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<1874/c> Key: **Footprint ConEn1** **Footprint ConEn2** **Footprint ConEn3**	grievances and tensions as disturbances spread out beyond the clothing districts into Rotherham and Sheffield, with raids in search of arms, bullets and money marking its final stages. In Lancashire and Cheshire events were less "pure". There was a machinery issue in the introduction of power looms. Several rioters were killed during an attack on a mill using them at Salford in 1812, but few manufacturers had as yet introduced them, or were intending to in the near future, and disturbances were intermingled with food riots and political agitation. Once again the name of Ludd was invoked and there were rumours of links with Notting-ham. An attempt to burn down a warehouse at Stockport was followed by rumours of secret gatherings, armings and oath taking and there was certainly talk of a general rising. Until the major reinterpretation by E.P. Thompson in 1963, a consensus view of Luddism prevailed among historians. The Hammonds had placed Luddism as the resort to violence by traditional workers who had failed in the face of a growing laissez-faire <pb n=218 ideology to persuade **parliament** to protect them by invoking old paternalist statutes. Machine breaking was a final act in the struggle of artisans to maintain or revive customs and laws which the new breed of capitalist employers was determined to evade. However, they were unable to place a violent movement like Luddism into the mainstream history of a developing **labour** movement. Those knitters who broke the machines had to be separated from the "constitutionalists" who organised the petitioning of **parliament**. Anxious to deny any significant revolutionary input, they were at pains to resist any suggestion that machine breaking could have had any links with a revolutionary **political** movement. They did, however, note that the disturbances of 1811-12 were distinguished by a new level of planning and organisation, but still insisted that the involvement of "proper" trade unionists was limited to sympathy. Gravenor Henson, the leader of the Framework Knitters' Union, they argue, did not even approve of Luddite actions. They have been more willing than other historians to accept at face value his retrospective remark of 1824: "The branch who broke the frames never contemplated any such thing as the combining." The parallel existence in Nottingham and Leicester of a movement for **parliamentary** redress alongside machine breaking has allowed historians other than the Hammonds to claim that each was the method of a distinct group. Such a "compartmentalisation" is less easy in the cases of Yorkshire and Lancashire. Here, too, the Hammonds were concerned to dismiss suggestions that Luddism was anything more than a despairing form of industrial protest without any real degree of **political** revolutionary intent. Faced with evidence to the contrary, which
	the government of **the day**
	either believed or at least affected to believe, they resort to describing the reports of arms, oaths and plans for insurrection sent in by **government** spies as exaggerations
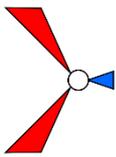
or fabrications, especially those of Bent, from Lancashire: "The Home Office Papers contain numbers of illiterate communications from him, full of lurid hints of the approaching outbursts of the lower orders, encouraged by mysterious beings in higher places." They further discounted reports of oath taking in Lancashire or in the West Riding. Their interpretation remained unchallenged until E.P. Thompson questioned their reading of this evidence in 1963. … a special pleading which exaggerates the stupidity, rancour, and provocative role of the authorities to the point of absurdity; or by an academic failure of imagination, which compartmentalises and disregards the whole weight of popular tradition … We end in a ridiculous position. We must suppose that the authorities through their agents actually created conspiratorial organisations and then instituted new capital offences (such as that for oath-taking) which existed only in the imagination or as a result of the provocations of their own spies. Most recent historians would agree that the Hammonds were much too reluctant to accept that there was even serious talk of revolution, although the majority do not go so far as Thompson in their assessment of the seriousness of the threat. It is reasonable, however, for Thompson to ask why such a degree of compartmentalisation of objectives should be presumed to have been the case in 1812, when war had been largely continuous over twenty years, when trade unions were under the interdict of the Combination Acts, when the hand- loom weavers and knitters were suffering a catastrophic drop in earnings and when high food prices were producing widespread and severe hunger. Thompson's view of Luddism is connected to the argument of The Making of the English Working Class, that a revolutionary underground movement linked the Jacobinian agitation of the 1790s to the re-emergence of more open radicalism after 1816. It is not a view shared by historians like Thomis who consider Luddism to have been "industrial in its origins and industrial too in its aims". Recently Craig Calhoun has also criticised the "revolutionary" view of Luddism. To him it was essentially a community-based populist movement which, while it was capable of employing a revolutionary rhetoric, was not so of organising a revolution. Professor Dinwiddy was more willing to accept the existence of a revolutionary movement in Lancashire and the West Riding which had begun to mobilise in a rudimentary way and which did administer oaths and invoke the name of Ludd. However, he did not think it was of formidable enough dimensions even to link the industrial towns of the North, let alone spearhead a