**Lecture 9: Protest and Consumption**

**Structure of the lecture:**

* Anti-saccharite and anti-slavery
* the boycott
* the food riot revisited
* types of alternative consumerism and society

**Purpose:**

To examine the ways in which different groups and campaigns used the power of consumption as a tactic. They attempted to hit powerful economic interest groups where it hurt, but also to create an alternative world with an alternative economy.

**Key words and terms:**

consumption,

boycott,

political economy,

‘moral economy’,

socialism,

Malthusianism.

**Anti-saccharite and anti-slavery**

**Source of the week:** blue glass sugar bowl, Bristol., early 19thC, British Museum

William Fox, An address to the people of Great Britain, on the utility of refraining from West India sugar and rum (1791) ran to 25 editions and sold 70,000 copies in 4 months. By 1792, about 400,000 Britons were estimated to be boycotting slave-grown sugar.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Josiah Wedgwood and production of anti-slavery consumer goods

Compare the tactic of abstention with petitioning:

1807 – slave trade abolished

1833 – slavery in the colonies abolished.

**Boycott:………………………………………………………………………………….**

**The food riot revisited:**

E. P. Thompson and the ‘moral economy’………………………………………….

The ‘moral economy’ of wages?

Cotton Arbitration Act 1800

1813-14 – wage-fixing legislation and the 1563 (Elizabethan) statute of Artificers repealed.

**Types of alternative consumerism and society**:

* **Followers of Thomas Spence:……………………………………………..**

Land nationalisation

Nov.-Dec. 1816 – Spa Fields meetings

1820 Cato St. Conspiracy

* **Owenite socialism**:……………………………………………………………

New Lanark mill settlement, run by Robert Owen from 1800

*New Moral World* newspaper

**\* Warning no1** \* - …………………………………………………………………….

* **Co-operation movement:…………………………………………………….**

December 1844 – Formation of the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers. with 28 members and £28 in capital.

* **Chartism and consumption**:………………………………………………….

1845 - Feargus O’Connor and the Chartist Land Company – over 44,000 shareholders, a quarter of whom were from the depressed industrial districts of northern England.[[2]](#footnote-2)

**Key features of all the movements**:

1…………………………………………………………………………………

2……………………………………………………………………………….

3………………………………………………………………………………..

1. ###  D. Davis, *The problem of slavery in the age of revolution, 1770-1823* (Oxford, 1989).

 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. J.L. Bronstein, *Land reform and working-class experience in Britain and the United States, 1800-1862* (Stanford, 1999), p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)