

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28 Sadler seconded General Gascoigne's proposal which resulted in the "Gascoigne amendment" in April 1831. See my chapter 4, "Michael Thomas Sadler and parliamentary reform".

compelled to resign his seat for Newark; when his lordship, forthwith, posted down Mr. Sadler as the retiring member's accredited successor. Some of the inhabitants, not liking the idea of a total stranger being crammed down their throats so unceremoniously, rebelled against their lord, voting for Mr. Sergeant Wilde, the opponent of the duke's nominee. This was not to be borne: immediately after the election notices of ejectment were served on the rebels; the Duke justifying his vindictive proceeding on the tyrant's pleas – that he had a right to do "what he pleased with his own"; affording a practical commentary of the vast utility of the constitutional maxim, which declares it to be a "high infringement upon the liberties of the people for any PEER to concern himself in the election of members of the House of Commons".30

Newark was a nomination borough and Sadler was Newcastle's nominee. When in March 1829 Sadler offered himself as Tory candidate for Newark at the suggestion of the duke of Newcastle he was automatically and forever to be associated with all that was perceived to be rotten with the British political system.

At the time of the second printing Newcastle was seen as the foremost opponent to a reform of parliament; this can only have contributed to the influence that The Black Book had on the historians writing the history of the early nineteenth century. Indeed, in the preface to the 1831 edition, Wade

stated that "The Black Book is the Encyclopedia of English politics for the
Georgian era, and will last as long as the abuses it exposes shall endure".31
Moreover, it was significant that a Black List of senior Ultra politicians was
published in conjunction with the 1831 edition of The Black Book. The list
catalogued those Ultra-Tories Wade considered guilty of financial impropriety.
Along side the name of each peer was given the amount they were purported
to have reaped in sinecures and pensions.32 Newcastle was accused of having
impoverished the country to the tune of £19,700, by no means the largest
amount apportioned against the names of individual members of the
aristocracy. However, when the total amount of monies to which Newcastle's
family were entitled were added to the duke's annual 'salary' as Lord
Lieutenant of Nottingham, it is by far the most substantial sum listed. Sadler's
association with Newcastle firmly and permanently linked him to the duke and
to his odious reputation. The historiography of Ultra-Toryism demonstrates
that the influence of The Black Book has far outlasted the abuses that Wade
sought to expose. Although Wade was by no means the first to do so, he
successfully linked the "Old Society" of the ancien régime to which Sadler was
committed with "Old Corruption" to which he was adjudged to have given his
blessing.33

ii) Sadler and the Whig historiographical tradition, c.1830 - c.1890

The view perpetuated by historians of Sadler is little different from that which
issued from the pens of early nineteenth century political commentators. The

31 Ibid.
32 Black List! Being the Annual Amount of Pickings of the Peers and their Families, who voted
against the Reform Bill, in the House of Lords, on Saturday, 8 October 1831, Printed,
published and compiled by W.P. Chubb, and sold at the London Spy Office, 48,
Holywell Street, Strand at One Penny each or Five Shillings per Hundred.
33 William Cobbett was the major attacker of "Old Corruption". Indeed, it was he who
coined the phrase.
diarist Charles Greville considered that Sadler was part of "the dregs" of the Tory party "to whom consistent bigotry and intolerance are dear".34
Moreover, Sadler's principles were those of "the narrowest Toryism and of High Church" and was not party to "more enlarged and enlightened views" which by the 1820s "began to obtain ascendancy".35 This contemporary view of Sadler and the political ideology to which he adhered has had a very long life. Indeed, as we shall see, this historical judgment is still the prevalent opinion.

William Edward Surtees believed that by the time of Sadler's death the constitutional principles enshrined in the Revolution Settlement "had become obsolete. New principles and another name were assumed by the party, to which he had belonged. And ancient Toryism... was buried in the grave".36 This assertion has been taken as gospel and faithfully reiterated until the present day.

Both Whig historians and commentators as well as modern historians have failed to appreciate the significance of what may be termed "Sadlerian Toryism" in the 1820s, as well as in the period following the Great Reform Act of 1832. What the Whig historians neglected to state in their writing of the history of the early nineteenth century is what Sadler and his colleagues were reacting against and more importantly why. That Sadler & co. were reactionary is self evident. Perhaps the three most eminent Whig historians, Thomas Babington

Macaulay,37 Harriet Martineau38 and Spencer Walpole,39 preferred to vilify Sadler and like-minded constitutionalists for their resistance to Repeal, Relief and Reform. John Richard Green too will be seen to have ignored the positive contribution of Sadler's concept of Toryism during years of political turmoil.40

The verdict upon Sadlerian Toryism, or 'old', 'ancient', 'true', 'orthodox' or 'Ultra-Toryism', given by Greville and Surtees was therefore not unique; on the contrary, many contemporaries viewed the likes of Sadler and his beliefs with the same degree of contempt. Undoubtedly, contemporaries together with subsequent historians have judged such old fashioned Tories to be anachronistic,41 intolerant42 and bigots43 or bigoted.44 "Foolish",45 "stupid"46 and "wicked"47 are amongst other of the more notable evaluations made of them. Martineau thought their position irrelevant.48 She considered that by 1825 "the reality had all gone out of the question [of Catholic emancipation]" and left the defenders of the Protestant Constitution with "merely a residuum

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45 *Hansard*, New Series, 1829, xx. 1223, 1150; xxi. 153.
47 *Hansard*, New Series, 1829, xx. 928, 849, 1205-06.
of words...".\(^49\) An Ultra like Sadler was seen as resolutely locked into the ancien régime and "deaf to all calls for improvements" in an age of progress.\(^50\)

The Whig historians sought to provide evidence that to defend the Establishment was reactionary and anachronistic. However, in respect to the Catholic Question, many from the intelligentsia and the universities voiced their opposition to Sir Robert Peel and the duke of Wellington. Robert Southey, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth, together with John Henry Newman, John Keble and Bishop Blomfield all acknowledged the vitality of the Revolution Settlement in the nineteenth-century. Indeed, Sadler and his colleagues were not alone in their belief that the British Constitution as formulated in 1688 had given stability to Britain after civil war and dynastic rivalry. The validity of the Whig propaganda is, therefore, questionable. Nonetheless, because the forces for change won the day it is their beliefs that have necessarily been recorded. The existence of the Revolution Settlement, however,

\[\text{"had advanced England to a pitch of greatness never attained by any other country in the World... had secured the rights of property, and led to the rapid accumulation of wealth... had extended all the arts of civilized life, and provided in an unexampled degree for the comfort, the instruction, and the well-being of the people".}\(^51\)


\(^51\) Hansard, Third Series, (1831) iv. 1136. (Sadler). However, this speech might well have been given by Edmund Burke or Robert Southey, or even William Pitt.
Notwithstanding the forcefulness of Sadler's arguments, it is the interpretation of the victors that has passed the test of time and has become the version accepted by posterity. As Eric Evans has pointed out, this is perhaps "to accept that history is indeed the propaganda of the victors". It is, surely, at least time to commence questioning the assertions of the victors. Moreover, as Best has observed, many who did succumb to the force of Peel's castigation of Sadler and other champions of the Protestant Constitution and acquiesced in the arguments of those who declared for constitutional change, came later to regret their decision.

A Tory M.P. such as Michael Thomas Sadler, whether he is categorised as an Ultra-Tory or as a "Tory Radical", looked to Pitt and Eldon for his Tory roots. Sadler, arguably one of the most cogent of Ultras in the area of theological and socio-political philosophy, was dismissed as a "hot headed sophist". Such a denunciation of Sadler is curious as his particular brand of paternalism was, at the very least, of some help to those in need. Sadler's schemes for increased poor relief, emigration to ease unemployment and improved working conditions for factory hands, were but three ideas he had to remedy distress. Indeed, Sadler's social reforming programmes were a genuine attempt to alleviate hardship and were at least worthy of debate to determine if they were more credible than the doctrines of his political opponents. "Laissez-faire", Sadler argued quite plausibly, left the weak and oppressed denuded of the potential of even the meanest measure of relief. Sadler has been castigated by one Whig historian as being "employed by a factious Duke to represent falsely the intimidated householders of

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Newark". The influence of *The Black Book* can be clearly identified here. It must be emphasised, however, that Wade's book came out of the radical, not Whig, politics of 1829-32.56

The most common epithet used to describe Sadler was 'bigoted'. It was applied to his resistance to both Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform. In fact Sadler was merely one amongst a "faction of bigots" who had "no bond of union except fierce intolerance".58 He had no arguments "except those which deep-rooted prejudice" supplied, and no policy save 'No Popery', "a signal of wanton intolerance and malice", a subterfuge of bigotry.61

At least Sadler was deemed to be "consistent". He was "certainly... consistent in immovable prejudice – consistent in obstinately shutting [his] eyes against the light – consistent in unflinchingly adhering to false opinions and erroneous principles".62 Sadler particularly objected to being "branded as [one of] a lessening class of intolerants and bigots".63 He strenuously denied that he was "devoid of true liberality and benevolence".64 Moreover, Sadler

58 The Times, 28 July 1830.
59 Hansard, New Series (1829), xxi. 129.
60 The Times, 21 July 1830.
61 Hansard, Third Series, (1831), iii. 1785.
62 The Times, 21 August 1830.
63 Hansard, New Series, (1829) xx. 1150 (Sadler).
64 Ibid.
was in the front rank of an "Army of dolts", an array of "bigoted idiots". Sir Charles Burdett called Sadler's arguments "flimsy sophistry"; Lord Mountcharles found them "trite and fallacious" and The Times lambasted him for being "a solemn coxcomb". It is little wonder that Sadler complained that he was "ranked amongst those that are devoid... of reason and intelligence".

Simes has written that "it remained an article of faith for most Victorian historians that the Ultras were intellectually bankrupt". Perhaps for the very reason that Sadler was possessed of a formidable intellect his detractors were so at pains to belittle him and denounce his arguments. He was repeatedly labelled "a hot and false head" weighed down by "antiquated prejudices" whose defence of religious exclusivism was "papably absurd" which stemmed from an "inate bigotry".

It should not be seen as a digression to remember the duke of Newcastle at this juncture. Newcastle too, being a leading Ultra-Tory has been the subject of much derision at the hands of the Whig historians. He has been belittled by crass name-calling, which is wholly unhelpful and reduces the analytical merits of Whig historiography still further. Greville recorded "there was

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65 The Times, 10 August 1830.
67 Hansard, New Series, (1829), xx. 877.
68 Ibid., 1236.
69 The Times, 21 July 1830. See too The Times, 28 April 1831.
70 Hansard, New Series, (1829), xx. 1150.
71 Simes, "The Ultra-Tories in British Politics", p.32.
never such a fool as he is". In his *Memorials*, the Earl of Selborne repeated the earlier judgment; he wrote, He [Newcastle] is not a wise man. In its obituary of the duke, *The Times*, always hostile towards Newcastle, was characteristically barbed: "That he may have rarely been in the right there can be no doubt that at all times he most thoroughly believed himself not to be in the wrong". Newcastle had been seen as the "evil genius of his party", whereas in more recent times he has been seen as cutting rather a pathetic figure, being deemed as "a tragic old goose". Grant considered his influence merited a kinder epithet. He noted Newcastle's energy:

"The Duke of Newcastle takes an active part in the proceedings of the House: not in the shape of speaking himself, but in concerting those measures with his party which are deemed most likely to stem the torrent of Liberalism. In this respect he is one of the most zealous and unremitting in his exertions among the Conservative peers. And somehow or other, he has much greater influence with his party than the intemperance of his language when speaking, or the well-known ultraism of his opinion, would lead one to suppose".

That Newcastle had "much greater influence with his party" makes him an important figure and worthy of greater investigation than the scant and

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78 *The Times*. 15 January 1851.  
81 J.G. Grant, *Random Recollections of the House of Lords, from the year 1830 to 1836*, including *Personal sketches of the leading members*, (London, 1836), pp.94-95. For the whole text of Grant's *Recollections* of Newcastle see pp.94-97.
superficial treatment which he has received until the present time. More importantly for our purposes here it should be recognized that if Newcastle was able to dictate to the party then Sadler as the duke's man would have a degree of credibility in the Commons not necessarily commensurate with the limited time he had been a member. Furthermore, Sadler's sensational maiden speech in which he fulminated against Catholic emancipation would have increased his standing and makes him even worthier of attention.

On the rare occasions when Newcastle has been the subject of historical enquiry he has been dismissed as an outdated figure of fun who expressed antiquarian political beliefs. John Morley devoted several lines to the duke's political career; usually Newcastle is dismissed in a line with a curt taunt. However, he was dealt with only in passing. "The Duke by his action and behaviour and his out-dated beliefs aroused violent antagonisms. For the Duke with his rigidity of thought was living in a changing country whose outlooks were incompatible with his tenets". He continued, Newcastle's

"chief fault was not to know that time had brought him into a novel age, he defended himself with the haughty truism, then just ceasing to be true, that he had a right to do as he liked with his own. This clear cut enunciation of a vanishing principle became a sort of landmark and gave his name an unpleasing immortality in political history".

82 I believe that my own research into the political activities of the fourth duke of Newcastle are the exception to the rule. See Karginoff, "The Protestant Constitutionalists and Ultra-Toryism in Britain...", especially chapters 6-8. Even Simes unwittingly manages to reduce the duke to a rather pathetic caricature.
84 Another victim of "the side-road assassination technique"?
85 Morely, Life of Gladstone, Vol.1, p.68.
86 Ibid.
Could it be that the duke's nominee too became an unwitting victim of this "unpleasing immortality"? With the duke firmly cast in the mould of "the monster of monopoly" who was greeted with the joyous cry, "Babylon is fallen" when faced with electoral defeat, it seems reasonable to infer a certain amount of the mud flung at Newcastle stuck to Sadler too.

Morley, although writing at the turn of a new century, faithfully adhered to the nineteenth-century line. This is not unexpected. Morley was the biographer of Gladstone, a politician who had abandoned the Tory and High Church ultraism of his youth and adopted the more "enlightened" Conservatism of Peel. Morley himself was a Liberal who naturally wrote in the Whig tradition. Morley's position is important. He is representative of twentieth-century historiography and his perspective is that which has remained dominant even until present times.

By the beginning of the twentieth century there had been little or no revision in the historiography of Toryism, still less in the position of Sadler. The Ultras, with Sadler prominent amongst them, were still regarded by historians as an evil and bigoted group who had dominated the Tory party and oppressed the nation in the early part of the nineteenth century. Historians at the beginning of the new century continued to resist the need for objectivity in debate concerning the activities, beliefs and personages of their own particular political demonology, whether real or imagined.

87 It seems to this student that Morley's convenient sidelining of Newcastle served two purposes. One, his verdict on Newcastle reads like an obituary and indeed, Morley did successfully "bury" the duke for over 90 years. Secondly, by marginalising Newcastle so neatly, partly by highlighting his antediluvian approach, succeeds in elevating the duke's new nominee and Morley's hero, the young Gladstone.

88 *The Times*, 28 April 1831.

iii) The Whig historiographical tradition continued: c.1900 - c.1960

The traditional Whig line was dutifully toed by A.D. Innes in 1915 when he unquestioningly proclaimed that the Ultra-Tories were "an oligarchy [which] could not be expected to show, and did not show, any understanding of the new conditions".90 Obviously Sadler, as Newcastle’s hand-picked gladiator to do battle on behalf of the sacred Constitution, was a servant of this oligarchy. Whig historians uniformly neglected to contemplate their political foes with anything which remotely approached neutrality. Innes’ approach early in the twentieth century was indicative that the trend would continue. The rashness of his judgment is demonstrated by a study of Sadler’s writings on social problems in Ireland. Sadler’s research into Ireland’s "evils" and his horror of Malthusian population theory portray his concern over social questions. His opposition to the Anatomy Act and defence of factory workers as shown by his work within the Ten Hours’ Movement reveal that he was abreast of "the new conditions".91 It should be mentioned that although it is Ashley who is remembered as the champion of downtrodden factory hands, it was Sadler who did the donkey work, a fact that Ashley himself readily acknowledged.92 Yet text-book historians have largely chosen to ignore Sadler’s contribution to factory reform and have preferred to concentrate on constructing tributes to the memory of Ashley.93

91 Ibid.
93 Although there is no twentieth-century biography of Sadler in fairness to Driver he does acknowledge Sadler’s role in the Ten Hours Movement in his Life of Oastler. He appears to be the exception. Nonetheless, Sadler is condemned to play second fiddle to Oastler’s tune. This is perhaps inevitable as Driver’s main concern was Oastler.
It is important too to draw attention to the similarity between ideas proposed by Sadler and other Ultras and the rural fundamentalism advocated by the Young England group and popularised in the novels of Disraeli written in the 1840s. In 1938 Sir Llewellyn Woodward spurned Sadler & Co. as "pig-tail tories of the old school". Woodward reasoned that the likes of Sadler were, therefore, "likely to be content with things as they found them for they would of necessity "oppose reforms which threatened their monopoly of place and power". Nonetheless, Woodward graciously admitted that these Ultras "were not fools", and conceded that "they had practical experience of government, since the administration of local affairs was largely in their control. They wanted to keep their authority and their privileges but they were ready to use their commonsense and to accept changes which did not affect their own position in the State". In fairness to Woodward he acknowledged Sadler's importance within the Ten Hours' Movement. He wrote, "Sadler, whose prominence in the debates on the bill [Ten Hours] gave him the parliamentary leadership of the movement at a critical time, was... a tory, and a strong opponent of catholic emancipation". At one and the same time, therefore, Woodward admits Sadler's social reformist zeal but reminds the

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94 For example B. Disraeli, Coningsby, (Penguin Books, 1989), first published London, 1844; B. Disraeli, Sybil, (Penguin Books, 1989), first published London, 1845. The full title of Coningsby or the New Generation is instructive. Perchance this new generation of Sadlerian Tories were more enlightened than has been admitted.


96 Ibid.

97 Sadler's experience as administrator of poor relief etc. and his role in various parliamentary select committees and Royal Commissions should be remembered.

98 Woodward, The Age of Reform, p.52.

99 Ibid. p.148.
reader of his anti-Catholic stance. Nevertheless, Woodward\textsuperscript{100} was quick to point out almost immediately that Sadler, who lost his seat in the first election after the reform bill,\textsuperscript{101} handed over the parliamentary leadership of the movement to Ashley".\textsuperscript{102}

So it can be seen that Woodward continued the dominant historiography being content to follow the orthodox line of his contemporary, George Kitson Clark, who as we have seen dismissed one leading Ultra in contemptuous tones. The pattern was set, therefore, for conservative historians of the later twentieth century. Norman Gash, Robert Blake, Robert Stewart and Bruce Coleman have all failed to acknowledge that the constitutional and political beliefs held by Sadler and friends in the 1820s were not an aberration held by a factious minority but rather those of "old" Toryism or what might be termed Pittite Toryism. Significantly, Woodward commented:

"... the Tories, who were in office in 1815, kept their parliamentary majority until 1830. The leaders of the party were able men; they had the support of the church, the universities, the services, the unreformed municipal corporations in the towns, most of the great landed families, and nearly all the country gentry. These supporters were likely to be content with things as they found them".\textsuperscript{103}

\textsuperscript{100} I believe Woodward was the first historian to draw attention to Sadler's leadership of the movement for factory reform.

\textsuperscript{101} My emphasis. The inference is that Sadler's parliamentary seat was only maintained because of inequalities present in the electoral system prior to a reform of parliament.

\textsuperscript{102} Woodward, \textit{The Age of Reform}, p.151.

\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Ibid.} Woodward is of course recognised as a very conservative historian, though writing in the Whig tradition.
There was thus, according to Woodward and contrary to the established Whig interpretation of the political sentiment in the nation, much support for the Ultra-Tory political perspective which sought to maintain the Constitution in its existing form. It is worth pointing out that Sadler who certainly advocated the maintenance of the Constitution was not "content with things as [he] found them". He was wise to the blatant inequalities in society and sought to alert the nations natural leaders to their paternalistic duties. In their social outlook, therefore, these Tory Radicals, or Ultra-Tories were, literally, reactionaries. It was the evils of the new industrial order they were combating, and they gave their support to its victims -- paupers, factory children, industrial and agricultural labourers. Moreover, Woodward omitted to acknowledge that the Tories of 1815-1830 were essentially those of the 1790s and were, therefore, consistent in their Toryism. Sadler whose political ideology was formed in the years after the French Revolution was imbued with a passion to maintain stability in society and believed this could best be achieved by preserving the existing hierarchical structure and that this would be more likely to happen if the dominant political elite honoured their responsibilities. Woodward, although basically hostile to the Ultras, nevertheless can be seen to have modified the views of the previous century which had emphasised bigotry as the over-riding characteristic. Moreover, Woodward neglected to examine why the old guard, as he perceived them to be, proved to be such "obstinate opponent[s]" to Repeal, Relief and Reform. Despite this glaring omission, Woodward failed to instigate any substantial reappraisal of the political

104 Ibid., p.52.
105 Ibid., p.54. Woodward's view of Eldon, who has been seen by many as the leader or "doyen" of the "pig-tail Tories", is instructive. Ibid., pp.52-54. In fact Woodward expressed a more sympathetic view of Eldon than had the overwhelming majority of nineteenth-century commentators. See Karginoff, "The Protestant Constitutionalists and Ultra-Toryism in Britain", Vol.1, pp.50-51.
standpoint of those on the right of the Tory party, of whom in the period 1829-1833, Sadler was unmistakably a leading light.

1938 witnessed the publication of a second weighty tome by the Oxford University Press. Unsurprisingly, however, it was woefully light on historical analysis or historiographical reappraisal. Keith Feiling essentially complemented Woodward’s views. He stressed the antiquarianism of the traditional Tories. Sadler did not merit a mention. Linda Colley, although primarily for other reasons, has described Feiling’s work as an "unsatisfactory... study". Feiling declared at the outset of his work that "the primary purpose of this book, is to tell the story". One can only asked the question why? He recounted a familiar tale no less convincing for the telling. In limiting himself to the narrow task of story telling, Feiling inevitably fell short on historical analysis. Indeed, primarily he merely regurgitated the tired old, tried and tested, Whig perspective.

Feiling’s later History of England likewise merely reiterated the standard historical axioms which surround Sadler’s particular brand of Toryism. Again his singular goal was narrative. Feiling emphasised the "bigotry" and anachronism of the opponents of political reforms in the usual fashion of nineteenth-century historiography. Thus, in one more history text-book to be added to the voluminous Whig histories, the familiar line was reiterated of the shortsightedness of the "pig-headed squiree". It is perhaps even more telling that Feiling mentions Green’s Shorter History of England in such reverent

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110 Ibid., p.810.
111 Ibid., p.821.
terms. He described Green's *History* as being "momentous". It should not prove surprising, therefore, that Feiling's acceptance of the Whig version of events set the tone for his own *History of England* in which he echoed Green's understanding of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century history. There was no thought given to Sadler being a possible bridge between the Toryism of an earlier age and the Conservatism of Disraeli.

With the publication of Geoffrey Best's "The Protestant Constitution and its Supporters" came the first formal acknowledgement that "the Protestant constitutionalists have probably received a worse press than any other party in the history of the English church and state", and, indeed, historical reappraisal of Sadler & Co. appeared underway. Not so; for Sadler and friends this glimmer of historical respectability was to be short-lived. Ultimately, Best conceded that they "lacked vision for the future", although they were by no means "lacking in intellectual distinction" and were "certainly not as barbarous, stupid, and as antiquated as their adversaries liked to pretend".

Historical reappraisal was, indeed, fleetingly maintained. Best soon modified his earlier view of the Protestant Constitutionalists. In 1964 he assiduously confirmed the nineteenth-century view of Halevy who had argued that Sadler's intellectual thesis to preserve the Protestant Constitution rested upon "old stock arguments worn threadbare by constant repetition". He confirmed that the Constitutionalists were "incapable of seeing the need for

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reform”. In the early 1960s Crane Brinton and J.H. Hexter repeated the standard wooden opinions passed down by generations of historians – that only third-rate minds could espouse such a narrow brand of conservatism. It is evident, therefore, that many erudite historians succumbed to the views of their Oxford contemporaries based upon the tradition of the Victorian Whig historians who had provided the "intellectual" basis of the "findings" of Elie Halevy, Crane Brinton, J.H. Hexter and the later work of Geoffrey Best. With the work of Best it is not so easy to make such a clear cut decision to place him firmly in the Whig historiographical tradition. His research will have to be looked at again, this time from a different standpoint.

iv) Conservative historiography on Sadler and Toryism, 1960-1970

We now move on to look at what may perhaps be controversially termed the "Tory" or Conservative interpretation of history. We have seen what the Whig-inspired historians have written about Sadler & Co., therefore we can perhaps be expected to anticipate a substantially different opinion from Conservative historians. However, the majority of research into the Tory party has very largely discounted the Ultras, as they did not suit the purposes of what has now become a Conservative historiographical tradition. Sadler has

116 C. Brinton, English Political Thought in the Nineteenth Century, (London, 1933) and (New York, 1962). It is interesting to note that the work was reprinted 30 years after its initial publication in its original form. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that any revision was deemed unnecessary. However, 'classics' are often reproduced without alteration. See (London, 1933), p.74 and (New York, 1962), p.73. See also p.13 of both editions. J.H. Hexter, Reappraisals in History, (London, 1961), pp.128-130. Hexter’s title is somewhat ironic – there is little reappraisal of the supporters of the Protestant Constitution. Hexter labelled them “Adullamites” – “Grondeurs, fondeurs, Adullamites sulking in their decaying, remote, rural lairs, always against the government, the lumpen proletariat and natural nihilists at the bottom of the landed heap, the chronic discontented second lieutenants of the country hierarchy, envying their betters, despising their inferiors, detesting both, ready for trouble if they could find it”. Reappraisals in History, p.129.
been more fortunate than many of his orthodox colleagues. His reputation remains largely intact. This has not been due to any sympathy with which Conservative historians may have inadvertently felt for this particular champion of the seventeenth-century Constitution. On the contrary, Sadler has remained largely incognito and has maintained a consistent invisibility in most history books post 1960. Why is this so? Again it is valid to suggest that Sadler has proved particularly difficult for historians of the Tory or Conservative party to reconcile with the traditional view of the Protestant Constitutionalists. Somewhat annoyingly, Sadler had a predilection for social reform. He hated the rapidly-advancing industrial system, on both political and humanitarian grounds. "It uprooted traditional social relations and values and spread subversion and discontent. At the same time it replaced the old personal relationship between masters and men by the impersonal cash-nexus, the by-product of utilitarianism and laissez-faire".117 No doubt such an enlightened predisposition to right wrongs and clear away injustice does not tally with the traditional views of bigotry, stupidity, intolerance etc. It should be noted that Sadler was in no ways unique in his political philosophy. Most of the defenders of the Revolution Settlement had a wider view of the Protestant Constitution than their detractors have allowed. The Constitution provided for the happiness and prosperity of the people - it was laissez-faire Liberals, Ricardian political economists, Whig manufacturing magnates and a Malthusian millocracy who adamantly obstructed early nineteenth-century Tory proposals for social reform.

1960 saw the publication of J. Steven Watson's *The Reign of George III*.118 He attempted to divorce Sadler and Co. from the Pittite tradition.119

119 Ibid., p.444
Watson went on to denigrate Sadler's Toryism as "sentimental" and characterised by a "love of the past". So it was that a decade which was to become renowned for progress in all spheres, in respect to the historiography of Toryism at least, was to witness little or no deviation from the standard historical line. By 1961, however, Norman Gash acknowledged that the Ultra-Tory crusade to offset Catholic emancipation and the subsequent attempts to remove Peel and Wellington from the leadership of the party were not completely born out of bigotry and malevolence. It would appear, therefore, that the revisionist work of Best had not been without some effect.

By 1965, however, Gash had moderated his initial acceptance of Best's revisionist line. In order that Peel might be exalted it became necessary once again to degrade the likes of Sadler. To maximise the triumph of Sir Robert Peel Gash argued that the Toryism of Sadler was too narrow a base upon which the Tory party could expect to achieve electoral success. He wrote, "For the sake of the landed interest itself Conservatism as a national party could not take its stand on landed Toryism alone". But did the landed interest expect the Tory party to stand for landed Toryism alone? Certainly, Newcastle for one did not think so, hence his desire to recruit Sadler. Indeed, Newcastle and Sadler's view of the importance of paternalism and responsibility coincided.

Despite Best's U-turn with the publication of *Temporal Pillars*, credibility was almost restored to Sadler's position when G.I.T. Machin proposed that Ultra

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121 It should be remembered by Sadler was involved in negotiations with the duke of Cumberland, Sir Richard Vyvyan, the duke of Newcastle, Sir Edward Knatchbull and Lord Eldon, amongst others, to wrest the party from the control of Peel and Wellington and restore it to the care of its natural leaders. Moreover, Sadler voted against the ministry in November 1830. See Karginoff, "The Protestant Constitutionalists and Ultra-Toryism in British politics", chapters 9 and 10, pp.470-590.
opposition to Catholic relief was possibly not based upon religious bigotry alone.\textsuperscript{124} Moreover, Machin included Sadler's role in the crusade against emancipation.\textsuperscript{125} With P.J.V. Rolo's acknowledgement the following year that the motivation behind Ultra opposition was not due entirely to personal animosities, it appeared the Ultras might be readmitted into the fold of historical "also rans".\textsuperscript{126} Moreover, by 1969 with Harold Perkin seemingly contemplating Best's earlier revisionist line on the Ultras by pointing to them having a social conscience, which he termed as the "aristocratic ideal" – being paternalistic and, therefore, philanthropic – it seemed the Ultras (and Sadler in particular) were, indeed, on the road to historical rehabilitation.\textsuperscript{127} It was of the utmost significance for the historiography of Toryism that Perkin's reappraisal of Sadler and friends took place in a work entitled \textit{The Origins of Modern English Society}. If Sadler was included at the dawn of modernity then clearly what he said and stood for might be of some importance.

With Perkin's acknowledgement of Sadler and the \textit{Blackwood's} \textsuperscript{128} contributor, David Robinson, as adherents to ideas of social reform, a cloak of respectability was almost hung around the shoulders of the Ultra-Tories.\textsuperscript{129} Nonetheless, almost inevitably, Sadler was initially described by Perkin as "a notable social crank".\textsuperscript{130} However, the positive aspects of Sadler's contribution to the Tory reformist cause far outweighed any negative observations.

\textsuperscript{125} \textit{Ibid.}, Cited Greville Memoirs, Vol.1, p.274.
\textsuperscript{128} \textit{Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine} found in April 1817. The leading Ultra-Tory journal.
\textsuperscript{130} \textit{Ibid.}, p.241.
Perkin boldly asserted that "Michael Thomas Sadler, [was] the acknowledged leader of the High Tory paternalists". In order to strengthen his case for a reconsideration of Sadler, Perkin cited the observations of the *Blackwood’s* columnist O’Sullivan. In commenting on Sadler’s performance in the parliamentary session following Sadler’s arrival in the Commons, he wrote,

"The Economists for the first time heard their fallibility called in question, and felt their ascendancy in danger... These sages of the Satanic school in politics encountered an adversary by whom their favourite measures were opposed, and their most familiar axioms disputed... Sadler has done this. Be he right or wrong, he is the man whose warning voice called the attention of the honourable House... to the first principles of the Economists; who bid them turn their eyes from the capitalist to the labourer; and who had the spirit and the feeling to ask them... whether that could be a good system... under the influence of which capital must increase at the expense of humanity; where what is called wealth only serves to oppress and then paralyse industry; and national prosperity is made to... proceed upon its course amidst the sweat, and the blood, and the groans of its victims".131

Perkin is keen to emphasise his thesis. He states that "Sadler was the key figure in the revival of the aristocratic ideal".132 Indeed, Perkin issues the plea (which was wholly ignored by historians) which Ecceshall reissued some twenty years later.


later. It should be noted, however, that Perkin tempers his call for Sadler to be given attention by inferring that Sadler's ideology was doomed due to the political context in which it was conceived.

"He [Sadler] belonged to a wide-spread current of social thought which was flowing strongly in the 1820s... That current of thought, signally defeated by the Reform Act... by the New Poor Law, and by the triumph of free trade, and then dissipated in the romantic feudalism of Disraeli, Lord John Manners and 'Young England', has suffered the neglect and misunderstanding of most lost causes. Yet in the 1820s it produced, quite a part from Sadler's contribution, a counter-attack on aristocratic 'abdication' and the entrepreneurial ideal which not only rejected outright the whole canon of classical economics but anticipated in great measure both Keynesian economics and the social outlook of the Welfare State".

With Norman Gash admitting that the Ultra crusade against Wellington and Peel was not merely a groundless attack on his hero and his owning to the possibility that there was some political and constitutional basis for the Ultra argument, the historical appraisal seemed complete.

133 Eccleshall, English conservatism since the Restoration, p.86.
134 My emphasis.
135 Again my emphasis.
136 Perkin, The Origins of Modern English Society, pp.243-244.
137 Gash, Mr Secretary Peel, pp.581-582, 587-588.
1970 saw the publication of Robert Blake's survey *The Conservative Party from Peel to Churchill*.138 Although he acknowledged the Ultras, Blake limited their political ideology to repeal, relief and parliamentary reform. It should be remembered that Blake's admiration for Peel blinded him to the fact that at one time Peel opposed all three. Blake considered Ultra-Toryism to be a bankrupt philosophy and so instead lauded "Peel and other abler members of the party" for broadening the political horizon from a mere "blind adherence to the old constitution".139 Blake has, therefore, followed the lead of Gash and isolated the Tory supporters of the Constitution as strictly limited to a landed aristocratic group.140

Whilst it is necessary to reveal the severity of the criticism dealt to Sadler and his associates, it is also important to point out that modern scholarship has not been totally black and white on the issue. It is not the intention of this thesis to elevate Sadler into a position of unmerited prominence. It is, however, only


139 Ibid., p.20. See too pp.19-20. An anonymous reviewer for the *Sunday Times* newspapers, published in London, praised "the consummate insight into the whole of the political scene" and continued, "I think Lord Blake has no equal". Blake identified Lord Chandos, later the duke of Buckingham, as being the "chief representative of the Ultras". Chandos was held in contempt by most Ultra-Tories. In 1965 Bradfield's unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, (London University), he conclusively demonstrated that the leading Ultra-Tories in the period 1828-1835 were Vyvyan, Knatchbull, Inglis, Sadler, Wetherell, Sibthorp and Gascoigne. Of course, he argued that Vyvyan was pre-eminent. See "Sir Richard Vyvyan and Tory politics...". It would be fanciful to guess that Norman Gash may have been the anonymous reviewer. In 1957 Sir Herbert Butterfield wrote, "I am not sure that the professionalising of history has not resulted in the unconscious development of authoritarian prejudices amongst the professionals themselves; and it could happen that by 1984, if readers are not their own critics, a whole field of study might become the monopoly of a group or a party all reviewing one another and standing shoulder to shoulder in order to stifle the discrepant idea, the new intellectual system, or the warning voice of the sceptic". H. Butterfield, *George III and the Historians*, (London, 1957), p.8. I am grateful to my father-in-law Professor John de Laeter who made a present of this book to me in 1993.

fair that he be firstly, acknowledged and secondly, given a fair hearing. It is not necessary to present Sadler, or indeed any of his parliamentary colleagues in white shining armour for him to be worthy of consideration, yet oftentimes it would appear that his chief opponent – Peel – has been portrayed as a larger than life figure. On the other hand, it is reasonable to point out that Sadler, for example, has perhaps warranted greater attention than he has been accorded. Whilst Peel’s importance may have been over-emphasised, Sadler’s has certainly been underplayed. Even historians who have given a grudging accreditation to Sadler and other Ultras have been guilty of giving a one-sided version of events.

Both Blake and Best have sold the Ultras short. Sadler in particular fares poorly. Best is guilty of severing anyone with some semblance of political and intellectual dexterity from Ultra ranks. Best excludes Sadler from the Ultra regiments.141 This is a classic example of how historians have divided the Ultras into select groupings to suit their own theses. Consequently, anyone not intellectually sterile yet of Ultra-Tory persuasion, or at least on the Right of the Tory party, has now become a "Tory Radical".142 Blake has stated that if Peel "had adopted the principles of Lord Eldon, or if – even less probably – he had been converted to the ideas of Sadler or Young England, he would have conceded a perpetual monopoly of power to the Whigs".143 Such a statement would appear to contrast strikingly with an earlier observation when he openly acknowledged that the principles of Eldon and Sadler were widely held by a majority of the political nation.144 However, it could be argued that the Tory, or Conservative party, was relegated to long term periods of opposition

141 Other important figures he disengages from the fold are Redesdale, Sidmouth, Winchilsea and Nicholl.
142 Best, Temporal Pillars, pp.176-178, 183-184, 233-235, 266.
144 Ibid., pp.19-20.
in the mid-nineteenth century precisely because Peel had refused to adopt the political ideology of Sadler or Young England.

As we have seen Gash, like Blake, stated that the Toryism of Sadler and friends was too narrow a basis upon which the Tory party could depend for electoral success. These statements by Gash and Blake raise four important questions which shall be looked at in the fifth part of this chapter. Firstly, Blake has distinguished between the Ultras, Sadler and Young England. It may be the case that these three elements within the more orthodox Toryism of the early nineteenth century marched under the same intellectual banner. Secondly, Peel's particular brand of Conservatism must be considered; it may prove to be the case that his was merely a form of traditional, or Ultra-Toryism dressed in other clothes. Thirdly, it must be asked whether Peelite Conservatism might not be more in line with Whiggism rather than orthodox Toryism. Blake has himself mooted this third possibility when he asked if Peel might not deliberately have been attempting to break free of the traditional elements in Toryism. The fourth important concern is one raised by Gash: was it necessarily the case that Ultra-Toryism, although essentially landed and aristocratic, sought to make early nineteenth-century Toryism a party of the land alone? Certainly the concerns of Michael Sadler, Parson Bull and Richard Oastler would indicate an awareness of the needs of the newly urbanised and industrialised classes. The work of Harold Perkin initiated study of the intellectual content of Ultra-Toryism which was centred around the Blackwood's contributors; these articles alone clearly indicate an awareness amongst Ultras of new conditions developing in early industrial Britain. It should be emphasised that it was Sadler who was in the forefront of moves to make the Tory party relevant to the new conditions of a rapidly industrialising society.

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145 N. Gash, *Reaction and Reconstruction in English politics, 1832-52*, p.139.  
v) Conservative historiography continued, 1970 to date

Despite Perkin's reassessment the question of Sadler's political credibility was not seriously taken up by any other historian until 1974. D.G.S. Simes declared at the outset of his work that his main purpose had been to "examine and reassess" the "traditional and prevalent view of Ultra-Toryism". Naturally, this necessitated an examination of Sadler's position. Disappointingly, he concluded that "generally they [the Ultras] resisted change and sought to preserve the existing system intact – a stance that was scarcely viable in practical political terms". This is a curious conclusion to have arrived at because during the thesis Simes judged Sadler's political philosophy to have been both vibrant and visionary as well as particularly valid in the context of early nineteenth-century Britain. Furthermore, Simes asserted that:

"there are many valid criticisms that can be made of Ultra ideals. They were static, and politically impracticable, they lacked originality, had little profundity, and sometimes verged close to incoherence. They were rarely expressed uniformly by all Ultras, and they were virtually never selflessly professed."

Simes does not indicate which specific charges refer uniquely to Sadler.

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147 Simes, "The Ultra-Tories in British Politics", p.l.
148 Ibid.
149 Ibid., pp.149-150.
150 Ibid. See especially chapter 1 and 2. "The image of Ultra-Toryism" and "The political and social beliefs of the Ultra-Tories".
151 Ibid., p.150.
Following Simes’ revised estimation of the Ultras they had to wait for more than a decade for a new champion with Clark’s gallant defence of the Ultra ideal. Nonetheless, Clark, as David Eastwood has rightly pointed out “fails to do justice to the range and richness of their social and political concerns”, Eastwood too could be said to have neglected the full range of their programmes. Bruce Coleman, in a recently published book on Conservatism in the nineteenth century, has condoned this viewpoint. Coleman has written dismissively of the Ultra-Tories and disparagingly of the Ultra commitment to the Anglican Church. He has been even more scathing when commenting on Ultra aspirations to bring about social reform to alleviate distress. Coleman wrote:

“There remains something of a historiographical mythology about the Tory contribution to 'social reform'... Certainly Tory theorists included a crop of romantic paternalists, Southey, Coleridge and Wordsworth being among those who articulated hostility to market economics. One can point too to the rhetoric of the Young England frondeurs, the multifarious good causes of Ashley... and those Tories who opposed the implementation of the 1834 Poor Law Act, supported factory legislation and lamented the dominance of national policy by Whigs and

154 It should be emphasised that Southey was Eastwood’s focus not Sadler. However, perhaps a link between Southey and Sadler could have been made. It is interesting to note that Southey was keen to write a biography of Sadler following his premature death in 1835. See *D.N.B.*, p.598.
economists... But ... it is difficult to assess the distinctively Tory contribution. None of the main social legislation was specifically Tory in its conception... Many Tories anyway concerned themselves little with these issues and gave priority to more basic concerns like social order, political stability and party fortunes.158

Social issues were of particular concern to the Ultras for precisely these reasons. Coleman states that "one can point... to... the multifarious good causes of Ashley... and those Tories who opposed the 1834 Poor Law Act [and] supported factory legislation" but he chose not to. Coleman has, therefore, only reiterated the opinions of Kitson Clark,159 Robert Blake,160 Norman Gash161 and Robert Stewart,162 all of whom have engaged in a universal hostility towards those on the right of the Tory party and consequently have promoted a uniform deification of Peel and his particular brand of Liberal Conservatism.163 To this end the opponents of Peel (and Sadler is perhaps a prime example) have either been ignored or dismissed as being "cranky and disruptive".164

158 Ibid., p.125.
160 R. Blake, The Conservative Party from Peel to Churchill; Blake, Disraeli.
163 See Karginoff, "The Protestant Constitutionalists and Ultra-Toryism in Britain...", Vol.1, pp.70-96; See too pp.13-16 and Vol.2, pp.814-828. I am mindful of Youngson's warnings and am not attempting to turn Peel into a bit-player!
164 Coleman, Conservatism and the Conservative Party, p.125.
Apart from the obvious absence of debate on the position of Ultras within the Tory party generally, there exists within the overwhelmingly negative historiography a plethora of definitions regarding the meaning of Ultra-Toryism. For example, Michael Thomas Sadler was without question a social reformer as well as a defender of the Anglican Constitution. He was also one of the most prominent of the Ultra-Tories. Moreover, as his patron was the duke of Newcastle this increased the respect he was accorded in the Tory party. However, Sadler has been ingeniously disengaged from the ranks of the Ultras because he did not rigidly adhere to the defence of the Protestant Constitution. Simes astutely accused Blake of seeking to prove that no viable alternative to Peelite Conservatism existed in the late 1820s and early 1830s. Blake "linked the Ultra-Tories to a group of agrarian status-quoites led by Chandos", and re-defined Sadler and the contributors to *Blackwood’s Magazine* as "radical Tories". Simes has judged Blake to have committed "grave violence to historical reality". Blake, together with other Conservative historians, have consistently projected the term Ultra-Tory in a derogatory way. The reactionary nature of Ultra-Toryism has consistently been stressed; this is needless for the Ultras were most obviously reactionaries – preferring things to remain as they had been. To this end Sadler has been deliberately hidden from view. When conditions in society necessitated change, Sadler for one, sought to implement workable remedies. His acknowledgement that industrialisation set the social and political context has been ignored or at best side-lined.

**vi) The Conservative historiography on Conservatism in regard to Sadler, post 1832**

165 Simes, "The Ultra-Tories in British Politics...", p.45.
168 For a detailed appraisal on this topic generally see Karginoff, *op.cit.*, pp.75-96.
The fundamental problem that continues to exist within the historiography of Ultra-Toryism is twofold. Firstly, historians of both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have neglected to define who it is they have been haranguing. Perhaps, more correctly, the problem is that historians have defined Ultra-Toryism differently. Indeed, they still do so. For example, Clark and Eastwood differ over the antecedents of Ultra-Toryism's intellectual foundations. Best and Perkin also are clearly at odds over who precisely filled the ranks of the Ultras. Secondly, historians have either chosen to ignore the Ultra contribution to social reform, or the likes of Blake and Coleman who have reasoned that as it is impossible to gloss over the contribution of the early nineteenth-century Tory reformers such as Sadler, have, nonetheless, denigrated them as mere exponents of crack-pot schemes of no possible merit. It should be remembered that the likes of Southey and Sadler put forward various ideas to alleviate distress throughout the 1820s. An analysis of some of Sadler's reform proposals will reveal these to be far from outlandish designs.\(^{169}\)

In recent years Conservative historians have begun to take notice of Sadler, albeit with some reluctance. For example, Jonathan Clark acknowledges Sadler in a footnote.\(^{170}\) R.J. Smith pays tribute to several Ultra-Tories in his *The Gothic Bequest*,\(^{171}\) however, Sadler is left out. Similarly, A. Everett sees no reason to include Sadler in *The Tory Idea of Landscape*.\(^{172}\) Perhaps more curiously, in a book entitled *The Protestant Crusade in Britain*,\(^{173}\) John Wolfe has chosen to

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\(^{169}\) Sadler, *Ireland, its evils and their remedies*. See my chapter 5.

\(^{170}\) Clark, *English Society*, p.78.


omit Sadler altogether. This is indeed strange. Sadler's first speech against Catholic emancipation sold 500,000 copies.\textsuperscript{174} It would appear, therefore, there is some justification for including such a stalwart Protestant crusader.\textsuperscript{175} Indeed, one could be forgiven for suggesting that a text purporting to highlight anti-Catholicism in Britain in the mid-nineteenth century which fails to make mention of this Protestant hero would be merely tilting at windmills. By contrast, however, James J. Sack\textsuperscript{176} in his study of the defence of the Church of England in the period prior to 1832 has given due place to Sadler's constitutional commitment to maintaining the specifically Protestant character of the Revolution Settlement.\textsuperscript{177} The duke of Newcastle too is included as a figure of some significance. Moreover, Boyd Hilton has integrated Sadler within an examination of the influence of evangelicalism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.\textsuperscript{178}

Hilton has also noticed Sadler whom he has described as an "extreme pre-millennial evangelical".\textsuperscript{179} Moreover, he has identified Sadler as part of "a bloc of evangelicals" associated not merely with attempts at "moral reform" but "with movements for social reform as well".\textsuperscript{180} Furthermore, Sadler is labelled as one of a number of "crypto-Recordites"\textsuperscript{181} who sat in parliament "from


\textsuperscript{175} Interestingly, however, Wolffe mentions Sadler's biographer the Evangelical publisher Robert Benton Seeley, \textit{ibid.}, p.149.

\textsuperscript{176} Sack, \textit{From Jacobite to Conservative}...

\textsuperscript{177} See my chapter 3.


\textsuperscript{179} \textit{Ibid.}, p.389.

\textsuperscript{180} \textit{Ibid.}, p.212.

\textsuperscript{181} Alexander Haldane's \textit{Record} (1828-1923) was a dissenting, evangelical journal which enjoyed the widest circulation out of a plethora of evangelical, adventist press in the 1830s. The \textit{Record} took over from the more 'moderate' \textit{Christian Observer} and elucidated Calvinist doctrine. \textit{The Record} strongly advocated the doctrine that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ must precede the thousand year reign of the Messiah on the earth.
about 1825"¹eight who although "not himself a Recordite... supported the Recordite campaign in Parliament, and was in turn backed firmly by the Scottish Recordite leader, John Briscoe".¹³ Indeed, Sadler has been linked to "adventists" such as Robert Inglis, John Weyland and G.H. Rose as well as the "apocalypticians G.S. Bull and Edward Bickersteth... and Ashley". Hilton is careful not to neglect Sadler's association with the "prophetic Recordites Spencer Perceval junior and Bucknall Estcourt".¹⁴ He has drawn attention to the importance of Sadler's evangelicalism which he opts to term "humanitarian paternalism". However, Hilton appears most eager to explain Sadler's attitudes to social questions by pointing to his association "with the pentecostal wing of evangelicalism". Indeed, he is keen, and rightly so, to link Sadler to Ashley and Seeley. However, curiously Hilton neglects Sadler's long friendship with Joseph Dickinson, J.R. Stephens and Richard Oastler.¹⁵ Interestingly, Ashley is portrayed as "a fervent pre-millenarian, obsessed with prophecy and with the imminence of the Second Advent, even though he sometimes found the

¹³ Ibid., p.212.
¹⁴ Ibid.
¹⁵ Sadler first met Oastler when the latter was 17 years old. In 1807 the two campaigned on behalf of William Wilberforce at the West Riding elections. Sadler was 9 years older than Oastler. From 1810 they were active in social welfare work, most notably during a typhus epidemic. Together they "performed every office of attendant and nurse". During the winter of 1815-16 all the resources of civic philanthropy were utilized by the pair through the charitable auspices of the Strangers' Friend Society whose members staffed the local infirmary and who were zealous on behalf of the Emancipation Movement. The Methodist heritage of these evangelical philanthropists was critical to their commitment to "good works". Indeed, in May 1790, John Wesley stayed overnight with the Oastlers and before he left took the eight-months old Richard in his arms and blessed him. "Richard's entire upbringing was conducted in the spirit of that blessing, for from the moment of his birth he was breathing the air of deepest piety". See C. Driver, Tory Radical. The Life of Richard Oastler, (Oxford, 1946), p.13. See too pp.13-24, "The making of an Evangelical" and pp.25-35, "The making of a Tory". Chapter 22, "The faith of a Tory", pp.424-437 are also instructive.
language of the Record too extreme".\textsuperscript{186} Seeley too "was a prominent pre-millenarian prophet, obsessed with the imminence of divine vengeance".\textsuperscript{187}

Of greater significance is Hilton's determination to link Sadler with Spencer Perceval junior. He is at pains to highlight Perceval's "drooling, shaking, resisting attempts by friend and foe to sit him down" on the occasion of "an amazing speech on cholera and the Second Coming" in which he pointed out that God punished mankind in a paternalist or discretionary way.\textsuperscript{188} Hilton consistently seeks to disengage the "extremist" Sadler from "moderate" or "scientific" mainstream Evangelicals. Nonetheless, although Sadler is derided and compared unfavourably to more "saintly" or temperate Evangelicals, he is at least included in a discourse on what Hilton has termed "the politics of atonement". Why an analysis of the link between evangelicalism and the natural law tradition – the central tenets of which, in respect to William Paley\textsuperscript{189} at least were mercy and justice (as opposed to paternalism and benevolence) – was omitted from Hilton's text is at once both curious and significant.

Sack too, in fact, is not, initially at least, very complimentary in regard to Sadler, but this is not important. What is of significance is that he is present in the text. He writes of "the now largely forgotten national political career of Michael Thomas Sadler", that he was in the "Tory-radical tradition", yet because of this

\textsuperscript{186} Hilton, The Age of Atonement, p.95.
\textsuperscript{187} Ibid., p.96.
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid., p.214, pp.214-215 for selected segments of Perceval's speech in the Commons of 20 March 1832.
\textsuperscript{189} For example Paley considered that the poor had a claim to charity "founded in the law of nature" and deriving from the original holding of property. Paley believed that the rich should be "charitable upon a plan" rather than spontaneously, and therefore he preferred efficient public charities to private activity. See W. Paley, Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, (London, 1785), Bk.3, Pt.2, chapter 5. Quoted in Hilton, The Age of Atonement, p.104.
"the term "Toryism" could [not] subsume both Peel and Sadler". Moreover, Sack acknowledges that the Ultra *Morning Chronicle* claimed him as their own. 
Sack has, therefore, confronted the two main problems within the Conservative historiography on Conservatism. He has identified Sadler and defined him as a potential Ultra, although admitting he is in the Tory-radical tradition, while at the same time pointing out his incompatibility with Peel and Peelite Conservatism. Moreover, he goes on to acknowledge the Ultra contribution to both the defence of the Anglican Church and to social reform. Sack states:

"... that certain humanitarian and political reforms did occur in nineteenth-century Britain no doubt owes something to their espousal by literary, political and press forces of the Right. While the importance of the Tory-radical and Tory-humanitarian tradition is difficult to gauge, not least because of the divorce between parliamentary politics and literary and local conflict, still, at times at least, words and their frequent reiteration may in the longer run be as important in the amelioration of grievances and the change of age-old ideas as momentary parliamentary majorities". 

Quite.

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191 See my p.59.
CHAPTER TWO

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THOUGHT: "MR SADLER'S SYSTEM"

Michael Thomas Sadler was a Protestant Constitutionalist. The Protestant Constitutionalists have been variously described as Ultra-Tories, or Ultras, High Tories or High-Tory paternalists. Sadler, however, as we have seen, has been also called a 'Tory Radical' or Radical Tory. In point of fact, the specific label to which Sadler might be attached is not terribly important. Nonetheless, if we can identify precisely what it was that Sadler subscribed to we may be able to christen him with an apt name and one with which to describe his political ideology.

Sadler's biographer, the evangelical publisher Robert Benton Seeley stated that it was "between the date of his marriage [1816] and that of his entrance into Parliament [1829], that the great outlines of his system" as Seeley termed it, "began to be distinctly marked". Seeley continued, "That system cannot", as it appeared to him at least, "be better described than as the Paternal and Productive; its leading characteristics being, to foster, protect, cherish, encourage, promote: its chief means of operation, the presenting to human beings the motives of benevolence and hope". Sadler's biographer believed that his subject had "seemed raised up to wage endless war" against "the

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1 Although Sadler was a supporter of the Protestant Constitution in its 1688 format and therefore an Ultra-Tory, this chapter is not a general discourse on Ultra-Toryism. Nor, indeed, is it a detailed survey of Sadler's various remedies for social ills. Therefore, the chapter does not deal specifically with Ireland, factory legislation or the plight of agricultural labourers. Rather the chapter seeks to give insight into Sadler's world view. For an in depth study of what the Ultra-Tories stood for, see Karginoff, "The Protestant Constitutionalists and Ultra-Toryism in British Politics...", chapter 2, pp.97-155.
2 Seeley, Life of Sadler, p.33.
3 Ibid.
antagonist system". This was the system of the political economists, whose leading proponents he thought to be Malthus and Ricardo. Seeley characterized such a system as the "Preventive or Repressive: its object being to repress, discourage, isolate, and limit; and its favourite means, the inculcation of fear; and of mutual distrust". He concluded:

"The motto of the one system is, "Dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed"; — that of the other, "At Nature's mighty feast there is no vacant cover for you: she tells you to begone — you have no business to exist".

While outlining "Mr Sadler's system" Seeley gives valuable insight into Sadler's personal and political psyche. However, it is advisable that the reader look beyond the hyperbole and dispense with the cant. To understand what was Sadler's prime motivation in whatever social or political sphere he was involved in it is necessary to quote at some length.

"It was the leading characteristic of... Sadler's mind, and that which elevated him above the mere party — politician of the day, that he never dealt with the bare externals of a question; never rested satisfied with arguments derived from present circumstances, or apparent expediency. His... understanding seemed unceasingly occupied with any question presented to him, until he had resolved it into its elementary principles, and fully satisfied his conscience as to the right and wrong of the matter.

4 Ibid.
He could not content himself with asking... "What is truth?" and then... leaving the subject without caring for an answer. He knew full well that with a light from heaven, especially provided for our guidance, he who willingly remained in darkness, would stumble to his own shame. And, with the immutable principles of truth deeply engraven on his conscience, and often recurred to in their Inspired Records, he never for an instant tolerated the idea of groping his way, like the blind, by the miserable aid of the nearest proximate circumstances.

This feature of his mind has especially forced itself on our notice, in perusing a number of his speeches... that the speaker not only speaks from the heart, but that he knows also; by the force of moral demonstration on his own mind, that he speaks the truth, and is advocating right and justice. And this is made apparently his constant appeal to first principles. The earliest of his speeches... goes at one to the foundation of the whole question and unhesitatingly asserts the difference between Protestantism and Popery to be no matter of doubtful merit, but one in which the truth was not only ascertainable, but actually ascertained, by the light of God's word. And in the last effort made by him in the House of Commons, in 1832, he, with the same

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6 It appeared significant to Seeley that this question was asked by Pontius Pilate and that he neglected to seek an answer. Seeley, Life of Sadler, p.34.
7 Against Catholic emancipation in 1813 at a public meeting in Leeds.
8 The case of the factory children.
boldness, rests his case upon "the law of God;" which
law he quotes, and upon which he fearlessly relies".9
This has been an overlengthy quote, however despite the antiquarian literary
style it reveals that Sadler was a Christian and inspired by the Bible which he
believed to be the literal Word of God. Moreover, the text demonstrates that
Sadler considered the Protestant Church to be the Body of Christ. Indeed, for
Sadler, the Anglican Church – the Church of England and Ireland was the true
church. We shall see that Sadler was a supporter of the Protestant Constitution
set down in the Revolution Settlement of 1688 which united Church and State.

Professor Sack has recently asked the question "what did it mean to be a
"conservative" in Britain" in "the latter Georgian period?"10 His central
contention is that "the defense of the Church of England [and Ireland], rather
than nationalistic impulses, monarchical sentiment, or even economic self-
interest, was the abiding concern of pre-1832 British conservatism".11 Of
course, Sadler's short parliamentary career was played out against the battle to
preserve the Protestant Constitution, and above all, to protect the national
Church. Sadler's over-riding aim was to safeguard an authoritarian and
hierarchical society which he believed to be sanctified by God and His agency
on the earth, the Protestant Church from, in particular, Roman Catholics.
Indeed, long before he entered parliament as the Ultra hope, "Sadler was won't
to give speeches to his Leeds fellow-townsmen on the Marian martyrs writhing
in agony in the torturing flames".12

Jonathan Clark has commented that at a national level, political connection and
affiliation before 1832 still took the form of personal allegiance and loyalty. He

9 Seeley, Life of Sadler, pp.34-36.
10 Sack, From Jacobite to Conservative, p.i.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid., pp.242-243.
stated "It was more than a verbal convention.13 Behind the form of words lay
an infinite variety of social relationships, and attitudes recognising, justifying or
idealising them, which can aptly be labelled 'patriarchal' or 'deferential' in the
sense which... nineteenth-century historians... have usually employed those
terms'.14 Clark then points out that early nineteenth-century paternalist
ideologues – he names Sadler and his close friends and colleagues, Oastler,
Southey and Coleridge – were original chiefly in applying still-current
patriarchal ideals, for the first time, to social welfare issues, the 'condition of
England question'. Clearly, Sadler sought the survival of the hierarchical vision
and notions of paternalism and deference, particularly as they were Biblical
concepts, and were essential to the continued viability of the Protestant
Constitution. What patriarchism did depend on was the vitality of an ideology
of order with which to preserve both civil and religious stability. Ultra-
Toryism, and particularly Sadler's unique blend of Ultraism and Tory
Radicalism with the accent on paternalism and Protestantism, provided such a
political philosophy with which to bolster the Revolution Settlement.

Sadler was influenced most extensively by his interpretation of the Bible – a
point which Seeley was keen to emphasise.

"The Paternal System, having... truth for its basis,
cannot be better described than in the words of that
book which is the only record of unmingled truth and
of perfect wisdom that we possess. The whole tenor of
that record, is in favour of the Paternal System... It
begins with a Divine command to the second father of
the human race, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish

13 As an example Clark gives "Mr Pitt's friends" or "the friends of Mr Fox". However,
one might also use "Mr Sadler's patron" or "the duke of Newcastle's nominee" or
"Newcastle's man".
14 Clark, English Society, pp.77-78.
the earth"... And in every successive instance in which a blessing is conferred, increase seems to be the most prominent feature of the benediction. "God shall enlarge (or increase Japheth"... To Abraham it is said, "I will make thee exceeding fruitful"... Of Ishmael, "I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly"... Again to Abraham,"I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore"... To Jacob, "I will make thee fruitful, and will multiply thee, and will make thee a multitude of people..."15.

Significantly, in the next passage, "the Israelites are exhorted to obedience,16 "that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land".17 Evidently, Britons would not be blessed of God if they were not suitably deferential. Furthermore, it is said, "As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the seed of my servant18 David".19 This reliance upon, and quotation of, Biblical texts is typical of Sadler. Both his writing and his speeches are liberally peppered with scripture.

At the very heart of Sadler's thought lay a Biblical injunction:

"Thou shalt surely give him; and thy heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the land. Therefore, I

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16 My emphasis.
17 Deuteronomy 8 vs 1.
18 My emphasis.
19 Seeley, Life of Sadler, p.69.
command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide to thy brother, to thy poor, and thy needy in the land".20

Although the Bible was Sadler's prime source of intellectual and spiritual inspiration, he was, nonetheless influenced by secular writing too. He drew on the work of Paley, Warburton, Blackstone, Somers, Harrington, Hume, Locke, Sherlock and Sydney. However, these were secondary influences. Sadler was more heavily influenced by Sir Thomas Bernard, Burke, Southey, Bacon, Berkeley, Davenant, as well as Pufendorf, Groitus, Montesqueu, Tillotson, Hale and Butler.21

It would seem reasonable to suggest, as Sack has intimated, that at the heart of the matter was the defence of the Anglican Church and State. At the very core of Sadler's (and indeed all Ultra) thought there lay an intense intellectual and emotional conviction that the existing Constitution, the product of the Revolution of 1688, was perfect, or at least very nearly so. The glorious Constitution in Church and State was the source of all Britain's manifold blessings. Its existence,

"had advanced England to a pitch of greatness never attained by any other country in the world... had secured the rights of property, and led to the rapid accumulation of wealth... had extended all the arts of civilized life, and provided, in an unexampled degree for the comfort, the instruction, and the well being of the people".22

Under it Britons were as free as their own thoughts and were additionally,

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22 Hansard, Third Series, (1831), iv. 1136. (Sadler).
"second to no people in arms, arts, enterprise; during prosperous times exceeding all in prosperity, and in season of contingent, partial and temporary distress suffering less than any others, abounding in resources, abounding in charity, in knowledge, in piety and in virtue".23

The Constitution was, therefore, quite clearly, "a fit personification of the great and noblest community upon earth".24 The Protestant Constitution was, indeed, Britain's "Ark of the Covenant".25

Sadler believed that the Constitution provided for the spiritual and material well-being of the people.26 Indeed, the Constitution impelled the government to protect the weaker members of society from self interested political economists, absentee landlords, landed magnates who sought to enclose common land and mill owning manufacturers whose only care was for maximum productivity at the expense of the mistreated producer. Sadler stated that his "notions on political economy" could be simply summed up in these terms, namely:- "To extend the utmost possible degree of human happiness to the greatest possible number of human beings".27 He consistently advocated that "the poor have a right to be cared for"28 and persistently demanded the retention of the poor laws in England and for their implementation in Ireland.29 Religion, or Protestantism was a civilising and

26 While religious belief sometimes sustained a paternalist policy, it sometimes buttressed the opposite policy (ie., laissez-faire).  
27 Seeley, Life of Sadler, p.42.  
28 Sadler, Ireland; its evils and their remedies, p.194.  
29 See my chapter 5.
educating force. The Bible with its philanthropic encouragements, was the prime inspiration for the "aristocratic ideal" and was an exhortation to the rich to carry out their paternalistic duties. Biblical injunction was for Sadler of paramount importance. The primacy of the Scriptures was fundamental to his political and social ideology. In a word, Sadler considered the Bible to be the cornerstone of the Church-State relationship. Religious orthodoxy was clearly a fundamental precept, for it underpinned the whole Revolution Settlement.
CHAPTER THREE

MICHAEL THOMAS SADLER AND CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION

It is not the intention to give a blow by blow commentary on the battle to offset Catholic relief. Nor, indeed, is it necessary to provide a detailed commentary on the final debate which led to emancipation. This task has been definitively carried out by G.I.T. Machin. Moreover, it is not the purpose of this chapter to record the thoughts and actions of the opponents of the measure. That too has been completed. This chapter seeks to explore Sadler's thoughts on Catholic emancipation generally, and to examine his part in the defence of the Constitution within the Commons, March-April 1829. Sadler's entrance into parliament was a direct consequence of the decision taken by the cabinet of the duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel, in February 1829, to adopt as their own, the measure commonly called Catholic emancipation. However, Sadler's anti-Catholic stance had a long political pedigree.

In 1813 the "Catholic Question was revived in parliament". A public meeting was called by the mayor of Leeds with the object of petitioning parliament against the proposed concessions to Catholics. "Mr Sadler's speech in seconding that motion", records his biographer, "seems to have


3 The issue had been often debated inside parliament c.1790-1801.
been the chief feature of the day's proceedings". Although Sadler's speech is longwinded (as indeed most of his speeches invariably were) it does include much of the oft repeated arguments against conceding emancipation to Catholics. He stated that he was opposed to any interference in the matter of religious freedom, "of which, in common with every individual in the British empire, his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects are already in the full possession and in the undisturbed exercise". This was "an inestimable privilege" and one which, Sadler was quick to point out, Roman Catholics had denied citizens of the Protestant faith during the reign of Mary. However, in the realm of civic responsibilities he was opposed to granting Catholics the right to hold any office unless they consented to take the Williamite oath of allegiance.6 No Catholic could do this unless granted absolution.

Sadler referred to Catholicism as the "grand adversary" of the Protestant cause. He believed that "the glorious revolution of 1688" had provided for a Protestant royal family, a Protestant establishment and a Protestant church and any alteration of that "happy constitution" would "deliver up the country to Roman Catholic ascendancy" which would result in tyranny.7 Moreover, he pointed out that the Papacy was a foreign power to which English Catholics owed allegiance and that Catholicism was the religion of France against whom Britain was at war. Furthermore, "the great Head of the Roman Catholic Church [was] at the coronation of Bonaparte".8 In short, he believed that Catholicism was "a system of spiritual tyranny" and "of priestly domination" and if Britain succumbed to an emancipation of Catholics "what

5 Ibid., pp.18-19.
6 Ibid., p.18.
7 Ibid., pp.19-20.
8 Ibid., p.22.
myriads of human victims, more numerous than those of Molech, [would] rise in awful rememberance before us...". Sadler then went on to link the move to free Catholics from the constraints of the Act of Settlement to the doctrines of Thomas Paine. In the Right's of Man Paine had contended that "religion is no question, or in other words, ought not to be brought into question, between man and man". Sadler disagreed and in keeping with Lord Chancellor Eldon, it was his "opinion that the Establishment is formed, not for the purpose of making the Church political, but for the purpose of making the State religious". Needless to say, the petition brought forward against the Romish claims was carried by an overwhelming majority.

It was at a similar public meeting in Leeds which led to Sadler's entrance into the House of Commons. The Pitt Club of that city held its usual anniversary Pitt dinner on 28 May 1828. Sadler delivered a speech which argued that Pitt had opposed emancipation without "securities" and that he had only consented to a measure of Roman relief "under the peculiar circumstances" of 1801. He concluded that the situation was much altered in 1828. Sadler's speech was favourably received and was reported in the Leeds Intelligencer, the Standard and the Morning Chronicle. The Ultra-Tory press had found a champion to raise the Protestant standard.

Early the following year Peel announced in the new session of parliament the determination of the Tory government to implement a full emancipation.

9 ibid., pp.22-23.
10 ibid., p.24.
12 The anniversary of William Pitt's birthday.
13 Seeley, Life of Sadler, p.97.
Those in favour of Catholic relief had attempted to bring about complete emancipation since the 1790s. All their best efforts had, nevertheless, been thwarted. In early July 1828, however, the political, historical and constitutional arguments that lent weight to Eldonite doctrine were rendered obsolete by the prospect of the Irish Roman Catholic Daniel O'Connell being elected for County Clare. To defeat successive motions for emancipation constitutionalists had cited the Act of Union with Scotland which "went the length of declaring, that Roman Catholics should neither be electors nor elected, in the representation of the Kingdom". O'Connell's election, therefore, rendered the Act of Settlement, the Bill of Rights and all subsequent acts and fundamental laws which declared it impossible that Catholics be admitted to power, wholly irrelevant. Should O'Connell be denied his seat at Westminster the logical conclusion would be rebellion in Ireland. The only antidote to such an insurrection inspired by the Catholic Association was the granting of Catholic emancipation. In the wake of a potential rebellion in Ireland all constitutional precedent was to be ignored. The remedy was seen to lie in bringing the propertied within the Irish Roman Catholic community into the legitimate arena. The leader of the defenders of the Constitution in the Lords, Eldon, was fully cognizant with this fact.

"As O'Connell will not, though elected be allowed to take his seat in the House of Commons, unless he will take the oaths... (and that he won't do unless he can get absolution), his rejection from the Commons may excite rebellion in Ireland. At all events, this business

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must bring the Roman Catholic question, which has been so often discussed, to a crisis and a conclusion. The nature of that conclusion I don't think likely to be favourable to Protestantism".15

Newcastle too was fully aware of the likely repercussions of the County Clare election.16 When the duke's son resigned his seat at Newark as a protest against the ministry's decision to bring forward a Catholic relief bill, Newcastle, mindful of the lionization of Sadler in the Ultra-Tory press since his performance at the Pitt Club of Leeds in May 1828, invited him to stand as a defender of the Protestant cause.17

So it was that Sadler became the unofficial champion of the Ultra-Tories in March 1829. The opponents of emancipation were strong in the Lords.


16 *Newcastle MSS.* Ne2 F3/1. 6 July 1828. p.49; 9 July. p.51; NeC 5346-47; Ne2 F3/1. 15 July 1828. p.53.

17 Seeley records: Newcastle, "remembering Mr Sadler's speech of the preceding May, – wrote to him for the purpose of recommending him to proceed to Newark without delay, and there to announce himself a candidate for the vacant seat [following Sir William Clinton's resignation on 5 February]. After much hesitation, he decided on responding to this call; and at once set out for Newark, where he found that letters had already been received by the persons most in his Grace's confidence, desiring their best exertions in his favour. He immediately commenced a canvass of the town, a work of some labour, – the franchise there appertaining to every cottage, and the number of electors being nearly 1800. His canvass was very successful, and he had every prospect of an unopposed return; – when a barrister of eminence from London, Mr Serjeant Wilde, was suddenly brought into the field, and a contest of great warmth and exasperation commenced. Every possible effort was used to inflame the passions of the more ignorant among the electors, and so effectual were the means employed, that it was not until the third day that Mr Sadler took his proper place upon the poll; which closed, on the fourth, with the following numbers: Michael T. Sadler, Esq. - 801. Thomas Wilde, Esq. - 587. Majority 214. The return was made on the 6th March, 1829, and appeared in the *Gazette* of the 10th. Mr Sadler spent a few days in Newark, in offering his acknowledgements to his supporters, among whom were included almost every respectable inhabitant in the town, and then proceeded to London, where on the 17th of the same month, he delivered his first speech in Parliament*. *Life of Sadler*, pp.112-113.
However, in the Commons their position was much less certain; no less because of Peel's dominance. Sadler's importance lay in the fact that he appeared to be able to challenge Peel. Knatchbull, Inglis, Wetherell et al had previously given Peel their support. By contrast, Sadler had never been aligned with Peel. Indeed, he had been returned to the Commons specifically to oppose Peel. He seemed, initially at least, cogent, lucid and able to arouse the passions of the anti-Catholic camp. His arguments exactly mirrored the Eldonite line. Eldon summarized the Ultra position when in 1825 he wrote:

My opinion is that the Establishment is formed, not for the purpose of making the Church political, but for the purpose of making the State religious. That an Establishment with an enlightened toleration, is as necessary to the peace of the State, as the maintenance of religion, without which the State can have no solid peace... that a Protestant Church and a Roman Catholic Church cannot co-exist upon equal terms; that one of them must be predominant; that if the Protestant is predominant, the Roman Catholic may have the full benefit of toleration — but that it can not have political power, with any hope that it will allow a fair degree of toleration for the Protestant Church. Its principles are founded in ecclesiastical tyranny must produce evil despotism".18

18 Eldon MSS. Folder marked "Letters to the Rev. Matthew Surtees". n.d. February 1825. Sadler had corresponded with Eldon vis-à-vis the Catholic claims. See Eldon MSS. Folder marked "Miscellaneous political papers in regard to the Catholic Question". Three letters marked "24th November, 1828"; "30th November, 1828"; "21st December, 1828". From these letters it is clear that Eldon responded or wrote to Sadler at least twice.
This was precisely what Sadler considered had brought about the removal of James II and his replacement with the Protestant William of Orange in 1689 by the Whig oligarchy. Sadler and other defenders of the Revolution Settlement believed that the Protestant character of the Constitution had been irrevocably sealed with the Glorious Revolution when "a solemn compact was made between the king and people to support the Protestant ascendancy".19

Within this microcosm of Eldonite doctrine is found what one Whig in 1823 astutely observed to be the central tenet in Ultra-Toryism. "The Tory... feels a sort of religious abhorrence to touch what he calls the sacred fabric of the constitution".20 Certainly, Sadler was suitably touched by a high degree of revulsion at the thought of any alteration in the Constitution which he regarded as sacred. Indeed, one of his mentors, Edmund Burke had stressed the divine order of things:

"No man can lawfully govern himself according to his own will, much less can one person be governed by the will of another. We are all born in subjection, all born equally, high as well as low, governors and governed in subjection to one great, immutable, pre-existent law, prior to all our devices, and prior to all our contrivances, paramount to all our ideas and all our sensations, antecedent to our very existence, by which we are knit and connected in the eternal frame of the universe, out of which we cannot stir. This great law does not arise from our conventions or compacts; on the contrary, it gives our conventions and compacts all

19 Hansard, xl. (1819) 407 (Eldon).
the force and sanction they can have; – it does not arise from our vain institutions. Every good gift is of God; all power is of God; – and He, who has given the power, and from whom alone it originates, will never suffer the exercise of it to be practiced upon any less solid foundation than the power itself. If then all dominion of man over man is the effect of the Divine disposition, it is bound by the eternal laws of Him that gave it, which no human authority can dispense; neither he that exercises it, nor even those who are subject to it".21

Burke, therefore, gave a divine sanction to the Ultra belief that it was they who were charged with upholding a political system whose origins were founded in God's law.22 There can be little doubt that Sadler believed he was acting in the Will of God by joining battle to block Roman Catholic incursion into British political life. Moreover, for the evangelical member for Newark and his no less evangelical patron it was, as much as anything, spiritual warfare they were engaged in to defeat "principalities and powers"23 which had manifest themselves in "that demon called Liberalism".24

22 Most Ultras looked to Burkean political ideology to bolster their arguments to preserve the 1688 Constitution in its seventeenth-century form.
23 Ephesians, 6 vs 12. "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms". New International Version.
24 Newcastle MSS. Ne2 F1. 22 March 1821. pp.4-5. See too Ne2 F1/13.
Following meetings with Newcastle and Eldon, Sadler took up his post in the Commons as the new 'Protestant' member for Newark. *The Scottish Protestant* recorded the efforts of Knatchbull and Bankes but noted that the "discussion" of the 17th and 18th March had "been peculiarly distinguished by the first and splendid appearance of a new Champion of the Constitution, Mr Sadler."

The new member's argument mirrored that of the champion of the Constitution in the Lords. Following the bill's first reading in the Commons, Eldon asserted "that it was his Majesty's determination, in the terms of his Majesty's most gracious speech, to preserve inviolate the Protestant Constitution and form of Government in this country". It was clear to "our aged and most uncompromising watchman" that the proposed bill could not do this. Sadler resolved to follow in the footsteps of a still more ancient watchman. He began with an historical attack on popery (much as he had

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28 Sir Edward Knatchbull, Ultra-Tory member for Kent. Leader of the Ultras in Kent and spokesman and sometime leader of the Protestant Constitutionalists in the Commons. The home of this 'country gentleman' was at Mersham Hatch near Maidstone in Kent. His opposition to Peel began in 1819 over "Mr Peel's [currency] Bill".
29 Sir George Bankes, Ultra-Tory member for Dorset. Friend of Lord Eldon; his son, William, also an Ultra, M.P. for Dorset, married Eldon's daughter Frances J. Scott.
30 *The Scottish Protestant*, No' V.
31 13 March 1829.
32 *The Scottish Protestant*, No' V includes the speech by Lord Eldon in the Lords, 13 March 1829.
34 The Old Testament prophet Ezekiel who was sent to the "rebellious house of Israel... an obstinate and stubborn people... you must speak my words to them, whether
years ago in Leeds) which "had dragged the objects of its resentment to the stake". He denied that the "Protestant Ascendancy" was "the source of the disasters in Ireland". Rather, the problems of Ireland, he asked, "were from what? From Protestantism, or Protestant Ascendancy! [sic] No" but rather "immediately from local oppression". Sadler believed the remedy was not Catholic emancipation but Christianity.

He went on to precis the discourse detailed in *Ireland: its evils and their remedies*.

"Legislate on her behalf, in the spirit of philanthropy...
introduce in behalf of her distressed population a
moderate system of poor laws... enforce the benefits of
Christian education – employ the starving people,
which... must be fed, but whose labours you now lose,
as well as destroy their characters by consigning them
to involuntary idleness and mendicancy – and finally,
while you legislate about and against the poor, dare to
touch the culpable and heartless rich, the deserters and
enemies of their country, and... compel them by
pecuniary mulcts to repay some of their duties to that
society to which they owe their all... Let them thus
afford employment and bread to a population never
adequately employed, always suffering from want, and
pushed to the utmost verge of human endurance...".38

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Sadler's opposition to Catholic relief enabled him to expound the full range of social questions with which he had become concerned. The issue of a poor law for Ireland would be taken up in the Commons by Sadler the following year.

Sadler attacked Peel who had argued that the answer to Ireland's ills was Catholic emancipation. He went on to point out that the bill made provision for a Roman Catholic First Lord of the Treasury who would then hold sway over the monarch and therefore, "the proposed measure touches the moral title of the King". Perhaps most grievous of all, however, was the subterfuge by which the bill came about. He asserted "... of all the circumstances attending this momentous measure nothing has so strongly excited the resentment of the people, especially that large and loyal part of them who have hitherto supported government, as the studied concealment, not to say intentional misleading, with which it has been attended throughout". The depth of Sadler's loathing for the actions of his own party leaders is hereby revealed. It did not diminish with the passing of time.

Sadler continued his defence of the Protestant Constitution with an appeal to let Britons decide the matter. "This house, I say, has no right to proceed in this work of counter-revolution without consulting the people". It is just such a statement which has led some to see Sadler as a Tory-Radical. He concluded his argument, however, in true Burkean vein.

"The Protestant Constitution, now endangered, was first established in a convention, called for that special purpose, and without as full an appeal, and with equal formality, the people cannot be robbed of it".40

39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
He refuted the charge that he was "hostile to the Roman Catholics". He averred his respect for "the talents and courage of my Roman Catholic fellow subjects" and declared "there is not one man of that body I would injure". Nonetheless, he was adamant - "still I will protect the character of the Protestant Constitution".41

Sadler also spoke against the bill on its third reading. However, the objections he put forward on 30 March were in essence the same as outlined in his earlier oration. Indeed, at the time the Protestant Tories were made to appear men of a single idea, so far as the Constitution was concerned, and as Geoffrey Best has commented, "that in the liberal springtime of the 'twenties... they found it difficult to keep that idea fresh and attractive".42 Moreover, some of them "found this difficulty embarrassing".43 Nonetheless, to none who took the principle seriously did their lack of originality matter. In fact they rather prided themselves on it, because it enabled them to stand in sharp contrast to their enemies of the Brougham-Birkbeck school, and to signify their disbelief in the 'outstanding progress of intelligence'. Henry Goulburn, for example, commented to his wife, "This morning [5 March 1826] I am looking over Catholic proceedings in the hope of devising something to say on the Catholic Question this evening. When one has spoken several times on a subject it is no easy matter to find anything new to say especially when the subject has been matter for debate for above 25 years".44 This lack of innovative argument mattered not one iota to Sadler; he stuck to his principle without budging.

41 Ibid.
43 Ibid., p.109.
He proclaimed his "objections remained unaltered" and reiterated his belief that emancipation "affects in its very nature the Royal Title; that it subverts the British Constitution, or in other words, of the rights and liberties of the people of England; that it is introduced on very insufficient, not to say fallacious grounds; that its securities are mere delusions... I totally disbelieve that it will settle the disputes between Protestantism and Catholicism".45

The core of Sadler's constitutional ideology, and indeed that of the Protestant Tories, was that it had attained its peculiar excellence only after a long, painful struggle with Popery, not concluded until 1688-89; that both religious and secular advantages (so far as they could be distinguished, which ideally they could not) were secured to Britons by this Constitution, and in particular by its religious establishment; and that while the established church remained materially subject to parliament, it was a self-evident absurdity to allow Roman Catholics any share in legislating for it.46 These constitutional arguments were in practice complicated by the facts that the Roman Catholic question was so largely an Irish question, and that the established church was the united Church of England and Ireland. As Best has pointed out, the "paternal imperialism with which the sensible Protestant Tories viewed Ireland led them to connect the movement for 'emancipation' with Irish nationalism, Irish national characteristics, and a dangerous social movement threatening the landed gentry and their just influence".47 Sadler, quite clearly, was one such

45 The Second Speech of M.T. Sadler M.P. for Newark in the House of Commons on the Third Reading of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, 30th March 1829, (London, 1829). Sadler commenced speaking at 2 a.m. on 31 March.
"sensible" Protestant Tory who recognised that the problems of Ireland would not be solved by political or constitutional change but required socio-economic impetus.

It is important to emphasise that Sadler's attempts to buttress the Constitution should not be seen as peculiar to him. Nor, indeed was Sadler's a lone voice in the Commons. He was but the latest constitutional champion to beat the Protestant drum. The debates in both Houses were passionate. In the final analysis, however, Ultra-Tory invective proved fruitless. Two other examples of Ultra spleen will suffice to support Sadler's thesis and to give the colour of the debate. Sir Charles Wetherell vented his customary inveiglement upon the "betrayers" of the Constitution. He was contemptuous of government ministers and brazenly "dared" them "to attack him".48

"He had no speech to eat. He had no apostasy to explain. He had no paltry subterfuge to resort to. He had not to say that a thing was black one day and white another... He would rather remain as he was, the humble member for Plympton, than be guilty of such apostasy, such contradiction, such unexplainable conversion, such miserable, such contemptible apostasy".49

Wetherell's main point was that "the exclusion of the Roman Catholics from office was one of the principles of [the] Revolution [Settlement]".50

Sir Richard Vyvyan too contributed to the Ultra defence of Protestantism with a fighting speech which gained the youthful and inexperienced member for

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50 Ibid.
Cornwall a good deal of notoriety. Despite his pride in his status as an independent M.P., his speech was a succinct account of Ultra political philosophy. Indeed, his argument was clearly an exact summation of the "Tory principle of allegiance to the crown, an attack on a possible Whig doctrine calculated to link that party's name with disloyalty, and an exaltation of existing institutions". Vyvyan commenced his diatribe against emancipation with an attack on Lockean doctrine before calling for "securities" and haranguing Peel and Wellington for asserting that to continue the administration without granting concessions to Catholics was an impossibility.

Vyvyan's defence of the Constitution then sadly degenerated into a rambling and incoherent discourse. He attempted to prove the existence of "a great conspiracy" masterminded by the Jesuits to further the political influence of "the politico-religious corporation of Rome". On balance Sadler's appeal to the hearts and minds of the House had greater effect than Vyvyan's misguided attempt to convince the emancipationists of "a great conspiracy... in existence" among the despots of Europe, which he traced through the system of Congresses. It fell to Huskisson to disprove Vyvyan's elaborate theory of a continental plot. Meanwhile, Sadler exclaimed,

"I know how dear this sacred, this deserted cause is, to the hearts and to the understanding of Englishmen. The principle may be indeed weak in this House, but abroad it makes all in its wanted might, headed... by

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53 Ibid.
the intelligence, the religion, the loyalty of the
country".\(^{54}\)

In point of fact Sadler had misjudged the mood of the country. The
overwhelming majority of the people were supremely indifferent to whether
political liberties were extended to Roman Catholics. There existed no
likelihood of a repeat of the Gordon Riots of 1780 despite the volume of
petitions sent to parliament. Ultra-Tory constitutional doctrine was in theory
supported by, although it was not dependent on, that "hearty 'No Popery'
sentiment which seems to be a fundamental characteristic of the British
Protestant".\(^{55}\)

The issue of the Catholic claims had been debated in parliament for over fifty
years. A measure of Catholic relief had been first brought before the
Commons in 1778 by Sir George Saville. Wellington had triumphed where
Canning failed. Sadler and fellow 'Protestants' were left to draw some modest
comfort when the king signed a bill for the disenfranchisement of Irish forty­
shilling holders. However, Peel and the Duke had also succeeded in another
regard. By their relentless pursuit of emancipation and the consequent
destruction of the Constitution which resulted, they had split the Tory party.\(^{56}\)
Not even the personal hatred directed towards Canning had achieved this.\(^{57}\)
A significant section of the party – that referred to disparagingly as the Ultra­
Tory faction – were now intent upon revenge. Their whole raison d'etre,

\(^{54}\) Ibid., xx, 1168. Sadler. 19 March 1829. Greville recorded that 500,000 copies of
Sadler's speech were sold and it was immediately reprinted in the Morning Journal.
pp.114-124 where parts of Sadler's contribution to the emancipation debate are
reprinted.


\(^{56}\) Karginoff, "The Protestant Constitutionalists and Ultra-Toryism in Britain...", Vol.2,
chapters 11-12.

\(^{57}\) Ibid., Vol.I, chapter 4, 6 and especially 7.
previously the preservation of the Protestant Constitution, was now fixed on bringing about the downfall of the Wellington government.\(^{58}\)

The aftermath, March 1829 - November 1830

Some historians have sought to identify a Tory to challenge Peel's leadership in the Commons. Variously, Vyvyan, Knatchbull, Wetherell, Gascoyne, Chandos, Blandford and even the unlikelier Sibthorp have been mooted as potential stalking horses from the backbenches. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that amongst this pantheon of veritable Tory champions the name of Sadler has also been included. Seeley noted how the Ultra press seized on Sadler's speech of 17 March as an indication of his potential leadership qualities. Certainly, "the people of England were at that moment peculiarly in want of a leader of Mr Sadler's mental powers". Indeed, "deserted, in one moment, by almost every man of commanding talent among those on whom they had been accustomed to rely, they felt the bitterness of their situation... They therefore were just in the mood to hail with the most delighted exultation the appearance of a man of genius and intellectual power, who offered himself at the moment to raise their fallen banner".\(^{59}\) Despite Seeley's fulsome praise, even allowing for the tremendous reception his contributions in support of the Constitution make in the Commons and being mindful of the patronage he enjoyed from Newcastle, Sadler proved not to be true leadership calibre. Moreover, during the period when Ultra-Tory intrigues and cabals were at their most intense, between March 1829 and November 1830, Sadler supported Sir Edward Knatchbull or Sir Richard Vyvyan and at no time did he seek to

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\(^{59}\) Seeley, Life of Sadler, pp.115-116. See pp.113-116 for the full hagiography.
assume the leadership of the 'Protestant party'. Nowhere in the Newcastle MSS. does Sadler's name appear linked to a leadership role in the Commons.

During the summer and autumn of 1829 Vyvyan was involved in a flurry of correspondence with leading Ultras. He wrote to Sadler to ask if he would elect to serve in a 'Protestant' government. No doubt in order to preempt Sadler imagining Vyvyan deluded for casting himself in the role of Tory party leader in the Commons, or, grander still as prime minister, the latter mentioned he had recently received a letter from Newcastle who had complained of the present ministry in the strongest possible terms. Vyvyan went on to offer Sadler office and asked if he would consent to be Vice President of the Board of Trade. He named Blandford as his possible Home Secretary. Apparently Duncombe was to be Sadler's immediate superior in his capacity as President of the Board Trade. Of course the whole scheme was totally fanciful. Sadler, meanwhile, had been placed in a somewhat invidious position as Newcastle and Vyvyan had entered into a disagreement on the composition of a 'Protestant' ministry. Vyvyan had changed his mind as to Blandford's suitability. Newcastle rather admired Blandford. Nonetheless, by the end of August Vyvyan was gratified to receive a positive response from Sadler. Evidently his approach to the member for Newark had been well thought-out. Sadler wrote, "I fully join in your approbation of

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60 Knatchbull MSS. and Vyvyan MSS. 1829-1830. See Vyvyan MSS. October 1829. DDV/3648/47 where Sadler is identified amongst a list of 35 M.P.s in the House of Commons of 1829 of "Tories strongly opposed to the present Government". See too Bradfield, "Sir Richard Vyvyan and Tory Politics...", p.93.

61 Vyvyan MSS. B0/48/16. 22 August 1829. Vyvyan to Sadler.


63 Vyvyan MSS. op.cit. Vyvyan to Sadler.

64 Ibid., B0/48/19-20. 25 August 1829. Newcastle to Vyvyan and Vyvyan to Newcastle.

65 Newcastle MSS. Ne 2 F3/1. 3 June 1829. p.145.

his Grace's conduct [Newcastle] and views, as well as what he says regarding the D[uke] of W[ellington]. Sadler then advised Vyvyan, "I can not hesitate in saying that I should have no objection to form part of a ministry founded upon such principles as you and I mutually adopt". By the same post, however, from a more significant player than Sadler, Vyvyan received less encouraging news. Knaichbull's letter was equivocal, his indecision typical of the double-mindedness of many leading Tories. All Vyvyan’s attempts to topple Wellington’s government in 1829 came to nought. Whether Sadler would have proved a worthy minister at his post in the Board of Trade is a matter of pure speculation.

What is certain, however, is that in the aftermath of Catholic emancipation Sadler was part of the violent Tory opposition to the government. It would be a mistake to limit Sadler’s desire for revenge upon the leaders of the party to their apostasy alone. The questions of currency and corn were additional areas of hostility. Greville recorded that at the end of January 1830 "the Country Gentlemen are beginning to arrive, and they are all of the same story as to the universally prevailing distress and the certainty of things becoming much worse". He continued to write "of the failure of rents all over England, and the necessity of some decisive measures or the prospect of general ruin". Greville acknowledged, as indeed was the case, that they "of course... all differ as to the measures, but there appears to be strong leaning towards an alteration in the currency and one pound notes". These Ultras, among whom Sadler was prominent, recognizing there was little chance of the ministry changing policy – particularly with Peel effectively at the helm – then resolved

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67 Ibid.
68 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
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During February and March Knatchbull presented a number of petitions from his constituents to the Commons in regard to distress. It was at this

70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
72 Newcastle MSS. Ne 2 F4/9. Tuesday, 5 February 1830. Newcastle's list of the 87 who voted against the government is accurate being identical with the division list recorded in Hansard.
time that Sadler appears to have drawn closer to the member for Kent. Such petitions and amendments, coupled with frequent meetings held in the home of prominent Ultras, convinced Mrs Arbuthnot that such was the hostility towards Wellington that the Ultras would form an "opposition party".73

Of particular importance were meetings held at Knatchbull's home. One such, organised for 8 February, attracted many leading agriculturalists. Knatchbull wrote to his wife that these included Bastard, Bankes, Dugdale, Gascoyne, Gordon, Heathcote, Inglis, Sadler, Taylor, Trant, Vyvyan and Wodehouse.74 Sadler was a frequent conspirator at such meetings at which the demise of the apostate administration was plotted. In the Commons Knatchbull was often supported by Sadler. At the commencement of the new parliamentary session their attack on the ministry was impressive.75

The fact that Knatchbull's amendment was negatived did not cause him to retreat into obscurity. On the contrary, Knatchbull's home continued to be the focus for the development of Ultra strategy to which Sadler was a keen contributor. The meeting of 8 February was only a precursor to others throughout the parliamentary session. One the following week will suffice as an example.76 Again Knatchbull confided in his wife the names of those present. He wrote enthusiastically, "We had a good party and all went off well". He continued: "My party was as follows: Gen[eral] Gascoigne, Sir

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74 Knatchbull MSS. 8 February 1830. Knatchbull to Lady F.C. Knatchbull. All of the above were Ultras.
75 Knatchbull's amendment was lost 105-158 votes. Knatchbull was disappointed by the result. He wrote to his wife, "At one time during the debate I expected to carry the amendment, but I am satisfied as it is...". Ibid. 8 February 1830.
76 Knatchbull MSS. 15 February 1830. Knatchbull to Lady F.C. Knatchbull.
Robert Inglis, Sir Richard Vyvyan, Mr V. Bankes [sic], Sadler, Taylor, Western, Richard Gordon, Dugdale and Wodehouse, Sir R. Heathcote [sic] and Mr Bastard and Mr Trent [sic] sent excuses. Knatchbull had invited "about 6 more" but their names are not included. By openly attacking the ministry their purpose was to make the government's position appear "as contemptible as possible". Indeed, Ellenborough recorded that Vyvyan had informed Holmes or Planta that their object was "to reduce the Government majorities as much as possible". Moreover, Harriet Arbuthnot was of the conviction that the goal of Knatchbull, Vyvyan and Sadler, together with other "suchlike ultra-Tories" was for "breaking down the Governmen[t].

On 9 February Mrs Arbuthnot recorded the conspiratorial nature of the Ultra intrigues with which Sadler had become involved. She had learned that the likes of Knatchbull, Vyvyan and Sadler had even taken to "voting with Mr O'Connell" in an attempt to bring down the government. Furthermore, she had been advised that O'Connell and Sadler often sat together in the Commons "whispering... all night". As if the sight of these Ultras openly working with the Catholic Liberator was not enough, Mrs Arbuthnot wrote that the Ultras were voting with Sir Francis Burdett the champion of franchise reform. Knatchbull, Sadler et al never conducted their opposition to the government in secret. The members for Kent and Newark had no part in any clandestine dealings. Knatchbull

77 Ibid.
78 Ibid.
80 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
wrote to his wife, "as to intrigues if any there are, I am no party to them". Sadler was openly and unashamedly hostile towards Wellington and especially Peel and his obvious intention was clear to all. Moreover, Sadler was in constant communication with Newcastle and his actions had the full support of his patron.

Throughout the period March-June 1830 the Ultras acted in concert. Vyvyan resumed his correspondence with the duke of Cumberland and the two began to work closely together. In the Commons too Vyvyan was active, keenly supported by Sadler. Both backbenchers participated in an important debate on distress, during which they roundly condemned the government for its inability to reduce the national debt and berated the Chancellor of the Exchequer for his failure to resolve the currency crisis. Sadler's vote was numbered amongst the majority against the government after a debate on naval estimates. The issue of retrenchment was consistently raised in the Commons during the spring of 1830 and inevitably found the Ultras voting with the Opposition. Brougham commented on this period that the "Ultra Tories" and he then named "the Duke of Richmond and Newcastle, with Knatchbull, Wetherell, Sadler and Vyvyan, so entirely formed part of our force, that in corresponding with Rosslyn on the results of the General Election we both set all that class down as members of the combined opposition...". Importantly, Brougham

84 Knatchbull MSS. 8 February 1830. Knatchbull to Lady F.C. Knatchbull.
85 Newcastle MSS. Ne 2 F3/1. Diary entries for 1830.
86 Vyvyan MSS. B0/48/60. 9 March 1830. Cumberland to Vyvyan. Most of the Vyvyan - Cumberland correspondence, however, is for 1829.
87 Hansard, New Series, xxiii (1830), 570-578. 18 March. Vyvyan and Sadler. Henry Goulburn was Chancellor of the Exchequer.
88 Ibid. xxiii (1830), 590. 26 March.
always feel it his duty to resist such measures when proposed by others".93

Immediately, Whigs Radicals, Irish M.P.s and Ultra-Tories declared their opposition to Wellington's dogmatic edict against all possibility of any reform of the House of Commons.94 Mrs Arbuthnot judged that Wellington's declaration was "violent and uncalled for" and by it the Duke had undoubtedly "sealed his fate".95 Without question it was a major blunder, for once the Whigs revealed their reform proposals Wellington's outright opposition to any reform whatsoever left the Tories no room for manoeuvre. It must be stressed that both Whigs and Radicals took care to mention the general and marked distress prevalent in the country, while in the same breath as speaking of the necessity of parliamentary reform. This was deemed essential not just to bring increased representation but also to be able to alter the general direction of fiscal, agricultural and commercial policy.

The centrality of the currency question to Ultra-Tory hostility is of paramount importance. Sadler was deeply concerned with the direction in which the government had taken the economy.96 One of Grey's three points in the programme upon which he formed his administration was "retrenchment".97 It is significant too that the ministry was defeated on a motion relative to finance.98 The government was defeated by twenty-nine

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93 Hansard, Third Series, i (1830), 18-53.
94 Ibid., 54-127.
96 Seeley, Life of Sadler, pp.477-539.
97 Interestingly, Grey also said (hoodwinkingly) that he had an open mind on the currency question.
98 A vote on the Civil List. The proposed reduction of £300,000 was opposed by some Ultras for being too small an economy. This division was taken on Sir Henry Parnell's motion to refer the Civil List to a Select Committee. Knatchbull and Sadler led the Ultra support for the motion.
votes.99 The following morning, Wellington and Peel resigned and so successfully delayed Brougham's motion in favour of parliamentary reform due to be brought forward that evening.100

Thirty-four Ultra-Tories voted with the Opposition. Sadler's name was prominent amongst the rebels. It had taken Sadler and friends twenty-one months to revenge themselves on Peel and Wellington for their "shameful apostasy"101 which brought about the measure which contravened and overthrew the Constitution.102 There has been much debate over precisely why the likes of Sadler voted against Wellington on 15 November. Indeed, the controversy is still alive. It seems reasonable to assume that the Duke's volte-face on the question of Catholic emancipation should hold pride of place in a catalogue of Ultra-Tory grievances. However, Wellington cited two other, albeit related, reasons for his defeat. He instanced the French Revolution of July 1830 as responsible for whipping up a general support in the country for a reform of parliament.103 Moreover, he cited his own speech which emphatically denied he would ever sanction such a measure.104 Paradoxically, the Duke believed such a rigid refutation of reform would woo the Ultras by convincing them he would not once again change his mind behind their backs. In this, Wellington seriously miscalculated. There was a hard core of Ultra M.P.s, of whom Sadler was in

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99 Hansard, Third Series, i (1830), 526-548. The government lost the vote 233-204 on 15 November.
100 Brougham's motion in favour of a moderate reform of parliament was scheduled for the evening of 16 November.
102 Ibid.
104 Ibid.
the forefront, who seemed keen to advance the cause of a moderate reform measure to make parliament more representative. He deduced that had the composition of the Commons better reflected the wishes of the country at large emancipation would not have been granted.

As recently as 1990, Norman Gash has written on Wellington's November defeat evincing the twin evils of relief and reform as contributing in a major way to the Ultra backbench revolt. Curiously, however, he has ignored the most longstanding and deep seated reason for the Ultra-Tory rebellion – Liberal-Tory economic policy. Since 1819 the independent country gentlemen, the backbone of the Tory party, had witnessed the gradual erosion of their rents, their profits and their influence. For over

107 It should be emphasised that it was in the year 1819 that Sadler's biographer states that "Mr Sadler [began] the formation of his system". "In the year 1819, his attention was naturally directed, in common with the whole British public, to the question of the currency, then undergoing a close investigation, leading to an important practical change. The bent of his mind naturally led him to prefer that kind of currency which offered facilities to the enterprising and industrious; rather than that seemed to vest all power in the great capitalist. But, seeing that some change was inevitable, his mind chiefly turned to the consideration of how that change might be effected with the least amount of suffering to the industrious classes". Seeley, Life of Sadler, p.37. It should be remembered that the twin objects of Sadler's wrath in 1819 were Mr Ricardo's doctrine of political economy and Mr Peel's currency bill. Moreover, it was in 1819 that Newcastle and Eldon first voiced criticisms of the government. Furthermore, Knatchbull entered the Commons in 1819 and instantly criticised the ministry for the onset of widespread agricultural distress for which he blamed government economic policy. Knatchbull immediately allied himself with men such as Thomas Lethbridge, Lord Granville Somerset and Thomas Gooch, leaders of the opponents of the new legislation. They became familiarly known as the "Boodle cabinet" from the club of that name frequented by Tory squires. See Eldon MSS. Folder marked "Letters to Lord Stowell". 29 September 1819. William Scott, Lord Stowell, was Eldon's elder brother; Newcastle MSS. Ne 2 Fl; Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugesson, Kentish Family, (London, 1960), p.164; N. Gash, Aristocracy and People, Britain 1815-1865, (London, 1979), p.121; Karginoff, "The Protestant Constitutionalists and Ultra-Toryism in Britain...", Vol.I, pp.307-360. Also chapters 7-8. It is a matter of much regret that the parameters of the M.A. thesis does not allow for an indepth investigation of
CHAPTER FOUR

MICHAEL THOMAS SADLER AND PARLIAMENTARY REFORM

The interest in Sadler's contribution to the debate on parliamentary reform principally lies in three areas. In 1817 he published his *First Letter to a Reformer*, in reply to a pamphlet in which Walter Fawkes of Farnley had advocated a scheme of political reform.¹ In 1831 he published in pamphlet form *On Ministerial Plan of Reform*² which complemented speeches made in the Commons in which he attacked Whig reform proposals. Together with the young Gladstone Sadler considered there to be "a certain element of Anti-christ in the Reform Act".³ Perhaps Sadler's third, and arguably, greatest contribution to the battle over the reform bill was on 18 April 1831 when he seconded the Ultra-Tory General Gascoyne's motion for retaining the existing number of members for England and Wales. The carrying of this amendment against Lord Grey's ministry led to the dissolution of parliament.

As with the previous chapter which looked at Sadler's part in attempts to stem constitutional change, chapter four will not seek to recall the well

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² M.T. Sadler, *On Ministerial Plan of Reform, 1831*, (London, 1831). I have been unable to locate this pamphlet but from the portions reprinted in Seeley, *Life of Sadler*, it appears to mirror, quite extensively the earlier *First Letter to a Reformer*. Indeed, Sadler's speeches recorded in *Hansard* also reveal a startling similarity to his *First Letter*. However, this merely serves to prove that Sadler, and indeed most Ultras, were nothing if not consistent in their political ideology. Between 1817 and 1831 there seems to be little or no deviation in either belief or argument.

documented debates concerning the 1831 Reform Act. The narrative will merely give Sadler's views on franchise reform. In order to do this *A First Letter to a Reformer* will be cited as the major primary source.

Sadler was opposed to any alteration to the Constitution. It is axiomatic, therefore, that he was against parliamentary reform. Nonetheless, together with other Ultra-Tories, Sadler had become convinced that due to the enactment of Catholic emancipation it was evident that there was something clearly amiss with the representation in the House of Commons. Although Sadler did not vote in favour of the motion for a mild reform of parliament introduced by the marquis of Blandford in June 1829 he did, nevertheless, believe that emancipation had been passed against the wishes of the political nation. Nonetheless, at this time he opposed all constitutional change.

In 1952, Aspinall argued that the Protestant landed interest, as represented by the marquis of Blandford and his supporters, initiated the parliamentary reform movement. This view was put forward by the *Quarterly Review*

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4 For an in depth account of Ultra-Tory attempts to stave off any alteration in the franchise and for Ultra arguments in favour of a limited measure of reform, see Karginoff, "The Protestant Constitutionalists and Ultra-Toryism in Britain...", Vol.2, chapter 11.

5 I was especially keen to use *A First Letter* on two counts. I have not seen the Letter used in secondary sources, accepting Seeley's *Life of Sadler*. Moreover, after eventually laying my hands on the document I then experienced immeasurable difficulties in actually being permitted to examine it. I am greatly indebted to the staff of the inter-library loans department, Edith Cowan University, W.A., who obtained a copy on micro fiche.


whose editor commented that the impetus for reform came from the Ultra-Tories who were hoping to limit the detrimental effects of Catholic emancipation.\textsuperscript{8} The \textit{Quarterly Review} also pointed to the Revolution in France as instilling fear in some members of the Establishment who then opted, albeit reluctantly for a moderate reform of parliament to preempt any such rebellion at home.\textsuperscript{9} Undoubtedly some Ultras did join in the activities of the British Parliamentary Union to agitate for reform.\textsuperscript{10} However, the movement for reform only gained momentum when other groups, distinct from Ultras, took up the cause. Ultimately, Whigs, Radicals and the Irish took over the movement.

In 1961 Professor Moore reasserted Aspinall's claim that the Ultra-Tories, led by Blandford, launched the popular movement for parliamentary reform.\textsuperscript{11} However, Moore went on to argue that the success of the movement for franchise reform was due to a county based alliance between Ultra-Tories and rural Whigs. It should be stressed that with his assertion that the Ultras began the movement, Moore was not evincing a new theory. Nonetheless, his claim that the Ultras were working in concert with some Whigs was a new addition to the historiography of British parliamentary reform. However, such a view has not been clearly substantiated. Indeed, Edwin Jaggard has ably demonstrated the fallacious nature of Moore's claim.\textsuperscript{12} He has shown that in Cornwall at least, where there was a significant Ultra-Tory presence, there had been consistent antipathy towards the idea of reform from High Tories since 1809.\textsuperscript{13} Jaggard has observed that

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{8} \textit{Quarterly Review}, xliv 1831, pp.555-558; xlv 1831, pp.252-253, 278, 283.
\bibitem{9} \textit{Ibid.}, xliv, 1831, pp.252-283.
\bibitem{10} D.C. Moore, "The Other Face of Reform", \textit{Victorian Studies}, 5, I, (1961), pp.7-34.
\bibitem{11} \textit{Ibid.}.
\bibitem{13} \textit{Ibid.}, p.87.
\end{thebibliography}
A moderate reform of parliament was seen as a panacea for a multiplicity of evils which encompassed everything from rebellion in Ireland to serious unrest in England. Unquestionably, however, many Ultras were outraged at the increasing numbers of M.P.s being returned who represented business and manufacturing interests. It was feared that some in the Tory party itself were contemplating a revision of the corn laws and this led some Ultras to believe that the disfranchisement of some nomination boroughs would result in an alteration in the complexion of the Commons. The hope was for a strengthening of the agricultural interest. Eric Evans has stated, "No serious possibility of reform had existed before 1827". This was primarily due to the economy being "generally buoyant in the early 1820s and employment prospects bright". Inevitably, therefore, "popular agitation had waned". By 1829, however, distress was widespread and it is significant that as distress became "general" demands for reform increased. It is also significant that nowhere was suffering worse than in Ireland and those Ultras who initially supported reform believed that a reform of parliament was vital in order to save the revenues of the Irish Church.

Initially some Ultra-Tories favoured reform, although many did not, believing a moderate reform of the House of Commons would be the first step in a thorough reform of the whole of parliament. Although Ultras such as Knatchbull and Sadler believed that the Protestant Constitution and Church Establishment were in mortal danger now that Catholics as well as

March 1830. A motion for a select committee to look into the matter of how Newcastle controlled his 'fiefdom' of Newark was lost 194-61. It should be pointed out that the other side were also guilty of "jobbery" and "thumbing" when manufacturers coerced their workers to vote their way.

32 Ibid., pp.22-23.
33 Ibid., p.23.
industrialists could buy their way into the Commons via the rotten boroughs, they were caught in a dilemma. By mid-summer 1829, Knatchbull as much alarmed for the future prospects of English agriculture as for the security of the Anglican Church, had reached "the depths of despair". Hence, when Blandford introduced his reform motion Knatchbull, together with Sadler, did not vote against the measure out of hand, but instead chose to propose an amendment to the motion. Most Ultras, however, believed that Blandford and the likes of William Blackwood had unleashed a storm which would wash away the Constitution in Church and State.

So it was that in February 1830, a majority of Ultra-Tories, including Sadler, supported the ministry in its opposition to a radical motion for a redistribution in the representation at East Retford. Sadler opposed it on the same grounds on which he had resisted the disfranchisement of Stockbridge, Grampound, and other boroughs. The leading opponents in the Commons were Inglis, Knatchbull, Sadler and Wetherell. At this juncture in the debate on reform, Sir Richard Vyvyan remained neutral. It was not until Russell's reform proposals were put before parliament the following year that he came out in total opposition to the measure. It is important to emphasise that Sadler, however, always opposed all parliamentary reform proposals.

Blandford and those sympathetic to moderate reform, for example, Buck, Duncombe, Fyler, O'Neil, Richmond and Winchilsea, believed emancipation would facilitate the arrival of a Catholic bloc dedicated to the complete overthrow of the Constitution. Blandford, and like-minded Tories, considered it essential to halt the spectacle of Irish Catholics infiltrating the Commons and

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34 Three Early Nineteenth-Century Diaries, p.xxiv.
35 Sadler, A First Letter... , passim.
therefore reform of the rotten boroughs was a prerequisite. Furthermore, Blandford had been propelled into uncharacteristic action to support reform, thinking it a viable antidote to rebellion in Ireland and serious unrest in England. It was these rotten boroughs that Blandford considered had harboured the constitutionally deviant who had piloted emancipation through parliament and onto the statute book. Sadler concurred but demurred.

Nevertheless, the wisdom of this reasoning notwithstanding, Knatchbull, Sadler and many other of their colleagues believed that by his sponsorship of a motion for parliamentary reform, Blandford "had done great mischief". Sir Robert Inglis articulated the majority Ultra point of view most succinctly when he stated that if "members [of parliament] were only the puppets of the popular will" it would mean the end to "freedom of discussion, and to that public conduct, of which calm inquiry and careful judgement were the guides". Inglis advised that reform would also mean the end "to that House, as a deliberate branch of the Legislature, and hence to the stability of the Government". To the Ultra-Tory mind, a "democratic" House of Commons was undesirable, but for many the dilemma was that an unrepresentative Commons had legislated against the Constitution. Moreover, even more ironically, an unrepresentative Commons had legislated against the will of the majority in the country.

Once the far-reaching terms of Lord John Russell's bill were known – which was not until 14 March 1831 – all division within Tory ranks ceased and a united

38 Ibid. Folder marked "Miscellaneous political papers". It is unclear if this is a copy of a letter from Inglis to Eldon or a copy of a speech by Inglis in the Commons. Written in Eldon's own hand.
39 Ibid.
front was presented with which to confront the measure.\textsuperscript{40} It was Russell's 'radical' reform proposal which inspired Sadler to compose \textit{On Ministerial Plan of Reform, 1831}. Indeed, the publication of this pamphlet catapulted Sadler into the forefront of the Tory challenge to the reform bill. Moreover, it was the notoriety engendered by this text which brought Sadler to such prominence and that led him to second Gascoigne's amendment rather than Knatchbull.

Sadler is a good example of how Ultra attitudes towards franchise reform altered in the 1820s.\textsuperscript{41} April and May 1831 found Sadler voting against Russell's reform motion. However, on 29 March 1830 he found himself in sympathy with action to "expose and redress specific abuses but opposed to speculative and indefinite proposition of reform".\textsuperscript{42} As Sadler was viewed by contemporary commentators with respect and increasingly as one of the leading Ultra-Tories in the Commons, it is, therefore, worthwhile to explore his views on reform.\textsuperscript{43} During the general election of July and August 1830\textsuperscript{44} Sadler did not fulminate against borough-mongering even though he attributed the granting of Catholic relief to the corrupt incumbents of rotten boroughs. Moreover, when he was asked to support calls from his constituents for a committee on reform to look into Russell's proposals, he was equivocal. The \textit{Leeds Intelligencer} fully reported Sadler's response:

\textsuperscript{40} For Vyvyan's position see: \textit{Vyvyan MSS. BO/47/48 "Parliamentary Reform Plan of Sir R. Vyvyan". 18 April 1832. This has been mostly reproduced in Bradfield, "Sir Richard Vyvyan and Tory Politics", pp.130-133. See too \textit{Vyvyan MSS. BO/47 otherwise unmarked. "Opinions of Sir R[ichard] V[yvyan] upon the prospects in case the Reform Bill passes". Also, ibid. "Great objections to the Bill".}

\textsuperscript{41} His opinions, like those of other M.P.s altered according to the political and economic climate. 'Distress' and calls for reform often coincided.

\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Hansard}, New Series, xxiii, 987.

\textsuperscript{43} For example, by Greville, Grant, Ellenborough, Le Marchant, Martineau and Mrs Arbuthnot. See \textit{Three Early Nineteenth-Century Diaries}, pp.xxv-xxvi.

\textsuperscript{44} Sadler was returned for the seat of Newark.
"If it is for the purpose of disenfranchising those boroughs where the corruption... has been carried on to so great an extent and conferring it [sic] on large towns – when facts are properly proved, I will support the measure. But let us take care that in endeavouring to repair the fabric of our Constitution we do not pull it down altogether – and which I am of opinion will be the case if other than skilful hands undertake the work".  

Sadler, it should be remembered, was in a somewhat invidious position. Many argued that his own constituency was a rotten borough. Nonetheless, Sadler, like Knatchbull who was prepared to offend the "Men of Kent" risked losing his seat rather than commit himself to a measure the consequences of which were at best guesswork. "I am not in the habit of voting against the wishes of my constituents", he explained, "but I must and will be independent and no power on earth shall make me otherwise". Nevertheless, he was careful to balance his argument and advised the electors that he was similarly "independent of Ministers" and, furthermore, he asserted his belief that they "will not be inclined to look to me for support". His views on reform were, therefore, identical to Knatchbull's, different to Vyvyan's as well as to others, confirming there was no common ground held by Tories whether 'Protestant' or otherwise. By 1831, however, Sadler's views against reform had firmed. He defiantly proclaimed, "we are not sent here... to represent the interests of our constituents. Their local rights, their municipal privileges, we are bound to protect; their general interests we are bound to consult at all times; but not their will".

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46 Ibid.
47 Ibid. However, it is as well to point out that he could hardly be independent of Newcastle.
48 Hansard, Third Series, iii, 213-214.
In February 1831 the Whig government announced a reform measure to be brought on by Russell for 2 March. Sadler spoke against this intention on 7 February. On its introduction the bill was debated for seven nights; again on 21 for two nights; and again on 18 April for two nights more. Seeley wrote that on this last occasion "Mr Sadler delivered one of his most splendid and successful compositions".\textsuperscript{49} There seems some justification for such praise. Sadler seconded Gascoigne's motion, that it was "not expedient to diminish the number of representatives for England and Wales", which amendment was carried by 299 votes against 291, and in a few hours after, parliament was dissolved.\textsuperscript{50}

Sadler had not concurred with the conviction, expressed by Wellington, that it was not possible to improve in the slightest degree, the existing Constitution of the House of Commons. Curiously though, he had earlier opposed an alteration at East Retford. He supported the marquis of Chandos who attempted to pass a bill for disfranchising Evesham and giving members to Birmingham. Moreover, Sadler was not against the suppression of ten corrupt boroughs and the enfranchisement of Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, Sheffield, Glasgow, Bradford, Halifax, Macclesfield, Wakefield and Stockport. He was, however, appalled by Russell's intention to draw up a "new constitution".\textsuperscript{51} For Sadler virtual representation rather than numerical or geographical was the original basis of the Constitution.\textsuperscript{52}

Sadler began his support of the amendment by charging the Whigs with reckless departure from all their own professions and pledges between

\textsuperscript{49} Seeley, \textit{Life of Sadler}, p.235.
\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Ibid.}, p.236.
\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Hansard}, Third Series, iii, 1533-1534.
November 1830 and March 1831. He reminded the House that Brougham had
denied his proposals were "an innovating or sweeping reform", and that he had
declared that he wished to "stand on the ancient way of the constitution" and
"to repair, not to pull down". However, one year earlier he had opposed
"repairing". Furthermore, Sadler recalled that Lord Grey had declared his
views and intentions "to be guarded and limited by a prudent care not to disturb
too violently, by any extreme changes, the established principles and practice of
the constitution".

From this exposure of the total departure of the authors of the bill from their
own professions, Sadler "proceeded to a view of the actual history of the House
of Commons, and a comparison of it with the new plan of representation now
proposed". It is here that his historical outline is taken from A First Letter to a
Reformer. After "he showed how constantly the progress to a freer and
larger representation had been going on; and that at no former period had the
popular will been so extensively felt in that house as at the present... He then
pointed out the absurdities and anomalies of the new scheme...". Sadler
revealed that to towns in England which possessed 2,920,095 inhabitants, the
ministerial plan gave 295 representatives; while to rural districts with 8,341,342

53 Seeley, Life of Sadler, p.238. I believe that Sadler's speech of 18 April 1831 may be
the pamphlet On Ministerial Plan of Reform, 1831. Certainly the speech specifically
attacks the Whig proposals outlined in Russell's reform bill.
54 Ibid., p.238.
55 Ibid., p.239.
56 Sadler, A First Letter to a Reformer, pp.1-108. "It will be seen that... he has principally
confined himself to the historical part of the argument... to take the lead in the cause
of Parliamentary Reform", p.v. Sadler goes on to assert that from Norman times the
progress of the Constitution had constantly been towards greater and still greater
degrees of freedom, and an increasing proportion of democracy: that instead of
encroaching upon the popular branch of the legislature, the crown had been
constantly losing influence, and suffering positive diminution of power: and that at
no former period were the people so fully and justly represented in the House of
Commons, as at the existing moment. See Seeley, Life of Sadler, pp.30-31.
57 Seeley, Life of Sadler, p.239.
inhabitants, they assigned only 149 M.P.s. He emphasised that a resident in a borough, therefore, had six times as much political influence as one who lived in an agricultural district. Sadler was then quick to point out that "the masculine mind of the Protector [Oliver Cromwell] could not produce any thing so false and incoherent as this attempt; nor, tyrant as he was, stoop to any thing so partial and selfish as [he would] speedily prove this to be".\textsuperscript{58} Cromwell had, in fact, given 237 members to the counties of England and 143 to the towns. Ministers, therefore, had actually reversed his plan. In short, Sadler feared for the "destruction... of our happy constitution". He reminded the House that "The tree is known by its fruits" and that these included "the proud boast of successive generations of our patriots – that England possesses the most free, happy, and efficient form of government existing on the face of the earth...". He remembered the "measure of prosperity, which we have, under Divine Providence, long enjoyed... her free institutions, industry, directed by intellect and supplied by capital... a country where, for ages past, no hostile foot has dared to tread; no slave has breathed; where impartial justice has constantly presided; and which religion and humanity have made their own".\textsuperscript{59}

Sadler was convinced that "the excellency of our constitution" should not be merely estimated by the numerous blessings it had conferred, but also "by the calamities from which it has been equally the means of protecting us". It had "preserved the country in security and internal peace, amidst the ruin of empires and the fall of thrones, – in freedom, amidst surrounding tyranny. Can such a system justify the illustration applied to it... that of a rotten and sinking vessel? No! its

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., p.241.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., pp.248-249.
soundness and strength have been too recently tried. When the foundations of the social system of Europe were broken up, and the lawless floods of democracy rose and overwhelmed the proudest elevations of society under one wide and stormy abyss; when all seemed darkness above and tempestuousness around, then was the British constitution seen like a sacred ark; mounting triumphantly in the storm, and preserving for a world restored to peace and order, the elements of loyalty, liberty, and law".60

He concluded by exhorting the House to preserve the "sacred Constitution... bequeathed to us by our ancestors...".61 The motion was carried, which then led to the dissolution of parliament.

Due to Sadler's opposition to reform in the Commons and his patron's hostility to the measure in the Lords, Newark had become "an uncertain seat".62 At the suggestion of the duke of Newcastle, he stood and was returned for the safer seat of Aldborough in Yorkshire. Following the passing of the reform bill his Aldborough constituency was abolished. Sadler was adopted as the prospective member for Leeds by the Yorkshire Short-Time Committees who fought a vigorous campaign on his behalf. Without doubt the controversial

60 Ibid., pp.249-250.  
61 Ibid., p.250. The charms of 'Merrie England' were embellished in the prose and verse of Lord John Manners, second son of the duke of Rutland, who yearned for a time when:
  Each knew his place – king, peasant, peer or priest,
  The greatest owned connexion with the least;
  From rank to rank the generous feeling ran,
  And linked society as man to man.
way in which Sadler had entered parliament as member for Newark in March 1829, his vigorous opposition to parliamentary reform together with the medieval world view of his benefactor led to the destruction of Nottingham castle for which county Newcastle was Lord Lieutenant.63 Indeed, Sadler's championing of Gascoigne's amendment certainly contributed to the Nottinghamshire reform riots during the reform elections of 1831.

Reform retrospective

After the elections of 1831 and 1832 a considerable change took place in Sadler's position and estimation in the Commons. He had originally entered parliament for a political purpose. The degree of success which attended his effort was such as to encourage high expectations among the 'party' to which he attached himself. Shortly after the question of Catholic emancipation was settled the reform bill agitation arose, and Sadler was called, by his associates, "into the very front rank", and selected to second Gascoigne's motion. Seeley comments, "that speech fully sustained his fame; and by a second in the next parliament, he lost no rank or estimation; but with these efforts may be said to have ended his party life".64 Although interested and engaged for short periods in these contests, his zeal and energy towards specifically constitutional matters quickly flagged. What his biographer has termed the "current of his soul" resumed its force. For over twenty years "the chief employment of his leisure hours had been, the study of the condition, wants, and miseries, of the labouring poor;

63 In late 1831 Newcastle began work on two papers which were published early in the following year. The first, What will be done with the Lords?, (London, 1831), was an attempt to bolster their lordships' morale and to be an encouragement to resist the reform bill. The second paper was An Address to all classes and conditions of Englishmen, (London, 1832). It was essentially a call to patriotic Englishmen to defend the Constitution. It is not wholly fanciful to speculate that Sadler may have contributed to these two pamphlets. Newcastle MSS. Ne 5073-5; ibid. Ne C5378/1-7. 1832. Copies are held in the North Library of the British Library.

64 Seeley, Life of Sadler, p.280.
and his favourite object had been, to devise means for the removal of those miseries, and the general amelioration of the condition of the working classes".65

Once it became clear that the enactment of a reform bill was inevitable Sadler "abandoned himself to his long-accustomed and favourite avocations". Indeed, his interest in the reform question visibly abated as he rapidly became absorbed in other pursuits. Rapidly, therefore, Sadler's position in the Commons changed. Although "a degree of disappointment... arose in some quarters" and many "voted him more than ever a bore... the country at large soon began to comprehend his motives and to appreciate his character; and if he lost rank as a party leader; he gained it as a pure and simple-hearted philanthropist".66

This change of priorities may be dated from autumn 1831. Nonetheless, Sadler continued to keep abreast of developments in the reform debate. It is worth looking at the last speech made by him on the reform bill because it may be considered the close of his political career. After 2 February 1832 Sadler spoke uniquely on what he considered to be the wrongs inflicted on the working classes. However, on that occasion he attacked ministers on the amount fixed as the property qualification which ensured eligibility to vote in borough elections.

"... the fixed amount of the qualification will, in consequence of the difference in value of houses in large and small towns, vary the franchise, and obviate the objections previously urged as to the apparent uniformity of the proposed qualification;"

65 ibid.
66 Ibid., pp.280-281.
but I would remind [Russell] that there is one uniformity which still remains, and one of a most forbidding and insulting nature, namely, a uniformity of disfranchisement as regards the lower and most industrious classes in every part of the United Kingdom; the vast majority of whom reside in houses beneath the standard arbitrarily fixed upon..."

It can be seen from this extract that Sadler was concerned for those amongst the lower orders who were to be denied the vote. He believed that ministers had neglected to indicate "the proportion of the community that will be intrusted with the franchise... or of that immense majority to whom it will refuse that privilege". Sadler estimated that "at least twenty millions... will be left without any representation whatever". Moreover, he emphasised the evident inconsistency in the government line "at a time when the principle of virtual representation is stigmatised as little better than none, and is to be superseded by a measure professedly liberal!".

Sadler calculated that "at present... in the greater part of one hundred towns, some of them of considerable magnitude and importance, every householder above the condition of pauperism has the vote; and consequently the humbler ranks of society, being always the most numerous, have, as they ought to have under any fair and permanent system of representation, their influence in this House". Sadler proved zealous on behalf of those voters holding "old" franchise rights. Perhaps herein lies the germ of the idea of an alliance between the working classes and the Tory party, euphamistically known as "Tory

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68 It should be noted that Sadler was a stickler for statistics.
Democracy", which was to be taken up by Disraeli and popularised in his novels in the 1840s.\textsuperscript{69} He continued by berating ministers who had denigrated such voters as "potwallopers" and who ridiculed them as subservient and corrupt. By contrast Sadler believed that they often exercised their franchises "honestly and independently" and were "little influenced by corrupt and selfish motives".\textsuperscript{70}

Sadler then went on to allude to a theme to which his name would be permanently associated – the condition of factory workers. He was appalled by the obvious relish with which Russell had pointed out to his supporters "how few voters there will be found in certain great factories". By contrast he considered that such a "circumstance is no true ground of satisfaction or security". He explained that

"the operatives... in the large factories... would, under the domestic system which has prevailed, or under a less extensive monopoly of business, many of them be themselves little manufacturers, occupying, in all probability, £10 houses, and advancing in a course of honest industry and unremitting attention; to a state of independence and comparative affluence; but now while a commercial policy which, however, inevitable, is... to be much deplored, has prostrated the once independent operative manufacturer, and sent him to the factory for employment, the present political policy is to deprive him of all influence, and complete his degradation... that class... this measure

\textsuperscript{69} Coningsby, Sybil and Tancred - the 'Young England' trilogy.
\textsuperscript{70} Seeley, Life of Sadler, pp.283-284.
will leave... wholly unrepresented everywhere...

[The bill] will establish a most capricious, imaginary, and insulting distinction regarding the very class it comprehends within its own scheme".\footnote{Ibid., pp.286-287.}

Sadler explained that by denying factory operatives the vote manufacturers were debarred from having political influence. In perceptive vein he drew attention to the distinction created between the productive or "industrious classes" and their employers, the "manufacturing" or factory owning class between whom would be created "irreconcileable" \[sic\] differences; "and will, if introduced, light up the torch of perpetual discord in every crowded community". This was to be fulfilled in the activities of the Chartists.

In conclusion Sadler asked how it was that "£9, £8, or £7 renters, many of them of precisely the same class with [the £10 renters] are to be kept quiet when they find themselves, in these liberal days, excluded from the franchise?"\footnote{Ibid., p.288.}

Moreover, he told ministers

"that if they carry their arbitrary measure, they will find my prophecy realized concerning it; that a system, professedly liberal, which thus prospectively annihilates the ancient rights of Englishmen in every place where they have been so long exercised and so deeply cherished; conferring by the new scheme no equivalent ones in any part of the empire, will, instead of being a permanent settlement, expose, and in no long time, this, their new constitution,
together with its authors, to the merited derision of
the great mass of the British people".73

Seeley at least, writing in 1842, believed that which Sadler had warned about to
have been realised. Indeed, such "an instance of foresight" stamped the
character of the speaker "as a statesman of the highest order".74

73 Ibid., p.289.
74 Ibid.
CHAPTER FIVE

A POOR LAW FOR IRELAND

Although, as we have seen, Sadler gained notoriety on 18 April 1831 for successfully seconding the "Gascoigne amendment" he now devoted himself in the House to questions of social reform. In June 1830 he moved a resolution in favour of the establishment of a poor law for Ireland on the principle of the 43rd Act of Queen Elizabeth, with such alterations and improvements as the needs of Ireland required. After his 1831 election for the seat of Aldborough a second resolution of his to a similar effect, moved on 29 August 1831, was lost by only twelve votes, a division which ministers acknowledged to be equivalent to defeat. The Irish Poor Law Act, however, was not passed until 1838.

Sadler’s contribution to the eventual enactment of poor law legislation for Ireland appears little known. Historians have largely failed to acknowledge Sadler as the harbinger of change. Eccleshall’s highlighting of Sadler’s important early work in the Commons, notwithstanding, he has also drawn attention to Ireland: its evils and their remedies, published in 1828. Sadler, although not unique amongst Tories as a would-be reformer was clearly in the forefront of strategies to alleviate distress in Ireland. Indeed, Ireland was intended as a supplement to a projected three-volume work, The Law of Population. Only the first four books were eventually published in 1830. It is

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1 Robert Eccleshall, if not the exception, is one historian who has noted Sadler’s early contribution to the debate on Irish poor law legislation, June 1830-August 1831. See R. Eccleshall, English Conservatism since the Restoration: an introduction and anthology, (London, 1990), pp.86-92, pp.103-108; especially pp.87-89 and pp.103-106 for Ireland.
important to recognise that Sadler had been marshalling his impressive research since 1819.3

Sadler refuted Malthusian argument which concluded that neither artificially increased wages nor public charity were appropriate means of alleviating economic hardship.4 Instead, so Malthus reasoned, the labouring classes might rescue themselves from pauperism by exercising foresight and moral restraint, postponing marriage until they could afford to support a family. Malthus contended that there was a natural tendency for population growth to outstrip the means of subsistence. Nowhere was this more evident, argued Ricardian political economists, than in Ireland. Sadler's case was not helped by the fact that Burke had agreed with Malthus, although he had done so by a different line of argument. Eccleshall has rightly observed that "noblesse-obligers were appalled by this message of self-help to the poor, because it absolved the rich of their paternal responsibilities".5 In particular, they were affronted by the attack upon the old poor laws, inherited from the sixteenth century and administered by local property-owners.6 Malthus and other Manchester economists7 denounced such method as a "ramshackle and expensive system, discouraging self-reliance and making recipients of charity dependent upon the benevolence of the higher orders".8

Sadler's repudiation of Malthus was prompted by a desire, shared with other Ultra-Tories, to implement an amended version of the English poor laws in

3 *The Law of Population* ran to over 650 pages.
5 Eccleshall, *English Conservatism since the Restoration*, p.86.
6 Such as the duke of Newcastle. It should be remembered that Sadler was a long-time poor law administrator in Leeds.
7 For example Macaulay and contributors to the *Edinburgh Review*. See July 1830 and "Sadler's Refutation Refuted", January 1831.
8 Eccleshall, *English Conservatism since the Restoration*, pp.86-87.
Ireland; this was a country providing prima-facie evidence of the principle of population, in that the fecundity of its (primarily Catholic) people was matched by their indigence. In 1827 Malthus told a Select Committee on Emigration that an extension of public relief to Ireland would only aggravate the distress of its inhabitants. Sadler argued that Malthusian doctrine sanctioned "the misrule of those whose elevated duty it is to mitigate or remove human miseries, by attributing those miseries to the laws of nature and of God". Sadler considered that Ireland's problems derived from the selfish misrule of a largely absentee aristocracy rather than overbreeding by its population. Sadler believed that God was a benevolent father-figure who was a perfect role-model for Ireland's natural leaders whom he had placed in that country for the purpose of shepherding its people.

Much of the ample prosperity produced by the Irish, Sadler argued, was appropriated by absentee landlords, who suppressed peasant proprietorship through a combination of exhorbitant rents and the deliberate clearing of smallholdings. One consequence of such misrule was the flooding of the English labour market with Irish emigrants, driven from their homeland by destitution. Sadler believed the solution was to treat the Irish peasantry as scripture ordained; this was as "they ought to be: let their natural patrons and protectors return to them, not 'for a short-time', as exactors and 'drivers', but, permanently, as kind and

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9 Ibid., p.87.
10 Sadler, Ireland: its evils and their remedies, p.xlvii.
11 The north of England was particularly prone to large scale Irish immigration. Often Irish labourers were content to work for very low rates of pay which caused unemployment for English workers and contributed to anti Irish and anti Catholic sentiment.
12 He has, therefore, been seen as an advocate of High-Tory paternalism, Radical Toryism and Christian Socialism.
resident landlords; let labour be fostered and encouraged; let want be relieved, and life preserved, by a moderated system of poor-laws, which shall concede those humble claims to all, which GOD and Nature have immutably established, and which policy itself has long sanctioned: in a word, let the different ranks resume their equally essential stations, each performing their several duties; and the social edifice, thus 'compact together and at unity in itself, shall never again be shaken'.

To Sadler, these were the means, simple and obvious, "though deprecated by inveterate selfishness, and ridiculed by theoretic folly", which would, he continued

"and in no long time, renovate Ireland, and repay the wrongs of many generations... The benevolence of the great would then be reflected in the thankful and gratified demeanour of their inferiors... Then, indeed, the different ranks of society, instead of so many steps of a dungeon descending down to lower and still lower depths of misery and degradation, would like Jacob's ladder, seem reaching up to Heaven, and the Angels of Mercy and Gratitude would be seen ascending and descending thereon, for ever".13

Sadler's poor law proposals and his general plans for the regeneration of the "industrious classes" in regard to Ireland contradict the assessment of at least

13 Sadler, Ireland: its evils and their remedies, pp.407-412. Part of the text is quoted in Eccleshall, English Conservatism since the Restoration, pp.87-88.
one recent historian of Conservatism. Bruce Coleman has asserted that any specific Tory plans to further social reform were really only "developed during the century's second quarter" and that "it is difficult to assess the distinctively Tory contribution". Sadler's philanthropic ideas were a series of well thought out remedial measures which had been finely tuned early in the nineteenth century.

In the Commons on 3 June 1830 Sadler argued that the institution of the poor law of England "encourages the demand for, and increases the value of labour, as well as abates distress". In Ireland, "in consequence of the want of such a law", he advised "labour is discouraged, and distress increased". The inevitable result was, he concluded, "the constant flux of numbers from the latter country, which nothing but a better and uniform system will ever prevent". Other circumstances were also cited which "conspire to make this defect a still greater evil". He went on to list "the consequences of Irish absenteeism... the want of labour, exorbitant rents... the ruinous and oppressive system of underletting... the clearing of farms... steam navigation has, by facilitating the cheap and speedy export of cattle, been another cause of th[e] increase in the size of farms, and comparative diminution in the tillage of the country, which had dispossessed so many little farmers and their labourers of their employment and their homes".

As a consequence of such circumstances, he alleged, "numerous little cultivators... barely enabled to sustain life, are deprived of their last shilling, and sent forth at once, without the slightest provision, upon a country which yields them no employment, and affords them no relief". Sadler went on to

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14 Coleman, Conservatism and the Conservative Party in Nineteenth-Century Britain, p.125.
15 Seeley, Life of Sadler, p.203.
16 Ibid., pp.203-204.
17 Ibid., p.204.
deny the Malthusian charge that destitution in Ireland was due to different circumstances than those which prevailed in England and that, therefore, the poor law provision should be made available. Irish emigration was a natural consequence of living in such circumstances, "and in increasing multitudes – nor do I blame them". However, he condemned those "who refuse them in their own country that relief in their distress which justice and humanity equally dictate, and which is rendered in every civilized nation on earth".18

In order to strengthen his case Sadler pointed out "that the want of a legal provision for the poor in Ireland operates as a grievous injury on those of England". Indeed, it was self evident that the "proprietors in the former island, being under no obligation to sustain the unemployed, the destitute, and the distressed, have an interested and selfish motive, which may indeed be denominated a premium, for thus getting rid of them and driving them forth to utter destitution" when many of them, of necessity, "take refuge here".19

Sadler lamented the consequences of emigration.

"They come for employment and for bread. The market force of labour here is consequently overstocked, and its value greatly depressed by the unnatural rivalry of those numbers who are annually obliged to make this country their asylum. Thus it is that in the field and in the factory, at the forge or at the loom, - in every sphere of industry, the Englishman finds himself interfered with, his wages greatly reduced, and himself in many cases thrown out of employment. The poor creatures

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18 Ibid., pp.204-205.
19 Ibid., p.205.
who take refuge here ... I do not blame; absenteeism has deprived them of the means of subsistence, and, in effect expelled them from the country. I would therefore receive and relieve them till a better system is established".

In the meantime, however, he could not "refrain from reprobating in the strongest terms the conduct of those who cause these constant deportations. "The interest of our own poor imperiously demand that those in Ireland should be sustained; nor are their interests alone concerned; so great and general have the evils... become, that it will... be found... that the rights of property, as well as those of poverty, will alike prescribe the same remedy; and then indeed may the poor of Ireland confidently hope for redress".20

Sadler concluded his plea on behalf of the Irish by asserting "the right of poverty". He defined what he meant by this.

"It is not put forth on behalf of the poor, as a right to a division of any part of the real property of the country; on the contrary, it is one urged in perfect consistency with all the just claims of property, however, rigidly maintained, and by whomsoever expounded; it simply implies, a real and indisputable right, that, after the institutions of the country have sanctioned the monopoly of property, the poor shall have some reserved claims to the necessaries of life;

20 Ibid., p.205-206.
and that these claims shall be available in the case of those only who may be smitten with sickness, and consequently incapable of labour; disabled by age or incurable disease, and who can therefore labour no more; of that infancy which, left parentless and destitute, makes so touching a demand upon our care; of that state of wretchedness, so common in Ireland, owing to causes to which I have already alluded, when those who are most willing, and even anxious to work, can nevertheless obtain no employment: that these should be relieved in some humble degree, so confined... and limited, that the right thus recognised shall make but a small inroad on the amount of wealth which shall be called upon to administer to these necessities... Finally, that all assistance should be administered in the form of renumerated labour, wherever the applicants are capable of it; to those who are willing and anxious to earn their humble pittance by the sweat of their brow. Such, then, are the narrow limitations of the right we assert in behalf of human indigence; – the bare right of existence”\textsuperscript{21}

Having stated the principle, he naturally went on to deal quite ruthlessly with its impugners. Perhaps for this reason the motion did not proceed to a division. The government did not accede to the proposition, "it passed in the negative"\textsuperscript{22} Seeley commented, "an unanswerable argument had been laid

\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.208-209.  
\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Ibid.}, p.219. For the whole of Sadler's speech of 3 June see Seeley, \textit{Life of Sadler}, pp.201-218.
before the British Parliament, and through it, before the British People. The result was certain, its accomplishment was only a question of time".23 Indeed, this was confessed a year later by the then Home Secretary, Lord Stanley24 who although once more opposed Sadler's renewed motion, said that "He could not conclude without expressing his persuasion, that an opinion in favour of Poor Laws was every day gaining ground in Ireland; and that to an extent which no government could, or ought much longer to oppose".25

Although the motion was defeated Sadler clearly had his admirers. Not the least of these was William Johnstone, who wrote in *Blackwood's Magazine*, where the plight of Ireland was a recurrent topic. He particularly welcomed Sadler's contribution both in and out of parliament which had caused the conclusions of the Select Committee on Emigration (1827) regarding the alleged evils of over-population to "have been shattered to pieces by the battery of Mr Sadler's erudition".26 Nonetheless, Sadler's argument was ridiculed in the *Edinburgh Review* by the political economist J.R. McCulloch, who had given evidence to the committee and, "contrary to Sadler, had attributed... [Ireland's] misfortunes to excessive fertility coupled with small-scale proprietorship".27 Johnstone took up Sadler's defence and castigated McCulloch for his rudeness to Sadler and ignorance about Ireland.28 John Wilson, the editor of *Blackwood's*, described *Ireland* as a "stupendous work" and Sadler as "a champion of the ancient constitution".29

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24 14th Earl of Derby.  
26 *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Vol.xxiv, 1828, pp.753-754; William Johnstone, "Ireland as it is; in 1828".  
Sadler's second motion "that it is expedient and necessary to constitute a Legal Provision for the Poor (Ireland)" was introduced to the Commons on 29 August 1831 where again he reiterated that "property was held in trust for the welfare of the people". He warned parliament that Irish nationalism would triumph and the Union would be severed if the Irish peasantry were crushed between the greed of absentee landlords and the dogma of political economy. He concluded his speech in passionate vein.

"A dark cloud of suffering has long hung over the west, where the angry elements are again heard from afar, and threatening that storm which may shake the empire to its very foundations. The time is come when property must be taught that it has duties to perform as strictly and righteously due, as those it exacts from poverty. Politicians and economists may agree as they please, but their

The "Edinburgh Reviewer" was T.B. [Lord] Macaulay. Macaulay wrote to Mr Macvey Napier in February 1831: "People here think that I have answered Sadler completely. Empson tells me that Malthus is well pleased, which is a good sign. As to Blackwood's trash, I could not get through it. It bore the same relation to Sadler's pamphlet that a bad hash bears to a bad joint". G.O. Trevelyan, The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay, (London, 1881), p.91. I am grateful to my wife who purchased this volume for me on holiday in Hobart in April 1995. Sadler was on holiday at Redcar when he received the savage Edinburgh Review article on his Irish book. Samuel Fenton recorded "He was vastly pleased, and said, 'I thought they might have ridiculed some grammatical errors, as it is written in such haste, but I would not now suppress it if I could. It is just what I could have wished - mere abuse'...". See Sadler Papers. Leeds. The Diary of S.G. Fenton. See too three letters from Sadler to William Blackwood, editor Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine. Sadler Papers. Edinburgh. MS 4028 ff 209-13, Leeds, 21 August 1830; MS 4029 ff 211-13, Redcar, Yorkshire, 22 September 1830; MS 4031 ff 81-2, London, 11 February 1831. From Leeds he wrote 'I perceive that a most furious attack is made upon the principle I have enunciated, in the Edinburgh Review, just published. The article is sufficiently strong as far as personal hostility goes, but is utterly destitute of the shadow of an argument, as will be fully shown...".

Hansard, Third Series, viii (1831), 498-536.
palliations and apologies will not much longer avail".31

In this last observation Sadler was correct. Poor relief was extended to Ireland in 1838, but it incorporated the workhouse structure, approved by political economists as a means of encouraging thrift and self-reliance, which had been established by the new English Poor Law of 1834.32

31 Hansard, Third Series, vi, 791-815 for the full text of Sadler's speech. The speech is quoted in full in Seeley, Life of Sadler, pp.264-279. The speech is also partially quoted in Eccleshall, English Conservatism since the Restoration, pp.103-106.

32 Sadler, together with many Ultra-Tories, disapproved of the new English Poor Law of 1834. Indeed, it was a major bone of contention with Peel who approved of it.
Autumn 1831 found Sadler confronting parliament with evidence in support of the second of the three great causes, relative to social reform, which he championed during his short parliamentary career. On 11 October, six weeks after his second motion on Irish poor laws, "he brought before the House of Commons... a subject of at least equal extent and importance; – namely, the grievances and wants of the English agricultural labourers". Sadler moved a resolution for bettering the condition of the agricultural poor in England. He pointed out to the House his concern "for bettering the condition of the labouring poor" generally. Yet, "very reluctantly" Sadler felt "obliged to divide the subject" and "defer to another occasion... the consideration of a measure on behalf of the manufacturing poor". Principally, therefore, he addressed the state of the agricultural poor. In doing so, he appealed to the tradition of the natural law writers, who he claimed, regarded the condition of the poor of "paramount importance". Sadler looked to William Paley who "asserted it to be the first duty of the legislature to take care of the poor". He judged Paley a "benevolent writer" who "has emphatically declared, that were a whole session [of parliament] so employed, it would be spent more to the honour of God and the good of society than in any other subjects in which the noblest patriots could engage". Sadler ascribed the degradation of the labourers to the growth

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1 Irish poor laws, the case of the English agricultural labourers and factory reform.
3 I too have divided Sadler's attempts to ameliorate their condition. See my chapter 7 for the manufacturing poor.
4 Seeley, Life of Sadler, p.292.
of large farms which had caused the eviction of smallholders, and to flagrant
injustice committed in the enclosure of commonland.

To remedy this situation Sadler proposed four main ideas. Firstly, the erection
of suitable cottages by the parish authorities, the latter to be allowed to borrow
finances from government to meet the capital outlay. Secondly, he suggested
the provision of allotments large enough to feed a cow, to be let, at the rents
currently charged for such land in the locality, to deserving labourers who had
endeavoured to bring up their families without parochial relief. Thirdly, he
sought the offer of sufficient garden ground, let at fair rents, to encourage
horticulture among the labourers and their families. Lastly, he wanted the
 provision of parish allotments for spade cultivation by unemployed labourers.

Sadler began his speech with a reference to the problems encountered by
agriculturalists, troubles which he was "fully entitled to assume, showed the
existence of some deep-seated evil". Naturally he then outlined the precise
nature of the mischief which had afflicted "the bold peasantry of England... and
which has hardly left a wreck behind". The reason, he believed, was quite
plain. "An ignorant and selfish system of spurious political economy, dictating
first to the agricultural interest, has at length triumphed". In short, he asserted,
"heartless dogmas" had sanctioned a system of "demolition and monopoly"
which had

"laid house to house, and field to field, that they may
stand alone in the earth, has left no place for the
poor; none for the little cultivator; none for the
peasant's cow; no not enough in one case in ten, for
a garden. The best cottages have been demolished...
The lonely and naked hut into which they are now
thrust, and for which is exacted an exorbitant rent, is
destitute, both without and within, of all that formerly distinguished their humble abodes; is often unfit to stable even quadrupeds, and is frequently so crowded by different families, as to set not comfort merely, but decency at defiance, and render morality itself an impossible virtue.\footnote{Sadler's speech in the Commons, 11 October 1831. Quoted in Seeley, \textit{Life of Sadler}, pp.291-294. In the speech Sadler quoted Goldsmith whom he believed “the loveliest of the poets of poverty” who had lamented the absence of cottages “spurned indignant from the green”; p.293. See too M.T. Sadler, \textit{The Distress of the Agricultural Labourers, Illustrated by the Speech of M.T. Sadler, Esq. M.P. (Upon a motion to bring in a Bill for their Relief) on 11th October, 1831}, (London, 1831). Copy held in the North Library of the British Library.}

Sadler claimed that when employed the wages of the labourer, with the exception of a few weeks in the year, were “utterly inadequate to supply the needs of a craving family”. In fact it was his belief that the term “wages” was incorrect. Many were sold by auction in certain parishes, and therefore reduced “to the condition of the slave, or driven to the workhouse” where they were “often treated worse than a felon”. Whereupon, “labour meant to degrade and insult him, is often prescribed to him; or, wholly unemployed, he sits brooding over his miserable fate; winter labour, whether for himself or his wife and children, having been long since taken away”. Sadler asserted that these “degraded wretches” were “perpetually insulted by false and heartless accusations, – for being a pauper, when his accusers have compelled him to become such, – for being idle, when his work has been taken from him, – for improvidence, when he can hardly exist...”\footnote{Seeley, \textit{Life of Sadler}, p.294.}

The enclosure of commonland was seen as a major cause for the impoverishment of agricultural labourers. Political economists, however, saw...
the root causes of their predicament elsewhere. Some of their "inventions" were identified, such as, "that the miseries of the labourers arose from their improvident marriages". However, Sadler stated that the facts, as shown from the population returns, demonstrated that "in those counties particularly denoted as scenes of agricultural distress, the marriages were fewer, than in those in which no such distress appeared". Moreover, he believed the standing argument of "the redundancy of the population" to be an assumption of "prodigious folly". Indeed, "notwithstanding the discouragements to which labour has been subjected in this country", he asserted, "our rural population is not, even yet, redundant". Sadler ably demonstrated that "even as early as April, all the healthy labourers are employed; that April is a very busy time; and, that from thence to the termination of the harvest, the demand for labour increases... so much so, indeed, that turning to the agricultural surveys, I find, that in the counties where so much is said of the redundancy of the labourers, even the hay-harvest could not be got in by the resident population without foreign assistance". Furthermore, Sadler was able to quote the evidence of "the individual whom the committee very properly place at the head of their list of witnesses". The question was asked: "Have you found in general, that it is very easy to obtain labourers?" He replied, "Generally speaking, I have, excepting during the harvest months; we then find a great scarcity of workmen". Therefore, the agricultural labourers were not only not redundant; they were too few. Indeed, it was the custom during harvest time for townsfolk and for seasonal workers from Ireland to flock to the countryside.

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7 Ibid., p.295-296. See too Appendix D for statistics used by Sadler to back up his argument, pp.635-638.
9 Seeley, Life of Sadler, pp.296-297.
10 One Mr M. Adam who testified "that he has had very considerable experience in hiring labour in the country". Ibid., p.297. It is unclear whether 'Adam' was his true name.
Consequently, the charge of idleness was refuted. It is axiomatic that if the fields could not be reaped, they would never be sown. Sadler went on to point out that it was ridiculous for political economists "to rant about the redundancy of labour" for they had determined "whether they are in excess... not by the demand for them in the season... when they are essentially necessary, but in that, in which he imagines he can dispense with them altogether". Such a method of computation he judged "absurd and unjust". Indeed, he asked, does "the general call his soldiers superfluous while in their winter quarters?". It was obvious that labour would be in less demand during winter than in spring and harvest. Sadler's own research led him to conclude that "the system of engrossing farms" and "the taking from them their commons" was amongst the main reasons for the "numerous class of little cultivators, or, as they might be called, independent or free labourers, being thus extinguished".

To bolster his own arguments in support of the agricultural poor, Sadler cited evidence brought before the Board of Agriculture by Lord Winchilsea. Not only had the small farm been monopolized, the common right destroyed, the 'garden' seized, but the cottage itself destroyed. Sadler did not forgo the opportunity to remind the House that "the foxes, indeed, might have holes, and the birds of the air, nests - but these Christian philosophers would not let a poor man have where to lay his head". Copious tables of statistics were produced to demonstrate the vast numbers of cottages and gardens which had been demolished and laid waste. It was his hope that government would

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11 Ibid., pp.298-299.
12 Ibid., p.304.
13 Ibid., p.311. See too Appendix E, pp.638-650. "Communications to the Board of Agriculture, on subjects relative to the Husbandry and Internal Improvement of the Country". Letter from the Earl of Winchilsea to the president of the Board of Agriculture, on the advantages of cottagers renting land.
14 Ibid., p.312. "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head". Matthew 8 vs 10. N.I.V.
15 Seeley, Life of Sadler, pp.313-328.
provide funds to rebuild cottages and set aside small allotments for private cultivation. Moreover, he pleaded that "it be the business of this house, as it is its evident duty, to make that happiness universal". Indeed, "let those who demand their summer toil, give them the means of employment and subsistence in the winter season". To this end he asked that parish relief be administered during times of hardship, "lest the cry of them that have reaped our fields, come up before the Lord of the harvest". Sadler concluded his efforts on behalf of the agricultural poor by appealing to the Commons to "assume its noblest character, that of the protector of the poor".

Sadler's plea for "substantial relief" was ignored. Even so, increased hardship among agricultural workers and heavy expenditure on outdoor relief in the early nineteenth century resulted in the Poor Law Amendment Act (1834). The act created 600 unions of parishes, managed by boards of guardians elected by ratepayers. Outdoor relief was greatly diminished, all paupers being forced into the workhouse, in which conditions were deliberately harsh. A wide range of social concerns dominated the Ultra psyche. Not least of these were a revulsion at the harshness of the Poor Law Amendment Act and Peel's disinterest with factory reform. It was to this latter subject to which Sadler devoted the remainder of his short parliamentary career and to which we shall now turn.

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16 Ibid., pp.328-329.
17 Ibid., p.329.
CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CASE OF THE FACTORY CHILDREN

In September 1830 Sadler's friend Richard Oastler had called public attention to the overwork of children in the worsted mills of the West Riding, Yorkshire. The agitation for legislative interference quickly spread, and in 1831 Sir J.C. Hobhouse (afterwards Baron Broughton) and Lord Morpeth introduced a bill for restricting the working hours of persons under eighteen years of age, employed in factories, to a maximum (excluding allowances for meals) of ten hours a day, with the added condition that no child under the age of nine should be employed. Sadler supported the bill, though he was prepared to go far beyond it. In the meantime alarm spread among many manufacturers, and yielding to their pressure, Hobhouse consented to seriously modify his bill. But Oastler pursued his agitation for "ten hours a day and a time-book", and agreed with the radical working men's committees to allow no political or sectarian differences to interfere with efforts for factory reform. Sadler was chosen as the parliamentary leader of the cause. Sadler especially resented Hobhouse's

1 For an outline of the background to factory legislation see B.L. Hutchins and A. Harrison, A History of Factory Legislation, (London, 1911), pp.1-29. Therein is a succinct account of the Poor Law of Elizabeth I, children's labour in the eighteenth century, parish apprentices, Dr Percival's views on factory legislation, early advocacy of inspection and control, cruelty to apprentices, the 1802 Act, Robert Owen's recommendations, the 1819 Act, the Acts of 1825 and 1831. I am grateful to Michael Sprode of Astrolobe Books, Hobart who kindly forwarded a copy of the above text to me.

2 Richard Oastler, (1789-1861), social reformer, nicknamed the factory king. A Yorkshire estate manager and Tory radical, he campaigned for the ten hour working day and was a vigorous opponent of the Poor Law Amendment Act (1834) which he condemned for its harshness. Although identified by historians as a Tory Radical, has also been regarded as a High-Tory paternalist or Ultra-Tory. Sought an 'alliance' between the working classes and the Tory party. For a biography of Oastler see, Cecil Driver, Tory Radical. The Life of Richard Oastler, (O.U.P., 1946). Hereafter, Driver, Life of Oastler.

3 John Cam Hobhouse
attitude, and wrote on 20 November 1831 that the latter had "not only conceded his bill but his very views and judgment" to the political economists, "the pests of society and the persecutors of the poor". The economists, however, were not all opposed to legislative control of child labour in factories. Old adversaries, Malthus and McCulloch, both approved it in principle. Hobhouse, however, regarded it as hopeless to make an effort for a ten hour bill at that time, and deprecated immediate action. Nevertheless, on 15 December 1831, Sadler obtained leave to bring in a bill "for regulating the labour of children and young persons in the mills and factories of this country".

Modern historians have been loath to mention Sadler's role in the Ten Hours' Movement. However, some have acknowledged his contribution to the history of the factory movement, albeit grudgingly. It would appear that only one contemporary historian commented on Sadler's performance in

6 Usually Sadler's contribution is mentioned in one or two brief sentences, if at all. See G.M. Trevelyan, British History in the Nineteenth Century (1782-1901), (London, 1930), p.248 where Sadler is accorded one sentence in which he is described as a "Tory democrat"; Sir L. Woodward, The Age of Reform 1815-1870, (Oxford, 1962), pp.148-151, five lines. However, Sadler is acknowledged as having "the parliamentary leadership of the movement at a critical time", ibid, p.148; N. Gash, Aristocracy and People. Britain 1815-1865, pp.194-195, six lines. Sadler fares no better in Gash's prolific writing on the Conservative Party. Perhaps this is not surprising. The foremost "Peel watcher" of our day is perhaps disinclined to overly mention Sadler who had little sympathy for his hero; R. Blake, The Conservative Party from Peel to Churchill, (London, 1979), pp.21-22, 88, 123. Sadler is mentioned in conjunction with the factory movement but it is Ashley who is predominant, p.22. The undermining of Sadler's position is uniform and ubiquitous.

7 H. Martineau, The History of England during the Thirty Years' Peace: 1816-1846, 2 Vols., (London, 1849-1850), Vol.2, pp.90-91, Sadler is mentioned in passing (one sentence). However, he is accorded a second entry on p.150 in relation to a Poor Law for Ireland (one line). Martineau claimed that the predicament of the factory children was "admitted by the most sagacious to be an insoluble difficulty", p.90. Nonetheless, she admits that "By guilty neglect we had brought ourselves into an inextricable embarrassment...", p.90. The Whig commentators and historians - Greville, J.R.
parliament to further factory legislation. It should be admitted, however, that Sadler enjoyed only a brief parliamentary career, 1829-1833. Nonetheless, his role both inside and outside parliament was fundamental to the success of the 1833 Factory Act — a fact which Ashley himself readily conceded — yet historians have largely ignored Sadler's tireless efforts on behalf of factory children.

Nonetheless, there are some notable exceptions. Unsurprisingly, Seeley has lauded his hero for his pioneering, if not fundamental position within the cause of factory reform. Driver too has lionized Sadler. However, there are three other important works devoted to factory reform which give Sadler due recognition. Importantly, Samuel Kydd demonstrated that Sadler's friend,
the Rev. G.S. Bull, who became a leader of the agitation for the ten-hour bill, found him [Sadler] "deeply moved" by the condition of the children employed in factories as early as 1823. Moreover, by the mid 1820s Sadler had already formulated ideas for the amelioration of these "factory children".15 Furthermore, Sadler's reputation in the West Riding rapidly spread. Charlotte Brontë, writing at Haworth in 1829, stated that in December 1827, when she and her sisters played their game of the "Islanders", each choosing who should be the great men of the islands, one of the three selected by Ann Brontë was Michael Sadler.17

For over a decade the cotton industry had experienced regulation. Under Peel's Act children between the ages of nine and sixteen were limited to twelve hours work a day. Hobhouse's bill appeared designed to impose definite restrictions upon the freedom of mill owners. It declared that no child might enter a factory before the age of nine; no-one between the ages of nine and eighteen should work more than eleven and a half hours daily, or eight and a half on Saturdays (a total of sixty-six actual working hours a week); there should be a half hour break for breakfast and another of an hour for lunch; no-one under eighteen should be allowed to work at night (defined as the time between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m.). Mill owners were particularly enraged by this last

13 Sometimes referred to as 'Parson Bull' in history texts.
14 D.N.B., op.cit., p.595.
16 Emily and Ann.
18 Peel's Act was passed in 1819 largely as the result of the humanitarian efforts of Robert Owen, though it fell far short of Owen's original proposals. The Act applied only to the cotton industry. It forbade child labour under 9 years; forbade children between 9 and 16 to work more than 12 hours a day, exclusive of mealtimes; left enforcement to Justices of the Peace. It was working very badly and its intentions were being circumvented by sundry forms of evasion.
19 In fact Hobhouse introduced two bills into the Commons. Mill owners were particularly incensed because the four main provisions of the bills were applicable to all the textile industries.
provision. The bill would mean that uninterrupted production would cease. Moreover, there was the problem of accidents, breakages and other stoppages. Strict application of the proposed rule would make it impossible to exact the customary overtime to compensate for these delays.\(^{20}\)

As a result of extra-parliamentary agitation against the bill, and despite a general "rousing of the North", principally inspired by Oastler's fourth letter in the series "Yorkshire Slavery",\(^{21}\) Hobhouse was compelled to drastically modify his bill before it was presented to the House.\(^{22}\) Important modifications included: the definition of 'night time' was cut down by two hours, thus enabling employers to use their children anytime between five in the morning and eight in the evening. Some parts of the woollen industry (such as wool processing) were exempted from regulation altogether. The silk industry was allowed to employ children from the age of seven and owners of water mills were given permission to exact an extra half-hour daily to make up for delays due to loss of water-power. Continued protests from manufacturers pressured Hobhouse to further amend his bill to permit a twelve hour day. Sadler, meanwhile, was busy on behalf of Oastler.\(^{23}\) The two were in close touch throughout the passage of the factory bill through the House of Commons. Oastler sent him data, arguments and advice. Sadler sent back strategic reports. He had written, "I not only concur with Mr Hobhouse's factory bill, but as I have expressed to him over and over again, I go much beyond it". Indeed, as

\(^{20}\) See Driver, Life of Oastler, pp.64-70; pp.72-77.
\(^{22}\) Hence Hobhouse is seen to have introduced two bills.
Driver has commented, "much of the burden of countering hostile moves and petitions fell upon him".24

Sadler bemoaned his lack of support in London. "My great loss is", he confessed, "that I have no energetic friend like yourself at my elbow to prompt and encourage me in these endeavours".25 The task was to prove to be a great strain "to one of his sensitive temperament".26 On another occasion Sadler wrote thanking Oastler "most deeply for your concluding advice". He continued

"May my motives be kept single and my conduct upright and humble! Indeed, I have more temptations arising from despondency and want of confidence at this moment than vanity or pride, which would ill become me; having no pretensions whatever to anything that could make me proud. The happy medium is what religion alone can give. I have of this a little – may God increase it; that is His gift, and the most precious one He bestows.

The millowners... are very powerful in Leeds. I meditate nothing but what I think would be for their interest, properly understood, if carried into full

24 Driver, Life of Oastler, p.93. Most of the opposition to reform came from the worsted industry around Bradford and Halifax. Consequently, the Short Time Committees from these towns and their surrounding regions were the most vociferous in their campaigning. Huddersfield, Oastler's own neighbourhood became the hub of the movement. However, Hobhouse indicated that the bitterest opposition to his measure came from Scotland and the western counties. Driver, Life of Oastler, p.96.


26 Driver, Life of Oastler, p.93. See too Seeley, Life of Sadler, p.405; D.N.B. op. cit., p.597.
effect; nothing that I would not gladly submit to, were I one of them.

...Our objects are the same, and I hope I shall live to see some of them realized...”

However, all the striving came to nothing. Late in the sitting of 28-29 September the bill came up on the report stage and Hobhouse accepted all the amendments which effectively emasculated the measure. The Commons decided that children in the woollen and worsted industries needed no protection. In its final form the Factory Act applied only to cotton and even there it failed to provide any machinery for its enforcement. As one historian of the nineteenth century has observed, it amounted to "nothing more than a barren declaration of principles". Indeed, many of the manufacturers were oblivious to the terms of the legislation and the rest merely disregarded the Act altogether.

Hobhouse claimed he had no alternative but to accept the wrecking amendments and take whatever bill he could get. He warned against fostering among the factory workers hopes that were impossible to attain. Moreover, he anticipated that Sadler would "make the effort which he seems to contemplate, of limiting the hours of labour to ten" but advised "you may depend upon it he will not be allowed to proceed a single stage with any enactment, and, so far from producing any beneficial effects, he will only

29 K.M. Finlay, A Letter to Lord Ashley, (London, 1833), p.16: "so little were the laws on this subject ever regarded in these districts, that I assert without fear of contradiction, the provisions of the Acts of Sir Robert Peel [1819] and Sir John Hobhouse [1831] were till lately unknown to many and disregarded by a great proportion of the spinners and manufacturers in them". Kirkman Finlay was a Lancashire manufacturer who was born in Glasgow. The letter was published in the form of a pamphlet.
thrown an air of ridicule and extravagance over the whole of this kind of legislation". Hobhouse was adamant that he had achieved all that was possible and considered Sadler to be mistaken in the belief that more could be done. He continued

"I regret very much to perceive that the discussion on the factory system is mixed up with party politics in Yorkshire, and more especially of the town of Leeds – still more do I regret that the good operatives should have been so much deluded, either by very ignorant or designing men, as to promise themselves the accomplishment of what can never be realised. Those acquainted with the real state of the question, so far as parliament is concerned, know very well that nothing can be more idle than to talk of the possibility of limiting the hours of labour daily to ten for five days, and to eight on the Saturday...".

Moreover, Hobhouse went on to express shock at Sadler's stance on the question.

"I was, and am surprised to find, by Mr Sadler's answer to the Huddersfield deputies that the worthy member for Aldborough should appear to concur in views so extravagant, and which can only end in disappointment... The censures which, it seems, are passed upon those concerned in the recent Act, and more especially on myself, can proceed only from those altogether unacquainted with the

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circumstances of the case, and from those who know
nothing of the difficulty of carrying a controverted
measure through Parliament...".32

Hobhouse trusted "that on mature reflection, that very respectable gentleman
[Sadler] will adopt a more useful course of conduct, and in that case he may
depend upon my exertions ... to second and encourage his honourable
labour...".33 Sadler ignored such advice and embarked upon his "utopian
project" of a Ten Hours law.

With such encouragement the likes of Oastler thundered across the length and
breadth of the north of England, Sadler set his face to the attainment of his
task. Oastler spoke for Sadler when he asked "as a Christian, upon what
authority and under what necessity is a parent compelled to act the part of a
tyrant to his child?"34 He asserted that foreign commerce had nothing to do
with the matter – this being the customary argument against reform by the
manufacturers. "Whatever the size of our trade, if it depended upon making
infants work more than adults and upon supporting the most horrid system of
slavery in the world, I would say: sink your commerce, and rise Humanity,
Benevolence and Christianity".35 He pointed out that the factory children had
immortal souls and an eternal destiny and the opportunities presented by the
factory system which enslaved them gave little scope for achieving any kind of
spiritual worth at all. "Is it to be borne", he asked, "that the expenses of
government and the national debt should be paid out of the bodies and souls
of poor infants? And have we really come to pass that with the Bible in our

32 Ibid., p.97.
33 Ibid.
34 Oastler's first speech in the first public debate with Edward Baines, founder of Leeds
Liberal Association, sometime M.P. for Leeds; early supporter of factory reform but
later broke with Oastler who called him "the Great Liar of the North". Driver, Life of
Oastler, p.121.
35 Ibid., pp.121-122.
hands, professing to be guided by its precepts, we act as if we thought it right to sell immortal souls for dirty gold?" He emphasised there was no question of setting men against masters, as the "enemies of reform" had alleged. This "cannibal" system was ruining all alike, but men were blinded to the fact by the dreadful hold which a false economic philosophy had over their heads and hearts. "Political economists are the natural enemies of the Bill", he declared. No issue could be simpler: this was a straight fight between "humanity and greed".

It was on the occasion of Oastler's first debate with Baines that the supporters of reform announced that Sadler was to bring a Ten Hours bill before parliament. The government only gave Sadler permission to bring his bill to a second reading on the condition that it should then be referred to a Select Committee of the House of Commons. The Times scoffed. "To bend six hundred and fifty-eight persons to lend themselves to private interests against the plain dictates of justice and humanity is certainly a serious task, but to mould a small committee of perhaps fifteen to twenty-three individuals principally selected from among the representatives of the manufacturing interests... would probably prove to the great mill owners no very great task". Such sarcastic editorials only encouraged Sadler to pursue his goal. Nonetheless, two weeks later the editor felt obliged to warn its readers anew that "the manufacturers have arranged themselves in formidable strength and are sparing no exertion for the continuance of the existing system,

36 Ibid., p.122.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid. Sadler obtained leave to bring in a bill "for regulating the labour of children and young persons in the mills and factories of this country", on 15 December 1831. See this chapter pp.138-141.
39 The Times, 13 February 1832. The Times was pro-reform.
notwithstanding the melancholy proofs which are on record of its fatal effects upon the lives, health and morals of the rising generation". 40

It was the appearance of Oastler's letters on Yorkshire slavery which marked the beginning of popular agitation for factory reform. The most prominent leaders in the movement were Oastler, the Rev. G.S. Bull (Vicar of Bradford), 41 the Rev. J.R. Stephens (who began life as a Wesleyan minister and took a leading part in the Chartist movement), John Doherty (general secretary of the Federation of Cotton Spinners, and a prominent Chartist), George Condy (editor of the Manchester and Salford Advertiser), and Philip Grant. Some have claimed that this movement may be traced back as far as 1825. However Grant stated that "the agitation in those days was confined to the cotton districts, and even here it only reached a few of the principal towns, such as Manchester, Stockport, Bolton, Blackburn, and one or two others. Indeed, any meddling with the subject was unpopular, even amongst the masses, and was attended with risk and imminent danger to the situation of any workman that took part in it". 42 It was not until 1830 that the movement got a real hold on the working classes, and it was from Yorkshire, and Oastler that the impetus came. 43

40 Ibid., 27 February 1832.
41 Parson Bull has been described as "an important new convert..., a stocky active little clergyman of 32. He had joined the Royal Navy at 10, taught for the Church Missionary Society in Sierra Leone and been ordained in 1824, serving curacies in Hessle and Hanging Heaton, before arriving in Bradford, as curate of Bierley. He was already well known as an Evangelical and Temperance speaker and an ardent supporter of the National Society, Sunday schools and Anglican organisation in the industrial cities. His impromptu, fervent speech to the cheering audience [of nearly 2000 Bradfordians who had rallied at the Exchange Buildings] on 27 December [1831] showed that the Movement had gained a valuable new leader". J.T. Ward, The Factory Movement 1830-1855, (London, 1962), p.48.
43 See Leeds Mercury, 16 and 30 October 1830 and Leeds Intelligencer, 11 November 1830 for reports of Oastler's activities from his base at Fixby Hall and of conversations with John Wood, a large Yorkshire manufacturer with whom Oastler stayed. Wood had
Although the movement was not confined to any one political party, later the Short Time Committees were spoken of as a "strange combination of Socialists, Chartists and ultra Tories".

As the former had no organized voice inside parliament the drive for factory reform can be seen as predominantly a Tory concern. Oastler was a Tory to the end of his days, but most of the popular leaders were extreme Radicals. Nonetheless, Sadler and Ashley were Tories, John Fielden, who took Ashley's place during his temporary retirement from parliament in 1846, had been brought up as a Tory, but had become a strong 'Radical Tory'. Moreover, Lord John Manners became the third Ultra-Tory member for Newark to enjoy the duke of Newcastle's patronage. Other parliamentary supporters, Charles Hindley and Joseph Brotherton, were Liberal members for Ashton and Salford respectively. There is not scope within the thesis to look at the role of the Orange Order but there is some evidence to suggest that there was a link between the Loyal Orange Institution of Great Britain and factory reform. Quite clearly Orangeism was identified with Ultra-Toryism. Certainly it is reasonable to opine that a major thrust towards factory reform came from Toryism although this would not seem to be born out by an analysis of the historiography of Conservatism.

In contrast to the findings published in a majority of both contemporary and modern texts some Whig commentators at the time conceded that the drive to enact factory legislation was a party question. For example, the Liberal Dundee Advertiser uneasily noted that Sadler's Bill was "a pet measure of the Tories" and that "the Tories everywhere had come forward as the champions of the operatives... [and] and opposition... had come from Whigs or Liberals".

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for some time been endeavouring in a quiet way to improve the conditions of factory employment.

Furthermore, its editor, John Galletly\textsuperscript{46} quoted John Doherty, the militant Lancashire cotton spinners union leader who had stated "that the factory bill shall be a party question, for they [Whigs and Liberals] obstinately refuse to join in procuring it. The attainment of the bill has been left entirely to the Tories and Radicals".\textsuperscript{47} Indeed, inside parliament the cause of the factory children was left to the Tory member for Aldborough.

Sadler's speech of 16 March 1832 has been universally praised by those who have chosen to acknowledge its significance.\textsuperscript{48} It was "an oration of three hours' practical Evangelical doctrine".\textsuperscript{49} His purpose was to rescue children from "that over-exertion and long confinement which common sense, as well as long experience has shown to be utterly inconsistent with the improvement of their minds, the preservation of their morals and the maintenance of their health".\textsuperscript{50} Sadler declared that "legislation was an evil, but was essential". Moreover, he contended that such arguments as "laissez-faire" and "free agency" were spurious for "even adults were not free agents". He believed that "the boasted freedom of our labourers in many pursuits will, on a just view of their condition, be found little more than a name".\textsuperscript{51} Throughout his appeal for factory reform Sadler was careful not to advocate regulation of adult working hours, being mindful of alienating operatives concerned at their potential to increase weekly wages and fearful of further angering factory owners.

\textsuperscript{46} Also secretary of a local political union who formed an operatives committee.
\textsuperscript{47} Quoted in Ward, \textit{The Factory Movement}, p.57.
\textsuperscript{49} Ward, \textit{The Factory Movement}, p.58.
\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Hansard}, Third Series, xi, 342. "16 March 1832. Factories Regulation Bill – read a second time, and referred to a Select Committee".
\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Ibid.}, 343-344.
Sadler's effort on behalf of factory children has been viewed as the principal reason for his notoriety. It is therefore, self-evident that his speech on the occasion of the bill's second reading should be looked at in some detail. Nonetheless, his oration has not been quoted *in extenso*. "In a word", he reasoned, the purpose of his bill was to alleviate the young "from a state of suffering and degradation which, it is conceived, the children of the industrious classes in hardly any other country endure, or ever have experienced, and which cannot much longer be tolerated". Nonetheless, Sadler was cognizant of the strenuous opposition which he faced.

"I apprehend, the strongest objection that will be offered on this occasion will be grounded upon the pretence that the very principle of the Bill is an improper interference between the employer and the employed, and an attempt to regulate by law the market of labour. Were that market supplied by free agents, properly so denominated, I should have fully participated in those objections. Theoretically, indeed, such is the case, but practically, I fear the fact is far otherwise, even regarding those who are of mature age; and the boasted freedom of our labourers in many pursuits will, on a just view of their condition, be found little more than nominal. Those who argue the question upon mere abstract principles seem, in my apprehension, too much to forget the condition of society, the unequal division of property, or rather its total monopoly by the few, leaving the many nothing whatever but what they can obtain from their daily labour; which very labour cannot become available for the purpose of
daily subsistence, without the consent of those who own the property of the community, all the materials, elements, call them what you please, on which labour is to be bestowed, being in their possession. Hence it is clear that, excepting in a state of things where the demand for labour fully equals the supply (which it would be absurdly false to say exists in this country), the employer and the employed do not meet on equal terms in the market of labour; on the contrary, the latter, whatever be his age, and call him as free as you please, is often almost entirely at the mercy of the former: he would be wholly so were it not for the operation of the Poor-laws, which are a palpable interference with the market of labour, and condemned as such by their opponents. Hence it is, that labour is so imperfectly distributed, and so inadequately remunerated, that one part of the community is over-worked, while another is wholly without employment; evils which operate reciprocally upon each other, till a country which might afford a sufficiency of moderate employment for all, exhibits at one and the same time part of its inhabitants reduced to the condition of slaves by over exertion, and another to that of paupers by involuntary idleness. In a word, wealth, still more than knowledge, is power, and power, liable to abuse whenever vested, is least of all free from tyrannical exercise, when it owes its existence to a sordid
source. Hence have all laws, human or divine, attempted to protect the labourer from the injustice and cruelty which are too often practised upon him. Our Statute-book contains many proofs of this, and especially in its provision for the poor...

The principle features, then, of this Bill for regulating the labour of children and other persons in mills and factories, are these: First, the inhibiting of the labour of infants therein under the age of nine; the limitation of the hours of actual work of children from nine to eighteen years of age to ten hours, exclusively of time allowed for meals and refreshment, with an abatement of hours on the Saturday as a necessary preparation for the Sabbath; and the forbidding of all night work under the age of twenty-one".\(^{52}\)

Sadler's twin arguments, notably that "the employer and employed do not meet on equal terms in the market of labour", and his detailed description of the sufferings endured by children in the factories deeply moved the House of Commons and the nation. He had intended to insert clauses (1) "subjecting the

52 Ibid., 344, 375. For the full text of Sadler's speech see Hansard, Third Series, xi, 342-375; The speech of M.T. Sadler, Esq. on the occasion of the first reading of the Factories Regulation Bill, 16th March, 1832, (London, 1832). Printed by Baldwin and Cradock. The full text of the speech is reprinted in Seeley, Life of Sadler, pp.338-379. Seeley commented: "It is not too much to say of this address, that while a more closely-reasoned or convincing argument never was produced, -- none, even of Mr. Sadler's own productions, is more redolent of deep and strong feeling, excited, not by fancy, but by fact". The speech, Seeley concluded, was "one of the greatest efforts of Mr. Sadler's life". Seeley, Life of Sadler, p.338. The speech is partly quoted in Eccleshall, English conservatism since the Restoration, pp.106-108.
mill owners or occupiers to a heavy fine when any serious accident occurred in consequence of any negligence in not properly sheathing or defending the machinery. And (2) proposing "a remission of an hour from each day's labour for children under fourteen, or otherwise of six hours on one day in each week, for the purpose of affording them some opportunity of receiving the rudiments of instruction". He had contemplated a further clause putting down night work altogether. However, in order not to endanger the principal object which he had in view, and "regarding the present attempt as the commencement only of a series of measures in behalf of the industrious classes", he had confined his measure within narrower limits.

The reply to Sadler was that his claims were greatly exaggerated, and that a committee should investigate his facts. Sadler consented to an inquiry and the bill, after being read a second time, was referred to a committee of thirty members, to whom seven more were afterwards added. The committee included Sadler as chairman, Lord Morpeth, Sir J.C. Hobhouse, Sir Robert Inglis, Lord Lowther, Poulet Thomson and Fowell Buxton. It held its first sitting on 12 April 1832, met forty-three times, and examined eighty-nine witnesses. At least eight committee members "were the earnest guardians of the interests of the Mill-owners". Seeley observed that "most sedulous was their attention to the whole proceeding". So much so that "any false or wilfully exaggerated statement could have passed them undetected, is clearly incredible".

53 Sadler Family Papers. Notes in Sadler's own hand, otherwise unmarked, held in a private collection in Belfast, Northern Ireland.
54 Ibid.
55 For a full list of the members of the committee see Seeley, Life of Sadler, p.381.
56 Ibid., pp.381-382.
57 Ibid., p.382.
The influence of the factory owners with the government compelled Sadler to consent to the delay involved in a parliamentary inquiry. The delay not only offset factory reform but "this inquiry was unquestionably the means of shortening Mr. Sadler's own life".\textsuperscript{58} It necessarily devolved upon him to conduct the whole proceeding. During forty-three days\textsuperscript{59} he occupied the chair of the committee. Although this was a serious task it formed only a small portion of the whole labour. "The inquiry was peculiarly his own". Hence it became his duty to seek out information countrywide; to correspond extensively with parties qualified to give information; and to carry the whole body of evidence accurately through the press and to collate it into a proper order for publication: and all this in the face of a determined, because interested opposition. "The toil of these combined operations was very great, making both food and sleep often unattainable comforts. The effects of that summer's work were visible to the very close of his life. It is certain that the exertion shortened his days: but it is gratifying to reflect, that the sacrifice was not made in vain".\textsuperscript{60}

About half the witnesses who gave evidence before the committee were workpeople. Their appearance was much resented by many of the employers, and on 30 July Sadler addressed the House of Commons on behalf of two of them who had been dismissed from their employment for giving evidence, and demanded compensation. Among the physicians summoned before the committee were Sir Anthony Carlisle, Dr. Thomas Hodgkin, Dr. P.M. Roget, Sir W. Blizard and Dr. Charles Bell, who all condemned the existing arrangements in factories.\textsuperscript{61} The committee reported the minutes of evidence on 8 August, "a

\begin{footnotes}
\item[58] Ibid., p.380.
\item[59] Extending from 12 April to 7 August 1832.
\item[60] Seeley, Life of Sadler, p.380.
\item[61] D.N.B., op.cit., p.597. See too Seeley, Life of Sadler, pp.380-381; A History of Factory Legislation, pp.49-51. Compensation was not obtained.
\end{footnotes}
mass of evidence, establishing a case of the most unquestionable guilt against
the Mill-owners, and making it clearly inevitable, that some remedy should at
once be sought out".62

The Manchester and Salford Advertiser, in an article on evidence brought before
the committee and commenting on the provisions of the Short-Time Bill,
referred to the fact that the chief obstacle to some effective legislative
enactment had hitherto been found in the arguments brought forward by
political economists in league with the factory owners.

"The great difficulty has been to persuade sages like
Mr. Hume63 to pass laws to restrain free labour, it
being totally overlooked, in the first place, that
Englishmen are not free, that it is because they are
not free that they are seeking to become so. It is... to
avoid this stumbling block that the attempts at
regulation have been confined to the case of persons
under age though the effect of really preventing
them from working beyond fixed hours must have
been to interfere with the labour of adults also. It is
to avoid this stumbling block that Mr. Sadler has
adhered to the principle of legislation for children
only".64

Moreover, Sadler recognised that by concentrating the attention of the House
of Commons and the committee of inquiry on the plight of children he was
more likely to gain advantage.

62 Seeley, Life of Sadler, pp.380-381.
63 Joseph Hume
64 Manchester and Salford Advertiser, 10 March 1832. Quoted in A History of Factory
Legislation, p.49.
While political economists propounded their theories of the advantages of laissez-faire and freedom of contract between employers and employees, the men on the committee of inquiry who were brought face to face with the stark realities of industrial conditions recognised that there was no such thing as freedom of contract. Even an investigator such as Dr. J.P. Kay, who was himself opposed to any state intervention in the hours of labour, was compelled to concede that the condition of the operatives was reminiscent of a scene from Dante's Inferno.

"Whilst the engine runs the people must work — men, women, and children are yoked together with iron and steam. The animal machine — breakable in the best case, subject to a thousand sources of suffering — is chained fast to the iron machine, which knows no suffering and no weariness".65

With evidence such as the above it was inevitable that the report impressed the commissioners and the public alike with the gravity of the question. Even Lord Ashley had heard nothing of the matter until such extracts from the evidence appeared in the newspapers.66 He was not alone in his ignorance of the circumstances. The economist, J.R. McCulloch, wrote to Ashley: "I look upon the facts disclosed in the late report as most disgraceful to the nation, and I confess that until I read it I could not have conceived it possible that such enormities were committed".67

The weight of the accusation, with its accompanying body of proofs, "was so felt by the parties concerned, that, in desperation at the absence of all other

67 Ibid., p.157.
pleas, they set up a cry of "partial" and "unfair", against the Report of this Committee".68 Driver has commented that "the Report which the Select Committee completed in August has become one of the best known British State Papers of the nineteenth century. Its 982 folio pages present a symposium of sordid wretchedness, the evidence adduced exceeding anything that Oastler had written in his letters on Yorkshire Slavery".69 Obviously the question of factory legislation could no longer be shelved as it had been the previous September.70 The investigation "revealed a state of misery which even Sadler had not disclosed", stated the Whig historian Spencer Walpole; "the Committee, merely reporting the evidence without comment of its own, made a bill of factory reform a necessity".71 Even "that acidulous individualist" Harriet Martineau was constrained to say that "by guilty neglect we had brought ourselves into an inextricable embarrassment".72 The power of the Report lay in the comprehensiveness and vivid realism of its detail; only a reading of that document itself can recreate the effect which that produced.73 The Report was not published until January 1833. Before then, however, Sadler's expectations of a Ten Hours' Bill had been dashed for a second time.

68 Seeley, Life of Sadler, p.381.
69 Driver, Life of Oastler, pp.170-171.
70 On the occasion of Hobhouse's factory bill.
71 Quoted in Driver, Life of Oastler, p.171.
73 Report from the Select Committee on the Bill for the Regulation of Factories, (Parliamentary Papers), Hansard, Third Series, 1831-1832, xv. See too First Report from Commissioners appointed to collect information in the manufacturing districts, relative to the employment of children in factories; with Minutes of Evidence and Reports of District Commissioners, (Parliamentary Papers), Hansard, Third Series, 1833, xx. Cruelty, frequent deformity, ill health, bad chests, asthmatical conditions, general debility resulting from exhaustion; fatigue helped to increase the number of accidents arising from ill-protected or unfenced machinery, for towards the end of the day children were working in a daze. The novelist Frances Trollope toured the factory districts of Yorkshire and Lancashire in 1837. What she saw confirmed much of the evidence presented to the committee. See Frances (Fanny) Trollope, Michael Armstrong, (London, 1839), p.80. For selective quotes from this novel and from the Report see Driver, Life of Oastler, pp.170-177.
He had dared to hope, even after the appointment of a select committee, that there might still be time to get a bill passed before the end of the session [1832]. But parliament was prorogued in October and dissolved in December. The struggle would, once more, have to begin all over again. This time, however, it would have to be fought out in the reformed House of Commons elected under the new franchise law.

Sadler's Aldborough seat had been abolished under the boundary revision which was part of the Reform Act. The chief burden of the work of the select committee and of the collection of the evidence had fallen on Sadler. He was in urgent need of rest, but the respite could only be brief. His election committee in Leeds were already meeting daily and the demands upon him were increasing rapidly. Furthermore, the factory owners demanded a new inquiry, not before a parliamentary committee, but by commissioners sent from London to collect evidence in factory districts. The manufacturers complained that when the session of 1832 ended they had not had time to open their case before Sadler's committee. Accordingly, in 1833 the government appointed a royal commission to collect information in the manufacturing districts with respect to the employment of children in factories. In the meantime, Sadler's health had broken down. He never recovered from the strain brought about by his work on the select commission. Moreover, his parliamentary career had drawn to a close.

At the dissolution in December Sadler had declined other offers in order to stand for Leeds. His chief opponent was Macaulay, who defeated him by 388 votes. The fight was a bitter one. In May Sadler published a Protest Against

74 Seeley, Life of Sadler, p.383.
75 Macaulay 1884 votes, Sadler 1596 votes.
the Secret Proceedings of the Factory Commission in Leeds, in which he urged that the inquiry should be open and public. In June he renewed his protest in a Reply to the Two Letters of J.E. Drinkwater and Alfred Power, Esqs., Factory Commissioners. After this, his health failed, and he took no further part in public affairs.

The contest at Leeds degenerated into an exercise in vituperation on the part of Macaulay. His nephew rightly observed that in the election debate he richly "deserved the praise which Dr. Johnson pronounced upon a good hater". The efforts of both candidates on the hustings were dominated by the issue of factory reform. Their ideological differences can perhaps best be illustrated by the following two extracts. Macaulay's speech to the electors of Leeds, in which, it should be noted, he had somewhat modified his earlier overt hostility for any factory regulation, is nevertheless supportive of the manufacturing interest.

"Gentlemen, permit me to say that though I distinctly admit that the employment of children in factories does require regulation, I can by no means admit that those topics which I have so often heard advanced on that subject have in them any soundness, and ... I say that if the labouring classes expect any great or extensive relief from any practical measure of legislation, they are under a delusion. (Hisses). I believe that they are confounding the symptoms with the disease... I

believe that the overworking of children is not the cause but the effect of distress. ('No, no.')... Against cruelty, against oppression, and against the excessive overworking of children who are of too tender an age to have the care of their own affairs, I have as fixed and firm an opinion as any one who hears me".80

Whereas Macaulay was at that time averse to any legislative regulation of the labour of adults, Sadler, by contrast, (largely due to the evidence he had heard at first hand as chairman of the select committee and from reading the Report of the Commission of Inquiry, which was laid before the House of Commons, on 28 June 1833)81 was convinced that reform was imperative on humanitarian grounds. This short and simple ballad, written by Sadler during the parliamentary inquiry, founded entirely upon a fact given in evidence before the committee, was read to the Leeds electors by his election agent. The poem is entitled "The Factory Girl's Last Day".82

Following Sadler's defeat at Leeds the parliamentary leadership of the Ten Hours' Movement passed to Ashley, who, at the request of the Short-Time Committee, promised to take up Sadler's Bill. However, his efforts during the session of 1833 were defeated by the introduction of a government bill,83 and the commission of inquiry, appointed to appease the factory owners, on the ground that the Report of Sadler's committee had been of a partisan character.

81 For the principal passages of the Report see Seeley, Life of Sadler, pp.384-398. Evidence was collected between April and June 1833.
83 Lord Althorp's Bill.
This was bitterly resented by the operatives who considered the commission a mere device for delay. An appeal was sent by the Manchester operatives to the king, William IV, petitioning him to withhold, or if issued, to recall the commission. When it was found that such measures were unavailing, the Short-Time Committee decided that they would refuse to give evidence, and presented protests to the commissioners on their arrival in the various towns.84

In the meantime, Ashley had introduced his bill in which he proposed that enforcement of the law should be secured by the drastic penalty of imprisonment for a third offence against its provisions. There was considerable controversy over this clause. In spite of enthusiastic support given to Ashley85 he was obliged to abandon his bill on the introduction of Althorp's government measure which embodied the chief recommendations of the commissioners.86 The most noteworthy features of Althorp's Bill were that two sets of children might be employed for a maximum period of eight hours each, and that the Act should be enforced by government inspectors. Both these provisions met with complete opposition on the part of Sadler and the Ten Hours' Movement. Nonetheless, the Factory Act of August 1833 forbade the employment of children under nine in textile mills;87 restricted the labour of those between nine and thirteen to nine hours in any day or forty-eight in any week; children under eighteen were limited to twelve hours in the day or sixty-nine in the week. Moreover, four inspectors with magisterial powers were to supervise the operation of the Act. Although industrial inspection was not unknown in the textile industries "the 1833 centralized inspectorate with regular reporting to the secretary of state formed an important administrative

84 See Leeds Intelligencer, 13 and 18 May 1833.
86 Ibid., pp.105-106. Ashley's Bill was defeated on 18 July 1833 by 238 votes to 93.
87 But not silk mills.
innovation". Importantly, a permanent legacy remained: the belief that it was a Whig-Liberal administration which had championed the emotional issue of factory regulation in the working lives of children and young people. Nevertheless, as we have seen, the impetus for factory reform came from the likes of Tories such as Sadler and Oastler.

Meanwhile, although no longer in parliament, Sadler's attention had turned to another piece of legislation proposed by Althorp – the Poor Law Amendment Act – carried through parliament in 1834, the harshness of which offended his paternalistic and humanitarian sensibilities. Ironically, this legislation has been seen as "overlapping, and to some extent weakening, the ten hours movement". However, this was an issue in which Sadler, broken by ill health and failure to gain a seat in the Commons by defeat in a by-election at Huddersfield, was to play no part. After this he never again became a candidate.

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89 Ibid.
90 When the Huddersfield poll closed the votes were: Blackburne 234, Sadler 147, Captain Wood 108. Seeley records "And thus, a second time, Mr. Sadler was foiled in his purpose of reentering Parliament". Life of Sadler, p.410.
CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

"With feelings of sorrow as deep as we have ever experienced, feelings which we are sure will extend throughout the British Empire, we announce the death of one of the best and greatest men who ever did honour to the name of Englishman. What can we say of a man whose bright and spotless character affords no shade to set in relief the most brilliant talents of which human nature is capable - the most splendid talents that have ever adorned our species? ...".

So began the eulogistic obituary of Sadler in The Standard, in August 1835. It should be noted that Sadler's public life was comparatively short - some eight years - less than four of which were spent in parliament. He entered the most active period of his life in his mid-forties, dominated by two influences, his philanthropic Christian principles and his particular brand of Protestantism. This High Toryism, or Anglicanism has been regarded as 'Ultra-Toryism' by some and by others as 'Radical Toryism'. Sadler's career was "devoted to welding together these attitudes".

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1 The Standard, 8 August 1835. Sadler died 6 a.m. 29 July 1835. Seeley records that some of Sadler's last words were from the scriptures: "I know that my Redeemer liveth; and that though in my flesh worms destroy this body, yet with mine eyes shall I behold him; whom I shall see for myself and not another, though my reins be consumed within me"; "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me, and Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me". From the Old Testament books of Job and Psalms, quoted in Seeley, Life of Sadler, pp.550-551.

2 1825-1833. In 1825 Sadler read a series of papers on the principle of the Poor Laws to the Leeds Literary and Philosophical Society.

Consequently, his political philosophy was based on a traditionalist Tory creed, paternal and hierarchic, rather than individualistic and democratic. His "notions on political economy" were simply "to extend the utmost possible degree of human happiness to the greatest possible number of human beings". Sadler detested what he regarded as "the new system" of liberal economics and uncontrolled individualism which was unsurping the traditional society he admired and wished to perpetuate. The policy of Ricardo, Huskisson, Wallace and Peel he considered "earthly, selfish and devilish". However, he viewed "all the policy" rooted in "the principle of the superfluity of human beings was alike monstrous and ruinous". Sadler's anti-Malthusian essay on Ireland, its evils and their remedies, together with his treatise on The Law of Population, advocated government intervention to alleviate suffering brought about by general distress.

Moreover, the abuses of the factory system roused his anger. He believed that exploitation by captains of industry was "calling infant existences into perpetual labour", ruining health and morality. Children were compelled to work in "the fetid corrupted atmosphere of manufactories" compared to which "prisons were palaces". To Sadler's way of thinking such a system "disturbed the peace of nature" and offended God. He believed that one had only to "look at the statistics of crime in the manufacturing districts" to be convinced that the work régimes of mill owners and the like were responsible. "Let it increase as it has done for fifty years", he told Fenton, "and every man in them will be a felon".

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4 Quoted in Seeley, Life of Sadler, pp.41-42. Speech given in 1826 "at a dinner given in Leeds to the Hon. W. Duncombe and R. Fountayne Wilson, Esq., the newly-elected [Ultra-Tory] members on the Protestant interest, for the West Riding of Yorkshire". Ibid., p.41.


6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.
Futhermore, "child labour" had led parents to "count from birth the [material] gain" from their children's "infant slavery in the accursed manufactories".8

It is important not to undermine Sadler's commitment to the Established Church. Anglicanism shaped his world view. The Revolution Settlement was the foundation of the Constitution which guaranteed political stability and social harmony and that ensured the maintenance of an aristocratic and hierarchical society. Sadler's aversion to Catholic emancipation was not the quirk of a bigot or a personal foible but the cornerstone of his ideology. So it was that the evangelical Newcastle offered the seat of Newark to Sadler. "A most important day with Mr Sadler", Fenton recorded on 19 February 1829.9 This was certainly an understatement. For Sadler it was seen as a divine sanction: "This evening the Duke of Newcastle wrote offering to bring him into Parl[ija]ment as a bulwark of the Protestant cause to oppose the Roman Catholic question".10 Sadler viewed it a sacred and patriotic duty to defend 'Church and King' whose continued existence was the Will of God.

In parliament Sadler lived up to his patron's hopes, opposing emancipation, speaking for an Irish Poor Law, on behalf of improved conditions for working people and against free trade, emigration schemes and the Anatomy Bill.11 His social policy, he told his Newark electorate in July 1829, was "to support in their just rights and essential interests every rank of society, and above all, the labouring classes of the community, whose prosperity was the foundation of all others".12 Two months later in a speech delivered in Whitby he argued that

8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 Sadler and many other opponents of the bill argued that the poor were vulnerable to exploitation.
12 Quoted in Seeley, Life of Sadler, pp.131-136 for the whole of his speech at the Town Hall, Newark on 24 July 1829.
"the modern system" was nothing other than "an attack upon the privileges of labouring poverty throughout".\textsuperscript{13}

As member for Aldborough, undeterred by his initial lack of success, he again proposed a motion for an Irish Poor Law and introduced a bill on the state of agricultural labourers, to encourage "cottage horticulture". Throughout the period 1830-1832 he consistently opposed parliamentary reform, condemning the "most forbidding and insulting... uniformity of disfranchisement as regarded the lower and most industrious classes".\textsuperscript{14} He was appalled that the few voters from the working classes were now deprived of their rights. Instead of franchise reform Sadler proposed widespread social improvements. The most notable was his advocation of factory legislation to alleviate the suffering caused by the exploitation of child labour.

In the year before his death Sadler vigorously opposed the Malthusian harshness of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act and completed a volume on Factory Statistics. This latter, his last bequest to the factory reformers, condemned "the monstrous cruelties so long inflicted", and was published posthumously in 1836. The preeminent historian of the Factory Movement has commented: "Disinterested, sincere and fearless, Sadler fought an uneven battle on many fronts against the rising tide of liberal economics. He was a Protectionist when Free Trade ideas were spreading; he was a believer in the paternal State when laissez-faire was the contemporary panacea; he was a traditionalist in a changing, Benthamite world".\textsuperscript{15} He once told his father-in-law that if "any one should write my life, let them say I undertook this work calculating upon the sarcasm of the thinking people, as they are called, and

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., pp.137-138 for the keynote of the speech at a public dinner in Whitby on 15 September 1829. See pp.137-149 for the complete text.

\textsuperscript{14} Sadler Papers. Leeds. The Diary of S.G. Fenton.

\textsuperscript{15} Ward, "Michael Thomas Sadler", p.159.
without any expectation of pecuniary advantage". Parliamentary opponents misjudged him as old-fashioned, bigoted, reactionary and a sophist opposed to "progress". Oastler spoke for many when he appraised him as "that heaven-born man". It is difficult to assess the attitudes which historians may have towards Sadler for he has been largely ignored by them. Nevertheless, for those who have an inclination a statue of this largely neglected early nineteenth-century social reformer may be seen standing at the entrance of the Leeds Parish Church. It bears a lengthy inscription the last line of which has partially eroded but reads: "By his numerous private and political friends this monument has been erected, to hand down to posterity the name of a scholar, a patriot, and a practical philanthropist". 

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17 For the full inscription see Seeley, Life of Sadler, p.553.
"You can define a net in one of two ways, depending on your point of view. Normally, you would say that it is a meshed instrument designed to catch fish. But you could, with no great injury to logic, reverse the image and define a net as a jocular lexicographer once did: he called it a collection of holes tied together with string.

You can do the same with biography. The trawling net fills, then the biographer hauls it in, sorts, throws back, stores, fillets and sells. Yet consider what he doesn't catch: there is always far more of that. The biography stands, fat and worthy-burgherish on the shelf, boastful and sedate: a shilling life will give you all the facts, a ten pound one all the hypotheses as well. But think of everything that got away, that fled with the last deathbed exhalation of the biographee. What chance would the craftiest biographer stand against the subject who saw him coming and decided to amuse himself?"
"The Factory Girl's Last Day"

"Twas on a winter's morning.
The weather wet and wild,
Three hours before the dawning
The father roused his child;
Her daily morsel bringing,
The darksome room he paced,
And cried, 'The bell is ringing,
My hapless darling, haste!'

'Father, I'm up, but weary,
I scarce can reach the door,
And long the way and dreary,—
O carry me once more!
To help us we've no mother;
And you have no employ;
They killed my little brother,—
Like him I'll work and die!'

Her wasted form seemed nothing,—
The load was at his heart;
The sufferer he kept soothing
Till at the mill they part.
The overlooker met her,
As to her frame she crept,
And with his thong he beat her,
And cursed her as she wept.

Alas! what hours of horror
Made up her latest day;
In toil, and pain, and sorrow,
They slowly passed away:
It seemed, as she grew weaker,
The threads the oftener broke,
The rapid wheels ran quicker,
And heavier fell the stroke.

The sun had long descended,
But night brought no repose;
*Her day* began and ended
As cruel tyrants chose.
At length a little neighbour
Her halfpenny she paid,
To take her last hour's labour,
While by her frame she laid.

At last, the engine ceasing,
The captives homeward rushed;
She thought her strength increasing—
'Twas hope her spirits flushed:
She left, but oft she tarried;
She fell and rose no more,
Till, by her comrades carried,
She reached her father's door.
All night, with tortur'd feeling,
He watched his speechless child;
While, close beside her kneeling,
She knew him not, nor smiled.
Again the factory's ringing
Her last perceptions tried;
When, from her straw-bed springing,
'Tis time!' she shrieked, and died!

That night a chariot passed her,
While on the ground she lay;
The daughters of her master
An evening visit pay:
Their tender hearts were sighing
As negro wrongs were told,
While the white slave lay dying
Who gained their father's gold!
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Collins Australian Pocket English Dictionary, (Sydney, 1982).


